A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century -

Vol 09 Ecclesiology

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Vol 10 Angelology

Dr. Edward Rice

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A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century –

Vol 9 Ecclesiology

Dr. Edward G. Rice

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Preface

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a USAF retired systems engineer turned Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and armed with a staunch belief in the preserved accuracy of the inspired Scriptures, I praise the Lord that he has provided me the unique opportunity to assemble "A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century."

As a systems engineer for thirty years (since 1972), I focused on systems analysis. Systematic theology has intrigued me ever since my first Bible institute course in 1975. I have amassed multiple systematic theology books and never found one that is wholly Biblical. In 2013 my seminary work at Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary, under Dr. Steven Pettey, assigned me to read and analyze six volumes of "Systematic Theology" by Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder and previous president of Dallas Theological Seminary. Initial critique of this neo-evangelical's voluminous, wordy, often unorganized work, answered the question, "Is there not a cause?" A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century is indeed a valid need. It cried out to be written and it was a work that I was privileged to endeavor.

God says he built man with an inner knowledge of the Creator's eternal power and Godhead. Further, God reveals from heaven, to every man, his wrath against all ungodliness. This true Light "*lighteth every man that cometh into the word.*" The Bible says the righteous God, The LORD of hosts, tries the reins and the heart of every man. The prophet Jeremiah writes of God, "*I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*" The psalmist says, "*my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*" With his tugs on the reins of your heart, you have come far in your studies, be sure that you have come to a knowledge and submissive acceptance of God's only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The beloved Apostle John wrote, "*And many*

other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Every Bible student is encouraged to follow through a list of Bible verses called by some the Romans road to heaven. The believing Bible student is encouraged to memorize them. That quintessential list of verses is John 3:16-19, 36, 5:24, Romans 3:10, 23, 5:8, 12, 18-19, 6:23, and 10:9-13. That last reference is God's formal acceptance policy for your receiving his free gift of salvation and eternal life. Got life? The beloved Apostle John writes, "*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*" Selah! It is Hebrew for "go-figure", and it intends that you pause, meditate, and consider what you just read.

After due consideration of the sole source of a systematic theology in Volume 01 – Prolegomena and a Volume 02 – Bibliology, an appropriate course of study would entail the study of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. That is the course of study for Volume 03 – Theology, Volume 04 – Christology and Volume 05 – Pneumatology. Such a discipline establishes a foundation for the other studies of this systematic theology. Volume 06 through 08 pursue the plight and salvation of man with titles Anthropology, Hamartiology, and Soteriology, and finally Volume 09 through 11 pursue the doctrines of the church, angels, and last things, in titles Ecclesiology, Angelology, and Eschatology. The set concludes with a Volume 12 – Epilogue.

In researching for this volume on ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church, I found that the Roman Catholic teaching that the church is a Holy Catholic Church and their teaching that it replaces Israel are the most detrimental influences to an overall Biblical understanding of the church. Those errors invade every Protestant denomination, and consequently the "poisonous fruit" invades all areas of Reformed theology. Baptists are not Protestant but the leaven then invades even Baptist theology. A conscious guard against a Catholic Church and its Replacement Theology via Covenant Theology is the first address of this ecclesiology. There is no wading pool, as it were, for a reproof of these errors in ecclesiology or in eschatology and the Bible student should be prepared to dive right into this powerful volume. May God bless your head first dive, and may the Holy Spirit of God guide you

through this sticky wicket. (A “Sticky wicket” in the game of Cricket is the area of ground around a wicket when it is tacky because of recent rain and therefore does not allow the ball to bounce well; it is a metaphor used to describe a difficult circumstance.)

When I began work on my Ph.D. in 2014 I set a goal to finish this Systematic Theology for the 21st Century in a five year period. When I finished my Ph.D. in 2017, I reestablished the same goal. This year, after publishing at least a draft of all twelve volumes in 2019, the goal remains. My plea for critique and correction also remains the same. I prefer friendly and constructive critique, but have found the hostile ones to be enlightening and beneficial for rounding out a stronger defense of truth. Feel free to engage in this effort, the many inputs I have received have strengthened the cause.

There is a cause.

Volume 01 Prolegomena 63 pages
Volume 02 Bibliology (The Doctrine of the Bible) 524 pages
Volume 03 Theology (The Doctrine of God) 87 pages
Volume 04 Christology (The Doctrine of Christ) 179 pages
Volume 05 Pneumatology (The Doctrine of Holy Spirit) 99 pages
Volume 06 Anthropology (The Doctrine of Man) 99 pages
Volume 07 Hamartiology (The Doctrine of Sin) 58 pages
Volume 08 Soteriology (The Doctrine of Salvation) 338 pages
Volume 09 Ecclesiology (The Doctrine of the Church) 241 pages
Volume 10 Angelology (The Doctrine of Angels) 128 pages
Volume 11 Eschatology (The Doctrine of Last Things) 464 pages
Volume 12 Epilogue 76 pages

2,356 pages total

Volume 09 Ecclesiology The Doctrine of the Church

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Chapter 1 Ecclesiology Introduction

> *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church* (1577 εκκλησια ekklesia *ek-klay-see'-ah*)*; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*
>
> (Matthew 16:16-18)[1]

Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the *ecclesia*, translated to English as the *church.* The origin of the word *church* comes from the Greek word *kuriakos,* meaning "the Lord's house." The English definition was extended to some extent to make it capture the full concept of Christ's *Ecclesia*. It had to capture that the *Ecclesia* is "a called out and assembled body of believers," i.e. believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Three integral parts of this basic definition need to be emphasized. The church is "called out", it is "assembled", and it is "a body." The King James Bible consistently translates the Greek word 1577 εκκλησια ekklesia *ek-klay-see'-ah* "church" one-hundred-and-fifteen times, and appropriately translates it assembly three times in Acts 19:32, 39, 41.

The Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant theology and doctrine have all and always considered the church to be one united catholic, universal, entity. The error in the concept of a Holy Catholic Church, originated in The Holy Roman Catholic Church. After Protestants broke from their mother, The Holy Roman Catholic Church, there was consternation about this doctrine and many devised a solution whereby the Holy Catholic Church was … invisible, but still Catholic.

Baptists have historically held to the Biblical view that the church is a local, independent, autonomous body with no

1 The Holy Bible

denominational head, only Christ is head of the church. The corporate body of Christ being built and referenced in Matthew 16:18, is not a Holy Roman Catholic Church, nor a Holy Catholic Protestant Church, nor an invisible Catholic Church. It was seen in soteriology that a genuine born-again-saved individual is by the miraculous power of God, instantaneously converted, justified, quickened, indwelt, and baptized into Christ. In the latter of the simultaneous, instantaneous acts the individual is wholly immersed (baptized) into the corporate body of Christ and is made one with him. In this world that believer is called upon to be baptized and united with other believers in a local, independent, autonomous body called a church and continue in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship (Acts 2:40-41). There is no unified, universal, catholic church with a visible or invisible, human or denominational head otherwise involved in this operation.

That local church doctrine is espoused in this work, but before detailing it, and distinguishing it, it is important to understand the historical background of why Christendom went through the wide gate and travels on the broad way of the Roman Catholic Church, its Covenant Theology, and its Replacement Theology. There needs to be, as it were, a precursor to ecclesiology, one wherein the promises that God made to Israel stand solidly and separatly apart from the church, and wherein the church age is recognized as a stand alone dispensation with a distinct beginning and a dispensational ending. That precursor is so essential it is part of this introduction to the doctrine of the church.

Ecclesiology and Eschatology Precursor

Before one can safely and successfully pursue a study of the local, autonomous, independent church there are three things that must be nailed down in their belief system. These are essential to ecclesiology and eschatology because Satan's major inroad into the church was threefold: 1) Rome's presuming that it would replace Israel as God's chosen people, 2) that the Holy Catholic Church would rule the world, and 3) that there would therefore be no need of a literal thousand year reign of Christ. These lies permeate all

Protestant and Reformed theology. Careful attention must be given to these three lies before full understanding can be given to ecclesiology or eschatology.

God Shall Fulfill Promises Made To Israel

First understand that God will fulfill the promises that he made to Israel.

> *"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."* (Micah 7:18-20)

God made some substantial promises about, and to, the twelve tribes of Israel. Promises about inheriting the promised land, about being regathered into the promised land, about dwelling in peace and prosperity in the promised land, and about all nations coming to them to seek after the LORD their God. Christendom has tried to spiritualize and steal these promises, to allegorize away the nation of Israel, and to detract from the holiness of God's holy land. What God promises God completely delivers.

Messiah Shall Reign From Zion

Secondly, God promised that his Messiah, the anointed one, the Christ, would rule and reign over the nations of this world from the throne of David set in his Holy Hill of Zion. One must insist that this promise be completely and literally fulfilled in a period of time here on this earth. It must fit in before the new heaven and new earth of Revelation 21, and it must fit in before the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20. This is an essential key to understanding any doctrine of last things, eschatology, and in comprehending that the dispensation of grace, i.e. the church age,

will come to an end as God's focus turns to the restoration of Israel. The Roman Catholic Church's ecclesiology thoroughly muddied the water, its eschatology was thoroughly obliterated, and Christendom in whole, has never seen the truth of either.

All Roman, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant (i.e. Presbyterian, Reformed, Episcopalian, Methodist, Pentecostal, and all their splinter groups) theology and doctrine has missed these two critical understandings; 1) God will literally fulfill the promises he made to Israel, and 2) God will literally establish his Messiah on the throne of David in his Holy Hill of Zion. There, from Zion, the Lord Jesus Christ will rule all the nations of the world while Israel is restored in his promised land. Without these two truths firmly embedded and believed one cannot have "an ear to hear" the Revelation of Jesus Christ, i.e. "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*" (Rev 2:7 – to the angel of the church of Ephesus); "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*" (2:11 – to the angel of the church in Smyrna); "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*" (2:17 – to the angel of the church in Pergamos); "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*" (2:29 – to the angel of the church in Thyatira); "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*" (3:6 – to the angel of the church in Sardis); "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*" (3:13 – to the angel of the church in Philadelphia); "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*" (3:22 – to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans).[2]

2 There are some things to be noted in this seven-fold repetition of the "ear to hear" verses. 1) The written message goes to individual, independent, autonomous, local churches, not to a Catholic (universal) Church that might want to control its "denominations." 2) The written message goes to "the angel of the church" not to the congregation directly. This angel, messenger, elder, bishop, pastor is singular with one (singular) assigned to each independent, autonomous, local church. Sheep need to be fed and in God's economy each local congregation has one Elder (presbyter), Bishop (overseer), Pastor (shepherd) assigned to "feed my sheep." 3) the message is word-for-word identical for all seven churches, but not, again, addressed to any Catholic Church. This sets a premise that God has, and God recognizes, no Catholic Church, and no "denomination" of churches; God only

Roman Catholic Saint Origen Was Wrong

Third and lastly, before one can safely and successfully pursue a study in ecclesiology or eschatology they need to understand what the allegorical method of Bible interpretation is, where it comes from, and why they must totally abandon it and its premises. To those with a Roman Catholic background and to those grounded in a Protestant/Reformed background, this will be a

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establishes and speaks to local, independent, autonomous churches. 4) Each individual message to each individual church is what the Spirit is saying "to the churches." It is not to the Roman Church, nor is it to any Catholic Church or denominational head. It is to the churches, which logically extend to all local churches of all ages. The seven messages to seven churches parallel the 2,000 years of church history that has unfolded. The message to Ephesus marks the beginning of the church age, and the messages to the Laodiceans marks the end of the church age. The parallel fit, all the way through these 2,000 years, is noticeable and not just a coincidence, as Romans and Protestants pretend. 5) There are seven repetitions and seven is a Bible number of completeness. This completeness further solidifies the previous assertions refuting the catholicness of any church. 6) Ear is singular here. In each of Christ's parable exclamations he declares this using plural "whosoever hath ears to hear..." but in each use in Revelation "ear" is singular, "an ear to hear." It could be an indication of a half-hearted listener and a stronger emphasis to pay the more diligent attention. i.e. even if you only have one ear engaged in this revelation, pay all the more earnest heed. 7) The first and last church messages address the church "of" Ephesus, and the church "of the" Laodiceans, the other five messages address the church "in" Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia. There is significance to this; things that are different are not the same. A church "in" Philadelphia differs from a church "of" Ephesus. Belief in verbal inspiration makes it so. I will not here codify that difference except to say that I pastor a Baptist church *in* Dresden which is not the church *of* Dresden. Notice in the article and title that there is also a difference in "of Ephesus" and "of the Laodiceans." Ephesus was a church of Christ, while the Laodicean one was a church of the Laodiceans. Also consider that the Greek construct for the church of/in Smyrna follows similar to that of the church of the Laodiceans, without the word "in" (also lacking the article and articulation of Smyrnians). I am not sure why the fifty-seven expert linguists who took seven years to translate the Authorized Version put it down as the church "in" Smyrna, instead of the church "of" Smyrna, but seeing I only took one year of Greek and only passed with a C, I will trust them in their decision. When analyzing a verbally inspired, infallible, inerrant Bible one cannot read

reproof. A correction, as called out in 2Timothy 3:16, is a turning which brings one back on a proper course, but a reproof, in that same scripture, means going all the way back to the drawing board and starting over. Those who learned to rely on allegorical methods of Bible interpretation must go all the way back to the drawing board on this issue.

In the Bibliology section of this work, under the chapter Biblical Hermeneutics, the allegorical method has been quite thoroughly exposed and refuted. Its most detrimental and obvious defect is found in ecclesiology or eschatology, but its leaven is present in each Bible doctrine considered in this systematic work. The allegorical method of Bible interpretation is the primary force behind the rejection of the first two points of this thesis, that Israel has a promising, and promised, future, and that Christ will rule from the throne of David, situate in God's Holy Hill of Zion.

Origen of Alexandria Egypt (AD 182-254) carefully followed his mentor Clement of Alexandria Egypt (AD 150-215) who had concluded that after the AD 70 fall of Jerusalem, and the systematic annihilation of every Jew in the land, God could never put Israel back together again. It was impossible. In his effort to help God out of such an embarrassing situation Origen of Alexandria Egypt began tinkering around with his Bible. He was genius and effective. He became known as “The Father of Biblical Criticism”, “The Father of the Allegorical Method”, and ergo “The Father of Roman Catholicism.”

Origen Adamantius determined that he would spiritualize all the promises made to and about Israel and apply them to the church. Three things were necessary for such a monumental task. First, the Bible had to be extensively picked at so that what was plainly written was not necessarily what was actually meant: thus Origen's title as a “Bible Critic” doing “Biblical Criticism.” Next a revolutionary new way of doing Bible interpretation needed to be formalized. But God had made extensive, all encompassing, and eternal promises to the seed of Abraham, to the twelve tribes of

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to much into little word variations like these. All Roman, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant theologies errantly hold to a catholic church and denominational controls. Which denomination is right? None.

Israel, and to King David and his seed. How could all these literal promises be wholly discarded or refocused to the church?

In Origen's allegorical method of Biblical interpretation, "Scripture is NOT to be interpreted according to normal communication rules", "Scripture, he supposed in the 2nd century after Christ, has many meanings, a literal sense, a moral-ethical sense, and a spiritual-allegorical-mystical sense", and Bible words, even certain letters, have SECRET significance only to be deciphered by those who have an inside knowledge. Ergo the Bible had many meanings and none can be certain.[3] Commoners, reading the Bible, presuming that it follows normal communication rules, were, and are, a threat to Origen's allegorical method. These commoners, or "lay-people", must be dealt with … we, "the clergy", as Origen supposed, and subsequent denominational heads thinking themselves to be "the clergy" supposed, must stop them from reading the Bible. This clarifies a thousand-years of Bible burning, translator burning, and Bible revision-mongering.

The third thing Origen needed to do in order to remove Israel from God's agenda and apply all their promises to the church, was to make the church catholic. Israel was one nation and was promised world domination, and thus the church needed to be one, universal, catholic entity headed for world domination. Israel was lined up to rule all the nations of the world from Jerusalem, and thus the Catholic Church had to be staged in order to take over that promise ... Staged to rule the world from Rome, labeled "Mystery Babylon" by the Roman Catholic Church herself.

To understand eschatology, yeah to understand ecclesiology, one must disavow all the effects brought on by the Father of Biblical Criticism, the Father of the Allegorical Method, and the Father of the Catholic Church. Clearly God says what he means and means what he says, and the allegorical method of Biblical interpretation needs to be completely discarded, it has evil roots. Christ will sit on the throne of David in God's Holy Hill of Zion and rule all the nations of the world, the Catholic Church will not, Israel will inherit and dwell in the entire promised land, the

3 Edward Rice, "Systematic Theology for the 21st Century – Volume 2 Bibliology," Chapter 13 Hermeneutics, 2018, pg 485.

Catholic Church will not.

Only when one grasps this systematic understanding of God's ongoing relationship with his chosen nation, Israel, can they see that the church is a parenthesis in his dealings with the nations of this world and the restoration of his chosen nation.

Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant, Reformed, Methodist, and Pentecostal theology and doctrine is grossly handicapped when it comes to ecclesiology and eschatology. They have been so handicapped since their founding. The source of that handicap is their rejection of Israel as God's chosen people.

The LORD God's Promises To Israel Are Literal

Examine if you would, God's assurances that he will literally and completely fulfill his promises about Israel and about King David's throne. Israel will be restored and that restoration is larger than the restoration after their 70 year Babylonian captivity (586 – 516 BC):

> *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*
>
> *Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured,*

and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD. 38 *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.* (Jeremiah 31:33-40)

God's covenant with Israel is an everlasting covenant:

Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them. (Jeremiah 32:37-42)

God's covenant with David is everlasting:

Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant

of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me. (Jeremiah 33:20-22)

The promises are as sure as night and day:

Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them. (Jeremiah 33:24-26)

God is married to Israel (as Christ is to be married to the church) and will never abandon her:

Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.... For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of

> *youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.* (Isaiah 54:1,5-10)

God is married to the Land, Beulah land, and will not forsake her:

> *For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee*. (Isaiah 62:1-5)

These verses assure us that God means what he says and says what he means when it comes to Israel. Origen of Alexandria Egypt, the Father of Bible Criticism, the Father of the Allegorical

Method of Bible interpretation, and the Father of the Catholic Church, opened three doors of apostasy and the majority of "Christendom" has entered his wide gate and walked his broad way. A Bible believer must know where that path leads, get clear of it, and give it wide berth if he will understand the doctrine of Christ's church, ecclesiology, and the Revelation of Jesus Christ as it pertains to the doctrine of last things, eschatology.

In an exceptional book "*Holy Ground, the True History of the State of Israel*", Dr. William P. Grady details an extraordinary and miraculous history with his King James Bible wide open. In its 900 pages he thoroughly exposes and reprimands Replacement Theology, taking careful aim at Fundamental Baptists that get drawn into its pernicious ways. Therein Dr. Grady expertly expounds Romans 11 which begins with the Apostle's question, "I say then, Hath God cast away his people?" The Apostle Paul then answers the question, "God forbid!" and goes on to present Godly, eternal truths about Israel. Dr. Grady's expose' of this section is worth every investment of reading his whole book. Israel is chosen of God, blessed of God, going to be saved as it is written, and "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes"... Such a conundrum is explained by Dr. Grady with a clarity that only a seasoned preacher, teacher, pastor, professor of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ could muster.

Also note that our hymnals, as written by Protestants with this Replacement Theology and Covenant Theology in their mind, are also riddled with this leaven of error. It is not necessary to discard such hymns, i.e. "Joy to the World" by Isaac Watts, but be cognizant of their misgivings about the Catholic Church, and the 2nd Coming of Christ. May God richly bless your studies as you keep yourself pure from these errors as a student of God's Holy Word.

The Effect of This Precursor

Seeing that these truths are self evident it is obvious that Christ the Redeemer of mankind is to become Christ the Redeemer of Israel. That necessitates an upcoming change of venue. The

Church of Jesus Christ is a parenthesis in God's dealings with Israel and that parenthesis will close. We, standing inside of this parenthesis, see God's grace and mercy extended to the Gentiles. But Christendom, via its Roman Catholic mother and guide, inflame with ego to errantly suppose we Gentiles are the main thing in God's plan, to errantly suppose we Gentiles are the new Elect of God, to errantly suppose we Gentiles are the replacement of Israel, and that there will be no close to Gentile preeminence, that there will be no rapture of the church and no millennial reign of Christ from the throne of David. In short, Christendom, following its Roman Catholic mother, is wrong about Israel, wrong about Catholicness and the permanence of a Catholic Church, wrong about ecclesiology and wrong about eschatology.

Finding the close of this parenthesis, the church age, the dispensation of grace, is easy when one is looking for it. Understanding that this period of time, wherein Israel is temporarily set aside, will end, open's a door to understanding the dispensational teachings of Scripture, and dispensational teachings of Scripture opens the door to good ecclesiology and eschatology.

It should be noted here that visionaries who rebelled against Roman-Presbyterian teachings of Calvinism's election and end time teachings, but held on to the misgivings about Israel have started the cults. Joseph Smith, 1830s founder of LDS, Ellen White, 1860s founder of SDA, Charles Taze Russel 1870s founder of JWs, Mary Baker Glover Eddy, 1880s founder of Christian Science, Robert Ingersol, 1890s founder of Atheism in America (Robert was born to his father, a Presbyterian pastor, in Dresden, NY, the town where I today pastor Good Samaritan Baptist Church across the street from a shrine/museum for Robert Ingersol), and even Harold Camping whose 2005 founding evaporated after his eschatology predictions proved false. All these fit this description, they rebelled against Roman-Presbyterian Christendom (wherein God chooses who goes to heaven and who goes to hell), and they could not comprehend dispensationalism nor God's enduring love for Israel.

Grasp this concept and grasp a good ecclesiology, and a good eschatology. Miss this concept and flounder around in Covenant

theology, Replacement Theology, Orthodox blunder and Calvinist election. Be a good student of the Holy Bible here, and comprehend a little bit of history; especially the ugly history of Bible criticism, the allegorical method, and the catholic church.

Chapter 2 Ecclesiology One of God's Seven Dispensations

One cannot account for a thorough coverage of Biblical ecclesiology (or anthropology, or eschatology) without a consideration of the great stages of stewardship wherewith mankind has been and will be tested. A systematic review of the whole of Scripture discovers seven distinct stewardship tests for man. Since the concept of the progressive testing of man in these stewardship phases, properly called dispensations, insults and assaults Roman Catholic Church doctrine, and that of its Protestant offspring, the Biblical basis for this teaching needs careful development up front.

A preliminary development of dispensationalism was given in the doctrine of man, Vol 6 Anthropology, because of the stewardship of man that it captures. This development of dispensationalism is pursued in the doctrine of the church because the church age has a beginning and a closing that is crucial to that doctrine. Dispensational truths are presented again in , Volume 11 Eschatology, in order to understand the doctrine of last things. One cannot understand the second coming of Christ without discerning the transition from the dispensation of grace into the last dispensation, “the dispensation of the the fulness of times” (Eph.1:10), called the Kingdom Age. For that reason a solid understanding of the seven dispensations is vital to Biblical doctrine. That understanding can be achieved by going through Chapter 5 of the Anthropology volume and/or this Chapter 2 of the Ecclesiology volume and/or Volume 11 Eschatology, pursuing the doctrine of last things. A brief outline of these seven dispensations is included below:

God's Seven Dispensations Outlined

The First Dispensation – Innocence (Gen 1:28 Scofield Note)
The Second Dispensation – Conscience (Gen 3:23 Scof. Note)
The Third Dispensation – Government (Gen 8:21 Scof. Note)

The Fourth Dispensation – Promise (Gen 12:1 Scof. Note)
The Fifth Dispensation – Law (Exod 19:8 Scof. Note)
The Sixth Dispensation – Grace and Truth (John 1:17, Eph 3:1-6)
The Seventh Dispensation – The Kingdom (Eph 1:10 Scof. Note)

Much more needs to be said about these dispensations. It is necessary to be systematically aware of their presence in the big picture. Mankind is given thorough and complete testing and opportunity in seven distinct phases, covering seven thousand years, and is repeatedly found lacking in each stewardship and dispensation. Dispensationalism is key to comprehending the larger picture of all of Scripture.

An understanding of dispensations is best introduced starting in the book of Genesis. So is an understanding of God, an understanding of man, and an understanding of redemption. But presuming some understanding of those three, let us focus on the very first dispensation, which is often called "Innocence." Most simply, a dispensation is a period of time where stewardship is tested. *Stewardship* and *dispensation* come from the same root word, *oikonomia* in Greek.

The First Dispensation – Innocence

God placed man in the Garden of Eden with a specific requirement of obedience. He was left in that testing for a period of time to "see" how he would fare[4]. He fared poorly, and was consequently removed from the Garden. There were consequences for his failure and that period of testing, for all mankind, was abruptly ended. Now a new set of guidelines must be determined, a new testing of mankind would be pursued.

In that scenario there is a general set of guidelines which define a dispensation (Greek - οικονομια – *oikonomia* translated in

4 That period of time opens with all heaven and earth of this universe being "*very good*" as stated in Gen.1:3. After Gen.1:31 Satan falls in rebellion and shows up in Gen.3:1 lying and deceiving. The Bible does not dictate how long this period of testing is, nor should we. The Bible does not tell us when Satan rebelled but one dare not move his rebellion outside of these 1:31 to 3:1 boundaries. Especially do not move it to some fictitious gap imagined by C. I. Scofield (1834 – 1921), and portrayed by Clarence Larkin (1850 – 1924)!

English "dispensation," four times and "stewardship," three times). It is defined in the lexicon, *the management, oversight, or administration of a household or of other property- usually owned by another.* A dispensation contains 1) a set of rules, guidelines or expectations given by God, 2) a period of time wherein man is tried or tested under the guidelines, and 3) a distinct ending of the testing period wherein (it shall be seen as the pattern develops) man fails to live up to the guideline. The word *dispensation* is used four times in the Holy Bible (1Cor 9:17, Eph 1:10, 3:2, and Col 1:25). Additionally it is translated *stewardship* three times (Luke 16:2, 3, 4). The understanding of stewardship might better refine what a dispensation is because as a *steward* one is left in charge of what belongs to another, there is a period of time where they are accountable, and there is a definite ending wherein "the Lord of the vineyard" returns (cf Matt 21:33-46). The first dispensation, *innocence* in the Garden of Eden, illustrates well these three concepts of a dispensation.

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the first dispensation:

> 4 (Gen. 1:28, heading) A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God. Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture. See Scofield Gen. 1:28, note 5.
>
> 5 (Gen. 1:28 And God blessed them...) The First Dispensation: Innocency. Man was created in innocency, placed in a perfect environment, subjected to an absolutely simple test, and warned of the consequence of disobedience. The woman fell through pride; the man deliberately. (1 Tim. 2:14). God restored His sinning creatures, but the dispensation of innocency ended in the judgment of the Expulsion (Gen. 3:24). See for the other six dispensations: II *Conscience* (Gen. 3:23); III *Human Government* (Gen. 8:20); IV *Promise* (Gen. 12:1); V *Law* (Ex. 19:8); VI *Grace* (John 1:17); VII *Kingdom* (Eph. 1:10).[5]

The Second Dispensation – Conscience

What were the rules after man was removed from the Garden

5 C. I. Scofield, "*The Scofield Reference Bible*", Oxford University Press, Inc., 1909, public domain, pg 5, s.v. *Genesis 1:28 note 4 & 5*.

of Eden? C. I. Scofield labeled the second dispensation "*Conscience.*" Therein man did what was right in his own mind. In the dispensation of conscience the first born man became the first first-degree murderer. Note particularly in that murder report, that man was not to take vengeance or retribution on Cain for his act of murder. Instead man had to answer for himself before a Holy God. Note also that a blood sacrifice was required in this age of conscience. Even if the learned scholar cannot find it in Genesis chapter four, the Bible believer knows the principle well from Hebrews 9:22, "*And almost all things are by law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission* (of sin)."

How did this dispensation of conscience end?

> *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart* (Gen 6:5-6).

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the second dispensation:

> 2 (Gen. 3:23 Therefore the Lord God...) The Second Dispensation: Conscience. By disobedience man came to a personal and experimental knowledge of good and evil--of good as obedience, of evil as disobedience to *the known will of God*. Through that knowledge conscience awoke. Expelled from Eden and placed under the second, or Adamic Covenant, man was responsible to do all known good, to abstain from all known evil, and to approach God through sacrifice. The result of this second testing of man is stated in Gen. 6:5 and the dispensation ended in the judgment of the Flood. Apparently "the east of the garden" (v. 24), where were the cherubims and the flame, remained the place of worship through this second dispensation. See for the other six dispensations: I *Innocence* (Gen. 1:28); III *Human Government* (Gen. 8:20); IV *Promise* (Gen. 12:1); V *Law* (Ex. 19:8); VI *Grace* (John 1:17); VII *Kingdom* (Eph. 1:10).[6]

The flood brought the second dispensation to an expedient

6 Ibid., pg 10, s.v. *Genesis 3:23 note 2*.

end. A new dispensation would now begin.

The Third Dispensation – Government

When man's conscience before God was unable to keep him from evil, God installed a dispensation wherein man was accountable to man to curb him from evil. C. I. Scofield labeled the third dispensation "*Government.*" Human government has three primary responsibilities in this endeavor, 1) to promote the good, 2) to punish the bad, and 3) to protect the innocent. These primary functions of a government are carried to our current day. It is intended to keep a restraint on man's depravity, iniquity and evil. It finds its root and basis in God's command,

> *And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man* (Gen 9:5-6).

Of course much more could be said about this dispensation, but consider that it did have other provisions, like shortened life spans, the eating of meat, and its tower of Babble consequence (Gen 6:3, 9:3, 11:3). Note also that this dispensation did not formally end, it just got dispersed to all the nations of the world when they dispersed with confounded languages. In that sense the role and principles of human government continue until today.

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the third dispensation:

> 1 (Gen 8:21 ...the Lord said in heart...) The Third Dispensation: Human Government. Under Conscience, as in Innocency, man utterly failed, and the judgment of the Flood marks the end of the second dispensation and the beginning of the third. The declaration of the Noahic Covenant subjects humanity to a new test. Its distinctive feature is the institution, for the first time, of human government--the government of man by man. The highest function of government is the judicial taking of life. All other governmental powers are implied

> in that. It follows that the third dispensation is distinctively that of human government. Man is responsible to govern the world for God. That responsibility rested upon the whole race, Jew and Gentile, until the failure of Israel under the Palestinian Covenant (Deu. 28.-30:1-10) brought the judgment of the Captivities, when "the times of the Gentiles" (See Lk. 21:24; Rev. 16:14) began, and the government of the world passed exclusively into Gentile hands (Dan. 2:36-45; Lk. 21:24; Acts 15:14-17). That both Israel and the Gentiles have governed for self, not God, is sadly apparent. The judgment of the confusion of tongues ended the *racial* testing; that of the captivities the *Jewish*; while the *Gentile* testing will end in the smiting of the Image (Dan. 2) and the judgment of the nations (Mt. 25:31-46). See for the other six dispensations: I *Innocence* (Gen. 1:28); II *Conscience* (Gen. 3:23); IV *Promise* (Gen. 12:1); V *Law* (Ex. 19:8); VI *Grace* (John 1:17); VII *Kingdom* (Eph. 1:10).[7]

Anyone can see this third dispensations initial, and then repeated failures on man's part. In any event there was a failure of government to restrain man's evil and God moves on to a new trial. The first three dispensations are applicable to all of mankind. The next two are applicable to a select group, God's chosen.

The Fourth Dispensation – Promise

With the failure of nations in curbing man from iniquity God chooses to construct one particular and peculiar nation and calls Abram as the father of this chosen nation. He gives Abram profound promises and Abram believes God. C. I. Scofield labeled the fourth dispensation "*Promise.*" Much more could be said about this dispensation of promise but suffice it to say some of the promises were unconditional and are yet to be fulfilled, i.e. Israel will occupy all of the promised land in peace and safety. The dispensation closes with the seed of Abraham still holding the promises. They have divided into twelve tribes of Israel, but they are in bondage in Egypt.

Dispensations are divinely ordered stewardships by which God reveals himself, reveals man's depravity, and reveals his longsuffering. It becomes increasingly apparent that every stewardship testing of man ends in man's failure. The fact that

7 Ibid., pg 16, s.v. *Genesis 8:21 note 1*.

there are seven such stewardship tests emphasizes that God is giving man every opportunity to do right. Yet each dispensation ends in the abject failure of man.

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the fourth dispensation:

> 1 (Gen. 12:1 Now the Lord ...) The Fourth Dispensation: Promise. For Abraham, and his descendants it is evident that the Abrahamic Covenant (*See Scofield note* Gen. 15:18) made a great change. They became distinctively the heirs of promise. That covenant is wholly gracious and unconditional. The descendants of Abraham had but to abide in their own land to inherit every blessing. In Egypt they lost their blessings, but not their covenant. The Dispensation of Promise ended when Israel rashly accepted the law (Ex. 19:8). Grace had prepared a deliverer (Moses), provided a sacrifice for the guilty, and by divine power brought them out of bondage (Ex. 19:4); but at Sinai they exchanged grace for law. The Dispensation of Promise extends from Gen. 12:1 to Ex. 19:8, and was exclusively Israelitish. The *dispensation* must be distinguished from the *covenant*. The former is a mode of testing; the latter is everlasting because unconditional. The law did not abrogate the Abrahamic Covenant (Gal. 3:15-18), but was an intermediate disciplinary dealing "till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3:19-29; 4:1-7). Only the *dispensation*, as a testing of Israel, ended at the giving of the law. See for the other six dispensations: I *Innocence* (Gen. 1:28); II *Conscience* (Gen. 3:23); III *Human Government* (Gen. 8:20); V *Law* (Ex. 19:8); VI *Grace* (John 1:17); VII *Kingdom* (Eph. 1:10).[8]

Of all the failed dispensations, the failure under this one, *Promise,* may have been more providentially driven than depravity driven, but it still depicts a failure. The failed *Innocence* dispensation brought death, The failed *Conscience* dispensations brought the destroying flood, the failed *Government* dispensation brought Babble, and the failed *Promise* dispensation ends in Israel's bondage. In the fifth dispensation God would lay down the law for his chosen nation Israel.

The Fifth Dispensation – Law

The promised seed of Abraham, which were to inherit God's

8 Ibid., pg 20, s.v. *Genesis 12:1 note 1*.

promised land, were redeemed from bondage in Egypt and read the Law of God by God himself. This began the dispensation called *Law*. The children of Israel agreed to obey all the laws of God. God agreed to bless them and give them all the promised land if they did. A quick read through the book of Judges confirms that they did not, and thus he did not.

It needs to be clarified that the law was only given to the promised seed of Abraham, i.e. the twelve tribes of Israel. It was not given to Gentile nations. It was not given as a model law for Gentile nations to pattern their laws after, and it was not given as a model law for the Christians, or the pious, or the religious. It was given to keep Israel a holy and a peculiar people in all the earth (Exo 19:5, Deut 14:2, 26:18, Psalm 135:4). The severe penalties of death by stoning were given so that this holy, peculiar people could "put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear" (Deut 21:21, cf 17:17, 19:19, 22:21, 24:7).

Consternation is dolled out to Christians who do not understand the dispensations, this dispensation particularly, and this purpose of the law. First because many religionists and "*Clergy*"[9] construct some form of works salvation where they pick a few choice laws and disregard others. Second because Christians themselves are confused and troubled about God having a man stoned because he picked up sticks on a Sabbath (Num 15:32-36). And third because the world mocks the Christian because he does not know how to explain the conflict between law and grace. Such consternation is relieved when one understands the realities of the dispensation of law. It is for Israel's peculiarity and for Gentiles learning (Gal 3:24-25[10]).

Although the law, given to God's chosen nation Israel, is not set as a model for other nations to follow there are many moral principles and civil laws which are exemplary models for other Gentile nations. Many of our US laws are based on God's laws for

9 Recall that true Christianity has no clergy, or laity, or Nicolaitans, cf Rev 2:6, 15.

10 Gal 3:24 *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

Israel. Our Creator's requirements for moral right and wrong are discernible. Criminal laws for murder and manslaughter, civil laws for stealing, property damage and restitution can certainly find a place in our legal systems. But the death penalty punishments and the eye for an eye consideration must be left in their context for the dispensation of law and their focus on Israel's peculiarity. All of Israel's dietary laws, ceremonial laws, and other laws designed to keep Israel a peculiar people must be kept in their proper context, in order to rightly divide the Word of Truth.[11]

And so Israel was given a myriad of laws to keep her a holy people, a peculiar people, and a chosen nation of God. Israel failed, but God's promises remain centered on his chosen people. After her chastisements only one tribe remained. The Hebrews are now called Jews, because the only tribe left in Israel at the coming of her Messiah was Judah. The only begotten Son of God came as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to be the king of the Jews. But after being under law for fifteen hundred years (BC 1492 – 30 AD) the lawyers, scribes and Pharisees of the Jews rejected their king. Indeed they had the Romans crucify him under Roman law fulfilling many Bible prophecies about the Messiah (Greek *Christ).*

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the fifth dispensation:

> 1 (Ex. 19:8 ...we will do...) The Fifth Dispensation: Law. This dispensation extends from Sinai to Calvary--from Exodus to the Cross. The history of Israel in the wilderness and in the land is one long record of the violation of the law. The testing of the nation by law ended in the judgment of the Captivities, but the dispensation itself ended at the Cross. (1) Man's state at the beginning (Ex. 19:1-4). (2) His responsibility (Ex. 19:5,6; Rom. 10:5). (3) His failure (2Ki. 17:7-17, 19; Acts 2:22,23). (4) The judgment (2Ki. 17:1-6, 20; 25:1-11; Lk. 21:20-24).
>
> See for the other six dispensations: I *Innocence* (Gen. 1:28); II *Conscience* (Gen. 3:23); III *Human Government* (Gen. 8:20); IV

11 Ellen White (1827 – 1915) insisted that her followers keep the 5th commandment in order to keep their salvation. She also supposed, from her hundreds of visions, a bunch of peculiarities about the advents of Christ and her misguided followers came to be called Seven Day Adventists!

Promise (Gen. 12:1); VI *Grace* (John 1:17); VII *Kingdom* (Eph. 1:10).[12]

Although the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah and King, their King did not reject them. The promise of God is emphatic, the Christ will sit on the throne of David and rule and reign the twelve tribes of Israel as he said. But after they rejected him as their king, he goes to the Gentiles, and temporarily the Gentiles become his people. That makes for a separate and distinct dispensation, the dispensation of grace, the age of the church.

The Sixth Dispensation – Grace and Truth

"*Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*" (Matt 21:43).... "*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*" (John 1:17).

In the sixth dispensation the promises that were made to the Jews are temporarily set aside and God's grace was extended to all people. "*For by grace are ye saved through faith*" (Eph 2:8a) is the hallmark of this dispensation. The salvation available in this dispensation differs from any other: individual's are Converted – Justified – Quickened – Indwelt – and Immersed-in-Christ (Matt.18:3, Rom.5:1, Eph.2:1, Rom.8:9, Rom.6:3). They are consequently sealed by the Holy Spirit of God and that new-birth, salvation, conversion, cannot be undone. It has been said, "In the Old Testament God made a temple for the people, in the New Testament God makes a people for his temple[13]. A whole volume of this systematic theology deals with soteriology. Suffice it to say here that it has never been easier for man to be in a right relationship with his Creator, Jehovah God, and yet this dispensation of Grace and Truth (John 1:17) is destined to end "*as it was in the days of Noe,... as it was in the days of Lot...*" (Luke 17:26, 28).

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the sixth

12 Ibid., pg 94, s.v. *Exodus 19:8 note 1*.

13 This was a well rehearsed thought of noted evangelist Dr. Laren Dawson, who had and heard more recordings of fundamental preachers of the gospel than any other evangelist.

dispensation:

> 1,2,3(John 1:17 Grace. Summary): (1) Grace is "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man. . . not by works of righteousness which we have done" (Tit. 3:4,5), It is, therefore, constantly set in contrast to law, under which God demands righteousness from man, as, under grace, he gives righteousness to man (Rom. 3:21, 22; 8:4; Phil. 3:9). Law is connected with Moses and works; grace with Christ and faith (John 1:17; Rom. 10:4-10). Law blesses the good; grace saves the bad (Ex. 19:5; Eph. 2:1-9). Law demands that blessings be earned; grace is a free gift (Deut. 28:1-6; Eph. 2:8; Rom. 4:4, 5).
>
> (2) As a dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 3:24-26; 4:24, 25). The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ, with good works as a fruit of salvation (John 1:12, 13; 3:36; Mt. 21:37; 22:24; John 15:22, 25; Heb. 1:2; 1John 5:10-12). The *immediate result* of this testing was the rejection of Christ by the Jews, and His crucifixion by Jew and Gentile (Acts 4:27). The *predicted end* of the testing of man under grace is the apostasy of the professing church: See "Apostasy" (See *Scofield note* 2Timothy 3:1-8) and the resultant apocalyptic judgments.
>
> (3) Grace has a twofold manifestation: in *salvation* (Rom. 3:24 *refs.*) and in the *walk* and *service* of the saved (Rom. 6:15 *refs.*). See for the other six dispensations: I *Innocence* (Gen. 1:28); II *Conscience* (Gen. 3:23); III *Human Government* (Gen. 8:20); IV *Promise* (Gen. 12:1); V *Law* (Ex. 19:8); VII *Kingdom* (Eph. 1:10). [14]

The dispensation of grace will come to an end, and it will end in a failure of mankind. It is man's failure in accepting God's simple plan of salvation (Heb 2:3). The ending of the sixth dispensation and the beginning of the seventh and final dispensation is really the beginning of a Biblical eschatology. The doctrine of last things includes the closing of the Church age, called the dispensation of Grace and Truth, and the ushering in of the last dispensation.

The Seventh Dispensation – The Kingdom

"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb,

14 Ibid., pg 1115, s.v. *John 1:17 note 1,2,3*.

> *and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest:* ***and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end"*** (Luke 1:31-33 emphasis added). "*And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying,* ***The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever****"* (Rev.11:15 emphasis added). "*And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written,* ***KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS"*** (Rev 19:16 emphasis added).

It has been resoundingly promised that the Jewish Messiah (Greek *Christ*) would be the King of the Jews, i.e. the King of Israel, who sits on the throne of David. That fact is hated by Satan and refuted with tenacity by the Roman Catholic Church and her children. The despise of that coming kingdom has freely flowed into the doctrine of the Roman reformers. The persistence of the denial has caused the rejection of all dispensational teaching in the wide gate and broad path of Christendom. That broad path is called "*supersessionism*" and it is unfortunate that so many Baptists are ignorant of its devices.

A study of Biblical eschatology will center on the fact that this kingdom will be ushered in at the second advent of Christ. It will last for the thousand years that Christ promised in Revelation chapter twenty, so it is called the "*Millennial Kingdom.*" It will be preceded by a judgment of the nations which will end "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24[15]) and be called the seven year tribulation and the seventieth week of Daniel (Dan 9:24). This Great Tribulation has 144 thousand virgin males (Rev. 14:1-5), from the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev.7:2-8), preaching the gospel. It will not be the church preaching the gospel during this seven

15 Luke 21:24 *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

year transition period, it will be these 144 thousand virgin male followers of the Lamb (Rev 14:4). The Church is removed in a pretribulation rapture, else they would be in competition with the 144 thousand Jews. Again the whole key to understanding "*the things which shall be hereafter*" requires that one believe in the Millennial Reign of Christ as the seventh dispensation of the Holy Bible.

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the seventh dispensation:

> 3 (Eph 1:10 ...dispensation of the fullness of times...) The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. This, the seventh and last of the ordered ages which condition human life on the earth, is identical with the kingdom covenanted to David (2Sam. 7:8-17; Zech. 12:8, Summary; Lk. 1:31-33; 1Cor. 15:24, Summary), and gathers into itself under Christ all past "times": (1) The time of oppression and misrule ends by Christ taking His kingdom (Isa 11:3, 4).
>
> (2) The time of testimony and divine forbearance ends in judgment (Mt. 25:31-46; Acts 17:30, 31; Rev. 20:7-15).
>
> (3) The time of toil ends in rest and reward (2Thes. 1:6, 7).
>
> (4) The time of suffering ends in glory (Rom 8:17, 18).
>
> (5) The time of Israel's blindness and chastisement ends in restoration and conversion (Rom. 11:25-27; Ezk. 39:25-29).
>
> (6) The times of the Gentiles end in the smiting of the image and the setting up of the kingdom of the heavens (Dan. 2:34, 35; Rev. 19:15-21).
>
> (7) The time of creation's thraldom ends in deliverance at the manifestation of the sons of God (Gen. 3:17; Isa. 11:6-8; Rom. 8:19-21).
>
> See for the other six dispensations: I *Innocence* (Gen. 1:28); II *Conscience* (Gen. 3:23); III *Human Government* (Gen. 8:20); IV *Promise* (Gen. 12:1); V *Law* (Ex. 19:8); VI *Grace* (John 1:17).[16]

But even the Kingdom age, where Christ physically rules and reigns over the whole world, ends with an insurrection . That insurgence is short lived and mankind steps off into eternity and streets of gold. This short survey of the seven dispensations builds the framework for the study the stewardships of man in anthropology, the study of the church age in ecclesiology, and the

16 Ibid., pg 1250, s.v. *Eph 1:10 note 3*.

study of last things in eschatology. Christendom's many misunderstandings of the Bible and its end times comes from those who have rejected dispensationalism and embraced supersessionism, i.e. Replacement Theology, and Covenant Theology. Be careful to rightly divide the Word of Truth in these areas, and dispensationalism is key to the divisions.

As was stated previous, grasping these dispensations, these great spiritual divides in God's dealings with man, these stewardship tests of mankind, is key to rightly dividing the word of truth. It is paramount for comprehending anthropology, ecclesiology and eschatology in ones systematic theology. It is, consequentially, covered in Volume 8 Anthropology, here in Volume 9 Ecclesiology, and in Volume 11 Eschatology. May God richly bless the student of Scripture that comprehends these great divides.

Dispensational's Alternative, Supersessionism

Supersessionism is a big word that simply captures the belief that the Catholic Church completely replaces Israel. Its main tenets are found in Replacement Theology and Covenant Theology. One cannot comprehend a Biblical doctrine of the church or of the last things while holding to these ideological moorings that the Catholic Church is the centerpiece for all Bible revelation and all Bible prophecy. The flaws of supersessionism are rehearsed and exposed in this essay.

The denial of the Bible's dispensational teachings started with the Roman Church. After the annihilation of the Jews, and Jerusalem in 70 AD. Catholic Church Fathers Saint Clement of Alexandria (150 – 215 AD), and his student Saint Origen of Alexandria (184 – 253 AD) errantly supposed that Judaism was gone forever, and errantly supposed that the Church (they errantly supposed it to be *catholic*) should thus absorb all the promises given to the Jews. Given that the Bible clearly promised the regathering of Israel, and their inheriting the Promised Land, this would have been an impossible task, but Saint Origen, known as the Father of the Allegorical Method, found a way to dismiss any

literal rendering of Scripture whenever it pleased "the Catholic Church." Consequently the allegorical method of hermeneutics has been the mainstay of the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformers to this day.

Supersessionism, Replacement Theology, and Covenant Theology are so brazenly unBiblical that it is often an embarrassment to claim it's tenets publicly. A less toxic summary of supersessionism is expressed by the neo-evangelicals who spend their days tip-toeing around it and pretending that it is not so bad. Michael J. Vlach, writing in a journal for John MacArthur's Masters Seminary, tries to back away from the toxicity by saying:

> Replacement theology or supersessionism is not a 'one size fits all' perspective. There are variations within this view. Punitive supersessionism emphasizes Israel's disobedience as the reason for its displacement as the people of God. Economic supersessionism emphasizes that national Israel's role as the people of God expired with the coming of the New Testament church. Structural supersessionism is an approach to the canon that minimizes the role of the Hebrew scriptures. Within supersessionism strong and mild forms are discernible. Strong supersessionism does not believe in a future salvation or restoration of Israel. Mild supersessionism believes in a salvation of the nation Israel but no restoration to a place of prominence.[17]

The whole concept of Covenant Theology, with its basis in supersessionism, is likewise an embarrassment to those who would defend it against Bible truth. Consequently there is little written by its proponents, who defend it with tradition, i.e. it is orthodox, (and

17 Michael J. Vlach, "VARIOUS FORMS OF REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY", TMSJ 20/1 (Spring 2009) 57-69, https://legacy.tms.edu/JournalIssue.aspx?year=2009 (accessed 10/29/2016) . [Michael J. Vlach is a Ph.D. and Assistant Professor of Theology at Dr. John MacArthur's Masters Seminary. The neo-evangelical positions of Masters Seminary do not represent the views of this author.]

catholic) and "we" have always believed this way. They will paint dispensationalists and teachings about the rapture as a Johnny-Come-Lately doctrine that could not possibly be true.

Who better to refute Covenant Theology than a Friends of Israel executive director and author, and in his writing, James Showers also delineates the facts of Covenant Theology which ofttimes even its proponents fail to mention. It is worthwhile in this effort on ecclesiology and eschatology to include all three parts and the conclusions of Dr. Shower's "The Facts And Flaws of Covenant Theology."[18] That article is copied in its entirety below:

The Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology, Part 1

By: James Showers

Covenant Theology is the dominant theological system of most mainline Protestant churches.

(Covenant Theology) is a system of theology that interprets the Bible's philosophy of history through the lens of two or three covenants and is founded on Replacement Theology, which maintains that God has replaced the Jewish people with the church and that Christians are now God's chosen people.

As a systematic theology, it attempts to explain God's purpose for history. Why are things the way they are today? Why were they different in the past? Why was there a time when there was no government on Earth? Why was there a time when God gave the Law to a particular group of people? Why is that system of law not applied throughout the world today?

Systematic theology must make sense of the progress of

18 James Showers, "Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology", from The Friends of Israel. Website: www.foi.org. Toll free: 1-800-257-7843, www.foi.org/free-resources/article/facts-and-flaws-covenant-theology-part1/ ...part-2/ ...part-3/ ...conclusion/ (accessed 9/9/2016). [James A. Showers is executive director for The Friends of Israel. Permission to copy and distribute this material is granted provided that you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction or alter the wording in any way. Please contact The Friends of Israel if you are making more than 100 physical copies. Proper accreditation must be visible on each copy. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred (where applicable). Any exceptions to the above must be formally approved by The Friends of Israel. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: From The Friends of Israel. Website: www.foi.org . E-mail: webmaster@foi.org. Toll free: 1-800-257-7843.]

revelation. Why didn't God give the Epistles to Old Testament Israel? Why did He wait to reveal those after the church began? Theology must provide a unifying principle that connects these historical differences with the progress of revelation, thus providing answers for the past, present, and future. Most important, a valid philosophy of history will answer these questions: "Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going?"

The Facts

Covenant Theology's basic premise is that, in eternity past, God determined to govern all of history on the basis of three covenants. (Some combine two of the covenants into one.) These are the covenants of works, redemption, and grace.

The Covenant of Works. According to Covenant theologians, the covenant of works was established between the creation and Fall of Man. Covenants are formal, legally binding agreements in which both parties have obligations.

The covenant of works supposedly was established between the triune God and Adam, in which Adam is God's representative head of the human race and acts for all his descendants. Covenant theologians argue that Adam's obligation was perfect obedience to God. God's obligation was to provide eternal life in exchange for perfect obedience. Adam's penalty for failing to keep his part of the covenant was death to both Adam and his descendants.

Where do we find this covenant in the Bible? We don't. It is not in the Bible. Covenant theologians infer these covenants based on certain Scriptures, including the threat of death for eating of the tree of knowledge in Genesis 2. There must be a covenant, they say, because God provided a warning and a penalty. That is the logic they use.[End Note 1]

The Covenant of Redemption. This covenant supposedly was established before creation in eternity past between God the Father and God the Son, in which the Father made His Son the Head and Redeemer of the elect. The Son volunteered to take the place of those whom God gave to Him—the elect here on Earth. The Son's obligation was to become human under the Law, live without sin, and willingly take the elect's punishment on the cross. The Father's obligation was to resurrect the Son and give Him numerous seed, all power in heaven and earth, and great glory.

Again we ask, "Where is this covenant in Scripture?" And again the answer is that it is not there. It does not exist. Covenant theologians claim it is implied based on God's promises and the Son's willingness to go to the cross.[End Note 2]

The Covenant of Grace. Some Covenant theologians combine the covenants of redemption and grace. They are uncertain when the

covenant of grace was established. Some argue it began with the promise of redemption in Genesis 3:15 when God told the serpent He would bruise the serpent's head and that the serpent would bruise the Man-Child's heel. Others argue it began with the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 12.

In the covenant of grace, God, the offended, makes a covenant with the elect sinner, the offender. The elect sinner's obligation is to accept the promise of salvation willingly, agree to be a part of God's people, trust in Christ forever, and commit to a life of obedience and dedication to God. God's obligation is to provide salvation through faith in Christ and eternal life to all who believe.

There is no reference to this covenant in the Bible. Covenant theologians argue that it is implied in the "I will be Your God" passages throughout the Old and New Testaments.

These three covenants constitute what is known as Covenant Theology. They define history's ultimate purpose as glorifying God through the redemption of elect man. The shortcoming of this philosophy is that it presents a human-centered view of history: The glory of God is summed up only through the redemption of man. The covenant of grace becomes the unifying principle for history, in which history is understood in terms of God's redemption of man.

If you want to understand what happened in the past, you turn to the covenant of grace. If you want to understand what is happening now or in the future, look at the covenants of grace and redemption.
End Note 3

The Flaws

There are a number of problems with Covenant Theology. First, its ultimate goal for history is flawed because it only explains God's purpose for elect man. It does not begin to touch on all the other programs God is carrying out in history.

For example, if God is the one true and sovereign God of this universe, He will restore the universe to its pre-fall condition (Mt. 19:28; Acts 3:18–21). Covenant theology provides no explanation for this aspect of history. Nor does it provide reasons for God's dethroning of Satan as ruler of the earth (Rom. 16:20) or for reestablishing God's theocratic Kingdom on Earth (Rev. 19—20).

Second, it is a human-centered theological system with an inherent weakness for humanism. Who is the god of humanism? It is man and the belief that, ultimately, all answers lie in man.

A theological system that believes the glory of God is centered in what God is doing with man ultimately focuses on man. Add to that fact a hermeneutic that spiritualizes the words of Scripture, reinterpreting the literal into something figurative, and you have created a platform for humanism. History bears out that liberal,

modernist movements have flourished in mainline Protestant, Covenant churches.

A further problem is that the unifying principle of Covenant Theology is too narrow. It deals solely with man's redemption; it does not include God's plan for the redemption of all creation. Nor does it provide enough answers for what God is doing here on Earth. Furthermore, it diminishes the true covenants recorded in Scripture: the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and New Covenants— to mention three.

Another of Covenant Theology's serious flaws is that it denies the distinction between Israel and the church. It redefines the church as all covenant people throughout history. Therefore, the church begins with Abraham (Gen. 12), rather than in Acts 2; and Old Testament Israel no longer refers to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Old Testament Israel is redefined as the covenant people, the people of faith in the Old Testament. No longer is it physical descent that makes one an Israelite; it is faith in God.

To accomplish its goals, Covenant Theology uses two methods, rather than one, to interpret Scripture— another serious flaw. Bible-believing Covenant theologians use the historical-grammatical-literal method of interpretation for most of Scripture, including all prophecy that has already been fulfilled. However, when it comes to unfulfilled prophecy, they turn to a different method: an allegorical-spiritual one that enables them to redefine Israel and make it the church, rather than the Jewish people. They also change the Millennial Kingdom from a literal, future 1,000-year period into the current Church Age. This belief is referred to as Amillennialism or Postmillennialism. [End Note 4]

Because it is built on Replacement Theology, to remove Replacement Theology from Covenant Theology would collapse the entire system. It would force Covenant theologians to accept that God has two distinct programs, one for Israel and one for the church. Covenant theologians would have to define the church as beginning in Acts 2, with Israel being a separate entity. Further, they would have to accept a literal, future Tribulation and the Millennium. To accept this would turn them into dispensationalists.

E N D N O T E S

1 Renald E. Showers, There Really Is a Difference (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1990), 10.

2 Ibid., 9–10.

3 Ibid., 10–13.

4 Ibid., 19–24, 127, 136–137.

The Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology, Part 2

By: James Showers

Covenant Theology is the dominant theological system of most mainline Protestant churches and maintains that God has replaced the Jewish people with the church.

On the basis of two or three "covenants" that are found nowhere in the Bible, it claims that Christians are now God's chosen people and that the Jewish people have no claim to the land of Israel.When examining this theology, what matters most is whether it can stand when tested by Scripture. It cannot.

What God's Word Actually Says

God's Word says the church began after Christ. Jesus Christ said, "I will build [future tense] My church" (Mt. 16:18). Christ was looking to a future day when the church would begin. Clearly, it had not yet begun or He would not have used the future tense. So the church must begin after Matthew 16. It began at Pentecost with the baptism of the Holy Spirit whom Christ promised to send after He was gone (Jn 14:16– 17; Acts 1:8).

First Corinthians 12:13 says all believers are put into the church through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, when Peter referred to Pentecost in Acts 11:15, he called it "the beginning." Obviously, he meant the beginning of the church. End Note 1

God's Word distinguishes between Israel and the church. In the Old Testament, Israel was a nation. In the New Testament, the church is never called a nation but, rather, an assembly or gathering of believers from many nations. Saved Jews in the Old Testament were never called the church, but they are part of the church in the New Testament. For example, Paul said, "Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks [Gentiles] or to the church of God" (1 Cor. 10:32). The words Jews and Greeks encompass all the unsaved (unredeemed). The words church of God refer to the saved, which include both Jews and Greeks. End Note 2

Scripture calls Israel the wife of God (Isa. 54:5–6) but calls the church the Bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9; 22:17). These concepts are never interchanged. They refer to two distinctly different relationships.

God's Word says there will be seven years of tribulation following the Rapture of the church. Covenant Theology claims there is no need for the Tribulation and no need to restore the nation of Israel and bring it to repentance because God is finished with Israel. According to Covenant Theology, there also is no reason for God to judge the Gentile nations for their treatment of the Jewish people.

Scripture begs to differ. Paul taught that the church will be caught up before the wrath of the Day of the Lord (1 Th. 4:16–17). In 1 Thessalonians 1:10, he spoke of our waiting for God to send His

Son from heaven, “even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” First Thessalonians 5:9 says, “For God did not appoint us to wrath.”

The Tribulation is a literal seven years, according to Daniel 9. The Antichrist will usher in that period by entering into a covenant with Israel. Divine judgment will flood the earth. Revelation 6—18 explains God’s twofold purpose: to punish the Gentiles and bring Israel to reconciling faith in the Messiah.

The prophet Jeremiah referred to the Tribulation as “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). He said Jewish men will hold their loins like women in labor because of the great trouble on Earth. Christ referred to the time as “great tribulation,” the greatest trouble the earth has ever seen (Mt. 24:21). Unless God stopped it, He said, no one would survive. It will culminate at the battle of Armageddon (Joel 3:9–17; Rev. 16:14–16), in which Satan will bring the armies of the world against Israel to destroy the Jewish nation. Then Christ will return to deliver Israel (Zech. 14:1–5; 2 Th. 2:8; Rev. 19:11–21).

God’s Word promises Christ will rule from His throne for a literal 1,000 years. Covenant Theology, of course, sees no reason for this. Covenant theologians have developed two views that spiritualize the texts. The first is Amillennialism. Augustine developed it about 400 years after the church began. It maintains the Church Age merely continues until Christ returns to judge all men and then take believers to the eternal future. The second view is Postmillennialism. It takes what it considers to be a more positive outlook: The church will continue until the entire world becomes Christian, thereby opening the door for Christ to return to take all believers to the new heavens and new earth. Both these views are contrary to the explicit Word of God.

Six times in the first seven verses of Revelation 20 there are references to the 1,000-year reign of Christ here on Earth. God promises to establish His Kingdom on Earth with the Messiah sitting on the throne to rule over Israel (Isa. 9:6–7; 11:1–2; Lk. 1:31–33) and the nations (Ps. 72:8– 11; Dan. 7:13–14; Zech. 14:9). The Bible says Messiah will govern as God’s King—God’s representative to do God’s will (Ps. 7:2–8; Zech. 14:9; Rev. 11:15). Since the time Adam fell in sin, there was no qualified human representative to administer His rule until Jesus came. When Jesus returns, His purpose will be to reestablish the theocratic Kingdom on Earth.

The beginning of the Millennial Kingdom is called a time of restoration of all things, a season of refreshing (Acts 3:18–21). Christ referred to it as the time of regeneration, in which He will restore the environment to its pre-sin condition. He will do away with droughts, wars, pestilence, disease, and illness and bring the world back to the

way it existed before man sinned (Isa. 2:2–4; 9:6–7; 11:2–5, 6–9; 33:24; 35:5–6; 55:13; Ezek. 34:25–29; 47:1–12). Covenant Theology is a fabrication based on supposed covenants found nowhere in Scripture. However, the Bible does have covenants that are clearly defined. They include the Abrahamic Covenant, the Land Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant. We do not have to say that God implied these covenants; they are all recorded. They are clearly defined in Scripture. They were all initiated by God. They were given to the Jewish people, and they see their ultimate fulfillment through Israel. They also are unbreakable because their fulfillment is not based on Israel's obedience but on God's faithfulness. And they are everlasting covenants (Gen. 17:7–8, 19; Ps. 105:8–11).

These covenants guarantee that Israel will be restored to the Promised Land as a nation and its place of blessing. Someday all of Israel will be regenerated. The Messiah will return to establish God's Millennial Kingdom on Earth and will rule from His throne in Jerusalem. And Israel will be the most blessed nation on the earth (Isa. 2:1–4; 60:1–3; 61:4– 9; Zeph. 3:20; Zech. 8:23).

All this will happen because God clearly says so in His Word. And His Word will endure forever!

E N D N O T E S

1 Renald E. Showers, There Really is a Difference (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1990), 171, 180.

2 Ibid., 183–6.

The Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology, Part 3

By: James Showers

If Replacement Theology is true, then certainly God has an opinion about it —one He states clearly and teaches visibly in Scripture.

Conversely, if it is not plainly taught, then Replacement Theology must be the fictitious creation of men.

What It Maintains

Replacement Theology maintains that, because the Jewish people rejected Jesus Christ, God has replaced or superseded ethnic Israel with the church* and punished them by rescinding all of the covenant promises He gave them.

It also claims (1) the church began with Abraham in Genesis 12, (2) the church is merely a continuation of Old Testament Israel, (3) the church is true or "spiritual Israel," and (4) true Israel in the Old Testament was comprised of Abraham's spiritual, not physical, descendants.

Replacement theologians also claim we must first understand the New Testament before we can understand the Old. The New

Testament, they say, teaches us how to interpret the Old Testament. This method enables them to redefine Israel to mean Abraham's spiritual descendants only. However, interpreting Scripture this way ignores the progress of God's revelation and implies that people who had only Old Testament revelation could not have understood it.

Replacement Theology also conveniently manages to uncouple God's covenant promises from His covenant curses. The church inherits all of the promises to Israel, but the Jewish people (ethnic Israel) keep all of the covenant curses. This uncoupling is quite a feat.

Since the Replacement church sees itself as a continuation of Old Testament Israel, it applies portions of Old Testament Law to itself while ignoring important New Testament teachings.

Finally, Replacement Theology teaches there is no future for national Israel: God has thoroughly rejected Israel and no longer has a place for it in His plan for eternity apart from the salvation of individual Jewish people. They are no longer His Chosen People; nor is there a future 70th week of Daniel (see Daniel 9:24–27) or a future, literal, Millennial Kingdom of God on Earth.

Replacement Theology is the historical position of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and the common position of the Reformed and Covenant churches. Unfortunately, it has fueled anti-Semitism for 1,800 years. It has been said that more anti-Semitic acts have been committed in the name of the church than by all other groups combined.

Christ's Words

Since Israel did not reject Christ until the Gospels, we would expect Replacement Theology to be taught in the New Testament. Using a literal-historical-grammatical method of interpretation, we would expect to find:

- Clear, concise statements that God has rejected Israel.
- Definitive passages that teach that the church has replaced Israel.
- God's declaration that He has excluded Israel from the Old Testament covenants.
- A total lack of New Testament verses that speak of Israel's future in God's plan.

Speaking to a Jewish audience, Jesus said, "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it" (Mt. 21:43).

Replacement theologians say this passage teaches that Jesus said (1) God has permanently rejected national Israel, and (2) the "nation" to whom the Kingdom of God will be given is the church.

On the surface, this explanation seems reasonable. However, scrutiny shows otherwise. Throughout the first part of His ministry on

Earth, Jesus preached, "Repent, for the kingdom is at hand!" He offered the restored Kingdom of God to Israel if the people repented of their sins and accepted Him as their Savior and Lord. But they would not.

Later Jesus lamented over Jerusalem, "who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! You shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" (23:37, 39). Although this passage teaches that Israel will be judged, it concludes by promising a future day when a new generation of national Israel will repent and accept Him as Messiah. If Matthew 21:43 taught that God had rejected Israel, then Jesus would not have taught later that a future Jewish nation will accept Him. Therefore, Matthew 21:43 cannot imply God has permanently rejected Israel as His people.

Furthermore, nowhere does Scripture define the church as a "nation." Rather, it teaches that the church is composed of people from many nations. Christ's use of nation in Matthew 21:43 refers to the future generation of Jewish people who will accept Him and bear the fruit of the restored Kingdom. Christ chose the word nation rather than generation because He knew the Jewish people would soon be scattered; and He wanted to note a future day when Israel would again be a nation, accept Him as Messiah, and usher in the restored Kingdom of God.

Far from teaching Replacement Theology, Jesus emphasized that, because the Jewish generation alive during His First Coming refused His offer of the restored Kingdom, God would take the Kingdom from them and give it to a future Jewish nation that will accept Him.

Paul's Words

One of the most often-quoted passages in defense of Replacement Theology is Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God," written by the apostle Paul. Replacement theologians say Israel of God refers to the church.

Their argument revolves around the Greek word kai that precedes the words upon the Israel of God. Kai is most commonly translated "and"; but they say kai is an explicative case (what follows explains what came before) and, therefore, should be translated "even." This change makes Israel of God refer to as many as walk according to this rule, meaning Christians. They also say Paul taught in Galatians the unity of all ethnic believer groups. Therefore, the words Israel of God refer to all believers, that is, the church.

However, the explicative case of kai is extremely uncommon usage and not likely supported by context or grammar. The more

commonly used and to connect the words Israel of God with the first half of the verse makes more sense.

In Galatians, Paul defended salvation by grace through faith alone. He spoke against the Judaizers who taught circumcision was required for salvation. They added works (circumcision) to faith. When Paul said, "as many as walk according to this rule," he spoke of those who walked by faith in Christ alone. His use of Israel of God contrasts Jewish people who believed in Christ alone with the Judaizers who taught one must have faith plus works to be saved.

In all other Pauline passages, the word Israel refers to national or ethnic Israel. It is highly unlikely he would use Israel here to refer to the body of all believers. Paul prayed in Galatians 6:16 that God would bless all who put their faith in Christ alone for salvation and that He would especially bless the Jewish believers who were distinct from the Judaizers. This verse does not say the church has replaced Israel. Even if one accepts the Replacement explanation, the most it says is that Gentiles are included with Israel.

Replacement theologians also use Galatians 3:7 and 29 to bolster their position: "Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham" (v. 7). "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (v. 29).

They maintain the words sons of Abraham and Abraham's seed imply the church has become true Israel, concluding that all believers are spiritual Jews. They tell us Abraham's seed means believers are related to Christ, whom they say is the true seed of Abraham; thus the church is true Israel.

However, it is possible to be Abraham's "son" or "seed" but not be Jewish. Ishmael was Abraham's son, but he was not Jewish. In Romans 4:11– 12 Paul taught that Abraham is the father of both the uncircumcised (Gentiles) and circumcised (Jewish). Some of Abraham's descendants are Jewish, and others are not.

Abraham himself was not Jewish. He was a Gentile from Ur of the Chaldeans. If he had been Jewish, then all of his descendants would be Jewish. Yet only the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are Jewish. It wasn't until Jacob that God bestowed the title of Israel, after Jacob wrestled with God all night (Gen. 32:24–30).

Galatians 3:7 and 29 do not say Israel has been replaced; they merely teach that people (Jewish or Gentile) who put their faith in Christ become partakers of the spiritual promises God made to Abraham. Paul affirmed this fact in 3:28 when He said, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

** Unless otherwise specified, all references to the church refer to the church in its broadest sense, including Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and evangelical. Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology,*

Conclusion

By: James Showers

The Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology, Conclusion

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What does God say about Israel's future? If the New Testament teaches ethnic Israel has a future, then Replacement Theology is untrue.

While on Earth, Jesus established that He was premillennial—meaning He believed in a literal, future, restored Kingdom of God. In Matthew 6:9–10, He taught His followers to pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus instructed His followers to pray that God will bring or restore His Kingdom on Earth, and He described what Earth will be like when that occurs.

How is God's will done in heaven? Precisely as He says. His will is absolute. If the church is the Kingdom of God, as Replacement theologians claim—or the Kingdom of God is here now—then what is done on Earth must mirror God's will in heaven. That is an impossible stretch even for the most generous mind.

Jesus' Throne

According to the New Testament, the nation of Israel and the Promised Land are vital to God establishing His restored Kingdom on Earth. The Bible teaches that Jesus fulfills the Davidic Covenant that guarantees a descendant of David will sit on David's throne in Israel forever. The Hebrew Scriptures teach the Messiah will rule over Israel and the Gentile nations from His throne in Jerusalem (Isa. 9:6–7; 11:1–12; Jer. 23:5–8; 33:14–16).

To date, these prophecies have not been fulfilled. But Jesus said, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Mt. 19:28). Jesus spoke those words in response to the apostle Peter's concern about the disciples' future. Jesus told them that someday, they each will sit on a throne ruling the tribes of Israel. Jesus certainly saw a future for ethnic Israel.

But the verse reveals more. The title Son of Man refers to Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus said He will sit on the throne of His glory, a throne that will bring Him honor. Nowhere does Scripture say He sits on a throne in heaven. Rather, it teaches that He is seated at the right hand of the Father's throne. The throne of Christ's glory is earthly. It will be located in Jerusalem where He will rule over Israel and the world. Jesus did not ascend to that throne at His First Coming. Thus, if He is to be faithful to His words, He must yet sit on His throne in Jerusalem.

Jesus explained when that event will occur: in the "regeneration." The Greek word translated "regeneration" is a compound made up of two Greek words: palin and genesia. Palin

literally means "back again" or "back to a previous time." Genesia is the word for genesis, "in the beginning."

The Old Testament prophets taught the Messiah will restore God's Kingdom to Earth and transform Earth to its pre-fall condition. No more disasters, disease, sickness, deformities, hard labor, thorns and thistles, pollution, wild nature in animals, injustice, or war. Thus Jesus said He will sit on His throne when Earth is restored to its condition as in the beginning—the restored Kingdom of God on Earth.

When the apostles saw Christ prior to His return to heaven, they asked, "Will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Obviously, they fully believed Jesus will restore the Kingdom to Earth and that Israel will be central to the process. Jesus did not correct their belief that He will restore the Kingdom to Israel. He simply replied that it was not for them to know the timing of God's plan to do so; their concern should be to get busy building His church.

Peter's Eschatology

A mere two chapters later, Peter used the teaching of the restored Kingdom to preach salvation to the Jewish people from Solomon's porch on the Temple Mount. The location would have ensured his listeners were Jewish. But he also addressed them in Acts 3:12–18 as those who denied Christ before Pilate and chose a murderer over Him. What Peter shared next revealed he, too, was premillennial.

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began (vv. 19–21).

Peter laid out an eschatological order for Israel. The nation's repentance will lead God to blot out its sins; Christ will return, and then the times of refreshing will come from God when He restores the Kingdom. Peter didn't teach Replacement Theology. Rather, he taught that God has a unique program for Israel that is key to God restoring His Kingdom on Earth.

Paul also taught this truth: "Has God cast away His people? Certainly not!" (Rom.11:1). It is obvious from the context of Romans 11:1–2 that Paul was asked if God had cast Israel away. His response was clear: Certainly not! In fact, he declared, "and so all Israel will be saved" (vr.26). Then he quoted from Psalm 14 and Isaiah 59 that God will honor His covenant and remove the Jewish people's sins.

In Romans 11:29, Paul reminded us, "The gifts and the calling

of God are irrevocable." Irrevocable means God will not cancel or retract His gifts or call. He Himself is the One who made the covenants with Israel. He is the One who told the people of Israel the covenants are everlasting. He is the One who remembers His covenants with Israel, and He is the One who keeps them.

Israel's coming national reconciliation, Christ's return, and the restoration of God's Kingdom on Earth do not depend on anything the Jewish people have or have not done. They depend solely on God's faithfulness to keep His irrevocable promises. According to Ezekiel 36, God will keep His promises for His name's sake so that His name will be exalted above every name on Earth, under the earth, and in the heavens.

Conclusion

For Replacement Theology to be valid, God must teach it clearly in His Word. However, nowhere does the Bible teach God has rejected Israel or replaced it with the church. Nor does it say the church is the historic continuation of Old Testament Israel or that all of the covenant promises have been taken from Israel and given to the church.

What the New Testament does teach is that Israel has a grand future in God's plan, although Israel's role is distinct and different from God's plan for the church. And without a future for Israel, there will be no glorious future Kingdom of God on Earth.[19]

This "Friends of Israel" spokesman gives more information about Covenant Theology than is found in any writings of the theologians who hold to it. The whole ideology is such an embarrassment to Bible truth that its proponents dare not focus much attention on it. This error filtered from the Roman Catholic

19 James Showers, "Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology", from The Friends of Israel. Website: www.foi.org. Toll free: 1-800-257-7843, http://www.foi.org/free-resources/article/facts-and-flaws-covenant-theology-part1/ ...part-2/ ...part-3/ ...conclusion/ (accessed 9/9/2016). [James A. Showers is executive director for The Friends of Israel. Permission to copy and distribute this material is granted provided that you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction or alter the wording in any way. Please contact The Friends of Israel if you are making more than 100 physical copies. Proper accreditation must be visible on each copy. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred (where applicable). Any exceptions to the above must be formally approved by The Friends of Israel. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: From The Friends of Israel. Website: www.foi.org . E-mail: webmaster@foi.org. Toll free: 1-800-257-7843.]

Church into the Orthodox, the Anglican, and then each Protestant denomination. Every Protestant denomination holds this ideology in its core, but if one asks a Presbyterian, a Calvinist, an Episcopalian, a Methodist, or a Pentecostal about Replacement Theology and Covenant Theology they can justly plead ignorance because it is not openly taught anywhere on the planet. It is an embarrassment to Bible truth. That being said, understand that the leaven of the false teaching is still in full bloom; each of these denominations has a despise, or at least gross reservation, about the teachings of the literal Millennial Reign of Christ, the premillennial return of Christ, the pretribulational rapture of the church, and the dispensational teachings of the Bible. From the pew, and from most of the pulpits, they can justly plead an ignorance of these basic Bible truths as well; in general they do not hear them taught or talked about.

The Bible student of ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church, and eschatology, the doctrine of last things, needs a reasonable understanding of this Protestant and ecumenical Bible ignorance and false teaching. The measure of intimacy in a friendship is the measure of revelation and sharing of future plans and aspirations. Understand that God's future plans for Israel are real. A self-centered, self-righteous, Gentilic rejection of those plans is certain to start the student down a wrong path in the pursuit of that intimacy. Jesus said it this way, *"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you"* (John 15:15). Cast away all the allegorical methods, trust God to say what he means and mean what he says, and then proceed into a study of his church and the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 3 Cambron's Bible Doctrine of Ecclesiology

A Systematic Theology must first have as its foundation a true Bible Doctrine. From that foundation a discourse must systematically analyze the doctrine keeping it pure from its detractors, and evaluating its fit into the larger arena of theology. Detractors from truth are myriad from outside but fall under three major considerations when guarding against internal sabotage. The Roman Catholic Religion has always directly opposed Bible truth; the Protestant Reformers are supposed to have come back to Bible truth, but, subtly, they carry all the Roman error as concealed weapons; and the ecumenical Bible correctors who make a pretense of using textual criticism and modern language to "fix" what God was “unable to preserve.” These three are enemies to Bible doctrine, Rome, directly; Reformed, more subliminally; and Ecumenical Bible correctors, very shrewdly. Exposing their pernicious ways is not generally the focus of a Bible Doctrines book, and in a world where Bible doctrine is under constant attack a systematic theology that inoculates against these attackers is needful. Herein a solid Biblical Doctrine must form the basis and starting point for a systematic theology.

There is no truer, or more thorough, published, Baptist, and Biblical doctrine than that of Dr. Mark G. Cambron.[20] His teachings on Ecclesiology at Tennessee Temple Bible School establish a solid doctrine essential for building a solid systematic theology. His book, *Bible Doctrines*[21] will, with the permission of

20 Dr. Mark G. Cambron, B.A., M.A., Th.B., Th.M., Th.D., D.D., L.L.D., Litt.D., was one of the foremost theologians of our times. Born in Fayetteville, Tennessee on July 31, 1911. He was born-again in 1919. It was during a Billy Sunday campaign in Chattanooga that he trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. He served for many years at Tennessee Temple College (1948-59) with Dr. Lee Roberson and served as Dean of the Tennessee Temple Bible College. From http://www.thecambroninstitute.org accessed 10/16/2013

21 Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines,* 1954, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 60-69

the Cambron Institute[22], be given in block quotes throughout this effort. The book is readily available through http://www.thecambroninstitute.org, and it forms a strong foundation for this Systematic Theology.[23]

Believing in the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures and believing that every single word is directly chosen by God, it is necessary to preserve and defend the doctrines extracted from Scripture and presented by Dr. Cambron. Below, in a block quote of his book, is his extensive analysis of Ecclesiology:[block quote of Dr. Cambron's *Bible Doctrines* page 211-228 Zondervan, 171- 186 pdf version]

Cambron's Ch VII Ecclesiology - The Doctrine of the Church

pg171 (the page numbers left in this block quote are from Cambron Inst. pdf and differ from his published work by Zondervan)

ECCLESIOLOGY (The Doctrine of the Church)

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OUTLINE FOR CHAPTER VII ECCLESIOLOGY

I. The Meaning of the Word.	V. The Gifts to the Body.
II. The Use of the Word.	VI. The Local Church.
III. What the Church Is Not.	VII. Discipline in the Church.
IV. What the Church Is.	VIII. Ordinances in the Church.
A. A Mystery.	A. Baptism.
B. A Body.	B. Lord's Supper.
C. A Building.	
D. A Bride.	

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Chapter VII ECCLESIOLOGY Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the Church.

I. The Meaning of the Word.

The word "church" does not mean the building in which the congregation meets; neither is it as the Catholics say, the Papal system. Others contend that it is a company, or a club, just an organization. The church is not an organization, but an *organism.*

22 The Cambron Institute, 35890 Maplegrove Road, Willoughby, Oh 44094

23 It is noted and reproved in the Bibliology section of this work that 41 times for 54 Bible verses Dr. Cambron's Bible Doctrines book recommends using the R.V., instead of the Holy Bible.

The following may surprise most students of the Word, but nevertheless, it is true. The word "church" cannot be found in the New Testament. The word "church," is a *rendition,* and not a translation. This same word "church" is a rendition of the word *ecclesia,* which means a called-out company, or assembly. If we should call Bible things by Bible names correctly, we would call it the assembly of God in Christ, instead of the Church of God in Christ.

The word *ecclesia* always means a called-out company, or assembly. It refers to all classes of people; it is not limited to believers in Christ. There are three references in the Bible that refer to three different kinds of people. None of them are related, yet they are called-out companies, or assemblies.

A. A Mob.

"When Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not, And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself to the theater. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the *assembly* [ecclesia: that is a mob, and not believers] was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together...And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said. . . . Ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches [this word means temple; it is not from the word *ecclesia*], nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. . . . But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful *assembly* [this is the same word *ecclesia,* and does not mean believers] . . . . And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the *assembly* [again the word *ecclesia*]" (Acts19:30-32, 35, 37, 39, 41).

B. The Children of Israel.

Certainly the children of Israel were a called-out company from Egypt, but we know that they were not the body of Christ. Christ had not been manifested in the flesh as yet. "This is he, that was in the church [this is the same word "*ecclisia*", but they were not the body of Christ] in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers who received the lively oracles to give unto us" (Acts 7:38). pg174

C. The Body of Christ.

By this we mean the body of believers in the Lord Jesus. The New Testament abounds with references to the *ecclesia,* the called-out company, or assembly, from the world to Christ. The following are a few: God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the *church* [*ecclesia,* meaning called-out company, or assembly], which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23).

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the *church* [*ecclesia,* meaning called-out company or assembly], and gave himself for it. . . . This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the *church* [*ecclesia,* meaning called-out company, or assembly]" (Eph. 5:25, 32).

II. The Use of the Word.

Knowing that the word "church" is a rendition from the Greek, *ecclesia,* meaning calledout company, or assembly, we shall turn our attention to those portions of Scripture dealing with the body of believers. The word *ecclesia* is used in the following ways:

A. A Local Assembly (church).

"Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto *the church* of the Thessalonians...." (I Thess. 1:1). "Unto the *church* of God which is at Corinth . . ." (I Cor. 1:2).

B. Local Assemblies (churches).

This has reference to several local bodies. "Paul . . . and all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace" (Gal. 1:1-3).

C. The Body of Living Believers (unnumbered).

We must explain that by this we mean a group of believers, living in a certain section, without reference to a local assembly, and without number. For instance, a minister may speak of the Church of Chicago, the Church of Denver, etc. we immediately know that he is referring to all Christian believers in these cities. The best illustration in the Word is: "Ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the *church* of God, and wasted it" (Gal. 1:13). Saul (Paul) did not limit his persecution to one certain

assembly, or several local assemblies. He went *everywhere,* hailing into prison, and voting the death penalty for the early Christians. He considered all Christians as *The Church.*

D. The Complete Body of Christ.

The complete body of Christ is called the *church,* and is composed of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture. "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the pg175 *church,* and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).

III. What the Church is Not.

A. The Church Is Not Israel.

"Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God" (I Cor. 10:32). Here is revealed that there are three classes of people today: Jew, Gentile and Church. When a Jew is saved, he ceases to be a Jew, and becomes a Christian. When a Gentile accepts Christ, he ceases to be a Gentile, and becomes a Christian. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:27-29). The Church (Body of Christ) is not spiritual Israel: "He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain *one new man,* so making peace" (Eph. 2:14, 15). The Body of Christ (church) is a *new man,* and not Israel, whether spiritual Israel or revived Israel.

B. The Church Is Not the Kingdom.

CHURCH	KINGDOM
1. No heirs of the Church.	1. The Church is heir of the kingdom.
2. No receiver of the Church.	2. The Church is the receiver of the kingdom.
3. There are elders of the Church.	3. No elders of the kingdom.
4. No Sons of the Church.	4. Sons of the kingdom.

CHURCH	KINGDOM
5. Church called a temple (Eph. 2:21).	5. Kingdom never called a temple.
6. Church is here.	6. Kingdom is not here, for the King is not present (Matt. 6:10).
7. Church was never a subject of prophecy (Eph. 3: 5,9).	7. Kingdom is the one subject of prophecy.
8. Church is to be built up (Eph. 4:12).	8. Kingdom is to be set up (Acts 15:16).

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IV. What the Church Is.

A. It Is a Mystery.

"By revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. . . . And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:3-6,9). A "mystery" in Scripture means a "truth revealed for the first time." In the above verses, the Holy Spirit shows us that *The Church* (Body of Christ) was first revealed to the Apostle Paul, and that it was not known by the Old Testament prophets. The truth of The Church was not hidden in Old Testament writings, but was hid in God.

B. It Is the Body of Which Christ Is the Head.

"As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is (the) Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. . . .

That there should be no schism in the body; but that the

members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Cor. 12:12-14, 25-27).

The Body is an organism composed of many members. All members do not have the same function. The Church is not a physical body, but a spiritual body. Believers in Christ are made members of that spiritual body by the Spirit's baptism. There are those who hold that I Corinthians 12:13 is speaking of water baptism, but this argument can easily be refuted by another Scripture. I Corinthians 12:13 says that we are made members of the Body by *baptism* (Spirit's), while Ephesians 3:6 declares we are made members of that Body by the *Gospel.* Both are correct. If I Corinthians 12:13 speaks of water baptism, then water baptism is an essential part of the Gospel of Ephesians 3:6. We know, however, that water baptism has no part in the Gospel whatsoever. *The Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ* (I Cor. 15:1-4).

As is true of the physical body, so it is of the spiritual Body; when one member of the Body suffers, all members suffer with it. Not one Christian can suffer persecution without the whole Body hurting also. One member cannot grieve, but that the whole Body grieves with it. When the Body suffers, the Head also suffers. When we are persecuted, Christ is also persecuted: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4).

Remember that the Body is an organism and must be considered as such. A building, for example, can be repaired by replacing old doors and windows, and the like, with new pg177 ones, but when part of a body is removed, such as an arm, leg, eye, and the like, the part can never be replaced. If it were possible for a member of the Body of Christ to lose his salvation, then the Body of Christ would be mutilated, and this could never happen. The following are four characteristics of the Body of Christ:

1. *Oneness.* A body is one, a complete whole, an organic unity. So is the Body of Christ.

2. *Deathlessness.* The Body of Christ will never die, for it is connected with a living Head.

3. *Manifestation.* The one purpose of the Body of Christ is to manifest, or reveal Christ. "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

4. Service. The thoughts and the plans of the head are to be carried out by the body. Likewise, the Body of Christ is to carry out the will of its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. What He commands we must do. His will shall govern our movements.

C. It Is a Building.

"Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22).

The apostles and New Testament prophets are the foundation of the Building (Church). They were the first ones to believe in the Lord Jesus, and they were the first ones to proclaim the Lord Jesus.

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5). We believers are living stones of this new building of God. When the temple of old was erected, there was no sound of hammer, chisel, or saw. All materials were formed beforehand. So are we, for we were selected before the foundation of the earth was laid. The inside stones of the temple could not be seen, for they were covered with cedarwood and gold. Only the gold could be seen. We, the living stones of the Building of God, are not to be seen. Christ only is to be seen.

The building was erected of different colored stones; even so the Building of God is composed of black, red, yellow and white races. God dwelt in the temple, and He abides in us. pg178

D. It Is the Bride.

Some have contended that the Bride of Christ is the same as the Wife of Jehovah, who is Israel. However, there is one Scripture

which disproves this theory, and that is Revelation 22:17: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The above passage declares that the Spirit and the Bride are extending the invitation to sinners to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. If the Bride is Israel, then it is the Spirit and Israel extending the invitation. We know that is not true, for the greater part of Israel is in unbelief today. Who is inviting, or urging people to accept Christ? It is the church, not Israel. Therefore, the Bride is the church, the Body of believers.

Ephesians 5:25-32 clearly points to the fact that husband and wife have the same relationship as that of Christ and His Bride, the church. Especially we see this in verses 28-30: "So ought men to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hateth his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it**,** even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

1. *The Bride Is Purchased By Christ.* "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and *gave himself* for it**"** (Eph. 5:25). See also I Corinthians 6:19, 20. In the Orient men purchased their wives; the price became her dowry. Christ bought his church with His own precious blood. His blood is her dowry forever!

2. *The Bride Is Espoused to Christ.* "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have *espoused* you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2). The Oriental marriage differs greatly from marriage as we know it**.** The Eastern custom of marriage took place after the following manner: First, the bride was bought (we have been bought by Christ); second, the ceremony was performed, inaugurating the espousal period, which lasted about a year. During this time the bride was considered the wife of her husband, yet they did not live together. The one year waiting period was protection of the future home. If there were any blemishes against the character and conduct of the bride, they would come to light during this time. The Bride of Christ is now in her espousal period. During this interval the blemishes of the Bride, if any, will certainly manifest themselves.

History has proved that there have been many who have had the form of godliness, but have denied the power thereof. These blemishes (these men) vanish away; finally comes the consummation of the marriage.

3. *The Bride Is Married to Christ.* "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:7, 8). "Then shall the Realm of heaven be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride" (Matt. 25:1 — Moffatt[24]). This is the consummation of Christ's marriage to His church. The espousal period is over; she is now with her husband, and so shall she ever be with Him (I Thess. 4:17). pg179

V. The Gifts to the Body.

"Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When He ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:7, 8, 11).

A. Apostles.

This was the first gift to the church (Body). Upon the Apostles was built the early church. The word "apostle" in the Greek is the same as the word "missionary" in Latin, meaning "the sent one." Of course, the church has missionaries (sent ones) today, but no apostles.

B. Prophets.

To these men God gave His revelations. At the first, the church did not have the New Testament, yet it needed to know the

24 The actual Bible says, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom" (Matt 25:1). There is no reason in the world for Dr. Cambron to use James Moffatt's copyright 1950 translation that changed "the kingdom of heaven" to a "Realm of heaven", and sent the ten "maidens" instead of "virgins" out to meet the bride not the bridegroom exclusively! Shame on Dr. Cambron for this travesty.

doctrines of God; therefore, God gave to men His unwritten Word; these in turn gave it to the people. The church has no prophets today for we have God's complete revealed truth, the New Testament.

C. Evangelists.

Another gift to the church was evangelists. These men fervently heralded the Gospel. They were men of humility, burdened for the lost. The pastor is told to do the work of an evangelist (II Tim. 4:5). The day of the evangelist is *not* over, and will not be until Christ comes to reign upon the earth.

D. Pastors and Teachers.

The word "pastor" means "shepherd." The pastor is to be the shepherd of his sheep, looking after his flock, weeping and rejoicing with them. The crying need of the church today is for pastors. Blessed is the man who has a pastor's heart. A pastor is not only called to preach three sermons a week, but he is called to pastor, shepherd, look after, care for, visit, love, protect, instruct the sheep. Every pastor, while doing the work of an evangelist, which is winning souls, should also be one who is able to *teach* the Word to his flock. Where will the church members get the Word if not from the pastor? All of the truth some people will get will be at a Sunday service.

Some distinguish between the pastor and the teacher, believing that there are those who are called only to be teachers. This may be so, but we know that all pastors are to be teachers also. All teachers may not be pastors, but all pastors *must* be teachers. pg180

VI. The Local Church.

While we believe that the Body of Christ is composed of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture, we do stress the importance of the *local* church, or assembly. The local assembly is the physical body by which the Body (Church) is manifested. God stresses the importance of the local church by giving it officers and ordinances. He who is ashamed of the local assembly is ashamed of that which was established at Pentecost. The local church, as well as the Body of Christ, was established at Pentecost.

A. Its Organization.

The Scriptures indicate that there was some organization, but not as that today. It was not copied after the synagogue. It was entirely different.

B. Its Officers.

1. *Deacons.* I Timothy 3:8-13 gives the requirements for deacons. The deacons were not chosen to run the church, but to minister to the church.

2. *Bishops and Elders.* There is a vast difference between the early church and that of today as to bishops. The early church had *many* bishops in one local church; today, we have *one* bishop over many local churches. The elders were called by that name because they were the oldest in the family. If the father were dead, the first son took his place. An elder was an elderly man. Titus 1:5-7 says, "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre." According to this, the elder and bishop were the same. The word "elder" refers to the person, while the word "bishop" refers to the office. Every bishop was an elder, but every elder was not a bishop. The word "bishop" means "overseer." The "overseers" of the local churches were old men. This group of bishops composed what is known as the presbytery (I Tim, 1:4).

C. Its Purpose.

The purpose of the church is to glorify God in the building up of the Body of Christ in the holy faith; and to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth, winning, baptizing, teaching.

VII. Discipline in the Local Church.

Even though it is true that the church is under grace rather than law, the flesh is still in the believer, and the Lord has laid down rules of discipline for His local church. There were three steps in church discipline, and they are as follows: pg181

A. Judgment By Self.

"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (I Cor. 11:31). The believer knows when he has sinned and should immediately confess it to God (I John 1:9). If he confesses that sin, he has judged himself. It is forgiven, and he shall never be judged for it again. Let us stress the word "confess" however. Confess does not mean to admit it, that is, to own up to it; that is implied, but it goes deeper than that. It means to take one's stand against.

B. Judgment By the Church.

If a sinning brother will not judge himself, then he must be judged by the local church. I Corinthians 5:11, 12 says "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?" Yes, fellowship in the local church should be withheld from the erring brother as judgment. Some term this "backdoor revival." This extreme judgment should be meted out only after the effort to restore him. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness: Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

C. Judgment By God.

If the fallen brother does not judge himself, and the church will not judge him, then God will judge him through chastisement (Heb. 12:5-13).

VIII. Ordinances in the Local Church.

The church has two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is observed at the beginning of the Christian life; the Lord's Supper is taken all during the Christian life.

We emphasize the fact that these are ordinances of the church, and not sacraments.

A. Baptism.

Baptism is from the Greek word *baptizo,* meaning to dip, to plunge, to immerse for the purpose of dying. It can never mean sprinkling, or pouring.

1. *Obligation* (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12). All

believers are obliged to be baptized. One does not have to pray about it to seek God's will in the matter. The Lord has commanded it**.**

2. *Administration.* Nearly every denomination, with the exception of some local Baptist groups, demands that their ministers, who administer the ordinance of baptism, must be ordained.

3. *Explanation.* Baptism is a public declaration of faith in Christ by the believer before pg182 man. It is his outward demonstration of an inward act, and is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Immersion fully portrays the place of death; there are some people, even today, who have met actual physical death after coming up out of the baptismal waters. Those who have come out of other religions evaluate the ordinance of baptism more highly than those who have been raised in Christian homes. Not only does baptism show the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it also shows the believer's identification *with* Christ. Baptism is his full declaration of his own death in Christ (II Cor. 5:14): dead to sin, dead to self and dead to the old life. It is also his declaration of being raised with Christ, after burying the old life, to walk in newness of life with Him.

The baptism of all believers, as recorded in the Word, pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The baptism of John the Baptist looked *forward* to Christ's death and resurrection, and our baptism today looks *back* to the death and resurrection of our Lord.

It is not a saving ordinance. Man is saved by faith alone. This occurs *before* baptism. It is true, however, that baptism is a public declaration of faith before man, and God looks not upon the baptismal waters, but upon the heart of man.

4. *Participation.* Who should be baptized? I believe *only* the believer! "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). Faith is first, then baptism. Again the question arises, "Does man have to be baptized to be saved?" No, for this Scripture says that he that *believeth not* shall be damned. *If* water baptism were essential, the

Lord would have added these words, “He that is not baptized is damned.” The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians said, “I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. . . . For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be of none effect” (I Cor. 1:14, 17). If baptism were necessary for salvation, Paul would not have boasted in the fact that he had baptized so few. He plainly states that baptism had nothing to do with the Gospel (Rom. 1:16), for Christ had sent him not to baptize, but to preach.

It is impossible to baptize an unbeliever, for if he is an unbeliever *before* he is immersed, he will be an unbeliever when he comes out of the baptismal waters.

What is the age limit for baptism? Some parents contend that twelve years of age is the youngest age at which a child should be baptized. This has no Scriptural foundation whatsoever. It may be a carry-over from the Jewish custom of adoption. The Word clearly states that baptism is for *all believers,* regardless of age or sex.

B. Lord’s Supper.

“I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance pg183 of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup” (I Cor.11:23-28).

1. *Origination.* From the above Scriptures little doubt is left as to who instituted the Lord’s Supper. There is no record of this ordinance being held *before* the Lord Jesus inaugurated it. We, as it were, take the bread and the cup from His own precious hands.

The theory that Christ never lived is exploded by the Lord’s Supper. It is His, and His only.

2. *Obligation.* The words "this do" are a command of the Lord, and the words "all of it" (Matt. 26:27) are better translated "all of you." This ordinance is for the entire Body of Christ.

3. *Participation.*

a. *Who?* No one but a baptized child of God should participate in the Lord's Supper.

Those who sat with Him at the last supper had been baptized. Baptism is the symbol of the commencing of the new life, and the Lord's Supper is a symbol of the sustenance of that life.

b. *How often?* Some churches observe the Lord's Supper every Sunday; some, once a month; others, four times a year; and still others, once a year; some never observe the Lord's Supper. What is the Scriptural stipulation for this observance? "As often" (I Cor. 11:26): there is no set, rigid rule.

c. *In What Manner?* Some believers are very confused concerning their fitness to partake of the Lord's Supper after reading I Corinthians 11:27-29. They notice the word "unworthily," and immediately they review their past mistakes, ever since they became a Christian, and fear that they shall be eating and drinking damnation to themselves if they partake. Let us point out that the word "unworthily" is an adverb, and modifies the word "drink," which means to drink in an "unworthy manner." As far as being worthy is concerned, which one of us can call himself worthy? No one! This has reference to the *act* of participation. The context will give a perfect explanation. In the early church love feasts were held; the rich brought their store of food and wine, while the converted slaves brought nothing. As the feast progressed, the rich believer, keeping his food and drink to himself, soon became drunk. The poor slave, of course, had nothing, and remained sober. The Lord's Supper was observed at the conclusion of the feast. The drunken believer could not appreciate the Lord's Supper. In his drunkenness, the cup of the Lord's Supper meant nothing more to him than another drink of wine. He could not discern the Lord's body and blood; thus, he drank it "unworthily." This fact led to many untimely deaths in the Corinthian Church: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (I Cor. 11:30).

If the Christian feels unworthy, it is a good indication that he *is* worthy, and vice versa. The man who finds some personal quality in himself to make him worthy to partake of pg184 the Lord's Supper had better stay away. The table is not spread for the righteous, but for the unrighteous, who are justified by faith.

4. *Constitution.* The elements of the Lord's Supper are bread and fruit of the vine. The bread was unleavened, as it was used in the observance of the Passover, from which the Lord inaugurated the Lord's Supper.

5. *Interpretation.*

a. *Transubstantiation.* This interpretation is held by the Roman Catholic Church. It declares that by the consecration of the priest the bread and wine cease to remain, as such, and become the actual body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. This Faith contends that when the Lord said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53), he meant the actual flesh and blood of Christ. Therefore, the Mass is that ritual which turns the bread and wine into the actual flesh and blood of Christ. The priest alone drinks the wine, as not one drop of Christ's blood must be spilt. The bread is in the form of a wafer, so that not a crumb of His body should be lost. In answer to this we ask, "How could Christ, while being in His perfect body, hold part of His body in His hand when he said, 'This is my body'?"

b. *Consubstantiation.* The Lutherans and the Church of England believe this interpretation, which states that, while the bread remains bread, and the wine remains wine, the body and blood is present in a spiritual sense; the body and blood are present only at the moment when they are partaken of, and after being taken, cease to be the body and blood of Christ.

c. *Symbolism.* This is the true interpretation, which states that the bread and wine are only symbols of Christ's body and blood, which were offered upon Calvary's cross for the remission of sins. "This do in *remembrance* of me"; it is observed in blessed memory, and that is where it ends.

6. *Limitation.* How long should the church continue this observance? Till He comes again. What is our answer to the scoffer

who jeers at the Second Coming, and who asks, "Where is the promise of His coming?" We point to the Lord's Table and reply, "There is the promise of His coming."

7. *Evaluation.*

a. *Its Value Doctrinally.*

(1) *The Person of Christ.*

(a) *His Humanity.* His humanity is as real as His Deity. The symbols speak of His actual human body and blood, and it is most essential that it is human, as the atonement must be in the nature of that which sinned ("Christ died for *us*").

(b) *His Deity.* His Deity is expressed in the words "Lord's Supper." All titles of Deity are in this one word, "Lord."

(2) *The Work of Christ.*

(a) *His Death.* The elements of the Lord's Supper portray this fact, for the body and blood are together in life, but separated in death.

(b) *His Resurrection and Second Coming.* "Till I come" does not mean "till I come from the grave," but "till I come from heaven." pg185

(3) *The Way of Salvation.*

(a) *It Assumes Our Guilt and Helplessness.*

(b) *It Emphasizes Substitution.* **(**"Broken for you")

(c) *It Reminds Us That Salvation Is Free.* (Given for you)

(d) *It Declares the Gift of Salvation Must Be Accepted.* (Take, eat and drink)

b. *Its Value Devotionally.*

(1) *We Come With Confession.*

(2) *We Come With Prayer.*

(3) *We Come With Consecration.*

(4) *We Come With Humility.*

(5) *We Come With Thanksgiving.*

(6) *The Whole Man Is Engaged.*

(a) *Ears to Hear His Invitation.*

(b) *Eyes to See Its Symbol.*

(c) *Hands That Handle the Elements.*

(d) *Mouth Which Eats the Elements.*

(e) *Body Which Assimilates the Element — Becomes Part*

of Us.

c. *Its Value Practically.*

(1) *It Is a Means of Grace.*

(2) *It Is a Means of Testimony.*

(3) *It Is a Means of Strengthening Faith.*

(4) *It Is a Means to Promote Our Love Toward Him.*

(5) *It is a Means to Promote Love Toward One Another.*

(6) *It Is a Means to Promote Fellowship.* This fellowship is one with another in Christ around the Lord's Table, He being the center.

(7) *It is a Means to Stimulate Holiness.*

d. *Its Value Prophetically.* If the Lord Jesus is not coming the second time, why celebrate the Lord's Supper? *He is coming!* Remember, in answer to those who ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?," we point to the Lord's Supper.[25] pg186

25 Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines,* 1954, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 211-228 (Cambron Institute release, 171-186).

Chapter 4 True Church History

There is no more thorough, accurate, and complete true church history than what can be absorbed from this chapter containing the expos' of Jesus' prophetic church history expounded by F.W. Grant and Harry Ironside, and the review of true Baptist history as expounded herein via Shakelford's "Compendium of Baptist History", and J. Newton Brown's "Memoritals of Baptist Martyrs." I cannot overemphasize the importance of this chapter for a Bible student who would comprehend ecclesiology as a whole and church history in truth. No study of ecclesilogy, the doctrine of the church, could be complete without such a revealing chapter, and, in the realm of systematic theology, no previous volume on ecclessiology included such a detailed true church history as this chapter contains.

The Prophetic History of The True Church

There could be no greater record of church history than was recorded by our Lord Jesus Christ himself, it is a prerecorded history that is truly His-Story. The Revelation of Jesus Christ contains two chapters recording his seven messages to seven churches that succinctly records two thousand years of church history.

Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation miraculously records true church history prophetically for first-century believers stepping into the church age: believers like Polycarp (69 AD – 155 AD) who, as the recorded Bishop of Smyrna, died as a martyr 23 February, 155 AD, when he was bound and burned at the stake, then stabbed when the fire failed to consume his body. It was prophetically recorded for first-century believers like Ignatius Theophorus (?? - 108 AD), recorded Bishop of Antioch, martyred while en route to Rome. These were not "church fathers", as Satan would put it in a later cover-story, for there are no "church fathers", only a singular church founder, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Dr. William P. Grady a renowned church historian and author who, following a promotion and moved to Philadelphia in 1974, was saved, baptized, and called to preach at the historic Marcus Hook Baptist Church (home church to Clarence Larkin[26]), then was grounded in dispensational premillenialism at the equally historic Philadelphia College of Bible (co-founded by C. I. Scofield, 1834-1921); Dr. Grady authored *"Final Authority", "What Hath God Wrought!", "How Satan Turned America Against God", "Given by Inspiration",* and *"Holy Ground"*.

Dr. Grady adds profound insights and detailed background information to his core subject of church history. His genius as touching Bible inspiration, and Israel's history from Bible time up to present day, is not overshadowed by any author. But what Dr. Grady expounds on church history is, in its core, by his own admission, to be found in the writings of Dr. Harry Ironside, and Dr. Ironside in kind, in his Lecture 4, expressly commends reading one of his mentors, F.W. Grant.

Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation miraculously records the history of the church historically for twentieth-century believers looking back on what has unfolded: Henry Allen "Harry" Ironside (1876 – 1951), a Canadian-American Bible teacher, preacher, theologian, and pastor, who authored *"Lectures on the Book of Revelation"* in 1920 and who pastored Moody Church in Chicago for twenty years expertly expounded on this history one-hundred years ago.

Dr. Ironside rightfully writes in his 1930 edition preface,

> ... the Great War and other colossal movements of the past five years have combined to so emphasize and clarify much that abler brethren had written in earlier years, that it now seems to me that a need exists for some later exposition of the last prophetic book of the Bible that would consider or include these many significant

26 Clarence Larkin (1850 – 1924) was an American Baptist pastor, Bible teacher, and writer. Larkin was converted to Christ at the age of 19 and the Clarence Larkin Books and Charts have been extremely helpful resources for Christians. Bible prophecy teachers today use prophecy knowledge directly or indirectly from Larkin, C. I. Scolfield and Rev "Doc" C.C. Gosey. Larkin's works and charts are found at: www.clarencelarkincharts.com/ Accessed 7/20/2025.

events.

Sober students of prophecy must be gratified to find that their position is only strengthened and their previous conclusions confirmed by recent happenings. On the other hand, those of the self-styled optimistic school, who have ever closed their eyes to the soles facts of prophecy, might well be humiliated to find their vain-glorious prognostications proven so utterly false and their confidence in human brotherhood, as a preventive of war and cruelty, shown to be a foolish hallucination that ignored the Word of God and the corruption of the human heart.[27]

Ironside's second lecture introduces this prophe-history of the church:

"He had in his right hand seven stars." The stars speak of ministry committed to His saints, as responsible to shine by His light and for Him in this world. "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). He holds the stars in His right hand. "Out of his mouth went forth a sharp two-edged sword." It is the Word of God (Heb. 4:12). Men are trifling with that two-edged sword, but they will find out soon that it is powerful and irresistible. …

In verse 19, we get the threefold division of the book of Revelation: "*Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter*" – or "after these things."

"*The things which thou hast seen*" are the things of chapter 1 – the *first* division of the book of Revelation.

"*The things which are*" follow in the next two chapters and make the *second* division. "The things which are" have to do with the current dispensation. The seven churches give us a picture of the whole professing church's history from the apostolic period to the coming of the Lord Jesus. These two chapters portray the condition of the church on earth in seven distinct periods. The church's history ends at the Rapture, when Jesus comes as the Bright and Morning Star. That event closes the current dispensation.

"*The things which shall be after these things,*" chapters 4 to the end, make the *third* and last division of the book – the things which shall take place after the church's history ends: the Great Tribulation, the kingdom, and the eternal state.[28]

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27 Ironside, H. A., "*Revelation: An Ironside Expository Commentary*", Kregel Publications, 1920, pg 9.

28 Ibid. pg 23-24.

The "Church History" that has been garnered and recorded by the Holy Roman Catholic Church, which is not holy nor catholic, is wholly tainted by the depravity of man and the diabolical hand of Satan himself. It records the history of the Catholic Church, it pretends "Church Fathers", it supposes that the Catholic Church wrote the Bible, and it calls Donatists, Montanists, Paulicians, Ana-Baptists et al., heretical infidels instead of genuine Bible believing, blood bought, born-again Christians. Always guard a study of church history with a differentiation from catholic church history.

No study of true church history could proceed without a study of what our Lord Jesus Christ taught in these two chapters of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and no study of true church history would be complete without a thorough review of the writings of John T. Christian's 1922 two volumes of "*A History of the Baptists*", J. A. Shakelford's 1892 "*Compendium of Baptist History, showing the origin and history of the Baptists, from the days of the Apostles to the present time, with an original chart, giving a comparative view of some of the denominations of Christians with which they have come in contact*", and J. Newton Brown's 1854 "*Memorials of Baptist Martyrs, with a Preliminary Historical Essay"*, wherein it is certified that true church history is indeed synonymous with Baptist church history.

These panoramic views of true church history are "briefly" covered in this chapter, with the intent that the true student pursue them to greater depth. Ironside wrote in introduction,

> And so we might go on for an hour, contrasting and comparing... but enough has been cited, I trust, to stir each interested believer to study for himself. What we get from our Bibles for ourselves is, in the presence of God, worth far more than all that another person can pass on to us. We may learn from each other, but it is best to take nothing for granted, but rather, like Ruth the Moabitess, to "beat out that (which we have) gleaned" (Ruth 2:17) through meditation and prayer."[29]

29 Ibid. pg 13

The Prophetic History of the Church, F.W. Grant.

Our Lord Jesus Christ prophetically gave us the course of the church age and it behooves a Bible student to study that prophecy and line it up with the church history that unfolded as seen in Grant's eight lectures.

F.W. Grant's 1902 book "*The Prophetic History of the Church, Evils Which Afflict Christendom and Their Remedy"*[30] was instrumental in framing the insights of Dr. Ironside's two lectures on the seven churches. For the sake of completeness Dr. Grant's eight lectures are given here in their entirety.

Lecture 1 - Spiritual Decline and the Judaizing of the Church

(Rev. ii. I-II).

We are going, beloved friends, if the Lord enable us, to look at the addresses to the Seven Churches--not indeed in detail, but more especially certain parts of of them--as representative of the state of Christendom as a whole from the time almost when the Lord left the earth until the time in which He comes again. Now, in the first place, it is only right that I should show you briefly what is my warrant for taking these addresses as applying in this way. I can only just indicate the reasons--the main one being the suitability of the application itself.

You find, then, that the Lord here is addressing, through His apostle, seven churches in Asia--a little district in the western part of what we call Asia Minor. But these seven churches are evidently taken up to represent the Church at large. In the first place, they are remarkable as being seven in number. It is a number which, as you know, runs through the book of Revelation. You have not only

30 Grant, F. W., "*The Prophetic History of the Church, Evils Which Afflict Christendom and Their Remedy*", New York Loizeaux Brothers, 1910, First Edition, 1902, public domain available at http://plymouthbrethren.org/series/6114 and http://www.gsbaptistchurch.com/theology/grant_prophetic_history_church.pdf and http://www.brethrenarchive.org/people/fw-grant/pamphlets/the-prophetic-history-of-the-church/ .

these seven churches, but seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven spirits of God, and other sevens, which everybody can see at once have a distinct significance as such. It is not a casualty that there are just seven. Now here we find the same number, which some of us will know to be one of the numbers which signify perfection, generally in a good sense, and indeed the perfection of Divine work. God completed everything in creation on the seventh day.

Again, to these seven churches the whole book of this prophecy is committed, evidently for us, and for all time, yet it is put into their hands; and thus they are made representatives of the Church at large.

Furthermore, the Lord presents Himself here in this chapter in the midst of the seven candlesticks. These candlesticks stand for the seven churches, as is said. There was a seven-branched candlestick in the tabernacle, or the temp1e; --here we have as it were, the seven branches separated from one another and standing alone. That seven-branched candlestick was the light, of the sanctuary--the light of the priests. It was significant of Christ by the Holy Ghost (through the Word, of course, the light of His people. In this scene in Revelation, His people are looked upon as the "light," not of the sanctuary, but "of the world," and the candlesticks stand each upon its own base, significant of their position of responsibility. But here again it is not merely among seven Asiatic churches that He walks, nor only those who have this position: the seven churches are but representatives of the whole.

Furthermore, the whole book is a "prophecy"- a prophecy which reaches down to the very end of time, and even into eternity itself a prophesy not of any local significance merely. Such an introduction, as merely concerned itself with a few churches in the apostles' time, whose memory for most would otherwise be entirely passed away, would, scarcely be in keeping with this character of the book itself. If they are prophecy, then the whole book evidently is one; and if prophetic of the condition of the Church at large, then how specially important for the servants of the Lord to whom He would show, for their own guidance, things that would shortly come to pass!

Then, furthermore, if you take the chapters themselves which contain these addresses, you find that in every one of them there is the most solemn appeal to "every one that hath an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Scarcely any part of Scripture has such constant, solemn injunction to attend to what is written. Surely, if we are to take the divine warning and admonition as applicable to ourselves, we must believe that these chapters have a very peculiar place in God's word, and a very peculiar application to us all. Written and handed down from one generation to another, all that have an ear to hear are exhorted to attend. But, after all, the most satisfactory evidence that these addresses do belong to the Church at all times is this, that we can trace that application in the actual facts of its history, and this it is which it will be my endeavour to set before you in these lectures.

Now, first of all, let us understand what is the character of the book we have before us. We have a distinct title--a thing not usual in the Word; you seldom have a title to any of the books of Scripture. The first two verses here are evidently that, and the title is, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." He calls it a "revelation." He says distinctly it is an "unveiling," or disclosure, of certain things shortly to come to pass. Instead of being something no one can understand, it is what God calls a "revelation."

We need not say that if God gave it to show these things to us, there will be no such obscurity about it as to defeat the object for which it is given. I venture to say, we shall not find it obscure, if we have honest hearts to receive it. You will find in the parable of the sower that it is the honest heart only that "understands." And then, also, it is a revelation to Christ's servants. It is to all, no doubt, but in that character. It is His servants that will have to do with the things. Their path will be in the midst of the things about which He is going to speak, and His servants will need to discern between the things which please or displease Him. But if we are not servants--if we have not that character, no doubt we shall find it hard; that is, if we seek speculative knowledge rather than practical.

To servants there is a distinct encouragement given with regard to hearing and reading the words of this prophecy: "Blessed is he

that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." If we could not understand them perfectly, I may say, and know without any doubt what these things apply to, how could we be expected to "keep the things written therein"? Because, if the thing is, after all, merely doubtful--what may or may not be so--it has no right in fact over you or me. We ought not to walk in doubtful paths. "Whatever is not of faith is sins"; and faith must have God's word to support and justify it. And therefore I say again, if there was not something that could be distinctly laid hold of, and learned, and understood in its application to what is around us, the things in the midst of which we are living, we could not possibly be expected to keep "the things written therein."

Let us now look at the addresses themselves. In the first place, to the "Church at Ephesus." We have the Lord speaking in words simple enough, but which are as solemn as they are practical for us all to-day. Amidst much commendation of them,--and the Lord commends all He can,--He has this to say to them: "Thou hast left thy first love." "I know thy works, and, thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love" (vers. 2-4).

That is the commencement of decline everywherewith every one of us; and if this applies to any one of us at this time, let us remember that we are "fallen," and can never be right until restored to that first state.

I want you to notice how much the Lord can commend even where He finds such serious fault. "I know thy works," He says; but not merely works,--" thy labour." That is energetic work. But again, labour in the midst of a scene like this is apt to break down under the disappointment and discouragement incident to it. The Ephesians had not broken down; they had "patience," quiet endurance. They went on labouring in spite of discouragement. Then, again, patience is apt to degenerate into toleration of the evil which we are so constantly meeting. They, however, "could not

bear them which were evil." It was commendation of them that they showed no such liberality as people often now would have. Such toleration is inconsistent with the love of truth and good.

Evil, too, was showing itself in high places already. It is remarkable to see that at the very commencement there were those already "saying they were apostles, and who were not." Let us mark that: it will be important to remember it in another connection by and by. We know what that pretension ripened into in later times, and that it still exists. We must not be daunted by it any more than the Ephesians were: "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."

Furthermore, they had borne and suffered, and for Christ's name had laboured. There was true love to Christ: there was not the first freshness of it, but there was true love to Christ underlying it all. There was much fruit; but the Lord had this to say: "Nevertheless I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love." There is no "somewhat": that would look as if it were a little thing that the Lord was speaking of, whereas it was as great a thing as could well be. After that, it is solemn to see that even Balaam-teachers were but comparatively a "few things" more. But He never calls this "somewhat." The Lord is jealous of our hearts--of our love, because He loves us; and it is not a little thing for Him to see our love declining-to see the first freshness of it gone.

I want to put it in a very practical way - I want to ask you who, by your coming here tonight, take the position of Christians - of those who have known Christ, - I want to ask you, as I would ask myself, whether you know what "first love" is, and whether you have this "first love" now? There is this characteristic of it - and I have no doubt your memories will justify me here - that first love is an engrossing thing.

You know how any new thing is apt to take possession of one. It has passed into a proverb. But in the case of first love it is pre-eminently characteristic of it that it absorbs the subject of it. If we remember what it was when first of all our eyes were opened to see what Christ was, and to call Him ours, - our Saviour, - to receive what He had done for us, I think we shall confess a common experience; that for a while at least, short or long as it may be, His

love possessed us; there was nothing else to contest the place with Him. And if it is otherwise now - if we have got down to a quieter and more moderate estimate of Him, and can find room and time for many an object of which Christ is only one among others - we may think it perhaps wisdom even, rightly surviving the heat of youth, when He is saying to us, "Thou art fallen, thou hast left thy .first love." That is what you find, for instance, in the apostle Paul, who, I believe, never relinquished his from first to last. What you find in the Epistle to the Philippians is that his love had that engrossing character. He gave himself up to the object of it; very deliberately too, but entirely and undistractedly. He had "one thing" before him; one idea possessed him. It made him, no doubt, what people would call narrow and one-sided. Nevertheless these are the men - to put it in that way - that make their mark in the world. Few men but get distracted with a number of objects; while, on the other hand, if you find a man bent upon one thing, absorbed with the desire, you will find generally (of course, I cannot say universally in a world like this) that that man in a great measure realizes his desire. What he pursues he pursues earnestly, concentrating his faculties upon his object, and he succeeds. If it is money, he will get money, and so on. For success, in other things at least, I suppose every one will grant there is nothing like entire occupation with one thing. Now it is distinctly this that the Lord claims for Himself. We may easily imagine, as love grows cool, that we are only acquiring wisdom; that we were extreme and enthusiastic; that the natural heat of first days is passed and ought to pass away; that we are only wiser, when in fact we are less spiritual and less devoted, - I surely believe, less happy too. For, oh, there is nothing like the happiness of an absorbing and responsive affection, which eternal and infinite love has awakened towards itself. And I say again, the apostle Paul at least was not one of these prudent ones; and he says distinctly that we are to follow him as he followed Christ!

For him to live was Christ, and Christ sufficed for him. These are what you find together in the Philippians. Take care you keep them together. In the first chapter you have a man for whom to live was Christ; and that man, you find in the last chapter, Christ

perfectly sufficed. He had learned, in whatever state he was, to be content; he knew both how to be abased and how to abound; everywhere, and in all things, he was instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need. He was not elated by prosperity nor cast down by adversity: always, in whatever state, content. How? He reveals the secret: "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." Now, do not imagine that every Christian can say that. Can any of us say so? It is of no use, of course, to urge what Christ can do. Christ can do everything; but the question is, do we practically so know Christ as to be able to say, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me"? If not, what is the reason? Failure as to the first principle - "For me to live is Christ."

Fruit may look very beautiful on the outside, and yet, after all, not be ripe for the Master's taste; so here a great deal of fruit there was which looked fair enough, but it had not hung in the sun enough. It was not ripe for the Master's use. Now, we are not in a right state to judge anything - even to discern what evil is - except our hearts are really right with Him. The Lord is giving us here what was the root of all the evil we find afterward. For if our hearts lose their freshness of love to Christ, - that is to say, if Christ has less of our hearts than once He had, - something else will surely come in to fill the gap. If nature, as they say, abhors a vacuum, our hearts surely do; and if Christ is not filling them, the world, in some shape or other, will be brought in to fill the void. It surely will be so. But then, there is no satisfaction there. What is the world? If you take the apostle's own estimate (or rather God's by him), it is this: "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world." Lust and pride; and that is all! Does lust satisfy? Lust is just unsatisfied desire. Does the pride of life? Alas! the pride of life is but twin brother of envy - another form of lust. And then, "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." Is not that enough of itself to destroy satisfaction? Now if what I pursue is only lust, the result is, the void becomes greater, and I become, alas, - if the Lord does not come in and stop me, - only more reckless and infatuated in the pursuit. One step of departure leads to another; and what

about the word of God, and its wholesale judgment of the world and all that belongs to it? Shall I take it truthfully? Shall I wish to apply it in its full force to the very things I am seeking after? The necessary result is that my judgment is warped as to what the world is, and I find it hard to believe that evil is just as evil as God's word would have it. "Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" So the course hastens downward. Save God alone, nothing can stop one in it.

Do not wonder, then, that you have here the root of all the evil that has sprung up in the Church, and do not let us sit down and judge this thing and that thing in what we find around us, while at the same time we have the root of it all unjudged in our own souls. I do press it on you, and on myself alike, that if Christ has not our hearts fully, - if our business, our pleasure, our whole life in fact, is not really, truthfully, honestly devoted to Him (I am not speaking now of realized absolute consistency, we all have to own much inconsistency, but still) if to give Him all is not the purpose of our hearts, there is really no proper fellowship with Him, and of course no power to judge truly what evil is. To have part with Him, He must cleanse, as He said: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." But if we put our feet into His blessed hands, we must put them there without reserve. If He washes, it must be according to His thought of what defilement is; and if He does not cleanse, we can have no part with Him. He cannot bear fellowship with evil; but as a consequence, our fellowship with Him is gone. The least reserve - the least deliberate keeping back from Christ what is rightfully His - these hearts that He toiled so for and has taken so much pains to win - the least conscious keeping back from Him is, so to speak, fatal. The freshness of our souls is gone. I am sure, as we go on with Him, He will show us more and more what this and that is, and that the judging all these things is more or less a practical work. Our eyes clear more and more as we are with Him, and we learn more and more to call things by their names, and see them as they really are. While all that is true, and while there is thus a growth in practical sanctification, yet the surrender that He calls for from us, from the beginning and throughout, is an entire and unreserved surrender.

There is no use in our going on with these addresses except we can honestly say, "Well, at any rate, my heart's desire is to give Christ all." It is no use trying to go further else. You cannot learn God's truth as a school-boy learns his lesson. It is not merely for the head; it is for the heart. The eyes to see it are of the heart, and not the head; and I put it to your heart as to where you are. It is solemn to think of its being Ephesus that is thus addressed. Had it been Corinth or Galatia, we should have said, the evil began with them from the beginning almost. But this is Ephesus, the very first, as one might say, of apostolic churches, and the one to whom especially had been committed the deposit of Church-truth. Failure here leaves us to ask, And where not, if at Ephesus? And in truth, if we only look at the epistles to the various churches, we shall have no difficulty in seeing that long before apostolic days were over, the fresh, bright days of the primitive Church were gone. The warnings and reproofs of the early epistles change to solemn and emphatic statements in the latter. At Rome all sought their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. "All they that are in Asia have departed from me," says the apostle to Timothy. The mystery of iniquity was already working. In John's days already there were many antichrists who had gone out from them; and, inside still, such as Diotrephes resisting openly the yet living apostle, and casting true brethren out of the Church.

The prophetic warnings carry this on to the very "last days" of Christendom. Evil men and seducers should wax worse and worse. False teachers should bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and many follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth would be evil spoken of. The "last days" would be specially "perilous times " - men having the form of godliness and denying the power thereof. And the man of sin, the heading up of evil already at work, would crown the final apostasy, and receive judgment from the Lord's own hand at His appearing.

We are prepared, then, to find the aspect of things getting darker as we proceed with these addresses. Even in spite of corrective measures, which the Lord's faithful love could not but provide, if even yet they might be roused up to a sense of their

condition, and return, truly and effectually, to Himself.

This discipline it is we find accordingly taking effect in the next epistle to the church in Smyrna, - the persecution which everybody knows broke out in the days of the heathen emperors. The "tribulation ten days" has been referred to thus by those who had no thought of any application of these addresses to the state of the Church at large. The justification of it by the history is undoubted in this case. But here you find that the Lord comes in, in the most gracious and tender way, though not to take them out of it, because He had His own purpose in their going through it. He wanted them to learn from the world how thoroughly in opposition to God it was. He would force them, as it were, by the great outward pressure, back to Himself, that there they might learn, as there only they could, the true character of that which was creeping in; and therefore He lets them go through it, bidding them only be "faithful unto death." He had been so; had "resisted unto blood, striving against sin." He had gone through it, and taken away its sting. He gives them the assurance of His sympathy. By and by He would give them the crown of life. Individually, multitudes were thus faithful. Nevertheless we must not imagine that in general the state of things improved. On the contrary, I want you to notice that there is a class of people spoken of here who are very distinctly brought into notice, and whom the Lord as thoroughly reprobates. If we have skill in reading the symbolic language which is everywhere here employed, we shall have no difficulty in regard to who they are, or to their place at this time in ecclesiastical history. The class of people which He refers to are depicted in these vivid words: "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN."

He does not speak of these, then, as the people He is addressing; but do not let us imagine that on that account they were outside, and not in fact an existing party in the Church. It is in accord with the character of these epistles that the Lord does not address these. It is just the same with the Nicolaitans, the followers of Balaam, and the woman Jezebel, who must be all admitted to have been inside the professing Church. But He could not reckon those who

were tools of Satan as among those who had an ear to hear. That they called themselves Jews too does not imply that they did not profess to be Christians also, for in fact they might be confounding Judaism and Christianity together; and this we know took place almost from the beginning, and the apostle Paul had everywhere to resist it. But these are not Jews, although they say they are. Had they been such, they would scarcely have needed to profess it so. Now Satan is the great adversary of Christ, the one continually seeking to destroy His work, as Christ, on the other hand, comes to destroy the works of the devil. This was the synagogue of Satan, a Jewish party, the tool of Satan in his effort to destroy Christ's work. They were not Jews really at all, but people taking Jewish ground, the ground of the synagogue, and blaspheming (or slandering) the true followers of Christ. It is slander, not persecution, such as from the world outside, that they are charged with; and the name by which the Lord calls them may instruct us sufficiently as to their real character. The "synagogue" is the Jewish word for their gathering, as the Christian word everywhere used is "assembly." The word "church," we need scarcely say, is a word that really has no existence anywhere in the word of God: it is the product of later times. This is well known, and there is nothing peculiar in saying so. Everyone who is acquainted with the original will allow it. At the same time it is of the greatest importance to keep this clearly in mind. If I speak of the "assembly," of course it could not possibly be confounded with walls, with bricks and mortar; yet that is one notorious abuse of the word "church."

Then, again, if I speak of the Christian assembly as it is in Scripture, i. e., the "assembly which is Christ's body," I cannot think of anything else than the gathering of all His members. Church membership is nothing else or other than membership of the body of Christ, and there cannot be many bodies of Christ, but only one, and that containing all true Christians. How, then, can we speak of the Church teaching, or anything of that sort? What is this Church that teaches? The Church is the whole company of teachers and taught alike. What they call church-teaching is only the teaching of certain teachers in past generations, accepted more or

less widely in after times. But that is not the Church at all. The restoration (were it possible) of the true word "assembly" would destroy many of these fancies at the very outset.

Now, let us mark, there is a difference between the Jewish and the Christian words. The word for the New Testament assembly, "ecclesia," is derived from two words meaning "called out." It is not merely a gathering; it is a gathering of people who are distinctly "called out" from others. On the other hand, "synagogue" is a mere "gathering together." It is no gathering out; and this very precisely distinguishes the Jewish from the Christian gathering.

Now in order to see what that means, let us look briefly at what Judaism was. It was a probationary system, in which God was trying man, to see if He could get anything out of him that He could accept - trying man, to see if, by any assistance He could give him, he could by any possibility make out a righteousness for himself, and stand before Him on the basis of his own doings. In Judaism God gave man the law as the measure of obedience which He required, in order that he might see His face and live. But he never did see God's face, and never could see it, on those terms. The moment you see what the law is, you cannot have any doubt that it must effectually exclude man from God's presence forever. Everybody at once will say: "If I have got to love God with all my heart and mind and strength, and my neighbour as myself, I have not done it, do not do it, and can not do it." Now, if these are the terms upon which man is to stand before God by his own work, then it is absolutely impossible for a man to come into His presence in that way. He is certainly excluded; and that is exactly what the law was given for. Says the apostle: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). That was not merely the actual effect of it, but it was the designed effect of it. Its sentence says, "There is none righteous; no, not one."

That sentence was the end of the trial - the end of man's probation. It is the end of the trial when sentence is given. The apostle points out to the Jews that sentence had now been given - given by their own law. The trial of man as to this was ended. It is

no use for a moment speaking as if the trial were going on, after sentence has been given. "There is none righteous" - Abraham or Moses, for that matter. The trial is over, the sentence is given, and that is the issue of the law - its foreseen and designed issue - every mouth stopped, and man guilty. I know it is very hard for us to receive this, the law being God's holy, good and righteous law. But the truth is, that the very issue of it as a trial lay in this, that God was taking man up on his own ground. If you take all the forms of religion everywhere, you will find, some way or other, they are law-keeping - doing something in order to live. It is the universal principle of what is called "natural religion " - it is the principle of works for acceptance with God; and no wit or wisdom of man has been able to devise another way. That is exactly what Scripture says as to the law. It was the "principles" or "elements of the world." It is what the world everywhere recognizes and acts upon, and rightly as between man and man. Laws are necessary to keep the world in any tolerable condition. We could not live but for them. Now what man finds so necessary in this way he naturally takes up as the principle between God and himself, and even there he is in measure right. The trouble is, he does not know, and would not like to believe, that on that ground he is simply lost, and nothing else; and thus he would bring the measure of what is required down to what be believes to be the measure of his ability, and thus evade the righteous and inevitable sentence.

The law, then, chimes in with the natural thoughts of mans heart everywhere. But he finds it hard to realize that God gave that law simply for the purpose of condemning; for he does not know the heart of God or the resources of His love; and if the law condemn, he sees nothing beyond. All his effort is therefore to escape judgment; but this he cannot, for God is holy and cannot pare down His law; and, on the other hand, no paring down will suffice to give man assurance before God. If sin be a matter of judgment with God, how can man appear before Him with it? The truth is, he is lost; but he will not face the truth. There was one thing, therefore, characteristic of Judaism, as there is one thing characteristic of Christianity. In Judaism it was characteristic that God was hidden; while the one thing characteristic of Christianity

is, that God is revealed. "The Lord has said that He would dwell in thick darkness," says Solomon. "God is in the light," says the apostle. "No man hath seen God at any time: the Only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." "He that hath seen Me," says the Son Himself, "hath seen the Father." Judaism and Christianity are thus in essential contrast. The unrent veil, the way into the holiest not made manifest, God essentially unknown - that is Judaism; and the very names by which God is called show this: He is the Almighty, the Eternal, (perhaps the nearest interpretation of Jehovah,) the Highest. None of these names tell me His heart. The Almighty! How will He use His power? Eternity, Sovereignty-all these are not Himself. But the Son, His well-beloved, comes into the scene-becomes a Man - to be near to man - and He reveals the Father. There I know Himself.

At the second giving of the law, when, together with law, God spoke of mercy, a gleam of the glory lighted up Moses' face; still it was Jehovah only who appeared. And while it is true He declares Himself as "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin," He has to add, (because it was still law, which the tables of stone, word for word, again contained,) "and that will by no means clear the guilty." But then, what hope for man, who surely is that? Although God could thus say, as to the wicked man, as He does in Ezekiel, "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive," still the unrelaxed measure there is still law. Mercy might deal with his past sins and give him a new beginning, but the new leaf he turned over, could he keep it unblotted? Could he ever bring to God the unblotted leaf which He required? Alas, never; he never could save his soul. And the law in its mildest form only made man's deep depravity the more apparent. It was what the apostle calls it, "the ministration of death," and the "ministration of condemnation." And therefore Moses, at the mount, still only saw God's back parts, and not His face. Therefore, also, the unrent veil through all the days of Judaism still showed that "the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest." What was made manifest was

but the uselessness of all man's efforts to see God and live.

Now as to the essential characteristic of Christianity.

First. It was not the modification of law: it did not come to make that still milder. On the contrary, the Christian revelation maintains the law in its utmost rigor. It is a Christian apostle who insists that "if a man keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James ii. 10). And it is another apostle who tells us that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"(Gal. iii. 10).

Christianity maintains, then, not abrogates, the righteous condemnation of all upon that ground - upon the ground of works of any kind, that is; for every point of man's duty is covered by the law. Sentence has been given; the trial of man is ended. He is "ungodly;" and more, he is "without strength" too. Nothing in the way of goodness or righteousness can be expected from him. What, then, remains? Why, God can show out Himself. He could not do it as long as the trial was going on. Man would naturally have said, I have performed my part of the agreement; I have kept the covenant. Therefore God had to keep His face veiled to man continually. But as soon as there was no doubt at all that man never could make his way in, never could stand before God at all, then, - at the time when man's sin had reached its height, when the Son of God hung dead upon the cross man had given Him, when the carnal mind had shown out thus its enmity against God in the completest way, - God's own hand rent the veil from top to bottom; and by that precious bloodshedding there was a way made to go in to God, and for God, on the other hand, to come out to meet man. Yes, a Man indeed found His way into the presence of God, and sat down there by virtue of His work; but it was the Man, God's fellow (Zech. xiii. 7). And the way by which He entered was henceforth a way of access, consecrated and made safe for sinners by the virtue of His precious blood.

That is what characterizes Christianity. God has come in with His grace in a way independent of man's works altogether. There is no more any mixture allowed or possible. As the apostle says, "If it

be of grace, it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace" (Rom. xi. 6). There is nothing more emphatic than that: you cannot mix these two principles. The gospel of Christianity is grace. God is not requiring from man except that he receive what He offers. He is not asking for righteousness; He is "ministering" it. The sinners exposed and condemned by the law are by the gospel welcomed and set at rest. He who by law could not clear the guilty, by the work of His Son justifies the ungodly. It is God that justifieth. Because "Christ died for the ungodly," He "justifies the ungodly." We are able, then, by the blood of Christ, to go right into God's presence and see Him face to face. And God who was behind the veil and "in thick darkness," is, as the apostle John says, "in the light." And that glory out of which we were once shut, becomes our permanent and peaceful home. But now mark, if that be the case, Christianity at once brings people into a distinct place of acceptance with God and relationship to Him, which Judaism never possibly could give. It brings out, as distinguished from the world, a people reconciled and at peace with God. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He right to become sons of God" (John i. 12, margin).

In Christianity you have thus the "calling out" of those who are able to take their place as children of God. In Judaism there was the mixing up, as people might say now, of the Church and world together. There was no separation, and none possible. In Judaism men were yet being tried, and nobody could take his place as a child of God in the true sense, as born of Him. Nobody could call God in that sense his Father. The apostle tells us in the fourth of Galatians that the true children, though heirs, were in their time of nonage, "under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the Father," and "differing nothing from servants, though lords of all." At school, with the schoolmaster, children say "sir," or "master," and not "father." So also in that condition they would say: "enter not into judgment with Thy servant, 0 Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. cxliii. 2).

True, God was a Father to Israel; but Israel was a nation in the flesh - a mingled company of sinners and saints together. There was, there could be, no marking out the one from the other. There

was no assembly of saints distinct from sinners. The only calling out was of Israel from the Gentiles, the type only, and in some sense the very contrast, of the calling out of Christians from the world. Thus in Judaism there was complete mingling. In Christianity there is now the separation of God's children, who are exhorted distinctly to come out and be separate from unbelievers, in order really to enjoy their place as that (2 Cor. V1. 14-18). Judaism was not in this sense a "calling out," but a mere "synagogue - a "gathering together." There, in the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of John, where Caiaphas unconsciously prophesies that Christ should "die for that nation" (Israel), the apostle adds, "and not for that nation only, but also that He might gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." That was one purpose of the death of Christ, that He might be able now to gather together in one the children of God scattered, in fact, by Judaism itself. The Church of God is the assembly of those who, no longer on trial, have the place already of God's children, and, as baptized of the Spirit, Christ's members; whose acceptance is ascertained and settled forever - of grace and not of works, nor mingled with them. The bringing in of Judaism again into the Church was the bringing in of distance between man and God. It was putting back the veil which God had rent on the cross - putting God in the darkness again, and man still under trial, to find his way to meet God and stand before Him if he could. It was putting' distance between God and man, of necessity, and covering the blessed face of God which He had revealed in Christ. Call it High Church or what you please, that is what it still is. Of necessity, therefore, it is the remingling of the Church and world together. Because, if they are on trial, nobody knows which is which, you cannot separate saint from sinner, all are together on trial; you cannot, then, separate the children of God from the children of the world.

Now, if you look around, that is what you will find exactly almost everywhere. The results of that awful change from assembly to synagogue are everywhere visible. In the epistle to the Galatians we see what was coming into the Church in the apostle's time; and you know how earnest he is about it: "I would they were

even cut off," he says, and warns them, if any one came and brought a different gospel, (not another, for there were not two,) he was to be "anathema," - accursed.

That Judaism has got judgment in the Church of God means nothing less than the destruction of it in its true character. The first point of departure (after what we were looking at in Ephesus) is the loss, in the true sense, of the very Church itself; and this was before uninspired church history began. Startling to say, we never have the true Church historically existent as that any more. If an ecclesiastical historian can say "the annals of the Church are the annals of hell," we may surely own that what he is speaking of is not the Church (except in responsibility), but the synagogue of Satan! Is the term too strong? Alas - while Christians are no doubt scattered through it - is the church of Rome, or of Constantine, or even further back, anything better as a whole than the miserable travesty of the true Church, Christ's body? Under whom but under Satan have men wrought to make it so? And every fresh departure from the truth is some fresh growth, in fact, of Judaism. No wonder, since it is man's religion naturally, and he has never been able to produce another. Baptized it may be, and transformed outwardly, no doubt. Men may be called Christians, although they hardly dare call themselves so; "members of Christ," made so by a sacrament; bishops may give the Holy Ghost as freely as apostles ever did, if words may be taken for divine realities! Alas, under it all, and at no great depth, the beautiful form is hollow as a mask, - a whitened sepulchre of impurity itself. Only, - so many are defiled - it has become the fashion, and is not to be talked of; he that departs from iniquity makes himself a prey. Look around, beloved friends, and at least it will not be hard to recognize the forms of Judaism, nor to hear the language of the synagogue, again set up. Doubtless they call themselves Christians, who, if you ask them are they Christ's, will think you have no business to inquire; and if you set up to be His, will wonder at your presumption. If you have no doubt, they will doubt for you. With them, men are still under trial, and they do not know how it will turn out. As in Judaism, you find everything to act upon man through his eye, his ear, his emotional nature: architecture and imposing spectacles; music and

oratorical appeals; everything to wake up the religious sentiment in a being who is not wholly "lost." As I have said, although called Christians, you are not to judge if they be really such. They are church members; but the true Church is invisible, and they know not where it is. They have practical working churches which do well enough. Have they eternal life? - they would be afraid to say. Forgiveness of sins? - they do not know. Are they children of God? - who knows? It is charity to suppose they are, and they will accredit you if you will accredit them. Is not that what you find on every side almost? A mixture of the Church and the world follows, of course. Separation is reprobated. It is Pharisaism - pretending to be better than your neighbour.

All that is just really what we have here. It is the world gathered together, as the substitute for God's gathering of His own. God is gathering people out of the world; a people who are "not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world." As to the Church, it is practically gone. The world of necessity comes in like a flood, and the children of God are swamped. They call it the "religious world," and so it is, although believers there are in it, many - overridden, bemired, and in bondage; a bondage which they feel, while they cannot break through it. If there be any fundamental difference between the Church and the world, what must ensue from that mixture? The Church becomes the world; and the world the Church. "All that is of the worlds' is necessarily found in it. To this day "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," are all there, and flourishing; and who rules over the world ? Who is its god and prince?

I close here to-night with just an application. You will, I hope, not misunderstand me, or think that I am confounding all Christendom together under the awful title we have been examining. God's own Church still exists, thank God. Its members are to be found on all sides, though, alas, scattered, and largely refusing true union with one another for the sake of alliances which, if they had eyes to see, they would recognize as of the world. I do not forget that we of this day are heirs to evils which come to us sanctioned by great names, and by dear ones. I must not shrink on that account from calling them by their true titles: I am

bound the more to do it. It is those who lent themselves in very early times to change the true Church of God into a Jewish gathering upon legal principles, confounding His people and the world together, whom He denounces as Satan's synagogue. But alas, the attempt was largely successful. Men slept. The sad results are with us today. The practice and the principles remain - widely diffused, long and almost universally accepted. The true Church has disappeared - is invisible. Of God's light for the world a few scattered lights appear, dim enough amid the darkness.

How far to yourselves or in general the principles I have described apply, you must discern for yourselves.

Only let us be honest and be earnest. Let us not scruple to call evil that, because good men have practiced it. And what we see as evil, let us refuse with our whole hearts. Let us refuse to call law gospel - to sanction it or listen to it. Let us remember the apostle's fearless and scathing words; - had I used such to-night, what would people say? Let us refuse, too, complicity with what has changed the face of the professing Church, until the features of Christ's spouse are no more visible. Let us refuse the yoke with unbelievers, even though they be baptized and orthodox unbelievers. It is the Lord says, not I, that we must do so that He may be, practically, to us the Father that He is. With these words let us close: "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ?" (an unbeliever). "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols, for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 14-18).

Lecture 2 - Nicolatianism; or, The Rise and Growth of Clerisy

(Rev. II. 12-17)

We are now going to look carefully at that fifteenth verse: "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."

This next stage of the Church's journey in its departure, alas, from truth may easily be recognized historically. It applies to the time when, after having passed through the heathen persecution, (and the faithfulness of many an Antipas was brought out by it,) it got publicly recognized and established in the world. The characteristic of this epistle is,- although I do not now dwell upon it, I hope to take it up another time,- the Church dwelling where Satan's throne is. "Throne" it should be, not "seat."[31] Now Satan has his throne, not in hell, (which is his prison, and where he never reigns at all,) but in the world. He is expressly called the "prince of this world." To dwell where Satan's throne is, is to settle down in the world, under Satan's government, so to speak, and protection. That is what people call the establishment of the Church. It took place in Constantine's time. Although amalgamation with the world had been growing for a long time more and more decided, yet it was then that the Church stepped into the seats of the old heathen idolatry. It was what people call the triumph of Christianity; but the result was that the Church had the things of the world now, as never before, in secure possession: the chief place in the world was hers, and the principles of the world everywhere pervaded her.

The very name of "Pergamos" intimates that. It is a word (without the particle attached to it, which is itself significant) meaning "marriage;" and the Church's marriage before Christ

31 No disrespect to F. W. Grant, but when he supposes that he knows more than the fifty-seven highly skilled linguists, employed and paid by King James from 1603 through 1611, divided into six companies which met in cities of Cambridge, Westminster, and Oxford, as they, under the unction of the Holy Spirit of God, took seven years to translate God's inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Old Testament and New Testament books into an authorized Holy Bible which answered only to the original Hebrew and Greek! Well when he supposes them wrong and himself correct, he is in error.

comes to receive her to Himself is necessarily unfaithfulness to Him to whom she is espoused. It is the marriage of the Church and the world which the epistle to Pergamos speaks of - the end of a courtship which had been going on long before.

There is something, however, which is really preliminary to this,- mentioned in the very first address - which I shall take up tonight, and which really comes in place here. I could not so well bring it in when we were looking at the address to Ephesus, because there it is evidently incidental, and does not characterize the state of things. In the address to Ephesus the Lord says: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate" (ii. 6). Here it is more than the "deeds" of the Nicolaitans. There are now not merely "deeds," but "doctrine." And the Church, instead of repudiating it, was holding with it. In the Ephesian days they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, but in Pergamos they "had," and did not reprobate, those who held the doctrine.

The serious question, then, is, How shall we interpret this? I answer that the word "Nicolaitans" is the only thing really which we have to interpret it by. People have tried very hard to show that there was a sect of the Nicolaitans, but it is owned by writers now, almost on all sides, to be very doubtful. Nor can we conceive why, in epistles of a prophetic character - which I trust I have shown these to have - there should be such repeated and emphatic mention of a mere obscure sect, about which people can tell us little or nothing, and that seems manufactured to suit the passage before us. The Lord solemnly denounces it: "which thing I hate." It must have a special importance with Him, and be of moment in the Church's history - little apprehended as it may have been. And another thing which we have to remember is, that it is not the way of Scripture to send us to Church histories or to any history at all, in order to interpret its sayings. God's Word is its own interpreter, and we have not to go elsewhere in order to find out what is there. Otherwise it becomes a question of learned men searching and finding out for those who have not the same means or abilities - applications which must be taken on their authority alone. God does not leave us to that sort of thing. Besides, it is the ordinary

way in Scripture, and especially in passages of a symbolical character, such as is the part before us, for the names to be significant. I need not remind you how abundantly in the Old Testament this is the case; and in the New Testament, although less noticed, I cannot doubt but that there is the same significance throughout. Here, if we are left simply to the name, I think the name alone is sufficiently startling and instructive. Of course, to those who spoke the language used the meaning would be no hidden or recondite thing, but as apparent as those of Bunyan's allegories.

It means, then, "conquering the people." The last part of the word (Laos) is the word used in Greek for "people," and it is the word from which the commonly used term "Laity" is derived. The Nicolaitans were just those: "subjecting, putting down the laity," the mass of Christian people, in order unduly to lord it over them.

There is another word which is very striking in this connection, and found in this very address, side by side with this; a word quite alike to this "Nicolaitans," although it is a Hebrew word and not a Greek; as you have the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, so you have the "doctrine of Balaam;" and as Nicolaitans means "conquering the people," Balaam means "destroying the people." You have pointed out what he "taught" Balak. Balaam's doctrine was "to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication." For this purpose he enticed them to mixture with the nations, from which God had carefully separated them. That needful separation broken down was their destruction, so far as it prevailed. In like manner, we have seen the Church to be called out from the world, and it is only too easy to apply the Divine type in this case. But here we have a confessedly typical people, with a corresponding significant name, and in such close connection as naturally to confirm the reading of the similar word Nicolaitans" as similarly significant. I shall have to speak more of this at another time, if the Lord will.

Let us notice now the development of Nicolaitanism. It is first of all, certain people who have this character, and who - I am merely translating the word - first take the place of superiors over the people. Their "deeds" show what they are. There is no

"doctrine" yet. But it ends, in Pergamos, with the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. The place is assumed now to be theirs by right. There is a doctrine, a teaching about it, received at least by some, and to which the Church at large - nay, true souls also on the whole- have become indifferent. Now what has come between these two things - the 'deeds' and the 'doctrine'? It is what we looked at last time - the rise of a party whom the Lord marks out as those who said they were Jews and were not, but who were the synagogue of Satan - the adversary's attempt (alas, too successful) to Judaize the Church.

I was trying to show you last time what the characteristics of Judaism are. It was a probationary system, a system of trial, in which it was to be seen if man could produce a righteousness for God. We know the end of the trial, and that God pronounced "none righteous; no, not one." And only then it was that God could manifest His grace. As long as He was putting man under trial He could not possibly open the way to His own presence and justify the sinner there. He had, as long as this trial went on, to shut him out. For on that ground nobody could see God and live. Now, the very essence of Christianity is that all are welcomed in. There is an open door and ready access, where the blood of Christ entitles every one, however much a sinner, to draw near to God, and to find at His hand justification (of the) ungodly. To see God in Christ is not to die, but live. And what further is the consequence of this? Those who have come thus to Him - those who have found the way of access through the peace - speaking blood into His presence, learned what He is in Christ, and been justified before God - are able to take, and taught to take, a place distinct from all others, as now His - children of the Father, members of Christ, His body. That is the Church, a body called out, separate from the world.

Judaism, on the other hand, necessarily mixed all together. Nobody there can take such a place with God. Nobody can cry "Abba, Father," really; therefore there could not be any separation. This had been once a necessity, and of God, no doubt. But now, Judaism being set up again, after God had abolished it, it is no use to urge that it was once of Him; its setting up again was the too successful work of the enemy against this gospel and against this

Church. He brands these Judaizers as the "synagogue of Satan."

Now you can understand at once, when the Church in its true character was practically lost sight of, when Church members meant people baptized by water instead of by the Holy Ghost, or when the baptism of water and of the Holy Ghost were reckoned one, (and this very early became accepted doctrine,) then, of course, the Jewish synagogue was practically again set up. It became more and more impossible to speak of Christians being at peace with God or saved. They were hoping to be, and sacraments and ordinances became means of grace to ensure, as far as might be, a far-off salvation.

Let us see how far this would help on the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. It is plain that when, and as, the Church sank into the synagogue, the Christian people became practically what of old the Jewish had been. Now, what was that position? As I have said, there was no real drawing near to God at all. Even the high priest, who (as a type of Christ) entered into the holiest once a year, on the day of atonement, had to cover the mercy-seat with a cloud of incense, that he might not die. But the ordinary priests could not enter there at all, but only into the outer holy place; while the people in general could not come in even there. And this was expressly designed as a witness of their condition. It was the result of failure on their part; for God’s offer to them, which you may find in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus, was this: "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice in deed, and keep my covenant, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."

They were thus conditionally offered equal nearness of access to God - they should be all priests. But this was rescinded, for they broke the covenant; and then a special family is put into the place of priests, the rest of the people being put into the background, and only able to draw near to God through these.

Thus a separate and intermediate priesthood characterized Judaism; and, for the same reason, what we should call now missionary work there was none. There was no going out to the world in this way; no provision, no command to preach the law at

all. What, in fact, could they say? That God was in the thick darkness? That no one could see Him, and live? It is surely evident there was no "good news" there. Judaism had no true gospel. The absence of the evangelist and the presence of the intermediate priesthood told the same sorrowful story, and were in perfect keeping with each other.

Such was Judaism. How different, then, is Christianity! No sooner had the death of Christ rent the veil and opened a way of access into the presence of God than at once there was a gospel, and the new order is, "Go out into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." God is making Himself known, and "is He the God of the Jews only?" Can you confine the gospel of Christ within the bounds of a nation? No, the fermentation of the new wine would burst the bottles.

The intermediate priesthood has, by the gospel, now been done away; for all Christian people are priests now to God. What was conditionally offered to Israel is now an accomplished fact in Christianity. We are a kingdom of priests; and in the wisdom of God it is Peter - ordained of man the great head of ritualism - who, in his first epistle, announces the two things which destroy ritualism root and branch for those who believe him. First, that we are "born again," not of baptism, but "by the word of God, that liveth and abideth forever; . . and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." Secondly, instead of a set of priests, he says to all Christians: "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (ii. 5). The sacrifices are spiritual - praise and thanksgiving, and our lives and bodies also (Heb. xiii. i2, i6; Rom. xii. i). This is to be with us true priestly work, and thus do our lives get their proper character: they are the thank-offering service of those able to draw nigh to God.

In Judaism, let me repeat, none really drew nigh; but now, the people - the laity (for it is only a Greek word made English) - and that in a better way than the Jewish priest could. The priestly caste, wherever it is found, means the same thing. There is no drawing nigh of the whole body of the people at all. It means distance from God, and darkness - God shut out from the people. Now, THAT is

the meaning of "the Clergy." I want you to look at it very carefully. I want you not to think it a mere question of a certain order of Church government - as people are very apt to do. I want you to see the important principles which are involved in this, and how really the Lord has cause, as He must have, to say of Nicolaitanism, "which I also hate." And my aim and object tonight is to try to make you hate it as God hates it. I am not speaking of people - God forbid. I am speaking of a thing. Our unhappiness is, that we are at the end of a long series of departures from God, and as a consequence we grow up in the midst of many things which come down to us as "tradition of the elders," associated with names which we all revere and love, upon whose authority in reality we have accepted them, without ever having looked at them really in the light of God's presence. And there are many thus whom we gladly recognize as truly men of God, and servants of God, in a false position. It is of that position I am speaking. I am speaking of a thing, as the Lord does -"which thing I hate." He does not say, "which people I hate." Although in those days evil of this kind was not an inheritance as now, and the first propagators of it had, of course, a responsibility peculiarly their own, self-deceived as they may have been; still, in this matter as in all others, we need not be ashamed or afraid to be where the Lord is. Nay, we cannot be with Him in this unless we are. And He says of Nicolaitanism, "which thing I hate."

Because, what does it mean? I will tell you in brief what the very idea of a clergy is. It means a spiritual caste, or class; a set of people having officially a right to leadership in spiritual things; a nearness to God derived from official place, not spiritual power: in fact, the revival, under the names and with various modifications, of that very intermediate priesthood which distinguished Judaism, and which Christianity emphatically disclaims. That is what a clergy means; and in contradiction to these the rest of Christians are but the laity, the seculars, necessarily put back into more or less of the old distance, which the cross of Christ has done away.

We see then why it needed that the Church should be Judaized before the deeds of the Nicolaitans could ripen into a "doctrine." The Lord even had authorized obedience to scribes and Pharisees

sitting in Moses' seat; and to make this text apply as people apply it now, Moses' seat had, of course, to be set up in the Christian Church: this done, and the mass of Christians degraded from the priesthood Peter spoke of into mere "lay members," the doctrine of the Nicolaitans was at once established.

Understand me fully that I am in no wise questioning the divine institution of the Christian ministry. God forbid; for ministry, in the fullest sense, is characteristic of Christianity, as I have already in fact maintained. Nor do I (while believing that all true Christians are ministers also by the very fact) deny a special and distinctive ministry of the Word, as what God has given to some, and not to all, though for the use of all. No one truly taught of God can deny that some, not all, among Christians have the place of evangelist, pastor, teacher. I believe I make more of this than current views do; for I believe that every true minister is a gift from Christ, in His care as Head of the Church, for His people, and one who has his place from God alone, and is responsible in that character to God, and God alone. The miserable system which I see around degrades him from this blessed place, and makes him in fact little more than the manufacture and the servant of men. While giving, it is true, a place of lordship over people which gratifies a carnal mind, still it fetters the spiritual man, and puts him in chains, everywhere giving him an artificial conscience towards man, hindering in fact his conscience being properly before God.

Let me briefly state to you what the Scripture doctrine of the ministry is; it is a very simple one. The Assembly of God is Christ's body; all the members are members of Christ. There is no other membership in Scripture than this, the membership of Christ's body, to which all true Christians belong: not many bodies of Christ, but one body; not many churches, but one Church.

There is, of course, a different place for each member of the body by the very fact that he is such. All members have not the same office: there is the eye, the ear, and so on, but they are all necessary, and all necessarily ministering in some way to one another.

Every member has its place, not merely locally and for the benefit of certain other members, but for the benefit of the whole

body.

Each member has its gift as the apostle teaches distinctly. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us," etc. (Rom. xii. 4-6).

In the twelfth chapter of i Corinthians the apostle speaks at large of these gifts; and he calls them by a significant name - "manifestations of the Spirit." They are gifts of the Spirit, of course; but more, they are "manifestations of the Spirit;" they manifest themselves where they are found - where (I scarcely need to add) there is spiritual discernment - where souls are before God. For instance, if you take the gospel of God, whence does it derive its authority and power? From any sanction of men? any human credentials of any kind or from its own inherent power? I maintain that the common attempt to authenticate the messenger takes away from, instead of adding to, the power of the Word. God's word must be received as such: he that receives it sets to his seal that God is true. Its ability to meet the needs of heart and conscience is derived from the fact that it is "God's good news," who knows perfectly what man's need is, and has provided for it accordingly. He who has felt its power knows well from whom it comes. The work and witness of the Spirit of God in the soul need no witness of man to supplement them.

Even the Lord's appeal in His own case was to the truth He uttered: "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" When He stood forth in the Jewish synagogues, or elsewhere, He was but, in men's eyes, a poor carpenter's son, accredited by no school or set of men at all. All the weight of authority was ever against Him. He disclaimed even "receiving testimony from men." God's word alone should speak for God. "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." And how did it approve itself? By the fact of its being truth. "If I speak the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" It was the truth that was to make its way with the true. "He that wills to do God's will shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." He says: I speak the truth; I bring it to you from God; and if it is truth, if you are seeking to do God's will,

you will learn to recognize it as the truth. God will not leave people in ignorance and darkness if they are seeking to be doers of His will. Can you suppose that God will allow true hearts to be deceived by whatever plausible deceptions may be abroad? He is able to make His voice known in those who seek to hear His voice. And so the Lord says to Pilate, "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice" (John Xviii. 37). "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;" and, again, "a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers" (John x. 27, 5).

Such is the nature of truth then, that to pretend to authenticate it to those who are themselves true, is to dishonour it, as if it were not capable of self-evidence; and it dishonours God, as if He could be wanting to souls, or to what He Himself has given. Nay, the apostle says: "By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. iv. 2). And the Lord speaks of its being the condemnation of the world that "light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John iii 19). There was no lack of evidence: light was there, and men owned its power to their own condemnation when they sought to escape from it.

Even so in the gift, there was "the manifestation of the Spirit," and it was "given to every man to profit withal." By the very fact that he had it he was responsible for using it - responsible to Him who had not given it in vain. In the gift itself lay the ability to minister, and title too; for I am bound to help and serve with what I have. And if souls are helped, they need scarcely ask if I had commission to do it.

That is the simple character of ministry - the service of love, according to the ability which God gave; mutual service of each to each, and each to all, without jostling or exclusion of one another. Each gift was thrown into the common treasury, and all were the richer by it. God's blessing and the manifestation of the Spirit were all the needed sanction. All were not teachers, still less public teachers, of the Word; still, in these cases the same principles exactly applied. That was but one department of a service which had many, and which was rendered by each to each according to

his sphere.

Was there nothing else than that? Was there no ordained class at all then? That is another thing. There were, without doubt, in the primitive Church two classes of officials, regularly appointed,- ordained, if you like. The deacons were those who, having charge of the fund for the poor and other purposes, were chosen by the saints first for this place of trust in their behalf, and then appointed authoritatively by apostles mediately or immediately. Elders were a second class,- elderly men, as the word imports,- who were appointed in the local assemblies as "bishops" or "overseers," to take cognizance of their state. That the elders were the same as bishops may be seen in Paul's words to the elders of Ephesus, where he exhorts them to "take heed to . . . all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." There they have translated the word, "bishops," but in Titus they have left it - "that thou shouldst ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee; if any be blameless . . . for a bishop must be blameless" (Acts xx. 28; Tit. i. 5,7).

Their work was to "oversee," and although for that purpose their being "apt to teach" was a much needed qualification, in view of errors already rife, yet no one could suppose that teaching was confined to those who were "elders," "husbands of one wife, having their children in subjection with all gravity." This was a needed test for one who was to be a bishop; "for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God ? " (I Tim. iii. 1-7).

Whatever gifts they had, they used, as all did, and thus the apostle directs, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, specially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (ver. 17). But they might rule, and rule well, without this.

The meaning of their ordination was just this, that here it was not a question of gift, but of authority. It was a question of title to take up and look into, often difficult and delicate matters, among people, too, very likely in no state to submit to what was merely spiritual. The ministration of gift was another thing, and free, under God, to all.

Thus much, very briefly, as to Scripture doctrine. Our painful

duty is now to put in contrast with it the system I am deprecating, according to which a distinct class are devoted formally to spiritual things, and the people - the laity - are in the same ratio excluded from such occupation. This is true Nicolaitanism, - the "subjection of the people."

Again I say, not only that ministry of the Word is entirely right, but that there are those who have special gift and responsibility (though still not exclusive) to minister it. But priesthood is another thing, and a thing sufficiently distinct to be easily recognized where it is claimed or in fact exists. I am, of course, aware that Protestants in general disclaim any priestly powers for their ministers. I have no wish nor thought of disputing their perfect honesty in this disavowal. They mean that they have no thought of the minister having any authoritative power of absolution; and that they do not make the Lord's table an altar, whereon afresh day after day the perfection of Christ's one offering is denied by countless repetitions. They are right in both respects; but it is scarcely the whole matter. If we look more deeply we shall find that much of a priestly character may attach where neither of these have the least place. Priesthood and ministry may be distinguished in this way. Ministry (in the sense we are now considering) is to men, priesthood is to God. The minister brings God's message to the people; he speaks for Him to them. The priest goes to God for the people; he speaks, in the reverse way, for them to Him. It is surely easy to distinguish these two attitudes.

"Praise and thanksgiving" are "spiritual sacrifices:" they are part of our offering as priests. Put a special class into a place where regularly and officially they act thus for the rest, they are at once in the rank of an intermediate priesthood, - mediators with God for those who are not so near.

The Lord's Supper is the most prominent and fullest expression of Christian thankfulness and adoration, publicly and statedly. But what Protestant minister does not look upon it as his official right to administer this? What "layman" would not shrink from the profanation of administering it? And this is one of the terrible evils of the system, that the mass of Christian people are thus distinctly secularized. Occupied with worldly things, they cannot be

expected to be spiritually what the clergy are. And to this they are given over as it were. They are released from spiritual occupations to which they are not equal, and to which others give themselves entirely.

But this must evidently go much further. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge." The laity, who have become that by abdicating their priesthood, how should they retain the knowledge belonging to a priestly class? The unspirituality, to which they have given themselves up, pursues them here. The class whose business it is, become the authorized interpreters of the Word also, for how should the secular man know so well what Scripture means? Thus the clergy become spiritual eyes and ears and mouth for the laity, and are in the fair way of becoming the whole body too.

But it suits people well. Do not mistake me as if I meant that this is all come in as the assumption of a class merely. It is that, no doubt, but never could this miserable and unscriptural distinction of clergy and laity have obtained so rapidly as it did, and so universally, if everywhere it had not been found well adapted to the tastes of those even whom it really displaced and degraded. Not alone in Israel, but in Christendom also, has it been fulfilled: "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule through their means, and my people love to have it so!" Alas, they did, and they do. As spiritual decline sets in, the heart that is turning to the world barters readily, Esau-like, its spiritual birthright for a mess of pottage. It exchanges thankfully its need of caring too much for spiritual things, with those who will accept the responsibility of this. worldliness is well covered with a layman's cloak. And as the Church at large dropped out of first love, as it did rapidly, the world began to come in through the loosely guarded gates, and it became more and more impossible for the rank and file of Christendom to take the blessed and wonderful place which belonged to Christians. The step taken downwards, instead of being retrieved, only made succeeding steps each one easier; until, in less than 300 years from the beginning, a Jewish priesthood and a ritualistic religion were everywhere installed. Only so much the worse, as the precious things of Christianity left their names at least as spoils to the invader, and the shadow became, for most, the

substance itself.

But I must return to look more particularly at one feature in this clerisy. I have noted the confounding of ministry and priesthood; the assumption of an official title in spiritual things, of title to administer the Lord's Supper, and I might have added also, to baptize. For none of these things can Scripture be found at all. But I must dwell a little more on the emphasis that is laid on ordination.

I want you to see a little more what ordination means. In the first place, if you look through the New Testament you will find nothing about ordination to teach or to preach. You find people going about everywhere freely exercising whatever gift they had; the whole Church was scattered abroad from Jerusalem, except the apostles, and they went everywhere preaching (literally, evangelizing) the Word. The persecution did not ordain them, I suppose. So with Apollos. So with Philip the deacon. There is in fact no trace of anything else. Timothy received a gift by prophecy, by the laying on of Paul's hands with those of the elders, but that was gift, not authorization to use it. So he is bidden to communicate his own knowledge to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also; but there is not a word about ordaining them. The case of elders I have already noticed. That of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch is the most unhappy that can be for the purpose people use it for. For prophets and teachers are made to ordain an apostle, and one who totally disclaims being that, "of men or by man." And there the Holy Ghost - not confers power of ordaining any, but says, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereto I have called them" - for a special missionary journey, which it is shown afterwards they had fulfilled. See Acts viii. 1,3; Xl. 19-21; xiii. 2-4; xviii. 24-28; i Tim. iv. 14; etc.

Now, what means this "ordination"? It means much, you may be sure, or it would not be so zealously contended for as it is. There are, no doubt, two phases of it. In the most extreme, as among. Romanists and Ritualists, there is claimed for it in the fullest way that it is the conveyance, not merely of authority, but of spiritual power. They assume, with all the power of apostles, to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands, and also for priesthood

in the fullest way. The people of God, as such, are rejected from the priesthood He has given them, and a special class are put into their place to mediate for them in a way which sets aside the fruit of Christ's work and ties them to the Church as the channel of all grace. Among Protestants you think, perhaps, I need not dwell on this; but it is done among some of these also, in words which, to a certain class of them, seem strangely to mean nothing, while another class find in them the abundant sanction of their highest pretensions. Those, on the other hand, who rightly and consistently reject these unchristian assumptions, do not pretend indeed to confer any gift in ordination, but only to "recognize" the gift which God has given. But then, after all, this recognition is considered necessary before the person can baptize or administer the Lord's Supper - things which really require no peculiar gift at all. And as to the ministry of the Word, God's gift is made to require human sanction, and is "recognized" on behalf of His people by those who are considered to have a discernment which the people, as such, have not. Blind themselves or not, these men are to become "leaders of the blind;" else why need others to be eyes for them, while their own souls are taken out of the place of immediate responsibility to God and made responsible unduly to man? An artificial conscience is manufactured for them, and conditions are constantly imposed to which they have to conform in order to obtain the needful recognition. It is well if they are not under the control of their ordainers as to their path of service also, as they generally are.

In principle this is unfaithfulness to God: for if He has given me gift to use for Him, I am surely unfaithful if I go to any man or body of men to ask their leave to use it. The gift itself carries with it the responsibility of using it, as we have seen. If they say, "But people may make mistakes," I own it thoroughly ; but who is to assume my responsibility if I am mistaken? And, again, the mistakes of an ordaining body are infinitely more serious than those of one who merely runs unsent. Their mistakes are consecrated and perpetuated by the ordination they bestow; and the man who, if he stood simply upon his own merits, would soon find his true level, has a character conferred upon him by it which the

whole weight of the system must sustain. Mistake or not, he is none the less one of the clerical body - a minister, if he has nothing really to minister. He must be provided for, if only with some less conspicuous place, where souls, dear to God as any, are put under his care, and must be unfed if he cannot feed them.

Do not accuse me of sarcasm; it is the system I am speaking of which is a sarcasm: a swathing of the body of Christ in bands which hinder the free circulation of the vitalizing blood which should be permeating unrestrictedly the whole of it. Nature itself should rebuke the folly. What enormous inference is deduced from such Scriptural premises as that apostles and apostolic men "ordained elders"! They must prove that they are either, and (granting them that), that the Scripture "elder" might be no elder at all, but a young unmarried man just out of his teens, and on the other hand was evangelist, pastor, teacher - all God's various gifts rolled into one. This is the minister, - according to the system, indeed, the minister, - the all in all to the fifty or five hundred souls who are committed to him as "his flock," with which no other has title to interfere! Surely, surely, the brand of Nicolaitanism is upon the forefront of such a system as this!

Take it at its best, the man, if gifted at all, is scarcely likely to have every gift. Suppose he is an evangelist, and souls are happily converted, he is no teacher, and cannot build them up. Or, he is a teacher sent to a place where there are but a few Christians, and the mass of his congregation unconverted men. There are no conversions, and his presence there (according to the system) keeps away the evangelist who is needed there. Thank God! He is ever breaking up these barriers, and in some irregular way the need may be supplied. But the supply is schismatical and a confusion: the new wine breaks the poor human bottles.

For all this the system is responsible. The exclusive ministry of one man, or of a number of men in a congregation has no shred of Scripture to support it; while the ordination, as we have seen, is the attempt to confine all ministry to a certain class, and make it rest on human authorization rather than on divine gift; the people, Christ's sheep, being denied their competency to hear His voice. The inevitable tendency is to fix upon the man the attention which

should be devoted to the word he brings. The question is, is he accredited? If he speak truly is subordinated to the question Is he ordained? or, perhaps I should say, his orthodoxy is settled already for them by the fact of his ordination.

Paul, an apostle, not of men, nor by man, could not have been received upon this plan. There were apostles before him, and he neither went up to them nor got anything from them. If there were a succession, he was a break in the succession. And what he did he did designedly, to show that his gospel was not after man (Gal. i. 11), and that it might not rest upon the authority of man. Nay, if he himself preached a different gospel from that he had preached (for there was not another), yea, or an angel from heaven (where the authority, if that were in question, might seem conclusive), his solemn decision is, "let him be accursed."

Authority then is nothing, if it be not the authority of the word of God. That is the test - is it according to the Scriptures? If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch? To say, "I could not, of course know, I trusted another" will not save you from the ditch.

But the unspiritual and unlearned layman, how can he pretend to equal knowledge with the educated and accredited minister, devoted to spiritual things? In point of fact, in general he does not. He yields to the one who should know better, and practically the minister’s teaching largely supplants the authority of the word of God. Not that certainty indeed is thus attained. He cannot conceal it from himself that people differ, wise and good and learned and accredited as they may be. But here the devil steps in, and - if God has allowed men’s authorities to get into a babel of confusion, as they have - suggests to the unwary soul that the confusion must be the result of the obscurity of Scripture, whereas they have got into it by disregarding Scripture.

But this is everywhere! Opinion, not faith; opinion to which you are welcome and have a right, of course; and you must allow others a right to theirs. You may say "I believe" as long as you do not mean by that "I know." To claim "knowledge" is to claim that you are wiser, more learned, better, than whole generations before you, who thought opposite to you.

Need I show you how infidelity thrives upon this; how Satan rejoices when, for the simple and emphatic "Yea" of the divine voice, he succeeds in substituting the Yea and Nay of a host of jarring commentators? Think you, you can fight the Lord's battles with the rush of human opinion instead of "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"? Think you, "Thus says John Calvin, or John Wesley," will meet Satan as satisfactorily as "Thus saith the Lord"?

Who can deny that such thoughts are abroad, and in no wise confined to papists or ritualists? The tendency, alas, is in the heart of unbelief ever departing from the living God, as near to His own to-day as at any time through the centuries His Church has traveled on; as competent to instruct as ever - as ready to fulfil the word "He that will do His will shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." The eyes are of the heart, and not the head. He has hidden from wise and prudent what He reveals to babes. The school of God is more effectual than all colleges combined, and here layman and cleric are equal: "He that is spiritual discerneth all things," and he alone. Substitute for spirituality there is none: unspirituality the Spirit of God alone can remedy. Ordination, such as practiced, is rather a sanction put upon it - an attempt to manifest what is the manifestation of the Spirit, or not His work at all, and to provide leaders for the blind whom, with all their care, they can not insure not being blind also.

Before I close, I must say a few words about "succession." An ordination which pretends to be derived from the apostles must needs be (to be consistent) a successional one. Who can confer authority (and in the least and lowest theories of ordination authority is conferred, as to baptize and to administer the Lord's Supper) but one himself authorized for this very purpose? You must therefore have a chain of ordained men, lineally succeeding one another. Apostolic succession is as necessary on the Presbyterian as on the Episcopalian plan. John Wesley, as his warrant for ordaining, fell back upon the essential oneness of bishop and presbyter. Nay, presbyterians will urge against episcopalians the ease of maintaining succession in this way. I have nothing to do with this : I only insist that succession is

needed.

But then, mark the result. It is a thing apart from spirituality, and from truth even. A Romish priest may have it as well as any; and, indeed, through the gutter of Rome most of that we have around us. must necessarily have come down. Impiety and impurity do not in the least invalidate Christ's commission. The teacher of false doctrine may be as well His messenger as the teacher of truth. Nay, the possession of the truth, with gift to minister it and godliness combined, are actually no part of the credentials of the true ambassador. He may have all these, and be none. He may want them all, and be truly one nevertheless.

Who can believe such doctrine? Can He who is truth accredit error? the righteous One, unrighteousness? It is impossible. This ecclesiasticism violates every principle of morality, and hardens the conscience that has to do with it. For why need we be careful for truth, if He is not? And how can He send messengers that He would not have to be believed? His own test of a true witness fails: for "he that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." His own test of credibility fails, for "if I speak the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" was His own appeal.

No: to state this principle is to condemn it. He who foresaw and predicted the failure of what should have been the bright and evident witness of His truth and grace, could not ordain a succession of teachers for it who should carry His commission, unforfeitable by whatever failure! Before apostles had left the earth, the house of God had become as a "great house," and it was necessary to separate from vessels to dishonor in it. He who bade His apostle instruct another to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart," could! d not possibly tell us to listen to men, as His ministers, who are alien from all this, and have His commission in spite of all. And thus, notably, in the second epistle to Timothy, in which this is said, there is no longer, as in the first, any talk of elders, or of ordained men. It is "faithful men" who are wanted, not for ordination, but for the deposit of the truth committed to Timothy: "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses,

the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Thus God's holy Word vindicates itself to the heart and conscience ever. The effort to attach His sanction to a Romish priesthood, or a Protestant hierarchy, fails alike upon the same ground; for as to this they are upon the same ground. Alas, Nicolaitanism is no past thing, no obscure doctrine of past ages, but a widespread and gigantic system of error, fruitful in evil results. Error is long-lived, though mortal. Reverence it not for its gray hairs, and "follow not with a multitude to do evil." With cause does the Lord say in this case, "which thing I hate." If He does, shall we be afraid to have fellowship with Him? That there are good men entangled in it, all must admit. There are godly men and true ministers ignorantly wearing the livery of men. May God deliver them; may they cast aside their fetters and be free! May they rise up to the true dignity of their calling, responsible to God, and walking before Him alone!

On the other hand, beloved brethren, it is of immense importance that all His people, however diverse their places in the body of Christ may be, should realize that they are all as really ministers as they are all priests. We need to recognize that every Christian has spiritual duties flowing from spiritual relationship to every other Christian. It is the privilege of each one to contribute his share to the common treasury of gift with which Christ has endowed His Church. Nay, he who does not contribute is actually holding back what is his debt to the whole family of God. No possessor of one talent is entitled to wrap it in a napkin upon that account: it would be mere unfaithfulness and unbelief.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Brethren in Christ, when shall we awake to the reality of our Lord's words there? Ours is a never-failing spring of perpetual joy and blessing, which if we but come to when we thirst, out of our bellies shall flow rivers of living water. The spring is not limited by the vessel which receives it: it is divine, and yet ours fully - fully as can be! Oh, to know more this abundance, and the responsibility of the possession of it, in a dry and weary scene like this! Oh, to know better the infinite grace which has taken us up as channels of its outflow among men!

When shall we rise up to the sense of our common dignity? to the sweet reality of fellowship with Him who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister?" Oh for unofficial ministry, the overflowing of full hearts into empty ones, so many as there are around us! How we should rejoice, in a scene of want and misery and sin, to find perpetual opportunity to show the competency of Christ's fullness to meet and minister to every form of it!

Official ministry is practical independence of the Spirit of God. It is to decide that such a vessel shall overflow, though at the time, it may be, practically empty; and, on the other hand, that such another shall not overflow, however full it may be. It proposes, in the face of Him who has come down in Christ's absence to be the Guardian of His people, to provide for order and for edification, not by spiritual power, but by legislation. It would provide for failure on the part of Christ's sheep to hear His voice, by making it, as far as possible, unnecessary for them to do so. It thus sanctions and perpetuates unspirituality, instead of condemning or avoiding it.

It is quite true that in God's mode of action the failure in man's part may become more evident externally: for He cares little for a correct outside when the heart is nevertheless not right with Him, and He knows well that ability to maintain a correct outside may in fact prevent a truthful judgment of what is our real condition before Him. Men would have upbraided Peter with his attempt to walk upon those waves which made his little faith so manifest. The Lord would only rebuke the littleness of the faith which made him fail. And man still, and ever, would propose the boat as the remedy for failure, instead of the strength of the Lord's support which He wade Peter prove. Yet, after all, the boat confessedly may fail; winds and waves may overthrow it; but "the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." Through these many centuries of failure have we proved Him untrustworthy? Beloved, is it your honest conviction that it is absolutely safe to trust the living God? Then let us make no provision for His failure, however much we may have to own that we have failed I Let us act as if we really trusted Him.

Lecture 3 - Establishments, and a Money Basis

(Rev. ii. 12-17)

We have seen, beloved friends, two main Steps in the Church's outward decline, after the loss of first love had made any departure possible. First of all, the divine idea of the Church was lost. Instead of its being a body of people having, in the full and proper sense, eternal life and salvation, children of God, members of Christ, and called out of the world, as not belonging to it, it became a mere "gathering together" of people, for whom indeed the old names might in part remain, but who were in fact the world itself, with true Christian people scattered through it. Children of God they might be reckoned by baptism, and by it have forgiveness of sins also, but that was no settlement for eternity at all. They were confessedly under trial, and uncertain as to how things would finally turn out - a ground which all the world could understand and appreciate, with sacraments and means of grace to help them on, and prevent them realizing the awfulness of their position.

Of course, this immense change from Church to Synagogue was not at once effected. Yet the Church historically known to us, outside of the New Testament, is but in fact essentially the Synagogue. The fire of persecution helped to prevent for a while the extreme result, and to separate mere professors from the confessors of Christ. Still through it all the leaven of Judaism wrought its deadly work; and no sooner was persecution stopped than the world's overtures for peace and alliance were eagerly listened to; and with Constantine, for many, the millennium seemed to have arrived. Could the Church of the apostles have fallen into the world's arms so? Their voice would have rebuked the thought as of Satan, as indeed it was: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?"

The second step we saw in the rise of a clergy, a spiritual or priestly class, replacing the true Christian ministry, the free exercise of the various gifts which resulted from the various places of the membership of the body of Christ. The clerical assumption displaced the body of Christian people - now a true "laity"- as at least less spiritual and near to God; a place, alas, easily accepted

where Christ had lost what the world had gained in value with His own. As Judaism prevailed, and the world came in through the ever-opening door, the distance between the two classes increased, and more and more the clergy became the channels of all blessing to the rest. Practically, and in the end almost openly, they became the Church; and the Church became, from a company of those already saved, a channel for conveying a sacramental and hypothetical salvation.

We come now to look at the issue of all this, when circumstances favoured. In Pergamos (where the Lord presents Himself no longer in the tender and gracious sympathy He manifests for His suffering ones in Smyrna, but as having the sharp sword with two edges - His Word to judge the state of things among them)- in Pergamos, the characteristic thing is, they are "dwelling where Satan's throne is." "Throne," not "seat," is confessedly the word used. The translators apparently shrank from the use of the stronger word:[32] for, according to current belief, Satan reigns in hell, not on earth; that is, in the prison in which God has put him, but from which he has strangely broken loose. Milton's picture is the popular one, and with it, no doubt, you are familiar. But it is as unscriptural as it is unreasonable. What would be thought of a government which allowed a chief malefactor to reign in his prison over his fellow culprits, and to break prison and roam freely where he would? God's government is not chargeable with this. In hell Satan will be the lowest and most miserable there; and when committed to it there will be no escape permitted. But that will not be until after the millennium, as Rev. xx. assures us.

This idea, however, permits people to escape from the appalling thought that Satan is now the "prince of this world," and the "god of this world" (or age) which Scripture plainly declares him to be.

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32 No disrespect to F. W. Grant, but when he supposes that he knows more than the fifty-seven highly skilled linguists, employed and paid by King James from 1603 through 1611, divided into six companies which met in cities of Cambridge, Westminster, and Oxford, as they, under the unction of the Holy Spirit of God, took seven years to translate God's inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Old Testament and New Testament books into an authorized Holy Bible which answered only to the original Hebrew and Greek! Well when he supposes them wrong and himself correct, he is in error.

It is over the world he exercises authority, and this gives to the "world" and "dwelling in the world" an exceedingly solemn character. For, "dwelling in the world" is quite another thing, of course, from being in it. We are in the world perforce, and in no wise responsible for that; but to be a dweller in it is a moral state; it is to be a citizen in it - the condition which the apostle speaks of in Philippians as obtaining among professing Christians: "For many walk of whom I have told you before, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our conversation (or citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (iii. 18-20).

Their characteristic is, that they are enemies, not of Christ personally, but of the Cross, that Cross by which we are "crucified to the world, and the world to us." Their hearts were on earthly things, which, not satisfying them, as earthly things cannot, made their god to be their belly ; - that inward craving became their master, and made them drudges in its service.

The Christian's citizenship is "in heaven." That forms his character, and delivers him from the unsatisfying pursuit of earthly things. But little, indeed, is this understood now. Even where people can talk and sing of the world being a wilderness, you will find that in general their idea of it is a place of sorrow and trial, to which all - the world and the Christian alike - are exposed. Pilgrimage, in their minds, is a thing perforce. The world passes away, and they cannot keep it; but, if honest, they would own that they would keep it if they could. As they cannot, they are glad enough to think there is such a place as heaven at the end of it; in the meanwhile they go on trying (honestly, no doubt, if you can call such a thing honest in a Christian) to get as much of it as they can - or, at least, as much as will make them comfortable in it.

It is a different thing to be a pilgrim really - a man journeying on earth with an absorbing purpose to reach a fixed point beyond: not one whom the world is leaving, but one who is leaving it. By the very fact that the stream of time is carrying us all down with it, if that constituted a pilgrim it would make all the world pilgrims;

and so, in fact, people do talk of the "pilgrimage of life:" but this is the abuse of a term, and not its use. We can be pilgrims in that sense, and find all the world companions; and such, indeed, had got to be the idea of pilgrimage in the Pergamos state of the Church. They talked of it, no doubt, and built their houses the more solidly to stand the rough weather: if they owned there were "rainy days" ahead, it was the more their duty to lay by for a rainy day. God said they were dwelling where Satan's throne was.

The history of old Babel was repeating itself. You may find the vivid type of it in Gen. xi., where men "journeyed" indeed, but not as pilgrims, or as only that till they could find some smooth place in which to settle down. They journeyed as colonists or immigrants on the lookout for land, from the rough hills where human life beyond the flood began; "from the east" (that is, with their backs to the blessed dawn), and "they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there."

That was, alas, the Church's progress: from the rough heights of martyrdom down to the smooth level where were no difficulties to deter the most timid souls. There the Church multiplied, and there they began to build "a city and a tower whose top should reach to heaven:" but the city was not Jerusalem, but Jerusalem's old enemy; not the "possession of peace," but the city of "confusion " - Babel.

Yet it prospered. They built well. True, they were away from the quarries of the hills, and could not build with the stone they had there been used to. They did the best thing they could with the clay which was native in the soil of that lower land. "They had bricks for stone, and slime for mortar." We have seen some of this work already. It looks well, and lasts, in the fine climate of those regions, quite a long time-human material, not divine - "bricks," man's manufacture, "for stones," God's material. They cannot build great Babylon with the "living stones" of God's producing. Men-made Christians, compacted together, not by the cementing Spirit, but by the human motives and influences whereby the masses are affected, but which the fire of God will one day try - so is great Babylon built.

Now it is remarkable that the word Pergamos has a double

significance. In the plural form it is used for the citadel of a town, while it is at least near akin to Purgos, "a town." Again, divide it into the two words in which it naturally separates, and you have "per" (although) a particle which "usually serves to call attention to something which is objected to" (Liddell and Scott), and "gamos," (marriage). It was indeed by the marriage of Church and world that the "city and tower" of Babylon the Great was raised. And such are the times we are now to contemplate.

They were the times of the great Constantine - the time of what is significantly called the "establishment of the Church;" but not, alas, its establishment upon its Rock-foundation, where the gates of hades could not prevail against it, but its establishment in the world's favour, and under its protection. It was the success of Satan, the triumph of his plan by which the Church became the synagogue; but not now God's, but in opposition to God.

As a consequence, you find not only Nicolaitanism now fully accepted, but the "doctrine of Balaam" also. They were still what is called orthodox. "Thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." They maintained, in general, the truth of Christ as against Arianism, which denied His proper deity. It was the period of the creeds - of Nicene orthodoxy. But it was an orthodoxy which, while maintaining (thank God for it) the doctrine of the Trinity, could be, and was, very far astray as to the application of Christ's blessed work to the salvation of man - orthodox as to Christ, most unorthodox as to the gospel.

Where, in the Apostles' Creed (so called), do you find the gospel? "The forgiveness of sins is an article of belief, no doubt; but how and when? In the Nicene Creed there is "I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins," and entire silence as to any other. In the Athanasian it is owned that Christ "suffered for our salvation," but how we are to obtain the salvation is again omitted. Practically, the belief of the times was in the efficacy of baptism, and so painful and uncertain was the way of forgiveness for sins committed afterwards, that multitudes deferred baptism to a dying bed, that the sins of a lifetime might be washed away together.

The Lord goes on to say: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

Balaam, the destroyer of the people, is a new graft upon Nicolaitanism - a prophet in outward nearness to the Lord, while his heart went after his own covetousness ; - a man having no personal grudge against the people, but whose god was his belly, and who would curse them if his god bade ; - one whose doctrine was to seduce Israel from their separateness, into guilty mixture with the nations and their idolatry around. The type is easily read, and the examples of it distressingly numerous. When the Church and the world became on good terms with one another, and the Church had the things of the world wherewith to attract the natural heart, the hireling prophet was a matter of course, who for his own ends would seek still further to destroy all godly separateness.

How glad one would be, to be able to think that a thing of the past! But it is one step only in a persistent departure from God on the part of the professing Church at large, never retraced or repented of. Nor, solemn to say, however much individuals may be delivered, is such decline ever recovered from by the body as such. Every step downwards only accelerates the progress down. In the wilderness Israel took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of their god Remphan, and the Lord’s word appended is, "I will carry you away beyond Babylon." There were many reformations afterwards, more or less partial, but no fresh start. So with the Church. People talk about a second Pentecost. There never really was. The true Pentecostal times lasted for how brief a moment!

It is a sad and terrible thing to speak of evil, and we have indeed ever to watch ourselves, lest in fact we should be rejoicing in that which we affect to judge. But if the Lord has pronounced, woe will it be to us if we are not with Him in His judgment. It would be unfaithfulness and dishonesty, as well as real breach of charity, not to say what the Lord says. To modify or alter it would be dishonest. "He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully," He Himself says.

From Constantine's day to the present, Pergamos has characterized the state of things. World and Church have been one in Christendom at large; and wherever this is found, there in truth is Babylon, although Rome may be head of Babylon, as indeed she is.

Let us look about us with the lamp the Lord has given us, and see whereabouts we are with regard to these things. How far are we individually keeping the Church and the world separate? How far are we really refusing that yoke with unbelievers which the passage in 2 Cor. vi. so emphatically condemns? Our associations are judged of God as surely as any other part of our practical conduct; and "be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" is His word. He cannot, He declares, be to us a Father as He would except we come out and be separate. Solemn, solemn words in the midst of the multiplicity of such confederacies in the present day! Can we bear to be ourselves searched out by them, beloved brethren? Oh, if we value our true place as sons with God, shall we not be only glad to see things as they are?

Now this forbidden yoke has various applications. It applies to anything in which we voluntarily unite with others to attain a common object. Among social relations, marriage is such a yoke; in business relations, partnerships, and such like; and in the foremost rank of all would came ecclesiastical associations.

To take these latter now: there are certain systems which, as we have already seen, mix up the Church and the world in the most thorough way possible. All forms of ritualism do - forms wherein a person is made by baptism "a member of Christ and a child of God." Where that is asserted, separation is impossible, for no amount of charity, and no extravagance of theological fiction, can make the mass of these baptized people other than the world.

All national churches in the same way mix them up by the very fact that they are national churches. You cannot by the force of will, or act of Parliament, make a nation Christian. You can give them a name to live; while they are dead. You can make them formalists and hypocrites, but nothing more. You can do your best to hide from them their true condition, and leave them under an awful delusion from which eternity alone may wake them up.

All systems Jewish in character mix them up of necessity. Where all are probationers together it is not possible to do otherwise. All systems in which the Church is made a means to salvation, instead of the company of the saved, necessarily do so. When people join churches in order to be saved, as is the terrible fashion of the day, these churches become, of course, the common receptacle of sinners and saints alike. And wherever assurance of salvation is not maintained, the same thing must needs result.

Systems such as these naturally acquire adherents, and rapidly; money and worldly influence prevail, and among such the doctrine of Balaam does its deadly work. The world, not even disguised in the garb of Christianity, is sought for the sake of material support. Men that have not given themselves to the Lord are taught that they can give their money. It is openly proclaimed that God is not sufficient as His people's portion; His cause requires help, and that so much that He will accept it from the hands of His very enemies. There is an idolatry of means abroad. Money will help the destitute; money will aid to circulate the Scriptures; money will send missionaries to foreign parts; money will supply a hundred wants and get over a host of difficulties. We are going to put it to so good a use we must not be over-scrupulous as to the mode of getting it. The church has to be maintained, the minister to be paid. They do not like the principle that "the end sanctifies the means," but still, what are they to do? God is sufficient, of course, in theory, but they must use the means, and this century no longer expects miracles.

But why go over the dreary round of such godless and faithless arguments? Is it a wonder that infidelity bursts out into a triumphant laugh as Christians maintain the impotence of their God, and violate His precepts to save His cause from ruin? Nay, do you not in fact proclaim it ruined, irredeemably ruined, when His ear is already too dull to hear, and His arm shortened that it cannot save? Money will build churches, will buy Bibles, will support ministers - true. Will it buy a new Pentecost? or bring in the Millennium? Will you bribe the blessed Spirit to work for you thus? or make sheer will and animal energy do without Him? Alas, you pray for power, and dishonour Him who is the only source of

power!

But what is the result of this solicitation of the world? Can you go to it with the Bibles you have bought with its own money, and tell it the truth as to its own condition? Can you tell them that "the whole world lieth in wickedness?" that "all that is in the world-the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world?" Can you maintain the separate place that God has given you, and the sharp edge of the truth that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God?" Of course you cannot. They will turn round upon you and say: Why then do you come to us for our money? You ask us to give, and tell us our giving will not please Him! It is not reasonable, we do not believe it, and you cannot believe it your selves I

No: the world does not believe in giving anything for nothing. Whatever the word of God may say, whatever you may think of it in your heart, you must compromise in some way. You must not maintain the rigid line of separation. Balaam must be your prophet. You must mix with the world, and let it mix with you: how else will you do it good? You must cushion your church seats and invite ft in. You must make your building and your services attractive; you must not frighten people away, but allure them in. You must be all things to all men; and as you cannot expect to get them up to your standard, you must get down to theirs. Do I speak too strongly? Oh, words can hardly exaggerate the state of things that may be everywhere found, not in some far-off land, but here all around us, in the present day. I should not dare to tell you what deeds are done in the name of Christ by His professing people. They will hire singers to sing His praises for admiration, and to draw a crowd. They will provide worldly entertainments, and sit down and be entertained in company. And, as more and more they sink down to the world’s level, they persuade themselves the world is rising up to theirs; while God is saying, as of His people of old, "Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not. And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek Him for all this"

(Hos. vii. 8-10).

It is a downward course, and being trod at an ever increasing pace. Competition is aroused, and it is who can be the most successful candidate for the world's favors. The example of one emboldens another. Emulation, envy, ambition, and a host of unholy motives, are aroused, and Scripture, the honor of Christ, the jealous eyes of a holy, holy God - ah, you are antiquated and Pharisaic if you talk of these! There is one feature in this melancholy picture I cannot pass by briefly thus. The ministry, or what stands before men's eyes as such, how is it affected by all this? I have already said that Scripture does not recognize the thought of a minister and his people. Upon this I do not intend to dwell again. But what, after all, in the present day, has got to be the strength of the tie between a church and its ministry? Who that looks around can question that money has here a controlling influence? The seal of the compact is the salary. A rich church with an ample purse, can it not make reasonably sure of attracting the man it wants? The poor church, however rich in piety, is it not conscious of its deficiency? People naturally do not like to own it. The ministers persuade themselves, successfully enough, no doubt, that it is a wider and more promising field of labour that attracts them. But the world notoriously does not believe this; and it has but too good reason for its unbelief.

The contract is ordinarily for so much money. If the money is not forthcoming, the contract is dissolved. But more: the money consideration decides in another way the character of man they wish to secure. It is ordinarily a successful man that is wanted, after the fashionable idea of what is success. They want a man who will fill the church, perhaps help to pay off the debt upon it. Very likely the payment of his own salary depends upon this. He will not be likely most to please who is not influenced by such motives: and thus it will be only God's mercy if Balaam's doctrine does not secure a Balaam to carry it out. But even if a godly man is obtained, he is put under the influence of the strongest personal temptation to soften down the truth, which, if fully preached, may deprive him of not only influence, but perhaps even subsistence.

Will the most godly man be the most popular man? No: for

godliness is not what the world seeks. It can appreciate genius, no doubt, and eloquence, and amiability, and benevolence, and utilitarianism; but godliness is something different from the union of even all of these. If the world can appreciate godliness, I will own indeed it .is no longer the world. But as long as the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, still characterize it, it is not of the Father, nor the Father of it. And why, in that passage, does the apostle say "the Father?" Is it not because, in thinking of the Father's relation to the world, we must needs think of the Son? As he says again, in another place, "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" And why? Because it is the Son of God the world has crucified and cast out; and that Cross which was the world's judgment of the Son of God, is for faith God's judgment of the world.

Was Christ popular, beloved friends? Could He, with divine power in His hands, and ministering it freely for the manifold need appealing to Him on every side - could He commend Himself to men, His creatures? No, assuredly. But you think, perhaps, those peculiarly evil times. They understand Him better now, you think. Take, then, His dear name with you to men's places of business and to their homes today, to the workshop and the counting-houses and the public places. Do you doubt what response you would get?

"In the churches?" Oh yes; they have agreed to tolerate Him there. The churches have been carefully arranged to please the world. Comfortable, fashionable, the poor packed in convenient corners, eye and ear and intellect provided for: that is a different thing. And then it helps to quiet conscience when it will sometimes stir. But oh, is there much sign of His presence whose authenticating sign was, "To the poor the gospel is preached?"

Enough of this, however. It will be of no profit to pursue it further. But to those with whom the love of Christ is more than a profession, and the honour of Christ a reality to be maintained, I would solemnly put it how they can go on with what systematically tramples His honour under foot, yea, under the world's foot - falsifies His gospel, and helps to deceive to their own destruction the souls for whom He died? The doctrine of

Balaam is everywhere: its end is judgment upon the world, and judgment too upon the people of God. If ministers can not be supported, if churches cannot be kept up without this, the honestest, manliest, only Christian course is, let the thing go down! If Christians cannot get on without the world, they will find at least that the world can get on without them. They cannot persuade it that disobedience is such a serious thing when they see the light-hearted, flippant disobedience of which it is so easy to convict the great mass of professors, while it is so utterly impossible to deter them from it. "Money" is the cry; "well, but we want the money." Aye, though Christ's honor is betrayed by it, and infidels sneer, and souls perish! Brethren, the very Pharisees of old were wiser! " We may not put it into the treasury," they whispered, "because it is the price of blood"

It will be a relief to turn to Scripture, and to examine what we have there upon this subject. It is very simple. There was no organized machinery for supporting churches; none for paying ministers; no promise, no contract upon the people's part, as to any sum they were to receive at all. There were necessities of course, many, to be provided for, and it was understood that there was to be provision. The saints themselves had to meet all. They had not taken up with a cheap religion. Having often to lay down their lives for it, they did not think much of their goods. The principle was this: "Every man as he is disposed in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." It was to be to God, and before God. There was to be no blazoning it out to brethren, still less before the world. He that gave was not to let his left hand know what his right hand was doing.

It is true there were solemn motives to enforce it. On the one side, "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." But on the other side - most powerful, most influential of all - was this: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich."

Such was the principle; such was to be the motive. There was no compulsory method of extraction, if this failed. If there was not

heart to give, it was no use to extract.

So as to the labourer in the Word, it was very clearly announced, and that as what God had ordained, that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel," and that "the labourer is worthy of his hire." But although here also God used the willing hands of His people, it was not understood that they "hired" him, or that he was their labourer. What they gave, it was to God they gave it, and his privilege it was to be Christ's servant. His responsibility was to the Lord, and theirs also. They did not understand that they were to get so much work for so much money. They did not pay, but "offered." There is a wonderful difference: for you cannot "pay" God, and you do not "offer" (in this sense of offering) to man. The moment you pay, God is out of the question.

Do you think this is perhaps a little unfair on both sides? that it is right that there should be something wore of an equivalent for the labour he bestows - for the money you give? That is good law, bad gospel. What better than simony is it to suppose, after this fashion, "that the gift of God can be purchased with money?" Would you rather make your own bargain than trust Christ's grace to minister to your need? Or is it hard for him that he who ministers the Word should show his practical trust in the Word by looking to the Lord for his support? Ah, to whom could he look so well? and how much better off would he be for losing the sweet experience of His care?

No: it is all unbelief in divine power and love, and machinery brought in to make up for the want of it. And yet, if there is not this, what profit is there of keeping up the empty profession of it? If God can fail, let the whole thing go together; if He cannot, then your skillful contrivances are only the exhibition of rank unbelief.

And what do you accomplish by it? You bring in the Canaanite (the merchantman) into the house of the Lord. You offer a premium to the trader in divine things - the man who most values your money, and least cares for your souls. You cannot but be aware how naturally those two extremes associate together, and you cannot but own that if you took the Lord's plan, and left His labourers to look to Him for their support, you would do more to weed out such traffickers than by all your care and labour

otherwise. Stop the hire, and you will banish the hirelings, and the blessed ministry of Christ will be freed from an incubus and a reproach which your contracts and bargainings are largely responsible for. And if Christ's servants cannot after all trust Him, let them seek out some honest occupation where they may gain their bread without scandal. In the fifteenth century before Christ, God brought a whole nation out of Egypt, and maintained them forty years in the wilderness. Did He, or did He not? Is He as competent as ever? Alas! will you dare to say those were the days of His youth, and these of His decrepitude?

So serious are these questions. But the unbelief that exists now existed then. Do you remember what the people did when they had lost Moses on the mount awhile, and lacked a leader? They made a god of the gold which they had brought out of Egypt with them, and fell down and worshipped the work of their own hands. History repeats itself. Who can deny that we have been looking on the counterpart of that?

It may be well to ask here, Is there any measure of the Christian's giving, for one who would be right with God about it?

The notion of the tithe, or tenth, has been revived, or with some two tithes, as that which was the measure of one Israelite's giving. Jacob has been propounded to us as an example, as he stood before God in the morning after that wonderful night at Bethel, when God had engaged to be with him and to be his God, and to multiply his seed, and bring him again into the land from which he was departing. "If God will be with me," he says, "and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

God's ways are so little like our ways, His thoughts so little like our thoughts, it is not very wonderful man does not understand them. But, surely, Jacob does not here enter into the blessedness of God's thoughts. I need not dwell now upon his case, but only notice it to say that for a Christian at least the whole principle is a mistake. You are not to ransom nine tenths from God by giving

one. You are bought with a price, you and yours. In a double way, by creation and redemption too, you belong, with all you have, to God. Many people are acting upon the perfectly wrong idea that whether as to time, money, or whatever else, God is to have His share, and the rest is their own. They misunderstand the legal types, and do not realize the immense difference that accomplished redemption has brought in with it.

Before "Ye are bought with a price" could yet be said, it was impossible to deduce the consequences that result from this. Grace goes beyond law, which made nothing, and could make nothing, perfect. The very essence of the surrender of the life to God is that it must be a voluntary one. Like the vow of the Nazarite, (which was a vow of separation to the Lord, and which reads, "when any one will vow the vow of a Nazarite,") that surrender must be of the heart, or it is none. Nor is it a contradiction to this that there were born Nazarites - Nazarites from the womb, as Samson and the Baptist. Christians are all born (new-born) to Nazariteship, which is implied, and necessitated, in a true sense, by the life which we receive from God. But the necessity is not one externally impressed upon it: it is an internal one. "A new heart will I give you," says the Lord: but the new heart given is a heart which chooses freely the service of its Master. A legal requirement of the whole would have been unavailing, and a mere bondage. "Not grudgingly, or of necessity," is, as we have seen, the Scripture rule for the Christian. But that does not at all mean what people characterize as "cheap religion." It does not mean that God will accept the "mites" of the niggard, as the Lord did those of the woman in the Gospels. Christ does not say, "Give as much or as little as you please: it is all one." No: He expects intelligent, free surrender of all to Him, as on the part of one who recognizes that all is really His. If you will look at the sixteenth chapter of Luke, you will find the Lord announcing very distinctly this principle. The unjust steward is our picture there - the picture of those who are (as we all are as to the old creation) under sentence of dismissal from the place they were originally put in, on account of unrighteous dealing in it. Grace has not recalled the sentence, "Thou mayest be no longer steward." It has given us far more, but

it has not reinstalled us in the place we have thus lost. Death, in fact, is our removal from our stewardship, although it be the entrance for us as Christians into something which must be confessed "far better." But grace has delayed the execution of the sentence, and meanwhile our Master's goods are in our hand. All that we have here are His things, and not ours. And now God looks for us to be faithful in what is, alas, to men as such (creature of God, as indeed it is) "the mammon of unrighteousness" - the miserable deity of unrighteous man.

Moreover grace counts this faithfulness to us. We are permitted to "make friends of this mammon of unrighteousness" by our godly use of it; whereas it is naturally, through our fault, our enemy and our accuser. It must not be imagined that the "unjust steward" is to be our character literally all through. The Lord shows us that this is not so when He speaks of "faithfulness" being looked for. No doubt the unjust steward in the parable acts unjustly with his master's goods, and it must not be imagined that God commends him - it is "his lord" that does so - man as man admiring the shrewdness which he displayed. Yet only so could be imaged that conduct which in us is not injustice, but faithfulness to our Master-grace entitling us to use what we have received, for our own true and eternal interests, which in this case are one with His own due and glory.

But then there are things also which we may speak of as "our own." What are these? Ah, they are what the Lord speaks of as, after all, "the true riches." "If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, - not "another man's," but God's, of course, - " who will give you that which is your own ?"

Thus our own things are distinct altogether; and I need not tell Christians what they are. I need only remind you that if you have in your thoughts, as men down here, a quantity of things as your own possessions, to be liberal with, or to hoard up - in both cases you misapprehend the matter. As to things here, you have your Master's goods, which, if you hoard up here, you surely lose hereafter, and turn them into accusers. On the other band, you are

graciously permitted to transfer them really to your own account, by laying them up amid your treasure, where your treasure is -"in heaven."

The rich man, in the solemn illustration at the end of the chapter, was one who had made his lord's "good things" his own after another fashion; and in eternity they were not friends, but enemies and accusers. "Son," says Abraham to him, "remember that thou in thy life. time receivedst thy good things; " - that was all. But what a solemn memory it was! How once again the purple and fine linen and sumptuous fare met the eyes they had once gratified, and now appalled. Lazarus had been at his gate, but it was not Lazarus that accused. And oh, beware of having things your own down here. There was a man who had his "good things" here, and in eternity what were they to him?

I know this is not the gospel. No, but it is what, as the principle of God's holy government, the gospel should prepare us to understand and to enter into. Have you observed that the most beautiful and affecting story of gospel-grace, the story of the lost son received, is what precedes the story of the unjust steward? The Pharisees, who in the fifteenth chapter stand for the picture of the elder son, are here rebuked in the person of the rich man. Will not the prodigal received back to a Father's arms be the very one who will understand that he owes his all to a Father's love? Is not "ye are bought with a price" the gospel? But then ye are bought: ye are not your own.

Put it in another way. You remember that when God would bring His people out of Egypt, Pharaoh wanted to compromise - of course by that compromise to keep the people as his slaves. Three separate offers he makes to Moses, each of which would have prevented salvation being, according to God's thought of it, salvation at all. The first compromise was "worship in the land.""And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land."

And still the world asks why need you go outside it? You are entitled to your opinions, but why be so extreme? Why three days' journey into the wilderness? Why separate from what you were brought up in, and from people as good as you? Ah, they do not

know what that three days' journey implies, and that the death and resurrection of Christ place you where you are no more of the world than He is! Egypt - luxurious, civilized, self-satisfied, idolatrous Egypt - and the wilderness! what a contrast! Yet only in the wilderness can you sacrifice to God.

Then he tries another stratagem"And he said unto them, Go serve the Lord your God; but who are they that shall go? "And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds we will go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord.""And he said unto them, Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire." By their little ones he had them safe, of course - a perfectly good security that they would not go far away. And so it is still. How many are brought back into the world by the children they did not bring with them out of the world.

One last hope remains for Pharaoh : -"And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you."

"Leave your possessions," he says: and how many leave their possessions! Themselves are saved; but their business, their occupation, these are still not sacred things, they are secular: what have these things to do with the salvation of the soul? But God says, No: bring them all out of Egypt: yourselves, your families, your property, all are to be Mine.

And, in point of fact, His it must be if we would ourselves keep it, for we cannot keep it of ourselves. The man out of whom the demon went is our Lord's own illustration of the fact that an empty house will never lack a tenant. The sweeping and garnishing, and all that, will not keep out the devil, but perhaps only make him more earnest after occupation. Nothing will save from it but the positive occupation of it by another, who will not, and need not, give it up. So we must bring Christ into everything; or, by that in which He is not, we shall find we have but made room for another - Christ's opposite. The parable has application in many ways, and in many degrees, to those who are Christ's people, as well as to

those who are not. Our idle hours are not idle. Our useless occupations have a use - if not for Christ, then against Him. Our so-called recreations may be but the frittering away of energy, and seeds of distraction. We are in a world where on every side we are exposed to influences of the most subtle character; where corruption and decay are natural; and where all that is not permeated by divine life becomes the speedy subject of decay and death. To a beleaguered garrison a holiday may be fatal. We cannot ungird our loins here, or unbuckle our armour. It is not enough to withstand in the evil day, but having done all, still you must stand. So, if you leave Christ at the door of the counting-house, you will have to contend alone, or give place to the devil within the counting-house. No, Christ must be a constant Saviour as to every detail of our walk and ways.

How important it is to be right here! It is not a mere question of points of detail; it is a question of truth of heart to Him, which affects every detail - the whole character and complexion of our lives, indeed. So you must not wonder at a question of cattle being concerned with a deeper question of salvation itself - looking at salvation as not merely being from wrath and condemnation, but of salvation from the sin also which brings in these. Be persuaded of it, beloved friends, that only thus can we find, in the full power of it, what salvation is.

We have been looking at this from the side of responsibility. Surely it is good to look at it also from the side of salvation. Until you are clean delivered in these three respects you cannot be happily with God, nor even safe. Of course, I am not talking about reaching heaven: you may be safe in that respect. But whatever you have that is not Christ's, that is the world's still, will drag you back into the world. Can you go to your business and shut the door upon Him and He not feel it, and you not feel it? Can you say to Him: Lord, Sunday is yours, and Monday is mine; or, Lord, there is your tenth, and these nine are mine - and feel perfectly satisfied that all is right with Him? Better keep it all back, than give in that fashion; for the amount given just hinders from realizing where we are.

In this great world of sorrow and of evil, Christ has interests

dear to His heart - how dear, no one of us has perhaps a notion of. Souls lie in darkness to whom His Word would give light, and in bondage to whom it would bring deliverance. He says to us, I count upon my people to do this. How can we answer to Him for this confidence He has placed in us? Shall we say, Lord, I have had to keep up with my neighbours, to provide for the future, to do a great many things which I thought of more importance? Or, shall we say, Lord, Thou art so great, so high, so powerful, Thou surely canst not want my help in a matter like this! Or, Lord, Thou art so gracious, I am sure Thou wilt accept anything I may bring. I would not suppose Thee a hard Master, to want me to bring Thee much? Alas, what shall we say? Shall we not rather own with broken hearts how little we have valued Him?

The "doctrine of Balaam" thrives upon the heartlessness of God's own people. Do not let us imagine, because we denounce the mercenary character of what is current all around, that we can have no share in upholding what we denounce. It is far otherwise. If we have, or are giving cause to those who sneer at the advocates of "cheap religion," we are giving it the most effectual possible support.

Beloved, I have spoken out my heart, and I must pray you bear with me. Who that looks around, with a heart for Christ, upon all the abominations practiced in His name, but must be led to ask, Did not all this evil spring out of the failure of His own people, of those who at heart loved Him? And further, how far are we perhaps now, unsuspectedly, helping on the very evils we deplore? Do we not pray for Him to search out our hearts, and shall we shrink from having them searched out? If the search detects nothing, we need not fear it. If it shows us unanticipated evil, it is well to realize that the truthful judgment of the evil is ever the truest blessing for our souls. It will cost us something, no doubt, to walk in what is ever a narrow way - a race, a warfare, calling for energy and self-denial. But ah, beloved, it will cost us more, much more, to have Christ walk as a stranger to us, because our paths and His do not agree.

But the door is open, beloved, to come back. He has never shut it. The one thing so greatly lacking now is whole-hearted integrity. So few without some secret corner in their hearts they would not

like to have searched out by Him. That corner must be searched out, for He must be a Saviour after His own fashion; and if we would not have it, we can have little apprehended the fullness and reality of His salvation. Not alone does He save from wrath - He saves from sin. It is in subjection to His yoke that we find rest.

God grant it to us for His name's sake even now.

Lecture 4 - The Woman Jezebel, and the Voice of the Church

(Rev. ii. 18-23)

We are going on to-night with the fourth of these epistles to the seven churches - the epistle to Thyatira. It is only the first part of this that we shall have before us now. The latter part will be reserved until another time, if the Lord will.

We have now come to what has very plain and simple application to Popery, or Romanism. We have been tracing the steps leading down to it; and when we begin to speak of Romanism (if this be a true application we are making in this address now), let us remember that God looks at it as inside of what, in a certain sense, He owns as His. I do not mean that He owns the woman Jezebel, but that He does own the church of Thyatira, where the woman Jezebel is. It is not something outside, with which we have nothing to do, but merely to let alone. It is not something that has arisen independently, outside of us (though we are surely separate from it,) it is something that is only the legitimate result, the full ripe fruit, of what we have seen maturing in former epistles.

We have, in fact, been tracing its gradual rise. First, the Assembly of God - the called out ones, losing their separate place as that, and becoming a "Synagogue" - a mere gathering of people indiscriminately, as it were, together. Then we have seen the appointment of a distinct class of priests to go between God and the people, because the people were now strangers, in fact, and not able to go to God for themselves. That is what we mean by "clerisy." In the next place, we have seen the marriage between the Church and the world - her complete settlement in it; and how this necessarily gave her the things of the world, only to become baits to worldly men to assume the role of Christian teachers, who

themselves, on the other hand, brought in the doctrine of Balaam, teaching and seducing God's people more and more to amalgamate with those around them, and to give up all pretence of separation. That was Balaam's work with Israel, whose history has been, as it were, the anticipation of our own. Now we come to the church of Thyatira - the full ripe result of this - the woman Jezebel, who is doing systematically, and as a prophetess, what they had done as individuals, and with less pretension.

I do not intend to confine myself to what is called Roman Catholicism. If we were merely looking at it in that way, we should be attacking something we have very little to do with. But I want to show you that the very principle that is so plain in Popery obtains much more widely, in fact, with those even who have come out of Popery, and who ecclesiastically are fully outside.

I must, first of all, however, show the application to Popery itself. Evidently, the great point in this epistle is the sufferance of this woman Jezebel. This woman Jezebel is now at the same work as the followers of Balaam formerly. But, as I have just now said, they were but individuals. Now the professing church as a whole is doing it - for this is the force and meaning of "the woman." This woman is teaching and claiming absolute authority, the authority of a prophetess - that is, in fact, inspiration for her teaching. She is claiming infallible authority. And yet, according to the Scriptures, the woman has no right to teach. "I suffer not a woman to teach" is the principle there. In Scripture, the Church is always the woman, never the man. This is very simple, because the Church is what is espoused to Christ, and it is Christ who is the Man to whom she owns subjection. It is from Christ, therefore, the Word has to come to her. The moment she herself presumes to teach, that very moment she is of necessity setting up an independent authority apart from Christ. She is in revolt from her proper allegiance to Him who is professedly her Lord.

It is the woman in the Man's place here. It is the Church, substituting herself for Christ. She bears also a remarkable name - Jezebel, which carries us back to the days of Ahab, king of Israel, - those days of the worst part of Israel's history, and of one who, though queen of Israel, was a Canaanite, an idolatress, and a bitter

persecutor of God's saints and prophets.

I need scarcely point out to you how remarkably this name Jezebel suits the well-proved character of the Romish church. If you go on to Babylon the great, the woman of the seventeenth chapter of this book of Revelation, you find her drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And there she is pointed out as sitting upon the seven hills, and the city reigning over the kings of the earth.

Her name is remarkable in another way. The most commonly accepted meaning of the word Jezebel is "chaste." While the Lord speaks of her fornication and killing her children with death, her pretension is the exact opposite. She pretends to be the chaste spouse of Christ; and in the seventeenth chapter she is called the harlot. What is her character? Every one knows that she claims infallibility for her teaching - it is her boast. No church has gone to the full extent of that as Rome has. She claims to be a prophetess, and therefore to speak with authority from God, oracularly, and yet she at the same time is teaching and seducing God's servants "to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols." She is putting the seal of God on the most horrible iniquity. The very commencement of the address here has marked reference to her teaching. In other cases you find the Lord presenting Himself in a character suited to the state which He is addressing. Here He presents Himself as "the Son of God." There is nothing more distinct in the teaching of Rome than that He is simply the Son of Mary. They exalt Mary above Him in every possible way. They say Mary is a woman, and has a tender heart; therefore go to Mary rather. Mary, too, is a mother, and she can command her Son. Even if they own Him to be God, this still serves to exalt Mary more; for then Mary is the mother of God and queen of heaven. That is the blasphemy of Rome. The Lord takes distinctly therefore here His own proper title as the Son of God. How striking it is I If we look into it, we shall find every word applying in the most complete way to that of which it speaks. This woman Jezebel is the Church in Christ's place; lowering Him, we may say, in every possible way to exalt herself; setting aside His Word to introduce her own, and claiming for her word that authority which she denies to the word

of God itself.

You know how she denies it. She will tell you - exalting at the same time her own tradition to a level with it - that there is no doubt at all that it is the word of God; but she will tell you at the same time that you cannot understand it except as you listen to her teaching. Practically it is her teaching you are to hear: as she misapplies Scripture, you are to "hear the Church," and will give you Matt. xviii. 17 for it. If you ask, on the other hand, how you are to know the Church, she will give you marks, as Unity, Sanctity, Catholicity, Apostolicity (not one of which, notoriously, applies to her); but she will not send you to ascertain her character from that very book which she calls the word of God, and which she pleads in behalf of her own authority! She opens the book to show you a fragment of a sentence - hear the "Church" - and then she shuts it tight between her fast-closed hands, and says, with a self-possession that almost redeems it from absurdity, - "and that is myself; you must hear Me!" So, in point of fact, what she inculcates is the blindest possible credulity. But I do not dwell upon this any longer. We want to have something that concerns ourselves. And I think there is no difficulty in finding that which concerns us abundantly in the very principles which are involved in this. We may think ourselves quite outside of Popery, while we are holding the very principles of Popery itself. We may have got the root, while disclaiming the proper fruit of the tree; but, beloved friends, the root, undoubtedly, is to be found everywhere in the soil, and plenty of fruit too. That root is the Church’s authority to teach - to give forth what you are to listen to as, in some sense, authoritative, because she teaches it. Of course, when I say that, I admit fully that that is maintained in very different degrees and ways. If I go to Ritualism, I shall find, for instance, pretension almost as high as that of Rome herself, only connecting itself with an antique Catholicism of whose traditions they are merely the jealous guardians. This is still the infallible oracular Church, only with an infallibility less tangible, and doctrines less defined.

But church-teaching is not necessarily connected with this pretension at all. If we look through Christendom, we shall find almost every little sect in it professing to define for herself

doctrines which she holds, and which she insists upon her members holding. I do not mean to say that they claim infallibility at all, or that they do not appeal to God's blessed word for what they hold as truth. That, of course, is all right and in place, but I mean something very different from that. I mean, if you take, for instance, the churches of the Reformation, and those which have sprung out of them since, you will find that every one is still holding fast this principle - that the Church is to teach, and it is necessary that a body of doctrine should be put forth as church-teaching to which appeal can be made, and which may answer for the truth their members hold. In this we have spite of its disguise, what I may call an essential principle of Romanism - the Church's, instead of Christ's authority - the Church pretending to give a word which is authoritative to those who, if they are not members of Christ, are nothing.

Let us look at it a little more fully. As I say, in the first place, there is this pretension about it - the Church claims to be a teacher. I will not say now an infallible teacher - that would be pure Romanism: but nevertheless a teacher. And those who hold to the Church, what ever that church may be, are at any rate bound to submit to her teaching. Now if we take Scripture, how completely contrary it is to all this. In the first place, what is the Church? The Church is the assembly of God's people - the assembly that is Christ's body: its members are members of Christ. From first to last in the New Testament, you will find no better equivalent of the Church, in God's thought. What man would make of it is recognized, I grant; but that is another thing. It is the Church which is Christ's body, and to it every member of Christ, and he alone, belongs. But when that is said, the question is, where is the teaching body? Plainly, the body of Christ is composed of all, teachers and taught alike. The very youngest babe in Christ belongs to that body as well as the oldest and most advanced. How is it possible, then, that this Church can give any authoritative utterance at all? The fact is, you must necessarily put aside that definition of the Church the moment you think of its teaching. Whom would it teach - itself, the world, or what? Is it not plain that you must not confound the teachers and the taught? And if the

Church is the teacher, the teaching must be for those outside the Church. And who teaches the Church?

Every creed and confession is, in fact, the faith at first of a few, addressed to those outside the few who put it forth. It may gain adherents, and become the faith in that way of a great number; but however that may be, the authoritative teaching is only that of the original few, binding, to whatever extent, even the teachers of the same body afterward. For when you say, the Church teaches us so and so, you do not mean the present teachers You may be, in fact, recalling them to the teaching of the Church, or convicting them of departure from it. The teaching which binds (or is supposed to bind) is not the teaching of the Church today, but the teaching of certain teachers in the past. The Church, then, is not here the teacher, but has only bound itself to receive such and such teaching. The whole weight of some imposing name is attached to the teaching of those who, if they lived in the present generation, would not be recognized at all as having the same authority.

But apart altogether from Scripture, which is not in question here, what gave this place to teachers of the past, which those of the present may not pretend to? Have we not the same Spirit as they had? Have we not the same Word to enlighten? We may be less spiritual - true: but are not the Word and the Spirit of God as sufficient for us now as when these church-confessions were made?

If we turn to Rome we shall find her more consistent, and therefore more wholly wrong. She does not exalt the past above the present, but claims the same infallibility as resident in the Church at all times. And as there are no degrees in infallibility, her decrees of yesterday have all the authority of Scripture itself. But here the voice of the Church means the voice of the Pope, or the Pope with the bishops and the cardinals; and it would be nothing but sheer irony to tell the simple layman that he had anything to do with the decree declaring the Pope infallible, or the Virgin Mary immaculate, except in obeying it.

Some may think this a quibble, and that "the voice of the Church" does not mean that the Church teaches otherwise than through its teachers; and this would avail for Rome better than for

the Protestant bodies, if (a great deal often depends upon "if") if it could be maintained. But it cannot; for the teacher is not the instrument, or mouthpiece, of the Church, but of Christ through the Spirit. "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some pastors and teachers." And not only so, but the apostle John can speak to Christians as having the Word of truth and the Spirit of truth, as being in a true sense independent of teachers. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One," says he, "and know all things." And again: "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie"(i John ii. 20, 27).

There is indeed infallibility, and available for every Christian; but it is the infallibility of the Spirit, not of the Church, nor of man: an anointing which every Christian has received, and which renders him, as I have said, independent of teachers even, in a true sense - which we must guard, however, from constructions that man's pride would put upon it. The apostle evidently does not mean that teachers are superfluous, or an excrescence upon the body of the Church. He does not mean to make every man a teacher, nor that God will maintain him in independence of ministries which He has Himself ordained. He does not mean us to be isolated units. The Church of God is a body in which the highest cannot say unto the lowest, "I have no need of you." He who refuses the help that God supplies him with need not wonder if he be left to prove the folly and barrenness of self-sufficiency.

But yet there is truth - deep and needed truth for us - in just these words: "Ye know all things, and need not that any one teach you." It is the knowledge springing from daylight and good eyes. The best eyes would not avail in darkness; nor the best light, if we were blind. But the Word is light, and the Spirit of God has rolled off the darkness from our eyes. To men with proper sight, in daylight, I can say, not only, "you can see," but, "you see all things." I do not mean the antipodes, or the other side of the moon; I simply mean that whatever is before you your own eyes can see. You are not like a blind man, needing to take it on my authority that the sun is shining, or the clouds threaten rain. Yet I may call

your attention to it, or I may put an object before you which was not in your field of view before. And this is the proper office of a teacher: not to give authority to truth, nor yet to decide for you that such or such a thing is true, but merely to put that before you which must authenticate to you both itself and me - itself as truth, and me as a teacher of truth. Here the Word and the Spirit have their proper supremacy with the soul. They, and they alone, are the guarantee of truth. They, and they alone, are my true and abundant security as to doctrine.

But here is the trouble with these confessions of faith - which you will understand I am not finding the least fault with, as the confession of the faith of those who drew them up. I may thank God for the Augsburg confession as a protest against error, while I refuse it as an authority to define or limit my faith. And this is what it came to be used for, as a test of truth and as security for its preservation - how feeble as such all Germany bears witness at this day. And no wonder; for thus the apostles' teachings (what they presented to the Church as truth) is set aside, nay, proclaimed insufficient and untrustworthy. The Bible! why plenty of Unitarians will accept the Bible! What then? Why, get a human declaration as to the deity of Christ, and that will settle the matter. I am not accusing people of intentional dishonour to the Word or Spirit of God, but, none the less, such it is in fact.

It is the common sin and shame of the whole Church of God. It has been our own, I suppose - all of us. And if unbelief introduced these things at first, unbelief no less maintains them. And we who have had so long in our hands an open Bible are proportionately responsible, are we not? surely much more than those who lived in the days when it was only just re-opened. I do not say that those who hold these things follow them out to their conclusion, but I am justified in giving the conclusion to which they may be followed out. What the Lord says is true in this application, "Ye shall know them by their fruits: do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

And here, do not let yourselves be misted by the common thought that men of God could not teach what is false. In that way the goodness of a man is set up against the truth of the word of

God; and, as I have already said, God's word is not allowed to be authoritative because good men speak different things. Men equally good and learned, who have taken equal pains (we suppose) to ascertain what it is they teach, are nevertheless teaching things directly opposite to one another. Yet God has given His Spirit to lead into all truth, and He has said, "If any one will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." How are you to connect these things to make them harmonize? If you take men's goodness as security for their doctrine, you cannot do it. Thus it is that so many cast the authority of Scripture overboard. You must not be so presumptuous as to say you have the truth. You may have opinions. What is the worth of an opinion? Suppose it leads you wrong? If it is my opinion, it is what I have no title to have, if the word of God is to be authoritative. Has He spoken unintelligibly, or can His blessed Spirit teach contradictory things? We must think so if we look at man's goodness and man's character, instead of testing by the Word all he brings. God meant, and has told us distinctly, that by the Word we are to test everything. Will men submit to that appeal? "Search the Scriptures" were His own words, "for these are they which testify of Me." So the Bereans (so often spoken of, so little followed!) are noticed as more noble than those of Thessalonica because, as to what even an apostle said, "they searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Where else shall we find certainty at all? You may talk of presumption, but, I tell you, in the presence of eternity we do want certainty - something that we can lean upon that will not give way. And it is the lack of certainty that is the feebleness of so much evangelical Protestantism. Infidelity is "positivism," and Rome is as bold as ever with her claim to possess absolute truth. How will you stand against the two, if you alone are uncertain? The Romanist naturally turns to you and says, Don't you want certainty? I say, Surely I do; and therefore I go to that which only gives it - the word of God, and the Spirit of God. The moment you bring in other authorities the word of God is gone.

Take, for instance, the so-called Church of England: if such and such a person teaches error, they do not bring the Bible into court, and look at that. It has no place there. I say distinctly, in judging

what is heresy it has nothing more to do than if it were not in existence. It is the Prayer Book that must decide; and if it is not condemned by the Prayer Book, the man is entitled to hold it, rank as the heresy may be. It is what Christians are groaning over in every direction, but they do not impute it to the right source. They do not see that it is the very necessity of a creed, which they suppose will secure the truth - that the necessary effect of the creed is that it removes the real standard of truth out of court altogether, and puts something else in its place. We need not question the piety of the men who composed the creed; yet, none the less, what is the result? Of course, they could not foresee what new heresies would arise; they could not guard every gap. They were not prescient as the Author of Scripture is. So their notable security for truth actually is in the way of their dealing with the error. They have barred God out from settling it in His own way; and their unbelief in His wisdom and care ties them hand and foot, and delivers them over to the enemy.

Let me ask you seriously, do you really think God's mind is really less certain, less clear, less plain-speaking, than man's word? You say that people profess to find this and that doctrine in Scripture. It is quite true; but do you really mean to say that, after all, man's word is clearer, and so can be greater security than God's word? If you realize it as His Word, you cannot surely argue so. Is it not God speaking to man ? - a Father to His children? Does He not speak even to babes - not to the learned, but the unlearned? If all this be true (and it is the simplest truth that can be), what must be the result? The result is, that God's word must be simpler, truer, safer to trust to, far, than any possible human creed can be. And to supplement it with a creed, an authoritative creed, is, in fact, to supplant it: it is to say, God has not done for us what man can do; that God has not cared for us with even the care we have for one an other.

The next result of a human creed is necessarily sectarianism and schism. I know this is a very little matter in people's eyes now, and I grant there is something that is worse in God's eyes - that false unity which people claim in Rome - a unity, not internal and spiritual, but external, secured by an authoritative putting down of

all dissent from it. That unity did practically obtain for ages; and what do we call those times? We call them truly "The Dark Ages:" that was when the Church's dictum (in opposition to God's word) was most authoritative.

Where there is not power to repress dissent after this fashion, the result of an authoritative creed is to produce divisions. Being human merely, it will not, of course, be perfect: it will give the measure of its composer's knowledge, and, very naturally, also bear the marks of his failure, wherever he has failed to apprehend the teaching of the Word. These errors are now, equally with the truth itself bound upon all by the same authority. People must submit, and do violence to their consciences, or they must respect their consciences and go outside. The confession becomes thus a party badge. It binds people together by the very beliefs in which they differ from other Christians, whom they cannot but own to be walking as godly as themselves. Scripture itself has to be interpreted in conformity with the creed, and where it cannot be silenced sectarians are made in plenty, and doctrines are changed from their design of edification to be the unholy watchwords of intestine strife.

So we have lost practically the blessed name of Christians, and are known as Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists - names derived from our differences only. Our differences are exalted above what we have in common, and the body of Christ is rent into many bodies, which become, therefore, human organizations, not divine. God's Church is owned to be the true one, but it is invisible. There are practical working churches, which accommodate themselves better to the many minds of men, and which they can regulate to their own satisfaction.

Who takes the twelfth chapter of i Corinthians as defining the actual church to which they belong? In what church is "membership" neither more nor less than membership of Christ? Who takes the fourteenth chapter as regulating the Church's coming together? Yet the apostle there exhorts every one who pretends to be spiritual to acknowledge the things he writes unto them are the commandments of the Lord. Is it all antiquated and passed away, or applies to an invisible body nowhere to be found

on earth?

On the other hand, they tell us that - "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered," etc.; and that - "The Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority on controversies of faith."

Whose is this voice? It is not Jezebel's: there is no pretension to infallibility, but the contrary: the Church "must not ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written;" and there is danger of it, for "as the church of Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch have erred, so also the church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith."

This is not infallibility, but, on the other hand, a very simple acknowledgment of danger in submitting to this authority that the Church is said to have. Yet she is maintained in the power she has abused, and is only warned not to ordain anything contrary to God's word. But who is to decide if she does? And what are we to do, if she does? Conform in spite of conscience, or go outside the Church? Both the one and the other have been done by tens of thousands; and the Church's authority has been maintained in Protestant England at the cost of innumerable troubled consciences, and the secession of the truest, bravest, godliest men she ever had. The Act of Uniformity emptied two thousand pulpits at once. How many have submitted, not strong enough to contend, not true enough to make the sacrifice demanded, the day of manifestation alone will show. How many at present do violence to their own consciences every time they use the baptismal services, who shall say? It cannot be helped, they say, for the Church has authority to decree, and she has no infallibility to save her from decreeing error I Does the word of God indeed give authority where there is such manifest incompetency to use it? No, emphatically; God forbid! It is the Church's own decree, not God's; the woman in the place of the man, and thus confusion.

Jezebel goes farther than this, and wisely. She does not proclaim her authority and her incompetency in one breath. She is a prophetess, and "infallible," the only ground upon which her authority can be righteously maintained. But she is emphatically

the preacher of unrighteousness, teaching and seducing Christ's people to eat idol-offerings and commit fornication. It is the "woman" of the thirteenth of Matthew putting the leaven into the fine flour of the meat-offering; for it is Lev. ii. that explains the parable there. Just as the "tree" of the third parable shows the result of the word of the Kingdom to be the establishment of a Babel-like power in the world, (and this answers to Pergamos) so the "woman" of the fourth parable corresponds to the "woman" of the fourth epistle; and the "meal" of the parable would be better rendered by the "fine flour" of Leviticus. That fine flour is Christ, the bread of life, the food of His people, and the woman might lawfully have this and distribute it. But she is doing more - she is adding of her own to it, and this is to adulterate and spoil it. God has given her no right of manufacture of His people's food. If she adds anything to it, it is "leaven " - corruption. The leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, and the leaven of Herod, are what the Lord Himself points out as the danger in connection with His people's food (Matt. xvi. 12; Mark viii. 15); and this He plainly points out to be their "doctrine." The doctrine of the Pharisees was ritualism and superstition; the doctrine of the Sadducees was rationalistic infidelity; the doctrine of the Herodians was a courtship of the world. And here are plainly still the adulterations of Christianity. It is the Man's voice, Christ's, which alone has title to be heard by the people of God; when the woman speaks, it is at once insubordination and corruption.

Unhappily those who at the Reformation so nobly and boldly protested against the doings and sayings of the woman Jezebel left the root of it untouched in not protesting against all church legislation in the things of God. Had they left legislation to the righteous Lawgiver, and claimed for the Church the simple duty of obedience to Him - had they maintained the authority of His Word alone, and for power the power only of His Spirit - how different would the result have been. Instead of this, they took away but infallibility from the woman, (owned the actual bad fruit of her teaching,) and then, having branded her thus as evil and incapable, set her up again as before, with only an admonition to teach truly and according to the Word. The natural result followed. Men

having the Word in their hands now, and having learnt that the Church was fallible, soon found her teaching actually false. Division followed - discord - doubt of all truth-until infidelity, on the one hand, proclaims that nothing can be really known; while Jezebel looks down from her prophet's chair and asks, "Does not 'babel' mean 'confusion' ? - where is the real confusion? with your many voices, or my single one?"

And, in truth, does not "Babylon the great" extend further, however much her seat may be, and is, in Rome? When God's judgment fell upon the old typical city - the seat of empire of the first apostate - and when, scattered necessarily by the confusion of speech, they separated and left off building the city, did not those who abandoned the plain of Shinar carry with them, in their diverse speech, the evidence that they too were only hindered by that effectual impediment from building Babel still? And are not the diverse tongues of Protestantism a sign of how thoroughly God hates mere outward, earthly, ecclesiastical unity ? - only thus hindered from being built up again.

Yet let us not be dismayed. God and His truth remain the same. "He that will do His will shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." If we will be content in weakness and nothingness to be doers of His will, seeking, not name or power, but the blessedness of proving the peace and pleasantness of His holy ways, we shall find His truth the same as ever, and His strength made perfect in our weakness still. If but "two or three," literally, were left together, His "there am I" has provided not only blessing but sanction for them. Was there any other with whom Enoch walked, who of old "walked with God?" We know not: but only of himself (in his generation) is this written. The "two or three" seems to assure us it shall not quite be that with us. But still, as singly, must our feet be walking as it were alone with God.

We shall look at Jezebel in yet another character, if the Lord will, next time. But I put it to you now, whether these church-teachings - much wider than Jezebel's - have not, in fact, the character I have attributed to them; whether they are not based upon a false assumption of authority where Christ's word gives none? whether they do not suppose God's word to be incomplete

and less plain-speaking than man's? and whether they have not led, and do not lead, to the scattering of Christ's sheep, instead of gathering them? They do, no doubt, assume to be for gathering, not scattering; but we must mark well our Lord's words: "He that gathereth not WITH ME, scattereth abroad." As a fact, is not the result further and further division? - must it not necessarily be so?

And if all this be true, what is our duty when the Church presumes to step into Christ's place, and claim the obedience which is His due alone? Is it humility to give way and say nothing? Is it loyalty to Him to give up what is His due. Surely every honest-hearted servant of His will answer, No. Let then the answer be practical and outspoken. Let us return to the simple blessedness of hearing His words and doing His will - to the yoke which, being His (far different to what the Church's yoke has ever proved), is easy, and to His burden, which is light. Let us hear the words which, as they come down to us from the centuries of the past, approve themselves as indeed prophetic: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Lecture 5 - "Ye Have Reigned as Kings Without Us"

(Rev. ii. 23-29)

As I have already said, we have here the full, ripe fruit of the Church's declension. We have, in a sense, the perfect development, the full corn in the ear, ready for the sickle of judgment at His coming again - a coming first announced here in these addresses. The ripe fruit tells us what the tree is; the end tells us what the thing has been from the beginning. If we look at the church of Thyatira, or rather at the woman Jezebel, we shall see that in every way Christ's word and Christ's person are superseded by her. It is the Church that is the teacher and not Christ; and the Church has slipped into the throne and is reigning upon the earth before the Lord's time has come to reign - that is, in the sense in which alone His saints could share the Kingdom with Him.

We shall see directly that there is a sense in which He reigns now. But this is not a throne which the Lord can share with His

saints. That throne is yet to be set up, and the Church reigning in the meanwhile without Christ is really reigning in His despite, fulfilling the words addressed long before to the church at Corinth: "Ye have reigned as kings without us." They had left the apostles out, and were reigning, with these still suffering. They were not reigning. "I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last," says one of these, "as it were appointed unto death, for we are a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men" (i Cor. iv. 9).

The apostles certainly, whatever may be true of their successors, did not reign. They disclaimed it in the fullest possible way. And the whole of the New Testament is against the idea of any reigning now until the Lord Himself comes, and takes that throne, which, as I said before, He can share with His people.

But let us look now at this state of things in Thyatira, and we shall see how it is in fact a perfect denial, I may say, of two grand features of Christianity. These two grand features are, Christ's absence as rejected and the Church being a mourner until He returns, on the one hand; and, on the other, the supremacy of the Holy Ghost, meanwhile, as come down into the world to represent the Lord Jesus Christ. These are really the two forms of denial which you see in a glaring way in the church of Rome - the woman Jezebel. These are the two things prominently denied there. She reigns, in her thought, rightly even over kings, - Christ Himself not being here but still rejected, - and there is a vicar of Christ, a human vicar in place of the divine One. Jezebel has usurped the authority and attributes of the divine One. She reigns, instead of being subject; and her infallibility becomes her practical denial of His.

Let us look at these two things. In the first place, however, let us be clear that the Lord does reign now. I do not mean to deny that, as a truth, but on the contrary assert it in the fullest way. There is a Kingdom - the Kingdom of heaven now. Do not let us fall into the mistake that the Kingdom of heaven does not exist now. It does exist, although it exists in a form of which the prophets of the Old Testament knew nothing. It exists in that form called in the thirteenth of Matthew the "Mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven." This mystery-form is a form which the prophets and spiritual men

of old knew nothing of, and said nothing about. It was hidden from ages and generations. As you find in the same chapter that the Lord spake in parables, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret since the foundation of the world."

That is what we have here: what has been kept secret from the foundation of the world. The Kingdom was not a secret. It was clear enough that Messiah was to have a kingdom, and sit upon the throne. But the throne and Kingdom in the form in which we now have it, (the Son of God sitting upon the Father's throne, - not the Son of man sitting on His own, a human throne, - but the Son of God sitting upon His Father's throne) is not Old Testament doctrine. And a Kingdom with the King rejected and absent, and true disciples suffering instead of reigning, is an equally strange thought there.

You will find, if you look at the end of the third chapter of Revelation, the Lord reminds Laodicea: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." And the moment you think of that, - the Son of God on the Father's throne, - you will see He could not share that throne with His disciples. None of us could sit upon the Father's throne! and thus although it is quite true He is reigning now, it is not true that His disciples are reigning with Him now. It is false, utterly false. He is reigning now on the Father's throne, and we are translated, as you have it in the first chapter of the epistle to the Colossians: "Translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son" (I3th ver.), not of the Son of man, but of God's dear Son.

You will notice in the appearing of the Lord, in the day of His manifestation, that it is as the Son of man He appears. "You shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven." That introduces the Kingdom of the Son of man. And going back to Daniel, you will see in the seventh chapter, how the Son of man comes and receives a kingdom. Again in the first part of this book of Revelation, in the first chapter, it is One like the Son of man who walks in the midst of the candlesticks, and who speaks

therefore as such to Laodicea.

Now, when the Son of man takes His own throne, as such, He has got a throne to share with His people. He will have His people to share that throne with Him: but in the meanwhile to speak of sharing His throne is utter ignorance; none but Himself can fill God's - the Father's, throne. That is the throne He has now as the Son of God. His own throne is as the Son of man, and then, and then alone, we reign with Him.

Now that at once gives us clearly the present state of things. In the meanwhile what have we here? Why, suffering, as a matter of course. The King is rejected, although on the throne of God. God has placed Him there, until His enemies are made His footstool, and that, however shortly it may be, is not so yet.

You will find the second psalm full of that thought. That psalm, you will remember, the apostle quotes in the beginning of the Acts as true of the Lord in that day, when the whole world was linked together, the nations and the people of Israel too, against the King whom God had anointed on the holy hill of Zion - the King of the Jews. But death cannot hold Him: He is taken up out of the sealed-up sepulchre. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh" (ver. 4) - that is where He is sitting, "in the heavens." "Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure" (ver. 6). Then God's voice comes out; "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." And the Lord says: "I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee; " - that is as man. "To-day I have begotten Thee" would not be applicable to the Lord as the Only-begotten of the Father. It is only true of Him as born upon the earth. "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession: Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron." A very striking word we have there: that word "rule." The words 'in this second chapter of Revelation are evidently taken from that second psalm. That ruling, though with a rod of iron, is really shepherding. In the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew the quotation from Micah gives the same thought: "And thou, Bethlehem, . . . out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule My people Israel." It is the same

expression "shall shepherd My people Israel." Out of Bethlehem God's shepherd-king had come before, king David, the very type of Christ: and where He rules with a rod of iron, that is yet a shepherd's care and love. Love, if need be, can strike. It is a mistake to imagine any inconsistency in this. The "rod of iron" is for preservation no less than for destruction: nay, preservation is the end in view; it is to "destroy them that destroy the earth," and to make even the earth a place where peace will flourish as the effect of righteousness.

"Ask of Me," Jehovah says, and He has not asked; - He is still sitting in patience, and we are therefore, as the apostle John, "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev. i. g). His long-suffering is now salvation. When it is over, and delay would be, not blessing, not long-suffering, but weakness, it is with the rod of iron that He takes the ends of the earth for His possession, - not, as people imagine, with the gospel. The twenty-sixth of Isaiah shows that grace has been tried, and found ineffectual. The gospel has been going out for centuries and had no effect in converting the mass of mankind. When the Lord comes, this confederacy of the nations against Him will be showing itself in its full character, as the psalm depicts it. They will be saying more than ever, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." And "then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure." He will use, in contrast with grace, the iron rod; and here He associates His people with Himself: "And he that overcometh and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall shepherd them with a rod of iron," - the same word - "as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star" (vers. 25, 27, 28).

There you have what we are waiting for. In the meanwhile, to have a kingdom, to pretend to rule, or to have the upper hand in a world where Satan is really god and prince is only necessarily to compromise with Satan. We may be sure that he who offered the Lord all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, would not be slow to tempt His people somewhat after the same fashion. And so he has done. But the Church has not been faithful as the

Lord was. She has been flattered into believing the world was growing better, when she ought to be ashamed of being less distasteful to it than He was, and has accepted the thought of a Millennium with Christ absent and the devil here.

When the Millennium really comes, and before you hear of the saints' reign, the reign of Satan comes to an end. Satan is bound, and cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up for the thousand years. There is no reigning of Satan then, - no allowing Satan to reign while the Lord is reigning. Christ is coming to put down all opposition and have undisputed sway. As a consequence you will find that a real belief in the Lord's coming is thus a very practical thing.

If, on the other hand, we believe that on the whole the world is going on well, and its conversion by the gospel progressing, how can it but affect all our estimate of its character, and our need of separation from it? How then could we speak of the world as a thing to be overcome - a scene in which all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution? Did they bare the cross in past generations that we might wear the crown to-day? Thus the whole character of the Christian life is in this respect changed.

The Lord Himself shows the usurpation of authority, and worldly ways, to be the effect of putting off His coming: "If that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth His coming " - what then? "And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken," - there is already what is only perfected in Jezebel.

The time of the Church's reign therefore was necessarily the time of its worst corruption. Men call it "the Dark Ages," It was a very distinct step beyond the Pergamos condition we were looking at before. There, if the Church were united to the world, she was not as yet its mistress. On the contrary, the Christian emperors were the rulers, convoked councils, placed and displaced bishops, and had in every way the upper hand. So that the Church became, - for her own interests no doubt, but still - a mere tool in their hands.

Again, in the churches of the Reformation, (so far as they were established churches) there the rulers of the State obtained ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and became heads of the Church in their

respective countries. This was evil, a terrible evil, but it is not Jezebel. Jezebel had her foot (and in theory always has her foot) upon the necks of kings - and distinctly quoted Scripture for her supremacy: the very same Scripture too that people are quoting now in behalf of what they call a spiritual millennium. The promises of the Old Testament to an earthly people, (which the apostle in the ninth chapter of Romans claims as belonging to Israel still) these promises are spiritualized, as they call it, by being applied to the Church. In our (old) Authorized Version you may find such applications constantly in the headings of chapters and of pages also. But the spiritualizing of the prophecies is, in fact, the carnalizing of the Church. For the promises are not spiritualized. The earthly is not translated into the heavenly, but earthly promises are applied as such to a heavenly people, - with what possible effect but that of making the people earthly?

Do not mistake me. If as Christians, we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," we are entitled to lay hold of every spiritual blessing, and by faith claim it as our own. Thus if God said to a saint of old, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," the apostle tells us that so we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper." The promises to Moses or to Joshua we may apply to ourselves. This does not take them from those to whom they were addressed, nor does it authorize us in applying promises as to headship in the earth and such like in the same way. "All spiritual blessings in heavenly places" sufficiently distinguishes our portion.

That is not confined to Rome: it is everywhere. Rome has acted it out to the full; Rome has given us the ripe fruit; and what has the fruit been? What has her reign been? As you know, so far as she actually fulfilled this, it was a reign of terror for all God's real saints. They were hunted into the dens and caves of the earth, to escape the power of what called itself "The Church." Babylon, as we have it in the seventeenth chapter of this book, drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. That is how she used the power which she claims.

But as I said, we cannot leave this there. We cannot say, That is Popery; we have nothing to do with it. The principles are all

around us in the present day. We may have given up the fruits of the doctrine, but have we renounced the doctrine itself? Have we taken these words of the Lord as true and applicable - now as ever--"if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it." These words are as true this day as in the day in which they were uttered. Have we apprehended them? Have we accepted the alternative, - the principles of His kingdom now, in the time of His patience?

What remains for us, then? The cross! The glory beyond and the cross by the way are principles which the Lord connects together; and rough as the path may be, it is alone the path where the glory shines. God has "called us by glory and virtue." "Virtue" here is "courage," needed for the difficulties of the way. We are "strengthened with all might, according to the power of His glory, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Israel's desert pilgrimage is the figure of our walk of faith over a soil where nothing naturally grows for us; our bread, - our sustenance, - has to come from heaven; the track of glory is traced on barren sands. Nay more, it is an enemy's country; circumstances are against us; the world is against us. We can purchase even a truce only by unfaithfulness. We are the descendants of martyrs and confessors. We are the followers of One whom the world crucified, and who has left us an example that we should follow His steps in the midst of those inwardly as hostile as ever, even beneath the garb of Christianity itself. His own words warn us: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore doth the world hate you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also."

Has new light in the present century dispelled these things as illusions? or are these things really true of us? Would it not be well

to ask ourselves here to-night: What cross do I carry ? - Do I carry any? People have got so low, that they talk about taking up their cross in getting up to speak in meetings sometimes. And if that is not our thought, yet how far do we apprehend that there is a cross at all? The common trials which come upon us as men, as in the flesh still, are not the cross. The cross is what is ours as Christians, and it still is ours, so far as we are are practically Christians.

The Lord has not changed His thoughts, because the Church has bought her peace with the world by shameful compromise. No, they remain there in the Word, just as sharp, clear, and unmistakable as ever they were. And those who can read these passages to mean their entire opposite, have lost the power to interpret Scripture - or, rather, Scripture has lost its true power over them.

A few words now about another thing. If the Church reigns in the absence of Christ, why then there must be something representing Him down here. He must have a vicar. He is not present (even the world cannot mistake that) except spiritually. He is at God's right hand. That is the common faith of Christianity, and it is the faith even of Rome, - although in spite of that her altars are continually proclaiming Him corporally present; the faith of Christianity is that Christ is away. But a visible kingdom requires a visible head. And I need not tell you that such they have given it. The Pope is, for Rome, Christ's vicar; it is the natural development of the thought of church-government which historically preceded and led on to it; and which extends far beyond Rome. Presbyterianism, Prelacy, Popery, are but three steps in the same direction. Apostles are no more; and the Church is orphaned, if not governed in a visible manner. Hierarchical government in some form is a necessity to it.

Now the Lord has indeed a Vicar during His absence - a perfect, infallible Guide for His people, as well as a guide-book absolutely perfect. The Church has not only a perfect body of discipline, but One also who is the Interpreter and Administrator of it. It is the characteristic of God's people, that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." So distinctive and so wonderful a blessing is the presence of the Holy Ghost with us

now, that, although the disciples in our Lord's day were blessed, by the fact of His presence with them, beyond all the generations previous, yet He could say to them, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you."

His presence in the believer makes even his body the temple of the Holy Ghost. So His presence in the Church makes it also "the temple of the living God." Looking at the Church again as the body of Christ, He is the One Spirit animating the body. As all the members move under the control of the spirit in the natural body, so in the body of Christ also. If the members do not understand and move in harmonious subjection to the spirit, we speak of it as disease; and it is not less, but more truly so in the body of Christ.

If we open the Acts, we shall find everywhere His presence - greater than apostles, higher than the highest there. From the day of His descent at Pentecost, He is supreme over all; and that supremacy becomes the harmony of action, the unity of spirit in the assembly. Sovereignly He calls instruments as He will, and as sovereignly uses whom He calls. "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul," He says to the prophets and teachers at Antioch, "to the work whereunto I have called them . . . And they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia." How strange to read as power conferred on man to convey office what is really the naming of individuals by the Spirit Himself, as called and sent forth by Him: one of them being the man who asserts his own apostleship to be "not of men nor by man"!

"Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, . . . they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not." "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days, who said to Paul by the Spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem." Not ordinarily indeed, perhaps not often, was the bidding of the Spirit expressed as audibly; but the manner of communication was but circumstantial, and not of the essence of the matter. He was present, Comforter, Guide, Teacher, Witness; Spirit of the body, "dividing to every man severally as He will ;" a divine Person, with divine power and divine authority.

Yet unseen! I grant the fatal flaw in all this for most. The Bible they can see, but it is not definite enough. The Spirit of God they cannot see, and alas, cannot believe in, in a practical way. "Whom the world cannot receive," says the Lord Himself, of the Holy Ghost, "because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." And when the line between the Church and the world is gone, who can wonder that this unbelief should be permeating the mass of what is professedly Christ's? It is not only Rome that refuses to the blessed Spirit the place He has come to fill. The unbelief which denied the sufficiency of Scripture, and supplemented it by creeds which come soon to supplant it, has denied in the same way the sufficiency of the Holy Ghost, and supplemented His authority with hierarchical governments to which, whatever the theory, He is practically unnecessary.

If you ask people what they mean by church-government, you will get various answers, no doubt; but they will all agree substantially in one thing. That one thing is, in an omission of what is indeed the key-stone of the arch. They will tell you, some, that they believe in an Episcopal form of government; some a Presbyterian; some a Congregational. And if you ask them further, Where do they put the Holy Ghost, you will find the mass of people even denying any special presence of the Holy Ghost as characterizing this dispensation. They will tell you, so far truly, that the Spirit of God has always been acting in the world from the creation of it; that the new birth has always been His work from Abel, or from Adam to this time. They believe too, in certain special gifts at the day of Pentecost, and for some time thereafter. But a distinctive "coming" in the place of Christ, a coming so important in character that it was expedient even for Christ to go away, that we might have it, they do not understand, and do not believe in. One well-known man, an Evangelical divine, Dr. Hugh McNeile, of Liverpool, when he had to admit that a personal "coming" of the Holy Ghost after the ascension of Christ, was taught in the Word, could only account for it by the supposition that, during the Lord's lifetime upon earth, all the operation of the Spirit was limited to Himself alone, so that the three and thirty years of our Lord's presence, were years in which no conversions

could take place at all, - a barren time in the world's history, and utter desolation otherwise of spiritual influences!

Thus you will find that the practical faith in the Holy Ghost's presence now is scarcely faith in a Person. It is "influence," like rain, or dew, or gentle breeze, - and these are true and scriptural figures so far, but quite impersonal. They talk of a "measure of the Spirit," and every fresh stirring of heart they find is a fresh "baptism" of the Spirit. The evident and necessary result is that they lose the first requisite for faith in Him as one come down to take charge for Christ on earth, to dwell as God in the house of God, to animate and govern the body of Christ, as the spirit in man guides and governs the natural body. Hence church-government in people's minds has nothing to do really with His presence here. Bishops, priests, and deacons may need, and of course do need, His influences. So in theory does the Pope. But practically the ordering of things is (within certain limits, whether of church-tradition or of Scripture, so far as Scripture is supposed to serve) in human hands, and subject to human wills. "The Church has power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith." "And those [ministers] we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work BY MEN who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard." But the Holy Ghost may not have "called or sent" them! Well, of course; and that is provided for: for "although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and DO BY HIS COMMISSION AND AUTHORITY, we may use their ministry, both in hearing of the word of God, and receiving of the sacrament"!!

Thus they may have Christ's commission although the Holy Ghost hath not "called or sent" them; Christ and the Holy Ghost are made to be at issue; and the Church can go on ordering and ordaining in despite of the Spirit Himself !

And this is order; while those who desire to yield subjection to the Word and Spirit of God alone are convicted of being rebels

against proper authority, and sure to end in confusion and (as some have said) in "atoms"! Yet faith will follow where God leads, owning indeed that in His path all will be confusion that is not subjection; and that, leave Him out, we at least have no resource. Let it be so. We will abide the issue.

To churches constructed after a human pattern the government appointed by God could not possibly adapt itself. The only possible one must be available for spiritual and unspiritual, believers and unbelievers alike. The world ever really says, "We do not so much as know whether there be a Holy Ghost," and counts the talk about Him as mysticism, and faith in Him as fanaticism and confusion. But faith, to be faith, must be in the unseen. In the unequal yoke of faith and unbelief, believers must descend to the level of their yoke-fellows. Unbelief cannot rise up to faith. Faith therefore must descend to unbelief. That, alas, has happened.

The effects of all this we have had before us already in some respects. The principles which have led to them are prolific in evil, but it is the principles themselves that are occupying us now. Rome, to which in this epistle we have reached, exhibits whereto the course of departure from God tended from the beginning. He who rules the course of this world has ruled it, and now it is seen clearly to be the adversary's deliberate assault upon the truth of God. The rejection of Christ by the world, he has made us forget, in the world's embraces; the cross he has changed from an inward discipline to an outward ornament; for the dishonored Spirit he has substituted hierarchical dignities; for the coming of the Lord, an ecclesiastical millennium: Thank God, though the tide runs strong, there is yet an overcoming possible; and the Lord's closing words here remind us of it. Let us keep them in our hearts. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of My Father; and I will give him the morning star." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Lecture 6 - Sleeping Among the Dead

(Rev. iii. i-6)

In the address to the church of Thyatira, we find the Lord announcing His coming, and bidding His saints wait to share then with Him the authority which the false Church was assuming to have already. Thus Thyatira presents us with a phase of things which goes on at least until the Lord comes for His saints; not indeed until the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon the world, of which Malachi speaks, but until He comes as the Morning Star - the herald of the day before the day appears.

In Sardis we have, therefore, not only a development of the Thyatira condition, but in many respects, as it is easy to see, what is in entire opposition to it; not the claim of infallibility, not corruption of doctrine (as what is prominent), not persecution of the saints, not the exercise of authority in the same sense. There is now a very simple and explicit statement as to the character of things, which is a lack of spiritual power, nay, of life itself. While Christ had as much as ever "the seven spirits of God," - the plenitude of the Spirit as of old, and for His people, - in fact, they whom He addressed had a name to live only, and were dead. I would only there were more difficulty in applying this; but it is surely what fatally characterizes, and did from the beginning characterize, not individuals necessarily, but the churches of the Reformation.

Understand me well. I do not speak of the Reformation itself when I say this; for the Reformation was the blessed work of God; and the Lord does not judge, or ever can have need to judge, His own work. He refers to what His grace had done for them, to what they had heard and received. Their responsibility was to take heed to it, and hold it fast; and already they had failed in this. This is the ground of judgment.

Christ has the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars. So He is represented here. There is no failure in the supply of spiritual power; no failure in His care for His people. Yet in them there is a strange and terrible lack. With more pretension than had before been manifested in one way, for they have now a name to live, a name assumed to be in the book of life, while the actual condition

of the mass is that of death - not feebleness, but death.

There are exceptions: not merely those alive, but, still more, those that have not defiled their garments; and of these the Lord speaks in the warmest terms of praise: "They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." Alas, it is only "a few names." Others may be alive; but in a scene of death - you know what defilement with the dead is among the symbols of the Old Testament - the many of those even alive are defiled. But the mass are dead altogether - dead with a name to live.

The Lord further refers to this in His promise to the overcomer in Sardis: "Him that overcometh . . . I will not blot his name out of the book of life." The book of life is understood by the majority of people to be only in the Lord's hands, and all the names written in it by Himself. Those ignorant of the gospel consequently stumble over this blotting out of the book of life, supposing that it is the blotting out of those who had once been saved. But there is no such thought here. There is not the slightest sign that those mentioned ever had life at all: they had a name to live - only the name.

Contrariwise you find in Rev. xiii. 8 the very opposite as to those "written," as we ought to read it, "from the foundation of the world in the book of the Lamb slain." It is their security from being deceived by and worshipping the beast. Sovereign grace is their only and their sufficient security. Here, on the other hand, the book has got into man's hand, and he writes names as he pleases. But the Lord in His own time corrects the book, and then He blots out the names of those who had but the name.

Now the "name to live" has special meaning in connection with Reformation times. It was, and is, in no-wise characteristic of Popery, the putting of people's names (while here on earth) into the book of life. " Saints" for them are the dead, and not the living. The living she warns that "no man knows whether he is worthy of favour or hatred," and that it is best not to be too sure. Her pardons, her indulgences, her sacraments, only show by their very multiplicity how difficult a thing salvation is. Darkness is the essence of her system, and she thrives upon it.

On the other hand, the Reformation recovered the blessed gospel, and the word of reconciliation was preached with no

uncertain sound. The doctrine of assurance was preached with the utmost energy, and was stigmatized by the Council of Trent as the "vain confidence of the heretics." They even pushed it to an extreme, maintaining (at least, some of the most prominent Reformers did) that assurance was of the very essence of saving faith itself, and that unless a man knew himself forgiven, he might be sure that he was not forgiven. Plainly, then, Protestantism put a man's name in the book of life in a way that Popery did not.

Two immense things the Reformation gave to us, which have never since been wholly lost: an open Bible, in a language to be understood; and, on the other hand, the gospel, at least in some of its most essential features. These are inestimable blessings, which, would we had but hearts to value more.

Of the men, too, who were the dear and honoured instruments in handing them down to us, we cannot speak with enough affection and esteem. God honoured them (how many!), taking them to Himself in fiery chariots, from which their voices come, thrilling us with the accent of the heaven opening to receive them. Those who disparage them will have to hear, one day, their names confessed and honoured by Him they, served, as those of whom the world was not worthy.

But, on the other hand, we must not make, as many are doing, the Reformation the measure of divine truth. They are not loyal to the Reformation really who accept less than Scripture as their measure, or test, of this. The broken and conflicting voices which are heard the moment the question is no longer of the gospel, but of the Church and its government, assure us that if Scripture has spoken as to this, the churches of the Reformation do not in this convey to us its utterance, as it did in the gospel. Lutheranism is not Calvinism, the Church of England is not the Church of Geneva here. We must needs, whether we will or not, take Scripture to decide, amid claims so conflicting; and when we do so, we find, with no great difficulty, that no one of these takes us back to the Church as it was at the beginning - the body of Christ, or the House of living stones - at all.

Instead of this, as is well known, the churches of the Reformation were essentially national churches - not in every

country able to attain the full ideal, as in France, where Rome retained its ascendency by such cruel means, but still always of that pattern. Rome had, of course, prepared the way for this. The nations of Europe were already professedly Christian nations, and it was not to be expected that those who escaped from Jezebel's tyranny would give up their long hereditary claim to Christianity. The adoption of an evangelical creed could not change the reality of what they were. True, they learned the formula, put their names upon the Church-books as Protestants, learned to battle fiercely for the gospel of peace, - and how could you deny their title to be Christians? Yet as to the many, it was but "a name to live."

We must learn to distinguish two elements in the ecclesiastical revolution of those times. There was, first of all, a most mighty and manifest work of God. The Scriptures, released from their imprisonment in a foreign tongue, began to speak to responsive human hearts, with the decision and persuasiveness that the word of God alone can have. Christ began once more to teach as One having authority, and not as the scribes. The blessed doctrine of justification by faith, everywhere brought souls, held fast in bondage, into liberty and the knowledge of a Saviour-God. The ecclesiastical yoke could not longer hold those whom the truth had freed; and where Christ had become thus the soul's rightful Lord, Rome's authority was but the tyranny of Antichrist.

This was the first and most powerful element in Protestantism; not a political movement, but a movement of faith. Luther, solitary, at Worms, in the presence of the mightiest political power in Europe, was God's testimony that the work was of Him: His strength was manifest in human weakness. Had that place of weakness been retained all through, had but God been allowed to show that power was His alone, how different would have been the result! And it is due to the foremost name of Protestantism to acknowledge that, as far as carnal weapons were concerned, Luther would have rightly refused them a place in a warfare which was God's. To call Protestantism essentially a political movement, is to do it glaring injustice, and contradict the plainest facts.

Yet we cannot ignore the political element which soon entered into it. Rome had made the nations everywhere feel the iron hand

of her despotism, and the national reaction against her was the natural result of her intolerable and insolent oppression. The notorious wickedness of her chiefs had destroyed, long ago, all real respect. Her power stood now in an excessive and degrading superstition. She lived upon men's vices and their fears; and where the light fell and removed the darkness, the fears were removed also, if the vices were not. Men learned to look upon the power they had cringed to with contrary feelings, deep in proportion to their depth before. Their interests, politically and otherwise, coincided with the spiritual movement which divine power had produced. Soldiers, politicians, governments, made common cause with the men of faith. It was hard not to welcome such apparently God-sent allies, when on every side persecution raged. The movement increased in external power and importance; but its character was in just that proportion lowered and perverted.

There was need of defined principles to give cohesion to elements which the Spirit of God no longer sufficed to bind together. Outside there was the pressure of Rome, a compact and immensely powerful body, armed, drilled, and intensely hostile. Organization was soon a necessity: but of what, or whom? To have proclaimed the true Church would have been to cast off their allies, to insure the continuance of persecution and reproach, to leave Rome unchecked, triumphant. I do not say that the true thought of the Church ever dawned upon them; but I do say that their alliance with the world was a sure means of hindering their seeing it. Instead of keeping the true Church's place, national churches were formed, with evangelical creeds as pieces of statecraft, and political power to back them - not divine.

Of these creeds we have already spoken a good deal, but yet there remains much more to say. It is easy to see that if a creed had been of necessity for His Church, the wisdom of God could have easily given us an infallible one, and His love could not have failed to do so. On the contrary, He has given us that which He proclaims able to furnish the man of God thoroughly to all good works, but which people feel at once to be as different from a creed as can be.

Why do people want a creed? They want something which can be more plainly and easily read than Scripture. Scripture is

indefinite; a creed must be definite. Of Scripture everybody makes what he likes; what they want is something different, something that shall not be susceptible of two meanings, plain to all - spiritual and unspiritual, Church and world alike.

I have before been contending that Scripture is clearer, plainer, than any word of man; besides being in infinite wisdom written so as to meet, as nothing else can, the thoughts of man at every point, so as to be the only guard and protection against heresy to the end of time. This is simple truth; yet I am going to own, what may seem a contradiction to my former words, that from their own point of view there is some truth in what they contend for as between Scripture and a creed.

From their point of view, - for the apostle's words limit us somewhat when we speak of the intelligibility of Scripture. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that" - what? -"THE MAN OF GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Scripture, profitable for doctrine as it is, does need a state of soul for its proper apprehension. It needs not, indeed, great attainments, human learning, deep research, but (what may be found in the lowest and poorest just as well) devotedness - that we be God's men: what all Christians are, indeed, by position and profession, but, alas, not what all practically are. This is the single eye which we must have for the body to be full of light.

But this being so, we can easily see that the Bible is not just the book for a court of law, and it is not the book for a national creed. The truth in it is not meant to be accessible merely to the natural mind. It is not crystallized into so many doctrines; and if it is not, if it is so essentially unlike a creed, on that very account we may surely believe that nothing like a creed was in God's design. He did not mean to give something that should serve as a motto for political partisanship, or a banner which should serve for any other purpose than spiritual warfare. Nationalism, the union of the living and the dead, was never in His mind. He meant spirituality to be a first necessity for the discernment of His thoughts; and men, when they reject the blessed word of God for their plainer creed, show

really that herein they are at cross purposes with Him.

"Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" is the exact moral description, as it is the condemnation, of nationalism: of more than this, no doubt, but still of this. It is not the Church of God at all, but a Christianized world with Christians scattered through it - a place so defiling that but a few really keep their garments Undefiled. Connected with the truth, as Popery is not, such a system betrays the truth which it professedly upholds. The character of the last days is developed by it: "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, proud, blasphemers," retaining all that was natural to them under the garb of Christianity, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

This is the effect of popularized truth - popularized as God never meant His truth to be. Of course you will distinguish between this and the preaching of His truth, than which nothing is more assuredly according to His mind. His gospel is to go forth to every creature, and the blessings of an open Bible we shall not be apt to exaggerate. But by popularized truth I mean what we have already been speaking of, truth made into a party badge so as to be accepted by those with whom Christ is not; for He never was popular, and He is not.

Popularized truth means truth that has lost its power. It may be truth for which martyrs died, truth that when first given of God, or given afresh, was full of quickening power. Popularized, it is so far lifeless - no exercise of soul in receiving it, no cross in professing it. They have got from their fathers what their fathers got from God; their fathers confessed it in shame; to them it is honour. There is nothing to test conscience, nothing to make them ask, Dare I take this without human sanction to commend, nay, in the face of all human discountenance? Yet only thus have we got it truly from God. The martyrs they talk of, took it thus, and suffered for it; they take it from their fathers, - a principle which would have condemned the martyrs, - and they take it without the least thought of being martyrs. Truth is proclaimed as powerless by the unholy lives of its professors, while unholiness is recommended by the practice of those who are orthodox as to the truth. And thus truth tends to die out of itself, as valueless, remaining all the while

in the national creed, embalmed as a memorial of the past. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God."

Too manifestly do we see this, with regard to all the national systems, to need more than a bare allusion. It is a system adapted to worldly minds, and to be worked by political machinery. The word of God is no necessity to it, except it may be to furnish a table of lessons, for the authoritative standard is the creed. The Spirit of God is not necessary to it, for colleges can manufacture preachers, and ecclesiastics ordain and send them forth apart from this. Christians are not necessary to it: they are too uncertain a constituent part of a nation or its government to be capable of being reckoned on; and there is no means of determining with certainty who they are. A sacrament - baptism or the Lord's Supper - takes here the place of less manageable tests.

And the grieved and insulted Spirit may be besought to breathe upon the lifeless mass, and fill the sails of the ship of the state. But He must keep within the bounds prescribed by ritual, hierarchy, and parliament, or He will be treated as schismatical. And, it may be remarked, how often, in fact, a schism springs out of a large and manifest revival. Souls brought near to God, and made to feel the value of His Word, and the necessity of obedience to it, are not made thereby the mere docile servants of the state.religion. The new wine will not be held in the old bottles. Statesmen are thus not favorable to such fresh enthusiasm, and no wonder: it divides the house which it is their interest to keep as one.

But is not this the history of the churches of the Reformation, of Protestantism in fact, during the three centuries of its existence? Is not this the true account of its divisions, for which it is reproached? The Spirit of God is not, indeed, the author of confusion, but of peace; of unity, and not disunion. But when people talk of schism, they should remember to what that term applies. As found in Scripture, it is "schism in the body" that is reprobated, and the body of Christ is not a national church. When men have joined together the living and the dead, when they have subjugated consciences to formularies instead of Scripture, to hierarchies instead of God, or to hierarchies in the name of God, what have

they forced the blessed Spirit to do but to draw afresh the line they have obliterated between the living and the dead, between man's word and God's, between human authority and divine?

And His mode of doing this has been constantly to bring out of the inexhaustible treasure of His Word some fresh or forgotten truth, which would do that which the popularized truth in the creed had almost ceased to do, and which would test the souls of His people as to whether they were indeed the descendants of those who confessed Him of old, whose tombs they built, and whose memories they had in honour. The fresh truth calls for fresh confession; it costs, and is meant to cost something; it brings its confessors into opposition to the course around them, and separates them at once from those whose only desire is to go with the stream, and with whom the profession of Christ and the Cross are widely separate.

Doubtless the division may separate between true Christians themselves; and this is in itself an evil, that true Christians should be separated; but the responsibility rests with those who are not quick-eared enough to hear God's call when it comes; not single-eyed enough to discern the path in which the Lord is leading His own. We are bound by the honour we owe to Him to maintain that He cannot possibly be leading His own in contradictory paths, cannot possibly refuse the needed light to walk aright, however simple or ignorant the soul may be. No one strays, and no one stumbles, because God denies him light. But "the light of the body," practically, "is the eye" - the inlet of it; and there the hindrance is. Thus a severance, sorrowfully enough, is made between real Christians; but the sin of it is not with those who separate from that which God has shown them to be evil, but with those who remain associated with the evil which is forcing out the true in heart. Separation from evil, so far from being a principle of division, would, if honestly followed, make for unity and peace, as leading upon a path where God's Spirit ungrieved could really unite and strengthen His people. With evil He cannot unite; evil, therefore, wherever admitted, is a principle of division. I am not, therefore, upholding or making light of schism. The divisions of Protestantism are its shame; and to glory in them is to glory in

one's shame. Error is manifold, contradictory, schismatic. Truth, however many-sided, is but one. Sects, in their multiplicity, may accommodate, no doubt, the religious tastes of man; but that only would show how purely human they are, how little divine.

The unity of the Spirit may be maintained, and allow indeed for growth in knowledge, and in unity of judgment as to many things. The Church of God has room for all that are God's, of whatever stature - fathers, young men, and babes. Nay, it insists upon the largest charity for those who differ from us in aught that would not link the name of Christ with His dishonour. But that is a very different thing from what is implied in a creed; indeed, I may say, is its fundamental opposite. For the creed defines in a way that, if rigidly adhered to, shuts out toleration as to points of confessedly minor importance, where the Spirit of God would teach, not indifference, indeed, but the largest charity; the creed forces its definitions upon all in a way most felt by the most conscientious. It is as necessary, as far as the creed goes, to believe in a child's being regenerate when baptized as it is to believe in the Son of God Himself. I grant there may be practical laxity, but for a soul before God that does not do. For such an one, with his eyes open, the subjection to human institutions in the things of God is just what he cannot and dare not yield.

"Making schism in the body "is always wrong. Separation from evil at all costs is a necessity, and always right: and from this have been gathered the freshness and power which have plainly characterized so many movements of this kind at the beginning. They began in self-judgment and devotedness. The evil at least they saw, and were exercised about, and the measure of truth they had was held in power. It soon became systematized, and in that proportion its power began to fail. The founders, if you look at their lives, were men of faith and power, suffering and enduring. The manners of the adherents were chastened, simple, primitive. When organized, popularized, with a large following, its freshness waned; and in the third or fourth generation it had taken its place as simply another sect among the many, boasting of a history which it did not discern to be a satire upon its present condition.

The organization, the creed, are to preserve the truth. But did

these give them the truth they are anxious to preserve? Surely not, as they must own. God in His love, God in His power, has given what man had proved his incompetency to retain; they cannot trust Him to retain it for them after He has given it. He has used His word to minister it; they turn around and use for that blessed Word of His a creed of their own manufacture to preserve it. The generations after follow their fathers' creed and not the Word. The truth popularized is gone as "spirit and life." God has to work afresh and outside of what a little while ago was a fresh revival produced by His Spirit.

And the spiritual life of the time has come more and more to manifest itself in "revivals," which, so far as they are really such, are the protests of the Spirit of God against prevailing death continually creeping over everything, and oftentimes connected with fresh statements of truth when the old have lost their power. The Lord's warning to Sardis points out this constant tendency to death: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die." "Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent."

It is scarcely too much to say that every true revival, whatever the blessing for individuals, - nay, I might even say, in proportion to the blessing for individuals, - weakens the national system, and this for reasons we have been considering. The Spirit of God must needs work in opposition to the death produced by the system, and therefore against the system which produces the death. Souls quickened by the Spirit of God cannot go on contentedly under deadly and unchristian teaching, comforting themselves with the assurance of the article that "the evil" who sometimes "have chief authority in the ministration of the Word and sacraments," do yet "minister by Christ's commission and authority;" nor will they always be able to accept the ecclesiastical "yoke with unbelievers," because the system requires "every parishioner" to communicate, irrespective of any other security as to his conversion than his baptism and confirmation may imply.

It will be no marvel, then, to find (what any one with spiritual understanding must own) that a large proportion of those who "have not defiled their garments," in the history of Protestantism,

have been in some way or other dissenters from the national system. The first generation of English reformers were dissenters from Rome, and Rome did her best to keep them pure by the fires she kindled for them. Afterwards a people began to be separated, who, from their honest endeavor to be right with God, were nicknamed "Puritans." I need not tell you what great names are found among this class, which after- generations have learnt to love and honour - a class with whom fine and pillory and imprisonment were familiar things. Everybody knows that Bedford jail was the "den" in which John Bunyan dreamed his memorable dream. In Scotland, the attempted enforcement of prelacy gave a succession of martyrs and confessors to the Presbyterian name, with whom, as elsewhere, their time of persecution was their time of real blessing, while Episcopalianism, which was riding roughshod over them, had gone already more than half way back to Rome. With the movement under Wesley and Whitefield, nearer to our own times, we are naturally still more familiar; and that which issued in the Free Church of Scotland is still within the memory of a generation not yet passed away.

All these, and many others, will exemplify the truth of what I have been saying, until in our own days the national systems are showing evident signs of decrepitude, and breaking up, and Romanists and infidels are beginning their pæans on the downfall of Protestantism. We who are able to see it all in the light of Scripture can easily understand why all this is, and see only the truth of God's word more and more manifested in it. Christianity flung as a cloak over a corpse can surely not warm it into life. Corruption will go on underneath, eating away the form of life - the only thing it ever had - until at last the cloak will more or less fall off, and what was all along true become apparent.

When the Protestant churches shall be gone altogether, or gone as such, their protest will not be gone, but only transferred to another Court. Heaven will take up what they have dropped. Babylon the great will fall under divine judgment, and apostles and prophets, and God's people everywhere, will rejoice at her fall.

But let us contemplate a little while now the other side of things. We have had before us to-night what is intensely sorrowful,

more provocative of tears than Jezebel's corruption. There, the very malignity of the evil roused the whole soul against it. Here, there is the fruit of what was in the beginning a movement of God. He can speak of what they had seen and heard, and exhort to hold it fast. There are still "things that remain," although "ready to die." And how can we but sorrow intensely over what was so fair in its earliest promise, and received its baptism in the blood of martyrs?

Yet the word to the overcomer here comforts us with its recurrence. It links us, if we have ears to hear, with the same little remnant that has ever been finding its way, through storm and flood, to Him from whose love neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword can separate, and in which they have approved themselves, through Him, more than conquerors. The overcoming may be now in a new sphere, and separation may have to be from brethren, heirs of great names in faith's record. Yet, only overcorners are their true successors. Not those who built the sepulchres of the prophets represented them or were linked with them, in our Lord's account, but those whom He sent forth - to be persecuted by these same admirers of antiquity.

And God must teach us independence even of one another, - that rightful independence which springs from real and lowly dependence upon Him. In His presence, what were even the greatest of His followers? How can I say to another, "Rabbi, Rabbi," when I must take the honor from Him that I deck another with? If I had not Him, it were lowliness; if I have Him, it is dishonour to Him.

It is not schism, this separate path, when not my own will, but His Word and Spirit leads me. It is not separation in heart from brethren, if Christ be dearer to me still than they. Nay, love to them only approves itself, as the apostle teaches us, "when we love God and keep His commandments" (i John V. 2). Faith's victories are not in applause wrung from a multitude, but in the path of One, the true Joseph, separated from His brethren; and God has overruled the presence of evil (which, I need not say, He has not caused) to the giving us a path, at least in its circumstances, the more Christlike. We are not left to the subjection to evil; He calls us to

rise above it. The difficulties of the path are only to prove afresh the power of God to carry us through them all. Every encouragement throughout these epistles is held out simply to the overcomer.

The Lord give us only the needed energy! The time is short. The end is at hand. The grace that is now sufficient for all daily need will soon be manifested in the crowning of the conquerors. Then, those that are poor shall have the kingdom; the mourners shall be comforted; the meek shall have the inheritance; those that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled; above all, the pure in heart shall see God - the God whom sin, for the time, has banished from the earth He made.

Lecture 7 - Christ's Word and His Name

(Rev. iii. 7--13)

We have much before us to-night, which I shall do poor justice to in the short time before me. But there are some prominent characteristics of the state of things to which this epistle addresses itself which I wish to bring before you. I do not intend to go into many details, but merely to apply certain prominent points, in this address.

This epistle has a different character from any former one. The Lord speaks of Himself in a very distinct way from that in which He spoke of Himself before. It is not anything external, but what He is Himself, the Holy and True One. The way the Lord presents Himself in these epistles is always in accordance with the state of those to whom He speaks. It is for warning or encouragement, or perhaps both, as in the address to Smyrna: “He that liveth and was dead,” enforced by the words, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.” Here, “He that is holy, and he that is true” is a solemn admonition, and yet it surely has its blessed comfort too.

This personal title, in conjunction with the whole epistle, seems to show the final break-up of ecclesiasticism, and an individual walk becoming the whole matter. Holiness and truth have seldom been the attributes of bodies of men, even where professedly

Christian. Not long was it even in the apostles' time before one of these could say, "All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ." Pentecost has never returned. And now, having followed the development of Christendom at large from Ephesus to Thyatira, and having seen the truth given again of God dying out in the national systems of Protestantism, (in Sardis), in Philadelphia we find a strictly remnant testimony; the Holy and the True speaking of that which has seldom characterized more than individuals, and which challenges our response as individuals to it.

It is comparatively easy to point out Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, but who shall point out Philadelphia? Can you decide it in your favour by the fact that you belong to this or that company of people,- in this or that ecclesiastical relationship? Is this all that is intended by keeping Christ's word and not denying His name? I am not at all denying that the question of our associations is one of grave importance, and rightly finds a place in connection with these things. A place it must have, and a serious one, for he must purge himself from vessels to dishonour, who would himself be a vessel unto honor; and Christ's word defines our Church-place, as all else. But to take a part for the whole would be a grave mistake, and even to give an undue place to such a part.

It is more than doubtful, then, if any body of Christians as a whole can possibly represent Philadelphia as a whole. It is quite certain that, in order to do so, it would have to be in a better condition far than was the Church already in the days when apostles were yet upon the earth. No: the more Philadelphia represents a condition which has in a remarkable way the Lord's own approval, the more does it become us to see well whether that condition is our own or not. Let us look a little then at what we have here in its prominent features.

They have but a little power: no very great works characterize them. Three things however do, to which the Lord evidently attaches great importance. First: "thou hast kept My word."Secondly: "and hast not denied My name."Thirdly: "thou hast kept the word of My patience."

And first, it is "My word," in opposition to all other.

Everywhere through the epistle, as you cannot fail to see, this "My" is remarkably emphasized, and the Person of the Lord exceeding prominent. It may remind us how He has been bringing out in these latter days the truth as to Himself. Not alone the effect of His work, the power of His blood to cleanse and reconcile, but what He personally is who has done all for us. Especially has He been teaching us to look into the inner sanctuary into which He is gone, and to recognize Him more simply and really for what He is, true Man, as true a Man as ever, as well as God over all, blessed forever. I think none can doubt, who know what God has been doing for us in His grace for some time past, that the Lord Jesus has been fixing the eyes of His people more intently upon Himself, and inviting us to nearer intimacy. For how many the thought of Christ where He is now, was dimmed by the very glories of the Godhead into which He was thought to have gone back - scarcely any longer to be thought of as a Man at all! And to how many has the thought of a Man - true Man, in the very glory of God, and there as representative of His people, brought Christ into a distinctness and intimacy which is now the life of all their joy.

This vividly personal mode of address is no less strikingly appropriate to our day than it is in itself precious and inspiring. And is it not also a further mark of remnant times? He whom men cast out of the synagogue because he could not but confess that Divine power had opened his eyes, and because he would not dishonour - little as he knew of Him - the One in whom that power had displayed itself, was but cast out to learn in Jesus' presence the glory of the Son of God, and to take his place among the sheep of the true Shepherd. And in proportion as we prove the breaking up of everything, - the ruin, not merely of the world as such, but the religious ruin - do we not find (if it be real) the presence of the Lord, all the more real, meeting all our need? And then, as we prove this, "His Word" has a place with us correspondingly. His Word, because it is His, - inherently sweet, no doubt, yet not only because it is sweet His Word, in opposition to all else.

And, beloved friends, if we look around us at the present day, which of us can be ignorant that it is the word of God that is in special question everywhere. The two great parties of this day, the

party of superstition on the one hand, and of infidelity on the other, however they may seem to be essentially opposed, yet unite in the attempt to lower and take away the authority of His Word as such. Will Rome allow consciences to be simply before God, and in subjection to Scripture? So far from that, you are to receive her infallible interpretation of it and not listen to it for yourself at all. And all ritualism, however diluted, runs in the same direction. The voice of the Church is substituted for Christ's voice, and the Church herself presses in between you and Him: there is to be distance, not intimacy. On the other hand, infidelity (which you will find, in a form still more variously diluted, where you least suspect it) will not allow God's voice to speak to you in any real way at all. Religion is an earth-born thing - not heaven-born; an aspiration perhaps, but not an inspiration; a seeking after God, not God after you; and a seeking which they are now determining to be a fond vain thing, for God is the Unknowable, and even the conception of Theism is "unthinkable."

On the other side, God has been bringing out for us in the most wonderful way the fullness of His Word. I do not at all speak of external evidences, although in every self-chosen path by which man is seeking to escape from God, He has been meeting and confronting him with these. Stones have been crying out in Egypt, and bricks in Assyria. The disentombed memorials of the long dead past have proclaimed Him then living, who still and ever liveth. But I speak of that in which His Word has witnessed for itself, as the innermost shrine of His presence in which every voice speaks of His glory. That Word which to unbelief is so poor and common and gives no response, has never to faith been so revealing God, since apostles and prophets spoke it first. Christ, mute in the judgment-hall and before His accusers, has never so manifested Himself before in the midst of His own. Thus a true and faithful God has been providing for the need of His people in the days which are coming, which even now are come, when nothing else remains to us; when, if we cannot take His Word and rest in it, no other rest is possible at all.

You may understand then what an immense thing it is to be keepers of Christ's Word. Let us remark now also, that it is not

merely words of His, but His Word, His Word as a whole. It has become a common fashion to say that Scripture contains God's word, not is it. Thus we are left to pick out, in the best manner we may, whatever is really His, from that which may be merely the mistake of the writer. Thus the Word ceases to have authority over us; instead of its judging us, we become its judges. We obey it when obedience coincides with our own inclinations and when we do not find it so, our excuse is at hand.

We can easily discern the folly and the sin of this; but we must remember, beloved friends, how we may really be acting secretly in such a way as this, without having any formal theory at all about it. Practically we may be making our Bible a mere collection of favourite texts, and ignoring those we have no fancy for, as if they were not inspired by the same authority. Are there none who have a very real disrelish for practical homely precepts, who get on excellently with the highest doctrines? Let us understand then clearly, that keeping Christ's Word means surely, if it means anything, honest subjection to the whole of it: to that of which even we may not perceive the importance, as if we did; calling nothing little of what He enjoins, - of what has equal authority to emphasize it.

We have need to remember, too, that our own contrary wills are often the most effectual hindrances to receiving what is really Christ's Word. How solemn it is to think that of the mass of things in which we differ from each other as Christians, this contrariety must needs account for very much the larger part. The Lord's words are plain enough, and universally applicable, that "if any one will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." It is due to Him, surely, to own that our differences are due to ourselves and not to Him. But then these differences, found in so many whom we must esteem as really godly men, what a warning they give us of how much that is not of God may be even in the godliest. So far as we have indeed whole-heartedly followed Him, who can doubt that He has led us right? But then how little really unreserved following there must be!

And it is not hard to see that such is indeed the case, - that a mass of His own (ignorantly perhaps, but then self-blinded) are

really following "words" of His, rather than as a whole His "Word." Nay, many seem to have come deliberately to a stand, where to go further would cost them (they think) too much. They do not realize that it costs them really more to proffer Him a compromise He cannot accept; that it costs the brightness and freshness of their lives now, and what hereafter He alone knows. How many are trying to make up for this by the excitement of work for Him, and almost persuading themselves that "to obey is" not "better than sacrifice, and to harken than the fat of rams."

I say again, do not decide it by ecclesiastical position; do not in fact draw the line anywhere; do not think it means you are this side of any line. Is your face - are our faces - still ever onward after Him, who rests not till He has us where His heart can rest with us? How plainly perceptible it is, when a soul thus stops I Though the working may go on, and the whole outside be no other than it was, there is something gone that one in fellowship with God will at once feel hindering fellowship. Beloved brethren, how sorrowful it is to lose one another's company in this way! But if we lose Christ's, what shall replace it?

And here, again, so many in judging themselves take up with what is far below the Christian standard. Their measure is merely by what is in itself right or wrong - a legal measure. They occupy themselves with what is good, perhaps the gospel, and fancy that must be devotedness, when perhaps it is all self-invented employment and will-worship, not in His plan for them, and meant, in fact, (so treacherous are our hearts) to buy them off from true obedience.

But I must pass on to the next thing here in the Lord's commendation of the Philadelphians. The first thing is, "thou hast kept My Word": they are exemplifying a spirit of true obedience; and now it is, "thou hast not denied My name."

Names in Scripture are significant things. They are not there as in the present day put upon people for their prettiness, or because they run in the family. God did not think it an unworthy thing often Himself to interfere and change or give a name, as we can all remember, and so the Lord with His disciples. There was a reason for the name. It was the expression of what the person was, most

generally, or would be, as in Abraham, Israel, Peter, and such like; and so especially with the names of God or of Christ.

When God took the special name of Jehovah with Israel, it meant that He was going to approve Himself to them in that character, as the immutable God, the I AM, upon whom they could rely to keep the covenant. So Christ is Immanuel, "God with us," and in order that that prophecy may be, or shown to be fulfilled, He is called "Jesus," His people's Saviour from their sins. God could not be with us except our sins were met, and none but a Divine person could meet them, - salvation must be of God: and this is all expressed in that name "Jesus."

Again the name "Christ," which every one knows, is but the Greek form of the Hebrew "Messiah," speaks of Him as the One anointed of God to be the Deliverer in three necessary ways: a Prophet to bring out of error; a Priest to open the way to God; a King to govern for God.

Thus Christ's name is a remarkably explicit declaration of Himself. And this name of His, with the facts which it implies, is what is committed to His people to hold fast and maintain as His, in the midst of a world which has rejected Him. To confess His name involves thus the confession of His absolute deity; His true humanity; His salvation of His people; His being their only and sufficient Teacher, Intercessor and Lord. This we have not to "profess" of Him merely, but to "confess," for the world will not allow that He is really this. I do not forget that among us the world is even yet what is called a Christian world, but that does not alter it really. As soon as it sees that these names mean something for you, that they express truly what Christ is to you, then they will not suffer it. Their protest may be more or less polished according to the refinement of the age; it may be the protest of liberality itself against your narrowness: none the less you will have to suffer. Christ calls for confession ever. His people need never fear that they will have to give up the old path of suffering, consecrated by the prayers and tears of past generations of the long line of His witnesses. The world never really changes: our path through it, our struggle against it cannot change.

The name of Christ expresses then what He is: the truth of what

He is, is what is committed to us, what we have to confess in the face of the world. Here is the great controversy between God and man in the present day. As in Israel the question was between Jehovah, the one true God, and the gods of the heathen; and Satan's effort then (alas, his too successful effort) was to lead the people of Jehovah into the surrounding idolatry, so now the question is as to the one Christ - for Satan's power has set up "many Antichrists."

People little realize how pre-eminently false doctrine is the work of Satan. Christ is the "Truth;" the Spirit of Christ, "the Spirit of truth ;" Satan is the "liar from the beginning." By a lie of his, man was first seduced and fell. By the truth he is brought back to God, and sanctified. Satan's effort is therefore by counteracting lies to destroy the power of the truth, and his most successful method is not so much direct denial, as perversion of the truth. Knowing man's heart but too well by long experience, he knows how to combine truth and error so skillfully, that the truth shall give only the more speciousness to the error, while the error in the guise of truth shall appeal to the lusts and passion, and enlist them upon its side.

Thus Satan seduces as an angel of light, and Christendom, with its profession of Christ's Lordship, can worship many lords under that profession. Not denying His name, may in this way be given as a signal mark of approbation in the midst of Christendom, even more than in the midst of heathenism. If we look further into Scripture for the association in which we find the name of Christ, we shall soon see that it is connected with the whole standing and walk of the individual believer, as well as with the practical gathering together of His people: things which, always of primary importance, have, as thus connected, come into special prominence in the present day. We are "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus;" our prayers are to be presented in His name; our every word and work are all to be done in His name; our gathering as Christians is to be "to His name." And these things may be otherwise stated, as our identification with Christ before God, His identification with us before the world; and the objective power of what He is for us, individually or collectively. That these are things very specially in

question in' these days, if we are intelligent observers, we shall surely see.

Our justification in His name involves the first of these truths. It is our identification with Him before God that alone permits, and necessitates our acquittal. We are justified, as Scripture assures us, "by His blood;" He having stood for us upon the cross and died under our just sentence. But thus also, if His death is ours, His coming up from the dead is also ours; if "He was delivered for our offences," He "was raised again for our justification." His death was ours as sinners before God: we passed away in that character entirely, "our old man," all that we we were as children of fallen Adam, being "crucified with Christ." His resurrection declares the fact of His acceptance in the offering of Himself for us, - declares therefore our acceptance. Our place is henceforth in Christ before God, identified completely with the One who as Man is entered into the heavens and set down in the presence of God for His people.

Hence the Lord could speak to His disciples, in view of the accomplishment of His work, and of His now imminent return to His Father, of prayer in His name as a new thing which would be now for the first time their privilege, when the Spirit of truth having come to lead them into all the blessed reality of the new position, they should know that He was in the Father, and He in them, and they in Him (John xiv. 20). Conscious of their gracious identification with Him on high, they were now for the first time to approach the Father as thus identified; and the answer to their prayers, however feeble these prayers, would be the testimony of Divine satisfaction with Christ and with His work.

But if His people are thus in Christ on high, He, on the other hand, is in them below; and, while identification is not the only thought in this, (for He is in us as life also and by His Spirit, and this is what empowers us for such a place), yet identification is none the less clear and certain too. If He represents us in heaven, we represent Him on earth, and this is as wonderful a privilege as it is an immense responsibility. We represent Him before the world: living His life, treading His path, learning His sorrows and tasting too His joys. Whatever we do in word or deed, we are to "do all in

the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. iii. 17).

And are not these truths which God has been graciously restoring to us in these days afresh, (though from the beginning in Scripture, and which characterize in a measure the spiritual movement of the time) do not they give fresh meaning to the confession of His name? No doubt the revival of "justification by faith" is as old as the Reformation, and was then brought out with simplicity and power. We have cause to thank God for it abundantly. Yet even that had been again very much obscured by the substitution of experiences and fruits of the Spirit instead of Christ, as to be rested in. And this had deprived the doctrine itself of much of its power and blessedness. But there was one thing to which the Reformation did not attain, and of which the common evangelical doctrine, so-called, has fallen entirely short: it is this identification of the believer with Christ risen and gone in, as Man, to God.

Even the full manhood of the Lord, as a present thing in heaven, has become misty and indistinct, and the resurrection side of the gospel is nearly absent from the evangelical systems. They stop short with Christ's death for us, and use that to replace us upon earth as men in the flesh still. They count it mysticism to talk of not being in the flesh, of being dead with Christ, risen and seated in Him in the heavenly places. The righteousness they impute is obedience to the law merely, than which they say there can be nothing higher, and which, according to the system, Adam should have fulfilled.

The effect of this is, we are left in the world and of it, though forgiven and justified; we are to take our place in it and make it better, not walk outside of it. Pilgrims and strangers we are not, save in the perforce way that all the world is - time hurrying us on alike to death and an eternity beyond.

A signal proof of this is just the doctrine everywhere current, that the law is the rule of a Christian's life. To this doctrine they attach extreme importance. To deny it is, as they think, to open the flood-gates of iniquity, and preach license of the wildest sort. For they have settled it against the apostle's clear and emphatic statement, that the law is the strength of holiness, instead of being,

as he affirms it, "the strength of sin" (I Cor. xv. 56). The law, they say, is the "transcript of the mind of God," and therefore the same as the gospel, only a good deal more. To speak of being "dead to" it, and "delivered from" it, they would deem profanity, if it were not that, these expressions being found in Scripture, they had decreed them to apply merely to the ceremonial law. But the "ceremonial law" is a theological fiction, not a Scriptural fact at all. It is not found in Scripture anywhere, but is an arbitrary invention, to escape from its plain meaning. In the very chapter from which the expressions just now cited are taken, and in direct connection with them, that law is represented as saying, "Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. vii. 7). Was this the ceremonial law? Was the ceremonial law "the strength of sin"? But my point is simply now, that when they claim the law as the rule of a Christian's life, they thereby omit from the Christian standard all that is not found in the Jewish one. The higher position of the Christian is not admitted to have any corresponding practical effect. Long life on earth is set before him as an aim and object. The heavenly position is not contemplated; and pilgrim and strangership are left out of the "rule;" for in the ten commandments, manifestly, these are not to be found.

How differently does the apostle set things before us in the last chapter of his epistle to the Galatians: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (or creation); and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and on the Israel of God." The Christian rule is that he walk as one crucified to the world, in Christ a new creation - not a mending of the old.

Thus, as I have said, evangelicalism drops the resurrection side of the gospel, and the characteristic heavenly features of a Christian's life. God has however come in to recall them to our attention. He is lifting our eyes up to the heavens to which He is just ready to call us home; and oh, may our hearts answer to His appeal. Remember, this must be no mere theory with us. It will not do to take this place, and spare the flesh and cultivate worldliness

after all. It will not do to talk about resurrection-life without some consistent endeavour to apprehend and exemplify it. Practical results will always follow real faith, and this is as true of faith in any special truth, as it is of faith as a whole. The holy and the true One seeks for holiness and truth.

There is another thing connected with the name of Christ, as we have already seen, and you must suffer me to go on to speak of this. It was Christ's name that once linked together all His people. No other name was known amongst them. And when other names did begin to appear, the apostle's voice rebuked the dishonour put upon the One to whom alone they were baptized, who was alone their Master. Now, alas, the name of Christ is no longer a sufficient bond of union for His people. No doubt they are ready, one and all, to claim the promise of His personal presence where two or three are gathered to His name; yet, if, instead of accepting this as a matter of course, they would try and prove their title, they would find it perhaps less easy to do so than they think. Would His name gather less than all His own? Could you plead being gathered to His name, and (apart from the question of scriptural discipline) exclude His people? If His name be the truth as to what He is, as we have seen, then this will exclude all falsehood as to Christ. But for the very same reason, it will unite all true confessors of Him. If whatHe is unites us, we shall have to put aside all separate and separating creeds and articles, and return to simple membership of the one body of Christ.

Alas, does it seem a bold thing now to claim His Church for Him? Well, if we may scarcely hope that she will answer to the claim, yet Christ has provided in His grace, from the very beginning, for the faith of two or three, if there were no more, who would refuse all bonds beside His name. If they have nought else they have the assurance that that faith shall not be in vain, - that He at least will be with them, whose presence is all needed sanction, and all joy.

You may perhaps turn round upon me here and ask, Do I mean to deny that Christ is with all His people, or that the Spirit of God does not work in the denominations of Christendom? And many will be ready to urge, nay, have urged again and again, that the way

in which the Spirit of God works amongst these shows His sanction of them. But that is too large a conclusion. It would carry us on to the conviction that Romanism itself was sanctioned of Him. Who can deny that God worked by such an one as Martin Boos? He worked, and worked largely; and we can surely own it fully, and bless His name for it, without at all supposing that His love and pity shown to souls in the midst of popery sanctions the papal system! God is sovereign in His grace, bound and limited by no restrictions. We rejoice to know that in a world of sinners He has bought Himself title to come in anywhere and save. Sin is no barrier where the Lamb of God has suffered for it. Did He want to have things right before He came in, who would be saved?

If you urge that grace, where it comes in, will tend to set things right, I answer, Of course: every soul that knows God would agree to that. But here comes in the mystery (mystery it is, to believers and to unbelievers alike), the mystery of the human will, - which, even in God's people, dares to set limits to obedience to His Word, aye, and can cover these up with flowers, as necessary fences and safeguards to holiness.

I fully allow that everywhere God's Spirit works, and works for good; but everywhere, alas, man's will works too. Let us not confound these. None can "be as God's mouth" who do not learn, with Jeremiah, to "take forth the precious from the vile." The mingling of such things together is not of God; but much that is of God is yet so mingled.

Yes, the working of God's Spirit is like that to which the Lord compares it, "the wind" that "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." And God's grace is to the chief of sinners unrestricted grace. We must not take these as putting sanction on the circumstances amid which they work. We must not judge of the latter but by the Word which God has given us for perfect guidance. And we must not propose to follow Him in His workings necessarily, for this is beyond us, to do as He does; and, as has been truly said by others, "He is the Sovereign, and we are the servants," and the servant must only do what he is bidden.

Most fully then can we allow that God works among

denominations, without in the least conceding that denominations are of Him, or that He is with them as such. I have already declared also my conviction, that in the beginning of many of these He was with - fully with - those whose consciences forced them into separation from some evil, which He had made them realize as such. But that proves nothing as to the denomination itself. Who indeed can read the apostle's challenge of the first entry of the thing at Corinth, and honestly maintain that God approves of it? Or that all that he forbade was their wrangling about it, but that when that wrangling had come to a division, then it would be all right? That would be to forbid a tree to have blossoms, whose fruit nevertheless might be acceptable enough.

We can fully maintain, then, God's universal grace. We can believe and rejoice in the unrestrained working of His blessed Spirit. We can do more than this: we can allow that Christ is with every individual Christian according to His promise: a promise realized indeed by these in proportion to the simplicity of their faith in Him, a faith whose fruit is found in the works which surely come of it. Our Lord's promise is clear, but in terms it is well to recall precisely, while we think of it. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him." And again: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him" (Jon. xiv. 21-23).

God forbid that we should deny these blessed words, or attempt in any wise to limit them arbitrarily, or indeed to limit them at all. The words apply to the individual, and to the individual alone: that is clear. And it should be clear that the Lord's promise to two or three gathered to His name is a promise additional to this, and outside of it. It is a sanction, not of individual state, as that in John is, but of a gathering as gathered to Him; a sanction connected not only with the hearing of prayer, but with binding and loosing by the assembly - with assembly acts, which no individual merely, or mere set of individuals, have power for.

For the assembly, if practically but only two or three of those gathered to His name, is thereby prevented being a mere clique or

private party, met to accomplish merely personal ends. Its door must be open for all that are Christ's, confessing truly His blessed name; and then He can be there to give efficacy and authority to that which is not the aim of a faction or a self-isolated party, but of His own gathered as His own, - as far as their will and aim can accomplish it, in unity with all His that are in practical fellowship with Him.

We may see then the reason of this promise, and that it is no arbitrary thing. And in order that He may be able to be with us so, He has put the terms of it as low as He could put them for a gathering to be a gathering at all, - "two or three" - blessed be His name! How great the grace we have indeed cause to own, in a day of such feebleness and disunion as is the present, spite of its pretension. Nor need there be one bit of pretension on the part of those who thus gather to His name. They, above all, are called to recognize the ruin in which they themselves have had but too disastrous part, and to own (what is a continual warning against pretension) that aught but continuous lowly cleaving to the strength of Christ can keep in a path where failure from the very beginning has been found.

Thus much then as to the confession of the name of Christ. Let us mark here, before we go on to consider the third thing before us, the meaning of the name Philadelphia, a meaning which connects well with what we have had just now, both in the way of warning and of encouragement alike. Philadelphia means "brotherly love." Not association merely, even of brothers, but brotherly love. So is it to be with us: love, wherever there are "brothers," love to all the children of the Father as His children, but a love which consists, and only consists, with heedful maintenance of what is due to the Father. I am but repeating the apostle's words: "This commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." Then the extent of this, and the argument for it, are given us: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him." And then the caution: "By this 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 grievous" (I John iv. 21; v. 1,2).

Many are making the mistake of supposing love to be the track, so to speak, in which we are to run; whereas it is the motive force by which we run in the track. The word of God lays down the rails; and these are rightly, and necessarily rigid and narrow too, in a true sense. The Word itself tells us that the way is a "narrow way" But love takes that road alone, and never another. The apostle will not allow that anything we may think love is such. He will not allow feeling to be the test at all. Of course we shall feel it - that is quite true, - but it is not the test; man's heart is too deceitful to allow it to be such, whether it be love to our brother, or to God our Father. Man is emotional, capable of being worked upon, and of working himself up to almost any extent. And he is quite capable of perilous mis-judgment of himself in that very way. I am not at all speaking of hypocrisy, (although I do not say there is not danger of that too), but of the way things may affect us powerfully, as it would seem, and yet superficially. This emotional feeling is no guarantee as to our true condition, any more than the waves driven by the wind against an ocean current are a sign of the real obliteration of the current.

But love - most God-like, when true - is that which has most imitations which are not of God. The giving all one's goods to feed the poor, the giving one's body to be burned, the apostle supposes might be all without love; therefore not adequate tests of it. I may love a child of God, and very dearly, and yet love him for many another reason than because he is a child of God. My love may be merely social; what is most Christ-like in him may be what I like least. How little indeed, if we take the apostle's characteristics of it in that thirteenth of I Corinthians, shall we find often of what will stand examination: "love that seeketh not her own, that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things "!

If you will turn to the first chapter of the second of Peter, you will find that in the order of divine growth, "brotherly love" comes in a very different place from what we should naturally imagine. From "faith," the beginning of everything in us, brotherly love is the sixth stage on towards perfection, and only short of the full

maturity of "love" itself. We are first of all to add to our faith "virtue," in the Roman sense of it - courage, spiritually applied. For as faith's walk is against nature, and through a hostile world, the very first requisite for it, next to faith itself, is "courage."

At the start you have to make up your mind. There must be no indecision, no half-heartedness. The obedience, which the apostle John has given us as the test of love, comes at the very beginning. Have we all even reached this first point from which alone the Philadelphian position can be attained? Are we all by God's grace unreserved in self-surrender to Him who is indeed our Master and Lord? Only after this, not before, comes "knowledge " - true knowledge - only to be acquired practically by the road, and in the field in the face of the enemy; and knowledge which immediately becomes practice as "temperance," - government of ourselves; and "patience," in view of adverse circumstances; "endurance," holding on to that wherewith we began - not only I did "count all things but loss," but still I do.

Then "godliness" follows. The more positive fruits begin to appear. The truth is acting upon the one given up to follow it, self-ward, world-ward, God-ward, and now at last brother-ward. Think of how much it involves to be a Philadelphian, and you will see at once that no mere right position ecclesiastically will put you there. You must be devoted; you must be self-governed; you must be enduring; you must be with God: and then, these points reached, your love to your brethren will be in orderly development, and somewhat that we can trust.

We need not marvel, however much we may deplore it, how little of this spirit is indeed to be found. But there is no remedy in mere expectancy or in lament, still less in accusation of one another on this score. The doing of this betrays the doer. It shows that "seeking not her own" is not the quality of our love, at least. If we mourned it rightly, we should be more with God about it - intercessors, not accusers. And then also, remembering that only what we receive we have, we should be seeking for God to minister and manifest His love to the needy and unsatisfied hearts towards Him, which this coldness of heart toward each other implies.

On the other hand, let us notice for our encouragement that from faith as a root all these fruits develop. The apostle's words infer as much as this. They are, really, "in your faith have also virtue, and in virtue, knowledge," and so on. This is as plants grow, each fresh bud developing out of the product of a former one. For faith, the root of all, lays hold on Him in whom all spiritual blessings are ours, and the spiritual growth is only by what we learn of Him. And so the apostle adds: "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The remedy is not in moody self-occupation, and not in endeavouring to get out of ourselves what is not found there, but in more real and earnest laying hold of what is ours in Him who is for us complete satisfaction and all-sufficient power. It is a great thing to be a Philadelphian, and you will not wonder that under this title the Lord should describe a people who, with all their weakness, have His special approbation.

But here, if we look a little around us, we shall find on the one hand a divine movement stirring the hearts of God's people towards a real, practical "brotherly love" springing out of "godliness." On the other it is easy to see an imitation of this which aims at a getting together of Christians, even at a sacrifice of that which is of God. In the world too, confederacy is the order of the day. "Union," they say, "is strength." And everywhere, societies, associations, companies, amalgamations of every kind, for all sorts of purposes, are found. They are naturally largely commercial, and for such selfish ends as the world that knows not Christ is full of. They are a banding of individuals who remain really in interest individuals, not seekers of each other's good, but their own. They are neither the expression of love nor do they promote it. On the contrary it is well known that the larger they are as corporations, the less heart there is in them. They intensify the self-seeking to which they minister, and for which they provide an ampler harvest field.

The bond here is in no wise brotherhood; yet who can deny that professing Christendom is largely permeated by the same spirit, and has adopted worldly means in a worldly spirit, for ends

professedly Christian? Do not mistake; do not run into the thought that these ends being worthy ones must sanctify the means employed to reach them. These combinations to produce great results, is there no ensnarement in the very thought? Are not means apt to be mistaken for ends? Is not the consciousness of strength which union promotes, and is designed to promote, the very opposite of the weakness which has need of and brings in God? Does not the publicity of action put those engaged in it before men's eyes rather than God's, and make them little content with such words as the Lord addresses here to Philadelphia, "I know thy works?" Lastly, does not the apparent greatness of the result aimed at, induce a carelessness as to what are considered the smaller details of ways and means by which it is to be reached?

No one can deny that while the increase of sects goes on without apparent abatement, yet along with this there is a marked and decided tendency to union for all kinds of objects dear to the Christian. Missionary societies, Bible societies, Tract societies, Sunday-school Unions, Young Men's Christian Associations, and such like, ignore on the one hand what they recognize on the other, and aim to unite Christians as such, to accomplish results which the divisions of Protestantism have hindered. And in movements of this kind there is much that one can very heartily rejoice over. Who can doubt that there is working a real desire for Christian fellowship, a longing for liberty beyond the artificial limits imposed by ecclesiasticism, and a yearning for greater and better fruitfulness than the strife of sects would allow? Who can doubt also that in this way the zeal of many earnest workers has been kindled, and that much has really been, and is being, accomplished? Intolerance has been softened down; sectarian rancor mitigated; and a busy activity in evangelistic efforts especially induced, which the Lord is using for blessing to numbers of souls.

We should be sadly wanting in discernment if we did not see, and in Christian spirit if we did not rejoice over, such things as these. Nor must it be thought a contradiction to point out on the other hand results which are to be deprecated, and tendencies which are rapidly developing as the years roll by, which must be a

source of trouble, if not surprise, to every one to whom . . ."Anworth is not heaven,And preaching is not Christ ;"to whom the quality of a thing, as viewed by the "Holy and the True," is of more importance than its quantity.

Let us judge candidly and seriously of that which the coming day at least will reveal in its true character. Who that has that day before him dare rashly blame or carelessly pass over things which affect the glory and the heart of the Lord our Saviour - that heart upon which rest (as the engraved jewels on the high priest's breast-plate), the names of His beloved people, not one of them forgotten? He who has before him, what we have here, the Son of Man in the midst of the candlesticks, will be delivered from the snare of acting before other eyes than His, and will have no motive to apply other than truthfully, and in love, "what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

We have glanced at the churches of the Reformation and scarcely need to have it repeated that nationalism everywhere gives "a name to live" where there is no real life. The discipline here is of the very loosest kind. Annihilationism, Universalism, Swedenborgianism, Rationalism of the extremest kind, are in some of these systems allowed openly to manifest themselves. "Tares and wheat," they urge, "are to grow together to the harvest." "Judas was at the table of the Lord." And thus they have scriptural ground, as they imagine, for not "putting away from among themselves a wicked person," or "purging themselves from vessels to dishonour."

What must be, what is, the effect of this and such like laxity? And what the effect of bringing a large number together where even the feeble bonds of such discipline are relaxed, and members of the loosest bodies are accepted thus far by those who in their own bodies are governed by stricter and more scriptural rules? What can the effect be but the deterioration of the whole, a leavening of worldly principles and of positive false doctrine also? Are the spiritual ordinarily in a majority in these large bodies, or in a minority? Do they lead the rest, or have they to find themselves forced to follow the lead of others, and to mix themselves up with that which they feel and own to be not as they would have it, but

still tolerate for the sake of the connection with so large a machinery for good, as they esteem it?

Generally, a compromise as to the truth has to be made, which would forbid any one in these associations to do what Paul appealed to the Ephesians as having done amongst them: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." They have to be (so far as these connections go) servants qualifying by omissions their Master's message, bound to refrain from delivering what He has put into their mouth to deliver. Oh that beloved brethren in the Lord would well consider for themselves how far this can go, without dishonour to the Lord who has bought them for His own, or without loss of real power through grieving the Spirit of power!

And are not means insensibly substituted for the end, - the registry of so many visits made, so many tracts distributed, so much ground covered, made to do duty oftentimes for that which these things are only handmaids to, if they mean anything at all? And if conversions are registered, the case is often still more sorrowful: conversions being expected as the result of so much machinery and chronicled - oh how lightly and carelessly - to man's successful effort rather than the praise of God!

Upon all this I do not desire to dwell longer. Examples to demonstrate the truth of it, will not be wanting to those who care to test what they do, by the one perfect standard to which we all appeal, and by which all will be exactly measured in a coming day.

With all this, I gladly own a greater seeking after communion among those that are the Lord's. Yet I press that co-operation apart from the truth is not God's mind, nor are human and voluntary associations His method either. God's Church - not a union of churches, but a union of members with their living Head - is His association, and in this He has provided as well for the maintenance of His truth as for the true liberty of His people. If we will not take this, how can we ask Him, because He is gracious, to bless the make-shifts substituted for it? Is it "love in the truth " and "for the truth's sake," where truth is set aside or compromised, in order to be together?

Yet if you follow truth, instead of practically bringing you to

unite with the many, it will separate you - isolate you - reduce practically to nothing much that now may seem great and valuable - and shut you up into a narrow path from which naturally you shrink. Does Scripture ever promise aught but a narrow path? Are weakness and nothingness hindrances or helps to trusting God? Is it any harm for faith to have exercise? and is not the power of God as competent to work by small means and individuals as by a multitude, and by machinery of the utmost power? If we do not think so, what does it show but how sadly a trust in means and machinery has displaced confidence in the living God?

Let us pass on now to consider one other thing in the attitude of these Philadelphian saints which the Lord singles out for special approbation. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

And what is connected with this?"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Remark, He says for the first time now, "quickly." We have not had that before. It is a sign here of how the time of His patience is coming to an end. It is now as the apostle says in the first chapter, "The kingdom and patience of the Lord Jesus Christ." By-and-by it will be His "kingdom and glory." Now it is the time in which, though already possessing "all authority in heaven and earth," He waits, not taking His power to put down evil, but exercising that long-suffering which is unto salvation, of which each one here saved by grace is an example and a proof.

Can it be a strange thing then for us to have to keep the word of His patience; to remember what holds back the wheels of judgment, and delays the fulfilment of our hope as Christians? Patience is not indifference as to that hope, but the very opposite. Were we indifferent we should not be able to speak of or to realize patience at all: "if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

Happy it is to need the exhortation to be patient thus, - because our desires laying hold of the exceeding great and precious promises, our souls are carried onwards in the current of them toward the haven which faith pictures close at hand! Need we

wonder at an admonition to be "patient?" Should we not wonder if our souls could embrace that future blessedness, and have no such need? But the keeping the word of His patience is more, a good deal, than being patient ourselves. It separates the thought from repression of merely selfish longings, and elevates it into communion with Him whose waiting and whose coming forth alike are the necessary result and the display of what He is - the divine Lover and Saviour of men's souls. If He come, or if He wait, it is righteousness, love, and wisdom in Him that combine and manifest themselves.

Two things are now promised to those keeping the word of His patience: first, that He will keep them out of the hour - not out of the temptation merely, but out of the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth; - out of the judgment of the world ready to involve the lifeless professors of Christianity, whose hearts remain, spite of their profession, bound to earthly things; out of the trouble and sifting also which will precede the judgment at the Lord's hand when He appears.

But how shall they be kept out of a time of universal trial? That is intimated in the second promise, "I come quickly." His coming will gather His saints into safety far from every breath of the tempest to ensue. They shall be with Him, raised or changed, caught up to His blessed presence, before the trial comes; and when the world sees Him coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, no saint of the present time but shall be with Him there. "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe, in that day" (2 Thess. i. 10).

And now let me ask: If this intimation of the speedy approach of the Lord marks Philadelphian times, who can for a moment doubt the coincidence with the cry which for half a century has been stirring the hearts of Christians everywhere? Nothing is more certain, be it right or be it wrong, than that there has been a widespread revival of the hope of the Lord's coming, together with an impression of its actually being very near. Even the dates which have time and again been confidently set for it, if, on the one side, they show the mistakes of prophetic interpreters, on the other, not

less plainly do they show the prevailing expectation. While there have been all through a large and increasing number who have never given credit to any of these calculations, they have yet been as deeply convinced as any that the time is near at hand.

And what is this but itself a token of its actual nearness, according to the promise in this Philadelphian epistle? Has not the Lord been saying to them, "I come quickly?" It is easy, no doubt, to fasten upon mistakes made by warm hearts or excited minds, in order to bring discredit upon the truth; but Scripture, which disclaims for us the knowledge of times or seasons, assures the faith of those who would be "exhorting one another so much the more as they see the day approaching."

Let us hold it fast, and let us hold it pure: free from the errors with which Satan is seeking to degrade it by association, - free from the mistakes of ignorance and fanaticism, - but also from the coldness and indifference of hearts that give little response to our Lord's words here.

I must pause here, though there is much, much more in this epistle. I must leave to your own meditations the sweet encouragements and promises to the overcomer, which, as often noticed, so link the believer with the One who addresses him. May we be able to take hold of them. They are ours, for faith to realize and rejoice in: that faith which not only "overcometh the world," but now in the professing Church has also to overcome. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My new name." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Lecture 8 - What Brings the Time of His Patience to an End

(Rev. iii. 14-22)

We now come, beloved friends, the solemn close of all; and it is very striking that it comes immediately after the epistle to Philadelphia, in which more than a little gleam of light and

blessing shone out. The two things are very closely connected: the blessing of the church in Philadelphia really leads us, in a sense, to the judgment of the church in Laodicea.

The great feature in the address to Laodicea is that they are lukewarm - neither cold nor hot. Surely, we may say, we have had the cold state in Sardis: death is cold enough. We have had in Philadelphia the Lord reviving things - something which we may call heat. Now the mixture of these two things produces this lukewarmness of which He speaks. It is not heat, as in Philadelphia; it is not cold, as in Sardis; but, so to speak, the effect of the heat is only sufficient to change the cold into lukewarm - nothing more. There has been the effect of the truth, - the truth must always have effect, - God's word never returns to Him void, without doing something, without making its mark on souls in some way. But then, it may make its mark in two ways. It may be in blessing, as God designs. Oh, surely, what He wants is blessing; but, on the other hand, if it is not received so as to become blessing, what then? It has effect still, but in increased responsibility and corresponding judgment. And if Christianity fails (for it is the history of professing Christianity that we have been looking at) - if Christianity fails, if, when God brings forth the treasures of divine truth, yet there is no due reception, no blessing for the mass, no real revival at large is produced by it, what then? He has nothing else to do - judgment must come. He must wind up the whole state of things.

You see, if there was law and that failed, as you know it did fail (that is, of course, when men failed, under it and were convicted by it, as transgressors) - if the law failed, God had something else to bring in - the precious grace of Christianity. And this He did, while neverthelessless judging the apostate state of things in Judaism. Still God came in, and gave the more "precious faith" of Christianity. If Christianity fails now, what has He to do? what has He to bring in more? If His truth, before tried, and now re-tried (His twofold witness), is not sufficient to revive things, what then? Well, the case is just what you find in the twenty-sixth of Isaiah: "Let favour be showed to the wicked" (that is, grace - it is the same word) - " Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn

righteousness." And what then? "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." That is what we have here - judgment must come because grace has been refused: because it has accomplished nothing as to the world at large, He must take the rod of iron: because His Word and His Spirit have been rejected, He must come with the rod of iron to beat down opposition.

But notice what is here very striking: it is not merely that God has been giving His truth afresh and it has been refused; it has been taken, or there would be no heat in Laodicea; there would be nothing but the coldness of Sardis. There has been effect. The truth has been taken, but for what has it been taken? Alas! instead of to judge man, and to bring all his high thoughts down in the presence of God that he might be lifted up and blessed, it has been taken by man in order to exalt himself with it. He has thereby become "rich and increased with goods, and has need for nothing." In his own thought he is so; whereas he is really "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." That is the striking feature we have here. Christ Himself is not; connected with the truth. The truth has been taken, and people flatter themselves upon having it; they are rich, and increased with goods. They have got a much, but have not got Christ. He is outside, though He stands at the door and knocks, still offering to come in; if anybody will open the door, He will come in, and sup with him, and he with Him. On the other hand, if Christ be outside the door, man can do in His absence what in His presence he could not do: he can dress himself up with the truth God has given him for another purpose - glorifying himself instead of God.

The Lord therefore presents Himself as the One, so to speak, who had done all He could, and all had failed.

He is "the Amen," the faithful and true witness: He has not failed.

He is the "Amen." You find in the second epistle to the Corinthians, the first chapter, how the apostle speaks of the word he preached as having that character, of yea and amen: because in Christ is yea; in Christ is never yea and nay. No uncertainty or doubtfulness was there in Christ or His word; He was always

simply positive "yea " - always speaking one thing, and absolutely to be depended upon. If we have only one word, it is a blessed reality given us in God's infinite love, which we may hang our souls upon for eternity, and which will never fail us. The character of Christ should stamp itself upon the Christian; Christ as seen in His Word should be exhibited in His people; but if, as here so sadly in Laodicea, they have not been faithful, nevertheless He abides faithful: He is the Amen, the "faithful and true Witness." The Church has been anything but that. He is just about to remove the candlestick, because they are untrue and unfaithful; but the Lord has not failed, and He therefore presents Himself as one absolutely true and trustworthy. And that, we can say, is our joy and comfort in the midst of the failure of everything in the present day. His people's shortcoming is not His own. Infidelity may seek to justify itself by the failure of Christians; and even Christians, alas, are capable, in the general wreck, of almost charging it upon Himself. But no, He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself. He is the "faithful and true witness."

Again, He is "the beginning of the creation of God:" that is a most important thing. You see in all these addresses the Lord brings out that in Himself which bears upon and meets the state before Him. So here He is not only the faithful and true witness, but He is the be ginning of the creation of God. The old creation, spoiled by sin, is passing away; its history is completed in God's sight, and judgment has been pronounced in the cross of Christ. Christ risen from the dead is not the mending of the old creation, but the bringing in of the new creation. In Him, risen from the dead, is all that God owns as really His, first and always in His thought, and for which the ruin of the old only prepared the way. When the psalmist lifted up his eyes to heaven, and, in view of God's glorious handiwork there, exclaimed, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? - the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" the answer is, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." But made whom? He is speaking, not of the first man, but the second - the One in whom alone his true ideal of man is realized - the One of whom Adam the first was but the fleeting image, and even the contrast too.

Now, if that be so, just notice the remarkable words used here of the state of things in Laodicea; for it is evident that, while keeping Christ outside, they are taking the truth He gave and dressing themselves up with it, counting themselves rich and increased with goods; that is, taking God's truth in order to build up the old creation, not the new. It is an exceedingly solemn thing to see that the very truth which God has brought out in order to judge man by is the very truth he uses for the purpose of self-gratulation. If you take the law, how has man used the law? God gave it "that every mouth might be stopped," as the apostle says, "and that all the world might become guilty before God" (Rom. iii.). How has man used it? You know he has used it to establish his own righteousness by it: instead of taking it to condemn, he has used it for the very opposite. And so, exactly, with Christianity: God has brought in the truth of the new creation, the world before Him lying under death and judgment. And yet man would take the blessed truth of Christianity and dress up the old creation with it, and patch up the world, making it better if he can. That is, alas, what he is doing on every side; and men are vaunting the success of the effort.

You know what progress people think they are making - how much better the world is; and they hope the Millennium is not far off. The gospel is going to have its effect because the churches are filled, and they have a good deal of money to send abroad, a good many Bibles for the heathen - all mere external things, which show nothing. You can buy all kinds of Bibles for so much money, but you cannot buy the Spirit of God for so much money.

No doubt God's Spirit is really and largely working, but His end and man's end are diverse thus far that, while He is converting souls to "deliver them out of this present evil world," man's thought is an improved world, a Christian world: the effect of which is only to amalgamate Christians and the world, and spoil the scriptural character of Christianity altogether.

But in these last days God has given many to recognize at least the truth in His Word as to this. Again He has revived the truth of the new creation, and revealed to us the practical and fruitful consequences which result from a place in Christ, where He is, in the heavens. Beloved friends, what are we doing with this truth we

recognize? Are we talking of being in Christ, a new creation, old things passed away and all things become new, and yet clinging with all our might to what has in it all the moral elements that make up the world - "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life?" Rank, station, birth, riches, worldly position - what are all these to us? Whether we be high or low, or rich or poor, the question applies alike. Are these things "gain" to us? Do they count for something in our estimation? Or, the things that were "gain" to us, are they counted truthfully all "loss for Christ?" Are we "renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created us, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is ALL and in all?" Is this theory with us, or is it practical reality? Has the Lord any need to appeal to us as the One who is "the beginning of the creation of God?" If so, is not Laodiceanism with us in that proportion?

For, certain it is that, as Philadelphia sets before us that true "brotherly love" which springs from our apprehension of a relationship which we have towards one an other in Christ and with God, so this fatal closing word "Laodicea" speaks of that which is the entire opposite of such apprehension. Laodicea means "people's right," not Christ's glory. It represents a claim which belongs entirely to the old creation, and not the new - a claim which sets aside the meaning of the Cross as the judgment and setting aside of the first Adam and his issue, and, of course, equally ignores the blessed place which we have of grace, in Christ. But we shall have to look at this again before we close. Let us go on now with the Lord's address.* From laos (people) and dike (right).

He says: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot."

So then He does not accept lukewarm Laodicea as an improvement upon the coldness of Sardis. And why?

Because the heat is not the heat of revival, but of declension. It is the final product of what He had given to bring about a totally different one. The failure is after repeated, exhaustive trial. It is the failure of all the highest, richest, and most wonderful truth - God's heart poured out without reserve to man, that we might know Him,

enjoy Him, be at home with Him. It is the turning back of heart in the very presence of an opened heaven, to take up with the paint and tinsel of the world. Therefore He says: "So then because thou art luke- warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth."

This is the solemn end of professing Christendom. Of course He will not spew His own beloved people out of His mouth. He must take these first of all to Himself before He can reject the whole mass as nauseous to Him. And we have already seen in the address to Philadelphia that the Lord tells them He is coming quickly, and that He will keep them out of the hour of temptation coming upon all the world. Not merely out of the temptation, - He might hide them in the desert so, - but out of the hour. Thus He must take them to Himself out of the world altogether. That is what "I come quickly" also intimates.

Here, then, we have the brief solemn pause before the Lord takes His people to Himself. He must do this before the professing body is spewed out of His mouth. He cannot so reject even the poorest, weakest, and most wayward of His own. And it is important to insist upon this, because there is abroad a view according to which only a class of better than ordinary Christians will be taken up when the Lord comes, while the rest will be left on earth to go through the tribulation which follows this, when the earth is enduring the vials of His wrath. They point to the promise to Philadelphia as in this way the promise to a special class. And the ten virgins of our Lord’s parable they speak of as all Christians, (as they bring the fact of their being "virgins" forward to prove) only foolish Christians, unwatchful and unready, with the oil of the Spirit in their lamps, indeed, but no extra supply in their "vessels." Thus their lamps, which had been burning, cease to burn at last, and the fresh supply of oil they get is obtained too late for admission to the marriage. The Lord rejects them as His bride only: they lose their place in that, and are shut out to be purified by tribulation, and made ready for the Kingdom afterwards.

But how many precious realities must be denied by those who hold this view! Is it our faithfulness, then, that gives us a part among those who are dignified with the title of the Bride of Christ?

Is the Lord, when He comes, indeed going to discriminate in this way between less and more faithfulness? - between ordinary and extraordinary Christians? What an engine for turning the blessed and purifying hope into a means of self- occupation and despair! If I am to be one of these more than ordinary Christians to be acknowledged by Him, where is the line to be drawn, and on which side of it am I? Is my joyful expectation of this blessed time to be based upon my belief in my own superiority to the many of my brethren? What comfortable Pharisaism, or what legal distress, must such a view involve!

If true, why should such a discrimination be made between the living saints alone? Why should it not equally affect the dead? And then, what is to purify these?

As to Scripture, the support it gives to any such view is only apparent, and results from an interpretation of single passages which is at issue with its plainest doctrinal teaching. The coming of the Lord to remove His saints is not, in Scripture, ever connected even with our responsibilities and their adjustment, but with the fulfilment of the hope wherewith grace has inspired us. Our responsibilities and the reward of our works are ever connected with that which is called the appearing, or manifestation, or revelation of Christ - His coming with His saints, not for them. At the door of the Father's house to which He welcomes us when He comes, no sentry stands. We go into it as purged by the precious blood of Christ, and in Christ. Already are we not only entitled, but "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

When He comes to the world, and His people take their places with Him as associated with His government, then dignities, honors, rewards of work, will find their place. It will be "Have thou authority over ten" - " Be thou also over five cities." We cannot keep these things too distinct in our minds. Salvation, righteousness, the child's place with the Father, membership of the body of Christ, our relationship to Christ as His bride, - nay, also our being "kings and priests unto His God and Father," are things which are neither gained nor lost by work of ours at all. Christ has procured them for us, and grace bestows them - grace, and grace alone.

When the Lord Himself, therefore, descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, is there discrimination among those in Christ - of the dead, who shall be raised - of the living, who shall be changed? Nay, but "the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord." Blessed words, how they pierce through and scatter the chilling fogs of legalism, and make "the blessed hope," not a means of sorest perplexity and doubt, but "hope" indeed!

Nor are the passages upon which these writers build in contradiction at all. The promise to the overcomer at Philadelphia is one of a class which, as the eye runs over them throughout these apocalyptic addresses, show plainly that they apply more or less to every true believer. Take the promise to him at Ephesus, and ask, will any believer not "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God?" Take that to Smyrna, and ask, will any one "be hurt of the second death?" And so on through the remainder. To the least believer something surely of tile spirit of the overcomer belongs: and while the promises suit themselves as encouragements to faith, adapted to the special condition of things pointed out, yet we know that the fruit of the tree of life, and deliverance from the second death, are not the result of any performances of ours, or any faithfulness on our part, but of His work, and of His grace alone. Again, as to the ten virgins, it is a mistake to suppose that in that character Christians are represented as espoused to Christ at all. The virgins who go forth to meet the bridegroom are not the bride, and to put them in that place disjoints the parable. According to the whole tenor of the prophecy of these chapters, the Jewish people and the earth are the objects mainly in view, and the parable of the virgins parenthetically brings in the connection of Christians with it. The Lord is coming to take a Jewish bride, according to the common language of the Old Testament prophets. On His way to do this, His people of the present time are called up to meet Him, and to return with Him. So much is implied in the expression in the Greek. It is when He is come, then, to earth that the foolish virgins are rejected; not

rejected as His bride, but are cast out of His Kingdom altogether. The parable is a parable of the Kingdom; and the Kingdom in the parables embraces the whole field of profession. "Virgins," "servants," and such-like titles in them, merely intimate the responsible profession, not necessarily the truth. He was a servant who had laid up his lord's money in a napkin, and never really served at all. He was a servant, but a wicked one; and so with these foolish virgins.

As to oil, they are expressly stated to have taken no oil with them; and the Lord's words of rejection, "I know you not," are decisive from One who "knoweth them that are His," and could never disown them.

No, He cannot spew His own out of His mouth; He must take them out of what He is going to judge, before the first hot drops of the storm of judgment fall. Even then it will be made publicly manifest, before He rejects the public professing body, how really they have, on their part, rejected Him. Christendom ends in open apostasy. The day of the Lord will not come except there be a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed. Popery, evil as it is, and antichristian too, is not the last evil, nor the worst. It is the harlot woman, not the man. It has been revealed over three hundred years at least, and the day of the Lord is not yet come. The Antichrist will deny the Father and the Son alike.

How solemn to contemplate this last end of what began so differently! How, above all, solemn to consider that, both at the beginning, and again at the end, the sin and failure of His own people is that which initiates and completes the ruin! Who can doubt that Christians every where are taking up this self-complacent utterance - "rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing?" Who cannot see that truth is being taken up as a form of godliness apart from power, apart from all the practical results that should flow from it? And who but can see, that has eyes to see at all, that that is the most terrible and hopeless sign of all, when the salt wherewith the mass should be salted, is losing its savour and becoming powerless to act for God at all?

Ah, it is one thing to appreciate the comfort of the gospel, and the blessings which it procures for man, and it is another to accept

honestly the level to which the gospel reduces all, and the place before God in Christ which brings poor and rich, and high and low, to a perfect equality, the rich rejoicing in that he is made low, as the brother of low degree in his exaltation.

Do we not want, all of us, to be reminded of what passed between the emulous disciples and their Lord on the solemn journey up to Jerusalem, when the cross was before the Master's face, but even its gaunt shadow could not still the contentious rivalry among His followers for the places on His right hand and His left, in His Kingdom? "You are making it a kingdom of the Gentiles!" is what He virtually says to them. "You are thinking of earthly place such as in these - of what would satisfy ambition and self-seeking greed! Do you think these are the places that are Mine to give? No; with Me the highest is the lowest; the greatness is in lowliest service; the blessedness is in giving, not receiving; the highest there - He (unchanged in spirit still) who as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

And then, as to our personal relationship to Christ, it is need that brings us to Him first, and makes us to know Him; and in His presence the sense of need, need met by Him, is ever maintained. It does not discourage us, for His grace is sufficiency; but it is only in weakness that His strength is made perfect still. "Rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing," is what no soul in the presence of Christ can say. Rich He is; and for us those riches are available; but the richer He is in our eyes, the poorer we are in our own. We can only keep the Laodicean condition by keeping the Lord outside our door.

And is there not a creed everywhere, largely professed among those who claim to be in some sort the very leaders of the Christianity of the day, which comes very near indeed to Laodicean profession? How could the claim to be rich and increased in goods, and in need of nothing, be more really made than by those who claim for themselves "perfection?"

Perfection! What do they mean by it? That they walk in very deed and truth just "as Christ walked?" That is the Christian standard; we cannot, with Scripture before us, make it lower than

that. But will anybody say that even for a single day, aye, for a single hour, he has walked just as Christ walked?

I know there is Scripture for the word. The devil, in deceiving Christians, will always take Scripture, if he can, to accomplish his purpose. But the Scripture term does not mean what in the dialect of the so-called "higher life" it is made to mean. Take one of the strongest texts used, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect:" the context shows decisively what is meant. We speak of a thing as perfect that has all its parts, without at all regarding the finish of the parts. So the Lord tells us that as children we must resemble our Father, and for this exhibit the different features of our Father's character. We must not only love those who love us, but, as He makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, we must exhibit this feature of His character also: not righteousness alone, but also love.

"Perfection" is also used for the mature Christian condition, as a glance at the margin of Heb. v. 14. will show. The term there "of full age" is in the margin rendered "perfect," just as in I Cor. xiv. 20, "be men" is in the margin "perfect," or "of a ripe age." It is used thus with two applications. In Hebrews Christianity itself is perfection, or maturity, in contrast with Judaism, which was a state of childhood. But again, among Christians there are those perfect, or mature, in contrast with being "babes;" and the apostle Paul, in the third of Philippians, (in which he disclaims the having already attained, or being already "perfect" - a consummation which in that sense he would not reach until with Christ in glory,) classes himself immediately after among those who had in another sense attained: "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

There are many texts, which I cannot now go through, but this should be sufficient to prevent the catching at a word, as people are prone to do. Plenty about perfection there is in Scripture, no doubt; but, as I said before, if people set up any standard of practical perfection short of walking as Christ walked, they are really lowering it. If, on the other hand, they can measure themselves with Christ and feel no rebuke, they must be more than credibly self-complacent.

Mischief is wrought two ways by the idea. In the first place, it tends to palliate sin, excuse or cover it by misleading names. Lust is called temptation, and sometimes even daring dishonour done to Christ Himself by the insinuation that He too was thus in like manner "tempted." So people quote "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," as if it meant that He had such inward desires, only restrained them, so that there was no actual outbreak. This - the actual blasphemy of Irving and of Thomas - in milder and less positive forms infests masses in the present day. The text they quote, in the common version, favours these views too much. There is no word "yet" in the original, as any one may see by the italics. "He was tempted in all points like as we are, apart from sin," is the true rendering. You must not imply sin in any way in the Holy One of God! Sin it is that produces lust, and lust, again, brings forth the positive outward sin. He had neither, and herein was our total opposite, as Scripture testifies "in many things we all offend."

But, again, the character of holiness is sadly spoiled by this perfectionism. It becomes self-occupation, self assertion. How much of Christ really do you find in the experiences so largely dealt in by those who advocate this doctrine? Is it, with the apostle, "not I, but Christ liveth in me," or is it, alas, a glorified, transfigured, very self-conscious I that lives and reigns throughout them? They do not see that as the natural life, in a state of health, does not engross or claim the attention, - as the heart’s pulsation or the lungs’ work is not furthered but disturbed by thinking of it, - so this aim at a self-conscious holiness produces but a poor, sickly Christianity at best. Is it far off from that which says, I am rich, and have need of nothing?

"I counsel thee," says the Lord to Laodicea, - "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Three things they are exhorted to "buy." So wealthy are they, the Lord will not talk of giving to them. And, indeed, it would be a happy thing for them to exchange their riches for them - false

glitter for true gold. This is the first thing, gold - a frequent symbol in Scripture, as you know; pure gold, as here, "gold tried in the fire," for what is divine. In the ark of the testimony, and in the furniture of the holy places generally, gold covered all. The apostle, I believe, gives us the exact meaning when he speaks of the golden cherubim as "the cherubim of glory, shadowing the mercy-seat." This "glory" is the display of what God is. God glorifies Himself when He shines out in the blessed reality of what He is, and Christ is the true ark in which the two materials are found together - gold and shittim-wood. The radiance of divine glory is the gold; the shittim- wood, the precious verity of manhood.

Can we not see why, to Laodicea, the "gold tried in the fire" is the first requisite? Their riches were but paper money, manufactured out of the rags of self-righteousness, and of merely conventional, not intrinsic value. Christ is what they lacked: divine glory, in the only face in which it shines undimmed. This is the power of Christianity, its essence and its power alike; and this is what the false, pretentious Christianity of Laodicea lacked so terribly - occupation with Christ, discernment of what and where all that is true and valuable is to be found. To know where this is, is to have it. Faith, it is that finds this treasure. To be without it is to be poor indeed. Next, "white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed," is, no doubt, practical righteousness of life and walk.

There is a connection between this and the former, which, when we have their meaning, becomes evident enough. Unless you have the divine glory shining in the face of Jesus for your soul, you will find no ability to live or walk aright. The "white" is the reflection of the full, undivided ray of light; and God is light. How is our life to be the reflection of this except as "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts, to give out the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"? Leviticus must precede Numbers ever. We must go in to see God in the sanctuary before we can possibly come out and walk with Him in the world.

Finally, "anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Thus there was utter blindness - the condition of the Pharisees over

again, for they surely did not realize it, but said, "We see;" and thus their sin remained. Had they been consciously blind, Christ was there to heal. But they, alas, needed not the Physician.

Still He says: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." To the last, He holds out a gracious invitation. His heart lingers while there is yet possibility of response on their part. But the day of grace is just about to end. If the words we have been considering find the parallel I have been drawing, if it be not untruly drawn, then we are surely near that end! Who can tell how near?

Before I close, however, I must return to that significant word which describes so vividly the moral, spiritual, aye, and political character of the latter days - "the church of the Laodiceans" - the men who claim "people's rights." Ominous name! Terrible claim when uttered in the ears of a God strong and holy if yet so patient, and provoked every day. It is a claim which denies the fall and its sentence, confirmed by countless individual sins - the claim of a world which has refused and crucified the Son of God come into it in loving mercy!

Let us look at it politically, for its political aspect is not without the deepest significance. Are not everywhere the nations quaking at the prospect of an uprise of the masses with this very watchword? When democracy meant only the curbing of the despotic power of rulers; when it meant still respect for wealth and rank, and law and order, they could rejoice over it, and cite it as the evidence of morally improved times. Arbitrary power only was to be restrained; there was to be equal justice, and quietness and assurance as the effect of righteousness. No doubt the abuse of power had been great enough to provoke reprisals, and to make the downfall of absolutism an apparent real advancement. But man was and is the same; and the mistake has been ever to suppose that alterations of this kind could really heal or touch a moral state which was the essence of the trouble. The leprosy, skinned over here, would break out elsewhere, for it was deeper than the surface - in the blood - in the vitals of humanity itself.

Who could say where the movement for men's rights should stop? Who could say to the restless surge of the sea, Come no further! Here shall thy waves be stayed? There were, and there are still, infinite and gigantic evils, - the power and abuse of wealth, for instance, - tyrannies which no form of government devised had touched or could take into account. What does every man's right to his own imply? What is his own? Is his right to use it to include a right to the enormous abuse of it which self-interest with power at its back will always make? Whose rights are to be respected when they come in conflict?

And from a lower level than before come murmurs, hoarse and threatening: socialism, communism, nihilism, anarchism - dread names, not merely for the monarch, but also for the man of property and the law-abiding citizen. "People's rights" threaten to be in terrible conflict with one another, and in their name how many wrongs to be inflicted! This is the Laodicea of politics, which is destined to be the rock on which governmental reform will surely split, and end in anarchy and chaos. "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

But the removal of the things that can be shaken will only make way for a Kingdom - not such as they anticipate, but absolute, which admits of no dispute, and righteous altogether. How comforting to turn from the thoughts that have engaged us, and think of the contrast to all rule the world has ever seen! "He shall judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people; and the little hills by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people; He shall save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor. . . . In His days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him."

Politically, the Laodician condition closes also the present state

of things. In another phase of it we shall find Laodicea characterizing, the ecclesiastical state. The political aspect, when Church and state have come so near together, naturally affects the ecclesiastical aspect too. Democracy is manifesting itself unmistakably in this sphere also. The people are rising up against the long rule of their spiritual leaders, and are claiming their rights at the hands of these. But they are not content with what is their just due here: they must be lords of their former masters. They pay their ministers; and who is the real master - be who pays, or he who is paid? Having control of the purse-strings, they see no reason why they should not choose their pastor as they choose their lawyer or their doctor. But this means that preachers must preach to please them: their doctrines, their style, must approve themselves to the criticism of their hearers. And thus, alas, Scripture is being more and more fulfilled which, prophesying of the last days, says: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

You know that I am advocating no spiritual aristocracy in saying this. People would accuse me, perhaps, of the opposite extreme. But in truth both are alike unscriptural. Neither aristocracy nor democracy is God’s principle, but a true theocracy. Christ is alone master - not clergy, not people. Ministers are but "servants," as the very name imports; but not "servants of men " - against which the apostle, as you will remember, so vehemently contends. "If I yet pleased men," says he, "I should not be the servant of Christ." Thus are these two things in essential opposition. Christ needs to be in His true place, which Laodiceanism, here as elsewhere, excludes Him from. Bring Christ in, and the ministers are His servants. Bring Christ in, and the people are His people. His service, on the part of all alike, is true and perfect freedom alike to all.

You will understand me when I say that I rejoice to see the pernicious distinction between clergy and laity being in some measure done away. I rejoice in the free evangelizing which is going on in almost all denominations: I rejoice to see Christ’s

people taking their true place, as a distinctive priesthood in relation to Him, and vested rights of clerisy being done away. Only let God's word settle all: let Christ have His sovereign rights: Laodiceanism will be then impossible.

But, finally, let us never forget there is a spiritual Laodicea. And this, too, in a double way. It may be purely spiritual: and here perfectionism, which we have glanced at, is plainly one form. Another, upon a lower plane, is to be found in that spirit which contents itself with outward church prosperity; and, neglecting divine measurement, seeing the Church and the world nearer together, assumes that the world is coming up to the Christian level, when it is Christians who are coming down to the level of the world. Christ must be outside the door for any to think so. The soul supping with Christ, and Christ with it, surely knows better what are His tastes, and how little the ostentatious ecclesiasticism or the showy charities so abundant can suit Him. Let me not speak disparagingly. I do not assign all (God forbid!) to one common rubbish heap. There are numbers of devoted, sincere labourers whose labours are with God, and whose fruit will be found with Him. And He, too, who seeth not as man seeth, neither seduced by fair appearances nor harsh in premature judgment, - He who teaches us that in taking forth the precious from among the vile we shall be as His mouth,- He much more will find which is valuable to Him, doubtless, in that which to us may seem the merest refuse. Still, the general result is but little affected. The heart that can look complacently upon the general condition of things religiously can scarcely be with Christ aright. It is not a question of prophetic knowledge merely, or what views we entertain about the Lord's coming, (though our views and our disposition of heart cannot be altogether disconnected,) but it is a question of obedience to His Word, and of truth of heart to Him.

But spiritual Laodiceanism has yet another phase, and - shall I own it to you? To me it is the most hopeless and distressing. It is where grace is owned and the Christian standpoint is assumed, the Christian language used, the ecclesiastical position, so to speak, all right, but where this is all found essentially inoperative upon the soul! Because here the failure of the Word is most decided; and if

the Word fails, what is there to renew us by? Beloved brethren, let me return then to this, and insist a little upon it: can we insist too much where this awful brand of Laodicea rests upon the one with whom God's truth is only professed, to be more than ever denied, - Christ's name assumed to be more than ever dis honoured!

The place in new creation, is it ours? Do we profess it ours, that wondrous place, where, for every one who is in Christ Jesus, "old things are passed away and all things become new"? If our standing is in Him, is our "walk according to this rule" of the new creation in Christ Jesus? Are we, as to all fleshly standing, title, claim, dead with Christ, buried, never to come up again? Who would think of the old Laodicean contention upon ground like this? Who would dream of "people's rights" being here once more the watchword among the followers of a carpenter's Son whom the world crucified, and whose chief spiritual leaders are the fishermen of Galilee?

Brethren, be cold or hot! be one thing or another plainly. When all are one in Christ, shall there be room for the hateful strife of democrat and aristocrat, as if the world was not crucified to us, as if we did not glory in that cross of Christ by which we are crucified to the world? "Members one of another," "all one in Christ Jesus" - is this not social equality of the very highest order? Brethren alike in the family of God, is this indeed, or is it not, nearer, dearer, more powerful than the ties of flesh? Not aristocracy, not democracy, but theocracy - let that be our watchword!

Is a worldly position something? Do our brethren feel that in our intercourse with them we do indeed (in language which Scripture is not responsible for, though our common version is) "condescend to men of low estate ?" * Do they feel that it is "condescension," not a recognition of true equality?* Rom. xii. 16; translated better in a recent version[33] "Have the same respect one

33 No disrespect to F. W. Grant, but when he supposes that any modernist ecumenical bible version knows more than the fifty-seven highly skilled linguists, employed and paid by King James from 1603 through 1611, divided into six companies which met in cities of Cambridge, Westminster, and Oxford, as they, under the unction of the Holy Spirit of God, took seven years to translate God's inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Old Testament and New Testament books into an authorized Holy Bible which answered

for another, not minding high things, but going along with the lowly [or what is lowly]."

On the other hand, is a worldly position which we have not, something? and are we using our Christian place to lift ourselves higher in the world, or to assert in the face of another the "equal rights" which are ours?

To both sides, no study could be more wholesome than that of the brief epistle in which we find the apostle Paul sending back to his former condition a runaway slave, now Christian, to his former master, Christian also. "Receive him as myself," he says to the latter; "no longer as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved." Such was the relationship of Onesimus to his former master; and such words, in those old days of deeper reality, meant what they said.

Then, also, as to Onesimus, was he to claim the place which grace had put him in, and insist on "equal rights" with his master? Was he to use his Christianity to escape from his slavery, and that because his master was a Christian? No; on either side, no! Grace was that under the supremacy of which both master and slave were now alike - the slave to the master a "brother beloved," but himself subject to a grace which, if it had given him the new relationship, taught him to value it too highly to prostitute it to the claim of worldly advantage.

To claim grace is not grace. It is not grace in me to pull down another from an assumed level, nor yet to claim one's own from others. It is the prerogative of grace to stoop to serve; and yet it is grace's prerogative to lift the lowest up upon a level so high that the highest of earth's princes shall esteem it only immeasurable exaltation to be allowed to share it with him. Oh, to be ever Christians! - to sup with Him who, if He admits us to His company, must have the door kept open for all that are His! - His, and to be associated with Him in the fast-coming glory, before which all earthly glory even now pales and dies!

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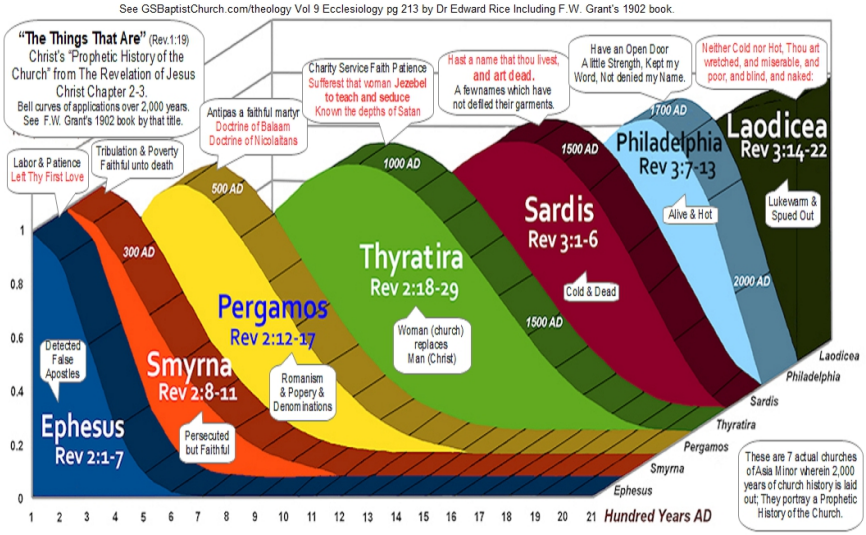
only to the original Hebrew and Greek! Well when he supposes them wrong and his preferred version correct, he is in error. The verse says, "*Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits*" (Rom.12:16).

Philadelphia and Laodicea! Significant contrasts! With which are we? Surely, surely the closing days of Christendom are Laodicean. Sorrowfully I feel it, and affirm it. And what then? Why, then He is near; He will come. Let us brace ourselves to our duty; let us hold fast the faith; let us be only more fully subject to Him whose rule is service, whose yoke is easy, whose presence and whose fellowship begin heaven for us upon earth. Oh, to know it better! As we look around, as we look within, our exhortation changes into prayer.[34]

34 Grant, F. W., "*The Prophetic History of the Church, Evils Which Afflict Christendom and Their Remedy*", New York Loizeaux Brothers, 1910, First Edition, 1902, public domain available at http://plymouthbrethren.org/series/6114 and http://www.gsbaptistchurch.com/theology/grant_prophetic_history_church.pdf and http://www.brethrenarchive.org/people/fw-grant/pamphlets/the-prophetic-history-of-the-church/ .

The author's engineering background, and profound interest in Dr. Grant and Dr. Ironside's portrayal of this prophetic history of the church, drove the development of a bell curve distribution of the seven messages as portrayed below: (last_oct/seven_msgs_rev2n3_19x30)



Also, in teaching the Prophetic History of the Church, the author condensed Grant's eight lectures into six 300 word essays as follows:

Msg#2537 An Ear to Hear

What The Bible Says Good Samaritan's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

The Revelation of Jesus Christ reveals as "*the things which are*" a prophetic history of his church. F. W. Grant's 1902 book "The Prophetic History of the Church", aptly defends that theses and meticulously aligns the revelation with church history in eight lectures. "*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; these things saith he that holdeth the seven Stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*" (Rev.2:1). Each church address has such a distinct author's title assigned. Here, the 'stars' speak of the ministry given to the saints, as responsible to shine by his light and for him in his world. "*They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and*

ever" (Dan.12:3). Also, as Jehovah God was "*in the midst of* " the Garden, of Israel, of the camp, and of the promised land, now is Jesus "*in the midst of*" the churches, of disciples gathered, of two or three gathered, and of the twenty-four Elders. This church "of" Ephesus was able to discern truth and lies, had labored for Christ's namesake, but had "*left there first love.*" Think of that deplorable condition; my familiar friends have forgotten me, my name, my words, that they were purged from their old sins, … Left there first love! Peter forgot thrice, Paul not once. It is the danger in all church ages and Jesus gives the solution "*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent.*"

The church "in" Smyrna was thrust into severe persecution. Only "*The first and the last, which was dead, and is alive*" knows of that anguish. He gives them high commendation, and no condemnation. Each church is implored, "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*" (Rev.2:7,11,17,29,3:6,13,22).

An Essay for week #37, Sep 14, 25

Msg#2538 From Ephesus to Smyrna to Pergamos

What The Bible Says Good Samaritan's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

In his 1902 "*Prophetic History of the Church*" Grant exposed a progression of the church as it moves from an Ephesus leaving of its first love, through Smyrna's great persecutions, to Pergamos' dwelling where Satan's seat is. In that 'progression' they ended with "*them that hold the doctrine of Balaam*" and "*them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans*" (Rev.2:14,15). This was an obvious '*leavening*' of the whole, a growth into a tree, lodging birds, a presence of tares in the wheat (Matt.13). The church hated the "*deeds of the Nicolaitans*"and the blasphemy of the "*synagogue of Satan*", but now, at Pergamos, they dwelt in the synagogue and held the doctrine! Also, there is a way of, an error of, and a doctrine of Balaam; the latter was the incorporation of strangers that corrupted the nation of Israel; and here, in Pergamos, there are unsaved individuals in the church. A '*synagogue*' was a gathering together of all people, while a church is to be a gathering together of a 'called out and separated people', the saints. In the New-Testament God doesn't want mixers he wants separators: those who

will "*come out from among them and be ye separate*" (2Cor.6:17), those "*in the world but not of the world*" (Jhn.17:15 - 16). Not tares in the wheat, fowls in the branches, or leaven in the lump. Also the "*deeds of the Nicolaitans*" now becomes doctrine. Nicolaitans are not a group, or sect, or people, it is a "*thing which God hates.*" From the word itself, it is a separation of a 'clergy class' from a 'laity class'. In Christianity there is to be no upper class of 'clergy' who can interpret scriptures for the 'lay people'. That is a 'thing' God hates twice (Rev.2:6,15)! This is indeed a prophetic church history. An Essay for week #38, Sep 21, 25

Msg#2539 From Pergamos to Thyatira

What The Bible Says Good Samaritan's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

God says to the church, "*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. ... For all that is in the world, ... is not of the Father*" (Jas.4:4,1Jhn.2:16). All forms of ritualism mix the church with the world. Supposing a person is made "a member of Christ and the child of God" by baptism makes the church's separation from the world impossible. Grant states it "all systems in which the church is made a means of salvation, instead of the company of the saints, … mix the world into the church" (Lecture3). Sons of God are born, "*not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, **but of God***" (Jhn.1:13). So Pergamos, dwelling where Satan's seat is, migrates to a Thyatira, where Jezebel teaches. We have been tracing her arrival; first with '*church*', called out ones, losing separation and becoming '*synagogue*', indiscriminate gatherings, and then appointments of priests and clergy to stand between God and people. Jezebel, with her idolatress doctrine of Balaam, is clearly Popery and Romanism. It is the woman in the Man's place; it is the Roman Church substituting herself for Christ. It is not confined to Roman Catholicism, this teaching of Jezebel is found just as widely in Protestants that came out of Popery. Jezebel, the worst part of Israel's history, was a Canaanite, an idolatrous and bitter persecutor of God's saints. In Revelation 17 you find her drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of the Lord. These messages to the

seven churches are indeed the "Prophetic History of the Church." "*He that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches*." An Essay for week #39, Sep 28, 25

Msg#2540 From Thyatira to Sardis

What The Bible Says Good Samaritan's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

"In the address to the church of Thyatira (Rev.2:18-29), we find the Lord announcing his coming, and bidding his saints to wait to share then with his authority, authority which the false church, the Jezebel teaching, persecuting with Popery and priestcraft church, was assuming to have already. In Sardis (Rev.3:1-6) we have an opposition to the false church, no claim of infallible authority, no corruption of doctrine, and no persecution of the saints" (F.W. Grant 1902 Lecture 6). They "protested" and they fit the bill of protestants. Christ, as much as ever, had "*the seven Spirits of God*" i.e. a plentitude of the Spirit, while Sardis had "*a name that thou livest, and art dead*" (Rev.3:1), i.e. a lack of Spiritual power, nay, of life itself. That is the character of the churches of the Reformation. They now have a name to live, a name assumed to be in the book of life, while the actual condition of the mass is that of death, not *feebleness*, but death. There are exceptions, "*a few names*" that are genuine, and "*they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy*" (3:4), but the mass are dead all together. In this scene of death, there will be a purging of church roles and many will, as it were, have their name blotted out of the book of life.

In Christ's prophetic church history we have glanced at Romanism and Reformation and ecclesiastic denominationalism gives "a name to live" where there is no life. It is leaven, it puts tares in the wheat; the spiritual are in the minority trying to tolerate Jezebel and Nicolaita. Upcoming, in the message to the church in Philadelphia, there is an open door for individuals to escape ecclesiastical nationalism, state-run churches, and denominationalism. Praise the Lord.

An Essay for week #40, Oct 5, 25

Msg#2541 From Sardis to Philadelphia

What The Bible Says Good Samaritan's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

In Christ's prophetical history of the church Sardis gets no

commendation, Philadelphia no condemnation. One has a name but is cold and dead, the other "*has not denied Christ's name*" and has an open door, life, and heat. This church in Philadelphia is addressed by *"he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth"* (Rev.3:7). Christ gives them this open door which leads out of Sardis' cold deadness. No coincidence, Philadelphia means "brotherly love" and this 6th church address manifests the 6th addition to maturing faith "*to* (5) *godliness* (add) (6) *brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness* (7) *charity*" (2Pet.1:7). Recall how "*all men shall know ye are my disciples*" in John 13:35, it is "*if ye have love one to another.*" Also no coincidence, that the very city where a Declaration of Independence and its Constitutional Law was signed, law which locked open a door where state-run churches are banned, and state persecutions of Christians prohibited, that city was Philadelphia. To this church Christ says, the synagogue of Satan shall bow "*to know that I have loved thee.*" This church "*will be kept from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world*", and is told, "*Behold, I come quickly*", and that, overcomers will be made "*a pillar in the temple of my God*" and will have a new name. These accolades are not given to previous churches, in fact, Sardis is warned, "*If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee*" (3:3). That's the difference between cold and hot. Next we will see that Laodicea spells lukewarm.

An Essay for week #41, Oct 12, 25
See F.W. Grant Lectures in Vol 09 www.GSBaptistChurch.com/theology

Msg#2542 From Philadelphia to Laodicea

What The Bible Says Good Samaritan's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

We now come to the solemn close; and it is striking that it comes immediately after the epistle to Philadelphia, in which more than a little gleam of light and blessing shown out. The two things are very closely connected: the blessing of the church in Philadelphia leads us to the judgment of the church in Laodicea. The name means "people's rights" and stands against "Christ's glory." He says, "*thou art neither cold nor hot; I would that thou*

wert cold or hot." He does not accept lukewarm-Laodicea as an improvement upon the coldness of Sardis. And why? Because the heat is not that of revival but of decline and moral deterioration. It is failure of all the highest, richest, and most wonderful truths - God's heart poured out without reserve to man, that he might know him, enjoy him, be at home with him.

"*I will spew thee out of my mouth.*" This is the solemn end of professing Christendom. He will not spew his own beloved out of his mouth; he will take them to himself before he can reject the whole mass as nauseous to him. He has addressed Philadelphia and tells them he is coming quickly, and that he will keep them out of the hour coming. He cannot reject even the poorest, weakest, and most wayward of his own. He cannot spew his own out of his mouth; he must take them out before the first hot drops of the storm of judgment fall. The Laodicean says "*I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing"; but they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*" Their riches are but paper money, manufactured out of the rags of self-righteousness; Christ is what they lacked. Don't be Laodicean. (Grant,1902).

An Essay for week #42, Oct 19, 25

See F.W. Grant Lectures in Vol 09 www.GSBaptistChurch.com/theology

The Prophetic History of the Church, H.A. Ironside.

Our Lord Jesus Christ prophetically gave us the course of the church age and it behooves a Bible student to study that prophecy and line it up with the church history that unfolded as it was seen in Grant's eight lectures it can be seen in Ironside's lectures 3 & 4.

H. A. Ironside gives exceptional coverage of church history from this perspective and his Lecture 3 and Lecture 4, entitled "The Seven Churches" is given here in their entirety. His preface to the second edition gives this insight:

> The eleven years that have elapsed since these lectures were first issued in printed form, have but given added proof that the system of interpretation followed is the Scriptural one. The word of prophecy is confirmed by the passing of the years. Everything in the Church, in Jewry, and in the world, moves on exactly as predicted in the Holy Scriptures.

Examine then the two lectures that give excellent coverage to church history that were prophetically given by our Lord Jesus Christ. They have unfolded exactly as prophesied.

H.A. Ironside's Lecture 3 The Seven Churches [35]

WE now turn to the letters addressed to the first four churches, as found in chapter 2. In the last address I tried to make it clear that the key to the structure of the book is the 19th verse of the first chapter. We have already been occupied with the things which the apostle John had seen - that is, the first vision of the book, where he beheld the glorified Lord in the midst of the candlesticks, as set forth on the chart. The third division is clearly indicated in the opening words of chapter 4, where we read in the Revised Version, "**After (*these things)*[36] I looked, and behold, a door was opened**

35 Ironside, H. A., "*Revelation: An Ironside Expository Commentary*", Kregel Publications, 1920, pg 25-38.

36 The Holy Bible says, "After **this..."** it is unfortunate that Ironside's

in heaven." Necessarily then, the second division must take in simply what we have in chapters 2 and 3 - "**the things which are**" (present, continuous tense) - the things which are now in progress; and this is the only part of the Apocalypse that has to do specifically with the present, the church period, though it is all written for our instruction, our warning, and our encouragement.

In fact, I believe that the real value of the Revelation consists in this: that it gives us the fullgrown trees which we now see as developing saplings. We need this book in order to judge aright the various movements that are now going on. For myself, I am sure that if I did not know something of the teaching of this book, I would long since have been identified with many movements which I have come absolutely to distrust, because I believe I can see, by a careful study of the Apocalypse, what the end of them will be.

Let me illustrate: Someone asks concerning the so-called "Church Federation scheme." Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if all the churches united? If we simply had one great organization, wouldn't it be grand? All could agree to accept a common creed so worded that everyone could subscribe to it, and so the shame of Christendom's divisions be at an end. Now, why not go in for something like that? Would not this be the fulfillment of the prayer of our Lord, "**that they all may be one**"?

Well, I might be caught by such a proposal, but I turn to the Book of Revelation and I learn that just such a religious federation is going to arise after the church of God has been caught away to be with the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is designated in the 17th chapter as "**Babylon the Great**." This will be the big world-church. The present movement is just a preparation for this, and when I have the light from heaven shining upon it in the Book of the Revelation, I say, that if that is the way it is going to end, the

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postmortem editors resorted to a copyright RV (The Revised Version is copyrighted 1885 by Church of England) to change the words to what they wanted it to say. Shame on those who translate verse to give what they think God should have said, and shame on those who use such copyright translations. The 2004 Kregel Publications revision also did some wordsmithing of Ironside's work, and stuck [brackets] into his Authorized King James Verses.

thing to do is to have no part in it now. Separation from evil - not fusion of diverse systems - is the divine order: and so we see that the prophetic book throws the light of the future upon events and movements that are in progress at present, in order that we may take warning and be preserved from that which is contrary to the mind of God.

Before we begin our study of "**The Things which are**," let me give you this parable. Sometime ago, rummaging through an old castle, some people came across a very strangelooking old lock which secured a stout door. They shook the door and tried to open it, but to no avail. They tried one way and another to move the lock, but could not turn it. By and by somebody picked up a bunch of old keys from some rubbish on the floor and he said, "Maybe I can unlock it." He tried one key and it made no impression. He tried another and it gave a little; another and it gave a little more; and so on, but none would open the lock. At last he came to a peculiar old key. He slipped it into the lock, gave a turn, and the lock was open. They said, "Undoubtedly this key was meant for this lock."

You will understand my parable if I draw your attention to the fact that, in the 20th verse of the 1st chapter, we are told that there was a mystery connected with the seven lampstands. The seven lampstands are said to symbolize the seven churches of Asia, but there was a mystery connected with them. While some have tried one key and some have tried another (and there have been all kinds of efforts made to interpret this mystery), no solution was found until some devout students of Scripture weighing this portion said, "Might it not be that inasmuch as this section of the book presents '**the things which are**,' God has been pleased to give us here a prophetic history of the church for the entire dispensation?" But would the key fit the lock?' They compared the first part of the church's history with the letter to Ephesus. Here it fitted perfectly. They went on and compared the letter to Smyrna with the second part of the church's history, and the agreement was most marked. They went on right down to the end, and when they came to Laodicea they found that what is written to the church of Laodicea answers exactly to the condition of the professing church in the

days in which we live, and they said: "There, the mystery is all clear. The lock has been opened; therefore we have the right key."

For myself, I have no question that this was in very truth the mind of the Lord in sending these letters to the seven churches. Seven churches were chosen because seven in Scripture is the number of perfection; and you have only to read these seven letters, then take any good, reliable church history and see for yourself how perfectly the key fits the lock.

The very names are significant. It would be impossible to reverse any of these names. If the order were changed they would not apply. Take the first one. Ephesus means "*desirable*," such a term as a Greek applied to the maiden of his choice. Ephesus gives us a picture of the church as it was in the beginning, when the Lord held the stars (His servants) in His hand, and controlled their ministry. He sent them here and there, just as He would, to proclaim the glad gospel of His grace and to minister to His saints. But human systems have largely changed all that. He walked in the midst of His churches. His eyes were upon everything. and He was there to admonish, to correct, and to control. Observe that in the beginning His Name was the only center, and unto Him was the gathering of His saints. Read the second and third verses:

"**I know thy works and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted**."

The early church was walking in separation from the world. The Greek word *ecclesia*, translated "**church**" in our Bibles, means *a called-out company.* This is God's ideal, and every effort to amalgamate the church and the world is opposed to His mind and must end in confusion, for the church will never convert the world in the present dispensation. Someone asked Dr. A. T. Pierson, on one occasion, "Don't you really think that the world is getting converted already?" "Well," he said, "I admit that the world has become a little churchy, but the church has become

immensely worldly." If it were possible that the church could convert the world, that would be the end of the church. What do I mean? Simply this, that the church is a called-out company, and if the world were converted, there would not be anything else left out of which to call the church.

Believers, in the days of Ephesus, could not bear those who were evil. In our day, discipline in the church is almost at an end. In many quarters, anyone is welcome to full participation in all church privileges, particularly if they have a good bank account; but in the beginning it was very different. That little Ephesian assembly said, "We don't want numbers if they are not holy numbers. We don't want growth at the expense of holiness." More than that, they were loyal to the truth. They tried those who claimed to be apostles, and if they found they were deceivers they refused them as liars, instead of saying, "Oh well, you know Dr. So-and-so comes with such good recommendations, he is such a lovely man and so cultured, and though he doesn't happen to believe in the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, or His atonement, etc., still he has so many good qualities that we mustn't be hard on him." The early church would have said, "Are you a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ?" and put a few serious questions to him. If he was not what he professed to be, they soon unmasked him and refused his unholy ministrations. But in these days teachers can deny almost any truth of Scripture, and the professing church never knows the difference. Oh, for more of the zeal and piety of early days!

In verse three we learn that these saints were suffering for the Name's sake of the Lord Jesus. It was not suffering for the name of any denomination, nor yet for some special theories or usages. It was suffering for Christ's sake. For His Name's sake they bore trial and endured persecution.

And yet, even then, we have the evidence of early decline. Fourth verse: "**Nevertheless I have *somewhat*[37] against thee, because thou hast left thy first love**."

They had left their first love. The heart was drifting away from

37 Ironside left *somewhat* out of his quote, errantly thinking, perhaps, that King James Bible *italic* words are ommitable. Shame, shame on such a practice.

Christ. The decline that began in these first days of the church has continued. There has been no corporate recovery. That spirit of declension has gone on increasing until the present Laodicean days.

In the next letter we see that the Lord, whose love never changes, permitted something to take place to arouse His people from their lethargy.

"**And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan**."

Smyrna means *myrrh*. It is frequently mentioned in Scripture in connection with the embalming of the dead. Myrrh had to be crushed in order to give out its fragrance. This sets forth the period when the church was crushed beneath the iron heel of pagan Rome, yet it never gave out such sweet fragrance to God as in those two centuries of almost constant martyrdom.

"**These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive**." What a blessed thing to know that the children of God are linked up with a resurrected Christ! The power of His resurrection works in them. He says, "**I know thy works and tribulation and poverty, (but thou art rich**)." This was the day when the church was hated, outlawed and persecuted. Instead of worshiping in magnificent buildings, they gathered together in caves, catacombs and other hidden places, with sentries posted to warn them of the approach of their foes. Despised by the world, condemned as enemies of the Empire because of their faith in and loyalty to Christ, their lives were precious to God. They were in His eyes rich. They were poor in this world's goods, but rich in faith.

But even then, all was not perfection; so He says, "**I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan**" - referring to the Judaizing movement that came into the church in the early centuries. It was

the leaven of Galatianism which had never been wholly judged, and which made astonishing progress in the second and third centuries. He says, "**Fear none of those things** . . . **ye shall have tribulation ten days**." It is significant that in the two centuries of Roman persecution, which began with Nero and which terminated 312 A. D., there were ten distinct edicts demanding that governors seek out Christians everywhere and put them to death. The last was under Diocletian. He was the tenth persecutor. The early Christians believed he would be the last, and he was. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," said Augustine. The testimony of the dying again and again led their very persecutors to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour because of the convincing power of the truth manifested in the martyrs. Satan's effort to destroy Christianity by persecution was in vain. But those were days when it meant something to be a Christian. When God's people were being crushed like myrrh, what a sweet odor of devotion, what fragrance of Christian love was wafted up to the very throne of God!

Pergamos has two meanings. It means "*marriage*," and" *elevation*." It speaks of the time when the church was elevated to a place of power, and was married to the world. It depicts the time when church and state were united, under Constantine and his successors.

Read the 12th and 13th verses:

"**And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth**."

The Lord Jesus judges everything by the Word. The word that He spoke will judge men in the last day. If you reject it now it will judge you then. "**I know where thou dwellest**," He says, even on "**Satan's throne**." What was Satan's throne? If you had asked any of the Smyrna believers, they would have pointed you to the

Emperor's throne in Rome. In Pergamos you find the very church of God sitting upon the imperial throne. How did that happen?

Those of you who are familiar with Roman history and church tradition will recall that after the death of Diocletian and Galerius, Constantine and Maxentius contended for the throne. Constantine is said to have seen a vision of a cross of fire and to have heard a voice saying, "In this sign, conquer." He wondered what the vision could mean. He was told that the cross was the sign of the Christian religion, and that it must mean that the God of the Christians was calling him to be the champion of the Christian religion; that if he obeyed the voice he would be victor over the hosts of Maxentius and become emperor of the world. He called for Christian bishops and asked them to explain their religion to him. He accepted the new doctrine and declared himself to be its God-appointed patron and protector. Some writers make a great deal of this so-called conversion of Constantine, but it is questionable if he ever became a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. He won a great victory over his opponent and thus became emperor of the world, and one of his first acts was to liberate the Christians and to stop all persecution. He bestowed unwonted honors on the bishops; they sat on thrones with the nobles of the empire.

It is during this time that the truth of the second coming of Christ was given up. Before the days of Constantine the church was looking for Him. That was their expectation and hope. But after the great change in their circumstances, this truth was largely lost sight of. Christian bishops said, "We have been looking for Christ's reign but we have been wrong. Constantine's empire is Christ's kingdom." They thought the church was already reigning; so it went on until the days of the Reformation, when the light began to dawn again.

But now note a most interesting thing: At the very time that the Lord said, "**I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat** (or throne) **is**," He goes on to say, "**Thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my faith**," etc. Here is something very remarkable. At the same time that Christ sees them sitting on Satan's throne, He can yet commend them for holding fast His

Name.

During that time the Arian controversy was fought out. Arius denied the eternity of the Word. John says, "**In the beginning was the Word**" - He always existed. When everything that had a beginning began, the Word was. Arius declared that the Word was the greatest of all beings that ever emanated from God. His opponents insisted that the Word was one with the Father, in one eternal Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: one God in three Persons. It was the most tremendous issue the church had ever been called to face, and, for over a century, it was the burning question that provoked heated controversy everywhere. For years the church was almost rent asunder over two words, "homoiosian" and "homoousian." The one word meant "*of like substance*," the other "*of the same substance*." The first was the battle-cry of the Arians; the second of the orthodox, headed by Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria. So irreconcilable were the contending parties that Constantine at last decided to take a hand in the matter himself, and he called a great church-council, which convened in the city of Nicaea, and there debated the question as to what the apostolic teaching really had been. Was Jesus truly God, or was He only the greatest being that God had ever brought into existence? Over three hundred bishops met together, and Constantine, sitting on a golden throne, presided as the acknowledged head of the Christian church, at the very time that he still bore the title Pontifex Maximus, or High Priest of the Heathen - the same title that the Pope bears at the present time. They examined the matter in question was examined from all sides. Again and again Constantine was called in to quell disturbances; feelings ran so high. On one occasion it is related that a brilliant Arian seemed to have almost silenced opposition, and the great assemblage appeared to be about to cast its vote in favor of the damnable Unitarian heresy, when a hermit from the deserts of Africa sprang to his feet, clad chiefly in tiger's skin. This latter he tore from his back, disclosing great scars (the result of having been thrown into the arena among the wild beasts, and his hack dreadfully disfigured by their claws), crying dramatically, "These are the brand-marks of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I cannot hear this blasphemy." Then he

proceeded to give so stirring an address, setting forth so clearly the truth as to Christ's eternal deity, that the majority of the council realized in a moment that it was indeed the voice of the Spirit of God. Whether this story be actually true or not I cannot say, but it well sets forth the spirit pervading many who were in attendance, most of whom had passed through the terrible persecution of Diocletian. The final result was that the council of Nicaea put itself on record as confessing the true deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Very God of Very God," "Light of Lights," "perfection of perfection". God and man in one blessed Person, nevermore to be separated. Thus was settled once and forever, in a public way, the acknowledged faith of the church of God, which held fast His Word, and did not deny His Name.

Did you ever stop to think what would have been the case if the council had decided the other way? It would have meant this: Unitarianism would have henceforth borne the stamp of orthodoxy, and the truth of the deity of Christ would have been branded as heresy.

We have no record as to who the Antipas was referred to in the latter part of the verses above quoted, but it is singular that the word means "*against all*." Many years after the council of Nicaea, when the Arian party were again largely in the ascendency, Athanasius, that doughty old champion of the truth, was summoned before the Arian emperor Theodosius, who demanded that he cease his opposition to the teaching of Arius - who by the way, was long since dead - and admit the Arians to the table of the Lord. This Athanasius refused. Theodosius reproved him bitterly for what he considered his insubject spirit, and asked sternly, "Do you not realize that all the world is against you?" The champion of the truth drew himself up and answered the emperor, "Then I am against all the world." He was a true Antipas, a faithful witness to the end of his days, despite banishment and opposition of various kinds.

Oh, my brethren, God wants to-day, just such men, men of God, who, for the truth's sake, are willing to stand, if need be, against all the world!

We now turn to consider another phase of things in the

Pergamos period - the introduction of the doctrine of Balaam and the teaching of the Nicolaitanes in the church. Balaam taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the sons of Israel by leading them to make unholy alliances with the Midianitish women, as recorded in Numbers 25:1-9. In figure this is the union of the church and the world. During the Smyrna period, Satan sought to destroy the church by persecution. In the next three centuries he tried different tactics: he endeavored to ruin the testimony by worldly patronage from without, and the introduction of false principles from within. You know it is far more dangerous for the church to be patronized by the world than when the world is openly arrayed against it. Take any of the different denominations in Christendom. When were they shining most brightly for the Lord? It was in the days of their first love, when they were suffering from the world and were the objects of its bitter persecution. But when those had passed, when the period of persecution ended and the world began to look upon them with complacency, to greet them with the outstretched hand and the smiling face, instead of with the sword and the frown, in every instance decline set in. So it was in the Pergamos period. Constantine's patronage did what Diocletian's persecution could not do. It corrupted the church, and she forgot her calling as a chaste virgin espoused to an absent Lord; then she gave her hand in marriage to the world that had crucified Him, thus entering into an unholy alliance of which she has never really repented.

In close connection with this we have the introduction of wrong principles within - the teaching of the Nicolaitanes. Others have often pointed out that this is an untranslated Greek word meaning, "*Rulers over the people*." Nicolaitanism is really *clerisy* - the subjugation of those who were contemptuously styled" the laity" by a hierarchical order who lorded it over them as their own possessions, forgetting that it is written, "**One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren**" (Matt 23:8). In the letter to Ephesus the Lord commended them for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, those who, like Diotrephes, loved to have the preeminence among them. But, in the Pergamos letter, we have Nicolaitanism designated as a distinct system of teaching. It was

then that *clerisy* was accepted as of divine origin, and therefore something that must be bowed to.

All this prepared the way for the Thyatira period, according to the letter that follows.

I have already tried to point out that every one of these names seems to be significant. Thyatira is perhaps the most difficult of all to define. Scholars tell us that it comes from two words, *one meaning a sacrifice, or an incense-offering; the other, that which goes on continually*. A suggested interpretation, therefore, is "*continual sacrifice*." And this is very significant, because Thyatira undoubtedly sets forth the period which was the result of the union of church and State, already noticed. It was in the 7th century that the Bishop of Rome was first regularly recognized as Christ's vicegerent, and visible head of the church. This was, properly speaking, the beginning of the papacy. There was no Roman Catholic church, in the full sense, until the Pope was the acknowledged head of Christendom. It is important for Protestants to keep this in mind. You will often hear papists say, "You know the first church was the Roman Catholic church, and all the different branches of the Protestant church have simply broken off from Rome. There was no Protestant church until the days of Luther." That is an absolute sophistry.[38] There was no such thing as the papacy until the 7th century of the Christian era. For six centuries before that, the church was becoming more and more corrupt - had been drifting further away from the Word of God until, in the 7th century, men professing themselves to be servants of God were ready to acknowledge the Pope as head of all Christendom.

A Roman Catholic once asked a bright Protestant school-girl, "Where was your church before the days of Henry the VIII?" "Why, sir, where yours never was, in the Bible," was her sensible and correct reply. It is a far cry from the simplicity of early Christianity, when in the 7th century they were ready to own the pretensions of the bishop of Rome.

I said that Thyatira seemed to imply a continual sacrifice. You

38 WordWeb Dictionary, s.v. Sophistry - A deliberately invalid argument displaying ingenuity in reasoning in the hope of deceiving someone

will see the significance of this in the great fundamental error of the church of Rome - the sacrifice of the mass. The Roman Catholic priests declare that, in the mass, they offer a continual sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. Other errors of the church of Rome spring from that. There are many things that Protestants might be able to condone. This is the central, the root blasphemy - the denial of the finished work of the Lord Jesus on Calvary's cross - the one, only and all-sufficient offering for the sins of a guilty world. Every time the priest stands at Rome's altar to offer the sacrifice of the mass, he denies the unchanging efficacy of the work wrought by the Lord Jesus on Calvary's cross. I have often pressed this question home to Catholic priests: "What is your function as a sacrificing priest?" They say, "It is my privilege to offer up the Lord Jesus from time to time - a continual sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead."

I generally put it like this: "Well, Christ has to be slain that He may be offered up; doesn't He?"

"Yes."

"You claim then that every time you offer the sacrifice of the mass, every time you pronounce the blessing, you are sacrificing Christ for the sins of the living and the dead?"

"Yes."

"Well then, you kill Christ afresh every time you offer that sacrifice!" Then they begin to hedge. But there is no escape from this horrible conclusion. The Roman priest says that when he offers the sacrifice of the mass he is presenting Christ again for the sins of the living and the dead. And the only way that Christ can be a sacrifice is to be put to death; therefore, the priest kills Him afresh every time he offers. They cannot get away from it. The apostle Peter said at Pentecost, "**Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up**. etc." If Christ has to be offered continually, then every priest is guilty of murdering the Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God.

God is going to judge Rome in a little while: so Christ's letter to Thyatira properly speaks of this central blasphemy of the church

of Rome. Continual sacrifice? Never! No other sacrifice is needed. The dignity of the Lord is so great, the value of His blood is so absolutely infinite, that it is vain for you or any other man to speak about a new sacrifice.

You may say, "I agree with you, sir." Well; now let me ask, Have you a personal interest in that one offering made once upon the cross? Can you say, "Thank God, He gave Himself a propitiation for my sins, and He is my Saviour. I need no other sacrifice. My soul is resting on the finished work of Christ. I require nothing more on which to enter the presence of God."

But let us turn to the Lord's address to Thyatira:

"**And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass**."

It is very significant the way the Lord presents Himself in each one of these letters, so as to meet the special condition in which the church is found. When He addresses Himself to the church of Thyatira, He speaks solemnly as "**the Son of God**." Why does the Lord Jesus Christ emphasize the fact of His deity here? Because Rome everywhere has accustomed people to think of Him as the Son of Mary. I once talked with a woman who told me she would sooner go to Mary than to Christ or the Father. She said, "There is nobody that has so much influence with a son as his mother, and if Jesus Christ is inclined to be a bit hard-hearted, I just go to His good, kind mother, and I ask her to please say a good word to Him for me." What a caricature of our Lord Jesus Christ! Think of having to go to anybody else to win His favor. Who else could be compared with Him? Thus Christ is degraded into the position of the Son of Mary, rather than the Son of God, who came in infinite grace to save poor sinners.

But, observe, He has "**eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass**." This speaks of His holiness and righteousness. He must judge all that is evil. And yet He never overlooks what can be commended. He goes on to say,

"**I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works: and the last to be more than the first**."

The Lord gives Rome credit for a great deal that is good. Remember from the 7th century on to the present time there has been a great deal in the way of good works in the Roman Catholic church that cannot be overlooked. There have been Roman Catholic nuns and monks who have been ready to lay down their lives for the needy and the sick. There were centuries before Luther when every hospital in Western Europe was simply a Roman Catholic monastery or convent.

The Lord does not forget all that. Where there is a bit of faith, His love takes note of it all. If there are hearts in the church of Rome that, amid the superstition, reach out to the blessed Lord Himself, He meets them in grace and manifests His love to them. But having done this, He then puts His finger on the sore spot:

"**Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols**."

To understand this well, we need to go back to Israel's history in the days of King Ahab. Jezebel was an adept in the art of mixing. She undertook to unite in one the religion of Israel and the religion of Phoenicia. That is just what Romanism is - a mixture of Heathenism and Christianity and Judaism. It is not Christianity - yet there is in it quite a little that is Christian. Where did its superstition and image worship come from? It was all taken bodily over from heathenism, under the plea that it would help to convert the pagans. The church became very accommodating. In the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries you find the church compromising with heathen rites and heathen ceremonies to such a degree that, by the 7th century, one could hardly tell heathen from Christian temples. The amalgamation is such that it is almost impossible to separate the one from the other. Go to a Roman Catholic church, and, after

sitting through the whole ceremony, take your Bible and search it from one end to the other, and ask yourself, "Is there anything like that in the Book?" You will say, " No." Where does it come from then? Go from there to a heathen temple. Observe its ritual, and you will say, "Yes, they are the same."

Romanism is Christianity, Judaism, and Heathenism joined together; and the Lord abhors the vile combination. Note two things that He holds against Rome - spiritual fornication and idolatry - The first is the union of the church and the world: and "**the friendship of the world is enmity against God**." Idolatry is the worship of images, strictly forbidden in the second commandment (Exodus 20:4, 5). God gave her space to repent and she repented not. Go back to the days of Savonarola in Italy, Wickliffe and Cranmer of England, John Knox in Scotland, Martin Luther in Germany, Zwingle in Switzerland, Calvin in France - all those mighty reformers whom God raised up throughout the world to call Rome to repent of her iniquity, but "**she repented not**."

Mark this, you could not transpose these churches. You could not put Thyatira in the place of Smyrna. It could not be said to the church in that early day, "**I gave her space to repent, and she repented not**;" but it is fully applicable to the church of Rome. And, in our day, we have a lot of foolish Protestants who believe that the old Rome is now a harmless old pussy-cat sitting on the banks of the Tiber: she purrs so contentedly. They say, "We never understood Rome. What a pity we ever had that Reformation at all." And so efforts are being made to re-unite the various great bodies of Christendom in one vast society headed by the Pope. This is the avowed purpose of many leaders in the larger Protestant bodies.

What foolish people these Protestants are! - Protestants who have long ceased to protest against evil doctrine, forgetting the millions of lives that were sacrificed for the precious truth. Depend upon it, if the day ever comes that the Pope gets into the saddle again, and gets control of the proposed union, it will only be at the expense of life if people will worship scripturally at all. But Protestant leaders are dazzled with the thought of a great united church, and are hurrying us on to a union with Rome which

Scripture shows clearly enough will yet take place. But, thank God, not until the church of Christ has been caught up to meet the Lord in the clouds, to be with Himself, according to His promise (John 14:2, 3). God gave Rome space to repent. If she had had any desire to get right with Him, she would have repented in the 16th century.

Since the 16th century she has added to her blasphemies and errors the declaration of the absolute sinlessness of the Virgin Mary, lifting her to the position of a female God, and declared that she was caught up to heaven without dying and crowned queen of heaven.

At the Council of the Vatican (1869) less than seventy-five years ago, the church of Rome produced another of her wretched dogmas - the infallibility of her Popes. This dogma was so utterly without reason that many bishops said, "This is going too far. We know that Popes have reversed each other over and over again." But Rome never repented; she has added sin upon sin to the heavy list God had against her in the middle ages, and will remain the same to the end. It behooves Protestants to keep clear of it all. God says He is going to cast her into the great tribulation.

Ephesus is at an end; Smyrna was at an end about A.D. 312; and Pergamos is at an end. Thyratira begins in the seventh century, goes right on into the Great Tribulation, and manifests herself at last as Babylon the Great. Her children are to be judged; but wherever there is a remnant found who "**have not known the depths of Satan**," the Lord owns them as His, and exhorts them to hold fast what they have until He come. To the overcomer He promises what Rome has always sought - power over the nations. They will rule with Him when He comes again. Thus the hope of the Second Coming of Christ is put before them, and henceforth has a large place in each of these church-letters.

Time has not permitted so full an exposition as I would have liked, but I trust enough has been brought before us to stir our hearts to search the Scriptures for ourselves, and to study as never before this marvelous portion of God's holy Word.

~ end of chapter 3 ~ http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/ ***

H.A. Ironside's Lecture 4 The Seven Churches (Continued)

Revelation 3

NONE of you can have a keener sense than I of the cursory nature of these addresses. Time forbids going into that detail on all points which alone would enable one to give anything like a complete exposition of this marvelous portion of the Word of God. But if I can but whet your appetite for further study, and start Christians searching the Word for themselves, and weighing, too, what others have written and published on this theme, I shall feel that these addresses have not been in vain. * * It is always a pleasure to me to commend the writings of trustworthy servants of Christ, who are true to the Book. There are a number of excellent expositions of Revelation, each one of which would, I am sure, be a help in the further study of the subject: "*Exposition of the Revelation*" by Walter Scott "*Lectures on Revelation*" by Wm. Kelly "*The Book of Revelation*" by A. C. Gaebelein. On the Seven Churches I especially commend, "*The Prophetic History of the Church*" by F. W. Grant[39].

We now go on to look at the next part in the marvelous series of this great annotated time-table of the church's history.

"**And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent**."

Sardis means "*a remnant*," or, "*those who have escaped*." This is surely very significant, and tells its own story too plainly to be misunderstood. It brings before us, prophetically, the great State-

39 Grant, F. W., "*The Prophetic History of the Church*", NEW YORK LOIZEAUX BROTHERS, 1910, First Edition, 1902, Seventh Printing, 1955, available at www.gsbaptistchurch.com/theology/grant_prophetic_history_church.pdf

churches of the Reformation, who escaped from Rome, only to fall eventually (alas, that it should be so) into cold, lifeless formalism.

It is plainly to be seen, from the first verse, that there is a measure of return to early principles. The Lord's introduction of Himself to this church is very similar to that in the letter to Ephesus, and yet the difference is most marked. Here He is said to have the seven stars; there He was said to hold the seven stars in His right hand. It is, at least, the recognition that ministry belongs to Christ. Ministers are Christ's ministers - not the church's. Yet, even in the glorious days of the Reformation, the truth was not fully apprehended that ministers are to be controlled by, and subject to, Christ, without any human intermediary. While the Protestant ministry is very different from the Romish hierarchy, unfortunately human ordination has done much to becloud a proper conception of the servant's responsibility to the Master.

The Lord declares solemnly, "**I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead**." How sad and solemn the indictment! One might well ask in amazement, How can such things be after the blessing and revival of Reformation days? But when we remember that the State-churches were, from the first, intended to include all the population of a given country, who were supposed to be made members of the church and kingdom of Christ by baptism in infancy, one can readily understand why such churches, though, possibly, strictly orthodox, may yet be largely composed of persons still dead in trespasses and in sins. Nothing can be much sadder than vast congregations of people, baptized, banded together as Christians, taking the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, zealous for church and Christianity, and yet largely devoid of personal, saving faith in Christ - trusting rather in forms and ceremonies, and what some have called "birthright membership," than in new birth through the Word and Spirit of God.

What is needed everywhere is a great revival of decided gospel preaching, pressing home on the consciences of men and women their lost condition, despite church membership, if they have not personally received the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word says, "**Break up the fallow ground**"; sow not among "**thorns**." We often hear

people say they would like to see more old-time conversions. Well, there must first be the old-time preaching of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the lost condition of all men by nature as well as practice, until the old-time conviction will seize upon the souls of Christless men and women, and then the old-time gospel will be hailed as the only relief. No wonder the Lord says to Protestantism, "**Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God**." And He calls upon them to remember how they had received and heard, and to hold fast and repent. Now, surely, it must be plain to anyone who carefully examines the Scripture, that this message would in no sense have been as applicable to the Thyatira as to the Sardis period. Such words would not have the same force when addressed to Rome as when addressed to the churches of the Reformation. What did these latter receive and hear? Clearly the great truths proclaimed so fearlessly in the days of the Reformation, and embodied for the instruction of future generations in the creeds of the 16th and 17th centuries. And, may I say, I am not one of those who waste time denouncing creeds. *Credo* means "*I believe*." Any man who believes anything has a creed. All the great creeds of Protestantism were but the carefully drawn-up declarations of the faith of those who had escaped from Romish superstition, who desired to make clear to their children what they recognized as the truth which they had received from God. We need not be surprised if we find in these creeds some statements which fuller light and knowledge would lead us to refuse or revise, but I think we may say that there is not one of these symbols which does not hold within it every fundamental truth of the Word of God. Take the Augsburg Confession of the Lutherans; the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians; the 39 Articles of the Church of England; and others too numerous to mention. Every one of them insists on the true deity of Christ and the efficacy of His atoning work on Calvary's cross. All alike declare that salvation is only through faith, apart from works.

Those creeds stand, I repeat, for the fundamental truths of Christianity; and it is not to any minister's credit to-day, if still attached to any such denomination as I have just referred to, to

stand up in the pulpits of such churches and say, "I have thrown the creed of the church overboard." When a man reaches that point he either ought to be thrown out of the church whose principles he no longer believes, or he should be honest enough to take himself out. One of the worst features of the present apostasy is that there are thousands of men occupying supposedly orthodox pulpits, who would, if they could, destroy everything for which their respective denominations are understood to stand.

And so we may thank God for the truths contained in these creeds; while, on the other hand, we recognize that, where the Word of God is bowed to, no humanly-drawn-up creed is needed. Nevertheless, it is in view of these very confessions, I am persuaded, that the Lord says, "**Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard**." He calls upon Protestants to remember the great truths committed to them at the Reformation, and hold them fast, and repent for the slack way in which they have treated them in the past.

And now, for the second time in these letters, the Lord speaks of His approaching advent: "**If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee**." How different this to the word in the 5th chapter of I Thessalonians. There, the apostle speaking of the same wondrous advent writes, "**But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief**." It is very evident, therefore, that the coming of the Lord should be the daily expectation of His own beloved people. It is only to the great mass of mere professors that His return will be as the coming of a thief, that is, as the unexpected and unlooked-for One, whose coming will spread dismay instead of gladness.

Blessed it is to know the declaration and promise of the Lord in verse 4. Even in Sardis He beholds a few names which have not defiled their garments, and such He declares shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy. His blood alone has made them so. There are thousands in Christendom who, though linked up with much that is unscriptural, and often almost undistinguishable from the mass, are yet plainly discernible to His eye, for it is written, "**The Lord knoweth them that are his**." To these overcomers the

promise is made that they shall be clothed in white raiment, nor will their names be blotted out of the Book of Life, when the thousands of names, representing a Christless profession, will be expunged from the records of those who profess to have life, in the day of manifestation.

It is not a question of people, who have been truly born of God, losing that eternal life given them in Christ, for that, as many other Scriptures show, is an impossibility. In fact, were it otherwise, it would not be eternal life at all. But the Lord is referring to those who have a name to live, but are dead. Their names are registered among those who profess to have life in Christ. In reality they are, as Jude puts it, "**twice dead**" - dead in trespasses and sins, and dead to their profession of life. So, in the day of manifestation, their names will be eliminated, and only those left who have proven by continuance in well-doing that they truly have life in Christ. Such will be confessed before the Father and the angels at the Lord's second coming.

The next in order is the letter to the church in Philadelphia, which means "*brotherly love*."

"**And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name** . . . **Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth**."(vv. 7-8, 10)

This, I believe, brings us to what we may call the revival period. Following the Reformation there came a time when a cold, lifeless formalism seemed to settle down over all Protestant Christendom - an era in which men were content simply to confess a creed, and as we have already mentioned, were supposed to be united to the church by baptism. But in the 18th and 19th centuries there came

over all those lands where the Reformation had gone a great wave of blessing. God began to work afresh in mighty power. There were marvelous awakenings all over northern Europe and the British Isles. A half century later the same mighty power began to manifest itself in America. Spirit-filled servants of Christ went through these various countries like firebrands of the Lord, calling on sinners to repent, and saints to awaken to their privileges. A little later, in the early part of the last century, God, in a very special way, began to arouse many of His people to a deeper sense of the value of His Word, and its all-sufficiency for the guidance of His people in this scene. This led to the recognition of the fact that Christ Himself is the gathering center for His people; and for His name's sake thousands left all human systems, and began to meet in simplicity, seeking to be guided alone by the Word of God.

Now I do not mean to imply that we are to understand any special movement or association of believers to be in itself Philadelphia, but, just as Sardis sets forth State churches of the Reformation, so I believe Philadelphia sets forth those in Protestantism who emphasize the authority of the Word of God, and the preciousness of the name of Christ. For any particular company to claim to be Philadelphia is but detestable ecclesiastical pretension, and God has very evidently blown upon all such conceit.

Notice what, in a special way, would mark those who seek to walk as Philadelphians. In the first place there is the very name of this church - "*brotherly love*." This implies that those contemplated here, love as brethren. They are born of God, and His love is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto them, and they are characterized by love to all who are Christ's. Alas, how little is this characteristic seen among many who make very loud pretensions to being the testimony of the Lord at the present time. There may be much high truth, and a great pretension to divine ground and maintaining of scriptural principles, but if this first mark of brotherly love be missing, depend upon it you have not yet found Philadelphia.

In the second place, observe the character in which the Lord presents Himself to this church. "**These things saith He that is**

holy, He that is true." This is, in itself, a challenge to separation from evil in life, and error in doctrine. If we would walk in fellowship with the Holy One, we must remember the word, "**Be ye holy, for I am holy**" (1Pet 1:16). And if we would enjoy communion with Him who is true, we must refuse Satan's lies, and love and live the truth ourselves. Hence it follows, as it has been put by others, that "separation from evil is God's principle of unity." Not, indeed, separation in a cold, pharisaic sense, but separation to Christ from that which is evil.

In the next place the Lord speaks of Himself as "**He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth**." In Isaiah 22:22, he who had the key of David was the treasurer of David's house. And the word used here is clearly a reference to that passage. There it is said of Eliakim, "**The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open**." The remainder of the passage shows that Eliakim was but a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one upon whom should be hung all the glory of His Father's house. He, by His Spirit, opens the great treasure-house of divine truth, and none can shut it. On the other hand where there is perversity of spirit, and an unwillingness to walk in the truth, He shuts and none can open. So He has said elsewhere, "**If the light that is in thee become darkness, how great is that darkness**."

And it is blessed to realize that, while Christ is said to have the key of David, there is another sense in which we see that Himself is the key, for it is by the presentation of Himself to the souls of His people that He opens up the treasures of His Word. Thus Christ is the key to the Holy Scriptures, and no other is needed. To understand the Bible you need only to know Christ.

Perhaps there is another sense in which we might apply the words in regard to opening and shutting; that is, they may have an application to service. The Lord Himself opens the doors for those whom He sends forth, and He it is who closes them when He so wills. And this is one thing that Philadelphian believers, generally, have found. Acting on the truth that Christ is Son over His own house, and that He has commanded His servants to go into all the

world and preach the gospel to every creature, thousands have gone forth, in dependence on Him alone, not only in the home-land, but to lands beyond the seas, even among heathen people, without any organization or Board behind them and have found the Lord Himself all-sufficient to meet every need, and to open and close just as He will. "Faith can firmly trust Him, come what may." I think the 8th verse emphasizes this second application, for there He says, "**I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name**." Observe these important characteristics of Philadelphia. - His Word is kept, - His Name confessed. The keeping of His Word involves a great deal more than just believing the Bible, or reading and studying it. It implies obedience to the revealed will of the Lord. It is a blessed thing to realize that "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works**." What immense scope is there here for faith to act upon! This blessed book of God marks out all my path, and, so long as I seek to walk in obedience, I will never be, found in circumstances where this Book cannot guide me. And this, I believe, is what is involved in keeping His Word.

The denial of His Name is the increasing apostasy around us on every hand. Those who have not denied His Name refuse all fellowship with this God-dishonoring condition of things. Christ is to them more precious than all else; even for the sake of service, they refuse to link themselves with that which dishonors or blasphemes that worthy name whereby they are called.

It is significant that, wherever Philadelphian truth has been proclaimed, the devil has raised up a counterfeit to draw people's hearts away from the truth, and so, in verse 9, the Lord speaks of those who will be manifested as the synagogue of Satan, "**who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie**." The day will come when they will have to worship before the feet of those who are faithful to the Lord, and shall know that He has loved them. It is, undoubtedly, that false Judaizing system which is contemplated, whose advocates everywhere oppose the truth of grace, and seek in

every way to hinder the carrying out of those principles which we have been noticing as pleasing to the Lord. In their ignorance, these teachers give up the true Christian position. claiming to be the spiritual Israel, appropriating to themselves Jewish promises and Jewish hopes, and would put the consciences of Christians under the bondage of Jewish legalism, thus really doing Satan's work.

The promise of verse 10, like all the promises to these different churches, is for every true child of God. "**Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth**." This is the Lord's own pledge to those who love His Name, and seek to keep His word - they shall not be left down here to pass through the appalling tribulation which is just ahead of those who "**dwell upon the earth**." This expression is found frequently in the book of Revelation. It does not simply mean those who live in the world, but a careful reading of the various passages in which this peculiar term is found, will make it manifest *that "the earth-dwellers" are in contrast to those whose citizenship is in heaven*.

They are persons who, while professing to be Christians, refuse the heavenly calling, and prove by their earthly-mindedness and worldly ways, that they really belong to this world. All their hopes are here, and their treasures likewise, and the Lord has said, "**Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also**" (Mark 6:21; Luke 12:34). The coming Great Tribulation will be, for them, a time of fearful trial.

Of this hour of turmoil the bulk of the book of Revelation treats, as we shall demonstrate in later lectures. But when that hour comes the church of the present dispensation will have been caught up to meet the Lord in accordance with the promise in I Thessalonians 4:13-18. And to this agrees the verse that follows in our chapter, "**Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown**." The Lord's return is the hope of every Christian heart. They long to see Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. At His return, they will be manifested before His judgment-seat, and be rewarded according to service

here. Then He will give out the crowns for service in this day of His rejection. Observe that the warning is, "**Let no man take thy crown**." It is not, " Let no man take thy life," or " thy salvation." That is eternally secure in Christ. Being born of God, I cannot lose my salvation; but, if I am not a faithful servant, I may lose my crown.

The overcomer will be made a pillar in the temple of God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and shall dwell in the Father's house to go no more out forever. Upon him will be written the name of God, the name of the Holy City, and Christ's new name. All that is involved in this is beyond our poor, finite comprehension, but it speaks of stability, of security, of fellowship, of intimacy with the Lord Himself, which will make heaven to the believer - his blessed and eternal home.

Laodicea completes this septenary series, and brings us down, practically, to the last stage of the professing church's history on earth - the close of the present dispensation.

"**And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth**."(vv. 14-16).

Laodicea is a compound word, and means "*the rights of the people*." Could any other term more aptly set forth the condition of present-day church affairs? It is the era of democratization, both in the world and in the church. The masses of the people are realizing their power as never before. The terrific slogan, *vox populi, vox Dei* (*The voice of the people is the voice of God*), is ringing through the world with clarion-like distinctness. Imperialism and every form of aristocratic government is disappearing - at least for the time being. The age of anarchy is almost upon us. Bolshevism is not confined to unhappy Russia, it is making tremendous progress in all Christendom. Statesmen and capitalists never were more anxious and nervous than at the present time. In the great war

we were told our soldiers were fighting to make the world safe for democracy. In a little while statesmen will be attempting to raise armies to make the world safe from democracy. The spirit of this ultra-democratic age has invaded a large portion of the professed church. The authority of God and His Word is rapidly being denied. The spirit of the age is the spirit of a large part of the church; hence the striking correspondence between this letter to the Laodiceans and the latitudinarianism so prevalent about us.

In a day when faithful witnesses to God's truth are becoming fewer and fewer, the Lord addresses Himself to the church as the **Amen** (that is, the establisher of all God's promises), **the faithful and true Witness**, who will maintain to the last what is of God, though the great majority of those who profess to follow Him be swept away by the apostasy. He reproves the church for its lukewarmness and indifference to Himself and the truth. He says, "**Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, *I am about to* spue thee out of my mouth**." There is neither burning zeal for His word, nor yet absolute repudiation of Christ and the Bible. Instead there is a nauseating, lukewarm condition, that is abhorrent to the Spirit of God. Lukewarm water is, in itself, an emetic; and this is the figure the Lord here uses. He cannot tolerate such conditions much longer, but will spue out the whole disgusting mass in judgment.

Meantime the church goes on in its pride and self-satisfaction, saying, "**I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing**"; knowing not that, in His eyes, it is "**poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked**." Never were church dignitaries and carnally-minded religious leaders more satisfied with themselves and their great work than at the present time. Anything and everything is advocated that will seem to make for, the church's popularity. The rights of the people alone must be considered; the rights of the Lord Jesus Christ are not even thought of. We have come to a time when, in many places, it is easier to get on without Christ than with Him; easier to carry on religious programs without the Holy Spirit than if He were working among us in mighty power. No wonder He says, "**I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire** (that is, divine righteousness)**, that thou**

mayest be rich; and white raiment (that is, practical righteousness) **that thou mayest be clothed, and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve** (that is, the anointing of the Holy Spirit) **that thou mayest see**." Yes, there is lots of work, much fleshly energy and human effort being put forth to reclaim the world, and make it a comfortable place for men to live in, apart from Christ; but the great things of God's truth are largely neglected, and myriads of so-called church-workers are utter strangers to the new birth, without which no one can see the Kingdom of God.

And so we see the Lord standing at last outside the door of the professing church, and saying so tenderly, "**Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me**." Ah, beloved friends, it is getting late in the dispensation: the night-shades are fast falling; and the Lord who, in the beginning, was in the midst of His church, stands outside that lukewarm system which calls itself by His name, and He knocks in vain for entrance! Yet, individuals here and there open to Him, and find His presence is more to them than all else that the earth or the professing church can afford.

And so we have come down to the closing days of the present dispensation of grace. The Ephesus period passed away long ago, and the same is true of the Smyrna and Pergamos periods. Thyatira, which, as we have seen, speaks of Romanism, and began properly when the Pope was recognized as universal Bishop, is with us still, and will go on to the end. Sardis, which began centuries later, remains to the present time, and will remain till the Lord shall come.

Philadelphia, thank God, is also here, and, though it has but a little strength, will also abide to the end. But Laodicea is more and more in evidence, and seems to be almost swamping everything that is of God.

The next great event is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him. For this we wait, and our longing hearts cry, "**Even so, come, Lord Jesus**."[40]

~ end of chapter 4 ~ http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/ ***

40 Ibid. pg 39-48.

The 19th Century Baptist Record – True Church History

There is a thorough history of the true church aptly recorded by faithful historians as they recorded Baptist history. John T. Christian, aptly named, records two volumes of that in his 1922 "*A History of the Baptists*"[41], but he regularly cites two earlier authorities that will be used extensively here to support the thesis that unifies true church history with Baptist church history.

J. A. Shakelford's 1892 "*Compendium of Baptist History, showing the origin and history of the Baptists, from the days of the Apostles to the present time, with an original chart, giving a comparative view of some of the denominations of Christians with which they have come in contact.*" is an excellent resource for such a development, and its first chapter is included below as introductory material. It is readily and freely available to the Bible student online via
http://baptisthistoryhomepage.com/shackelford.compendium.index.html

J. Newton Brown's 1854 "*Memorials of Baptist Martyrs, with a Preliminary Historical Essay"*, however, in twenty pages of his Preliminary Historical Essay, certifies that true church history is indeed synonymous with Baptist church history. That essay is included after Shakelford's first chapter.[42]

True church history is amply introduced via Shakelford's introductory chapter given in its entirety below:

41 Christian, John T., A History of the Baptists, Vol 1&2, The Baptist Bible Institute, New Orleans, Louisiana, first published in 1922, public domain, soft copy http://www.pbministries.org/History/John T. Christian/vol1/ or http://www.reformedreader.org/history/christian/ahob1/ahobp.htm, (Accessed 10/23/2013).

42 Hundred year old scholarly works are generally written on a college reading level that does not follow the dummied down English prose of the 21st century, but a Bible student who reads carefully will benefit tremendously from the effort. Learning to read these more complex sentence structures, is not that difficult to one who reads God's word regularly.

Compendium of Baptist History – First Chapter

Compendium of Baptist History[43]

From http://baptisthistoryhomepage.com/shackelford.compendium.1.html via http://baptisthistoryhomepage.com/shackelford.compendium.index.html

By J. A. Shackelford

Chapter I

Importance of an accurate knowledge of church history. Christ the founder of the true churches. There are true and false churches. Scriptural anathemas against false doctrine. Lack of information concerning a Scriptural church. How we are to find the true churches. Necessity of being loyal to the truth.

An unusual interest has, of late, been awakened in the study of church history. This is a hopeful indication. It shows that many are disposed to turn away from human organizations, and seek for the true church of Christ, as revealed in the Gospels. It is worse than folly to suppose that the Saviour left his work so incomplete that uninspired men, of later years, must take it up and bring it to perfection. It must be a recognized fact that Christ established his church, as a "pillar and ground of the truth."

All institutions, claiming to be churches, which antagonize the churches of Christ, must be false, and are, therefore, of Satan. The God of heaven could not have instituted organizations that rival his own, or bring his people into disrepute. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathers not with me scattereth abroad."

That there should be organizations claiming divine origin, and yet lacking the sanction of Christ, is not strange. "Men have stolen the livery of heaven to serve the Devil in," and Satan has masked himself with truth, that he might drag souls down to ruin. Error has ever been gilded. There is nothing very valuable that has not been

43 Shakelford, J. A., (1892) “Compendium of Baptist History”, Press Baptist Book Concern, Louisville, Kentucky, 1892, http://baptisthistoryhomepage.com/shackelford.compendium.index.html (Accessed 03/18/2021).

counterfeited. The presence of the counterfeit attests the existence of the genuine. If there was not a true church there would be no false churches. The lines must be sharply drawn. Error must be unmasked, and the truth brought into contrast. The multiplicity of so-called churches awakens the thought that all cannot be churches of Christ.

Would God impede the progress of his own cause? Would he build but to tear down? He is not the author of confusion, but of peace. He may purge, but will never destroy his churches. The splendor of his truth will blaze out amid the darkest gloom. His kingdom must destroy all other kingdoms. In order that this may be accomplished, there must be a contest between truth and error. God's word must be kept before the people. All creeds must be tried by his word, and the wood, hay and stubble be burned.

The churches of the present day should correspond exactly with the divine original. Nothing short of this should satisfy the inquirer after truth. Church histories are plentiful. Men have traced the histories of their own organizations back to their origin, and with pride they sometimes point to their founders. But who was the founder of the New Testament churches? When and where was the first church on earth established and who were the members?

These are questions which many cannot answer. We need a treatise of this kind; one so plainly written that the simplest mind may compare its statements with the divine record. We need also to compare the doctrine of the true churches with those of the false churches of the world, in order that the errors of the one may be the more clearly seen when brought into contrast with the truths of the other. Surely the Holy Spirit did not so obscure the truth that we cannot find it. We propose to look into the Scriptures for a Scriptural church, and then trace its history through the intervening centuries. This can only be done in many instances by the light of the martyr fires, or the blood-stained foot-prints of the suffering witnesses.

Men have come to attach the word church to all organizations engaged in Christian work. Such organizations, unless they bear the marks of a Scriptural church, are usurping the authority of Christ, and will receive the anathemas of heaven. "As we said

before, so say I now again, if any preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:9. "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed, for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 10-11. With these passages of Scripture before us we not only cannot afford to be wrong ourselves, but cannot recognize any organization which does not bear the marks of a Scriptural church. Loyalty to the truth, and to our Master, requires that the principles and doctrines of the New Testament churches be kept prominently before the people.

That a large proportion of Christians do not know what constitutes a gospel church, is seen from the diverse opinions respecting it. People talk about the "universal church," "the church at large," "branches of the church," etc. These expressions convey but an indefinite idea of a church, and one without any foundation in Scripture. They show, however, a necessity for an investigation of the subject from a Scriptural standpoint. The great question which should interest us is, what was the nature of the organization which Christ called his church, and the relation that we sustain to that organization? Does that organization exist to-day? If so, how can we ascertain the fact?

Evidently if we can find the particular organization in the New Testament which Christ called his church, and ascertain the declarative principles governing the New Testament churches, then finding these principles perpetuated in existing organizations of the present day, we have found a gospel church. To this one, and to this alone, do we owe allegiance. Before it let every other organization claiming the rights and privileges of a church perish. Let us oppose such organizations as we would oppose a false god, and "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

The blood of martyrs in other ages attested the love they bore to the cause of Christ and the truths of his word. We should be no less faithful in our day. Human traditions are as displeasing to God now as they were eighteen hundred years ago. Among all the conflicting doctrines as taught by men, we can only hope to find the truth in the word of God.

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[From J. A. Shackelford, *Compendium of Baptist History*, 1892, reprint, pp. 11-15. Scanned and formatted by Jim Duvall.]

Memorials of Baptist Martyrs - Preliminary Historical Essay

J. Newton Brown's *Preliminary Historical Essay*, certifies that true church history is indeed synonymous with Baptist church history. That essay is included in its entirety below:

PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY[44].
BY J. N EWTON BROWN.

A MARTYR is a witness—a witness for God, for Truth and Righteousness—a witness tried both by action and by suffering, and found faithful to his conscience and to Christ, through every trial. Such, at least, are those who, by the grace of God, are entitled to the name of Christian martyrs. "To you it is given," says Paul to the Philippians, "in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."

By usage, however, this title, which belongs to faithful Christians in general, has come in modern times to be restricted to those who suffer unto death. Hence, in our English Bible, the only three examples where the term occurs are of this kind :—Stephen of Jerusalem, Antipas of Pergamos, and the prophetic roll of the "martyrs of Jesus," with whose blood the mystic "Babylon." is drunken. Acts 22: 20. Rev. 2: 13. 17 : 6.

Martyrdom, in this restricted sense, may be said to have begun with the first generation of fallen man. Then in the world's fresh morning, the blood of righteous Abel, shed by a brother's hand, cried unto God from the crimsoned earth. The first revealed "heir of the righteousness which is by faith," was thus a martyr—a Christian martyr's — typically, but truly—like John the Baptist in

44 Brown, J. Newton (John Newton), 1803-1868. "*Memorials of Baptist Martyrs*", Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1854, pg 3-24

later time, bearing witness unto death to “the Lamb of God,who taketh away the sin of the world.” (4 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY.)

But it is manifest that the testimony of the true martyr must vary in degree, though not in kind, with the measure of Divine Revelation in different ages, and under different dispensations. Hence, the martyr from the time of Noah to Abraham might die as a witness to the new truth revealed to Noah; and from Abraham to Moses for the new revelation to Abraham; and from Moses to Christ for the new revelation to Moses, or to any one of the successive prophets, by whose anointed lips, “God, in time past spake unto the fathers.” The martyrs down to the time of the Maccabees, are examples cited by Paul. Heb. 11: 35–38.

On the same principle, it is equally clear that, after the coming of Christ, every faithful martyr was liable to suffer for the new revelations and institutions introduced by Him; whether in person, or through his Apostles, by the power of the Holy Ghost. (John 15: 18–27. 16: 1–4. 12 —15.) Of this, Christians, from the beginning, were fully forewarned, and especially Christian ministers, (Matt. 5: 10–12. 10: 16–42. 16:21–28.) and appropriate cautions, counsels, and consolations were provided for their guidance and support.

It behooves us, therefore, to examine carefully what those new revelations and institutions are, belonging especially to the New Testament dispensation, and binding upon the conscience of every disciple of Christ, “even unto the end of the world.” For it is not every sufferer that is a martyr—though he may be a Christian; for it is possible that even a Christian may suffer for his own faults, and not for righteousness' sake, or for Christ's sake. (1 Peter 4: 15–16.) A single fault in the temper and tongue of the meekest of men, shut him out of Canaan. Moses, the noblest witness for God in his time, yet died for his own fault—a warning to every succeeding generation of God's witnesses. Still more striking is the case of the (pg 5) young prophet at Bethel; who died for disobeying the plain command of God, through what might be thought a becoming deference to the authority of a “father ” in Israel—a warning too little heeded by those who followed “the traditions of the elders” in after times, and the authority of “the early fathers” in the Christian church. (1 Kings 13: 20–24.) In like manner, Paul in reproving the

Corinthians for their abuse of the Lord's supper, says, “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” (1 Cor. 11:30).

Nor is it every one that suffers in a true and righteous cause, though he may die with indomitable courage, that wins the crown of martyrdom; for “though I give my body to be burned,” says the Apostle, “and have not charity, (i.e., love), it profiteth me nothing.” Thousands also have been slaughtered for their connection with Christianity, like the infants of Bethlehem, who were rather victims to cruelty than martyrs for Truth.

Much less, even in the judgment of charity, are they to be justly regarded as Christian martyrs, who die in the diffusion and defence of antichristian errors. We grant that this distinction may be, and has been sadly abused for many hundreds of years, by many pretentious parties in Christendom; still within proper limits, and with due allowance for all Christian freedom of thought, it is a sound one, and must not be ignored. The opposite opinion—however disguised under the name of liberality—involves absolute contradiction. Though often grievously misapplied, therefore, the old maxim is essentially true, “There are no martyrs out of the Church.” But then the church is no narrow sectarian organization, no self-assumed infallible patron of orthodoxy, no State Establishment, whether episcopal, presbyterial, or congregational; but the universal body of evangelical believers

(6 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY). of every age — the body which recognizes and adores Jesus Christ as “God manifested in the flesh,” “the propitiation for our sins,” and the unchanging “head of all principality and power.”

It may be well to state explicitly what we conceive to be the essential and invariable elements of true Evangelical Christianity. There may be others, but the four following we regard as both fundamental and vital.

1. THE SCRIPTURES ONLY, AS THE SUPREME RULE of FAITH;
2. FREE JUSTIFICATION IN CHRIST ONLY THROUGH FAITH;

3. SPIRITUAL REGENERATION ONLY, AS THE ORIGIN of FAITH;
4. PERSONAL SANCTIFICATION ONLY, MANIFESTED BY Good works, As THE EFFECT AND EVIDENCE OF FAITH.

These propositions are logically and inseparably linked together, and constitute one self-consistent organic system of revealed Truth. This system is "the Gospel of Christ." No other can be substituted for it. It bears on its front the stamp and seal of the Almighty. It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. And of this it is as the Apostle says to the Galatians, "If we, or an angel from Heaven, preach unto you any other Gospel, let him be accursed." The man who intelligently and honestly believes this—lives for it, and dies for it—wherever found, or whatever name he bears, is worthy to be esteemed by all mankind, as he is by Christ himself, a "faithful martyr."

But we go farther. The above formulas of fundamental truth do not exhaust the distinctive principles of a PURE CHRISTIANITY. There are others that belong to the institutions of Christ, under the New Testament economy. Such, for example, are the following.

5. UNIVERSAL FREEDOM of CONSCIENCE ONLY As A CONDITION of FAITH;
6. BAPTISM ONLY on A CONSCIENTIOUS PROFESSION of FAITH;
7. IMMERSION ONLY, AS THE PRESCRIBED BAPTISM of FAITH;
8. BAPTIZED (pg 7) BELIEVERs ONLY, AS THE PROPER MATERIALS of THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH-the living Body of Christ.[45]

These propositions—to add no more—may be safely said to shine on the face of the New Testament, and to inhere in the very substance of the revealed dispensation under which we live. They

45 This likely first listing of attributes of a fundamental Christian is supplemented by a short review of the fundamentalist movement given at the end of Brown's preliminary historical essay.

are all organically and logically connected with each other, and are essential to the normal or regular visible constitution of the kingdom of God on earth. They are the characteristic features of that "kingdom which is not of this world;" in distinction from all preceding dispensations; and in contrast with all subsequent forms of religion, founded on human policy, and supported by civil power.

Now what we wish to be remembered is, that any one who, from a good conscience toward God, suffers for any one of these "words" of Christ, suffers as a Martyr. He is bound, as a Christian, "to observe all things whatsoever" commanded by Christ, even at the hazard of his life, or the loss of it. Unless he thus take up the cross of his crucified Lord, he cannot be a genuine disciple. "He that seeketh to save his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake," says Christ, "shall keep it unto life eternal." And "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Hence, our Lord himself—the King of Martyrs—bore testimony to the truth before the Jewish Sanhedrin, although he knew that his death would be the penalty—a death of public infamy, and of unutterable agony. Hence, animated by His Spirit, Peter and John, when summoned before the same council, and forbidden to preach in the name of Christ, made their noble appeal—"Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which

we have seen and heard." Hence, the intrepid Stephen laid down his life, under the hands of violence—praying like his dying Saviour, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Hence, John the Baptist, for his faithful remonstrance against sin, and James, the son of Zebedee, that fearless "son of thunder," both fell under the bloody steel of Herod. Thus began, with names never to be forgotten, the long bright roll of New Testament Martyrs. And thus, from year to year, and from age to age, that illustrious roll received accessions, from the violence of Jewish or Heathen persecutors, for three centuries.

But, with only one known exception, all this time, these

Christian Martyrs were BAPTISTs. Neither Christ, nor his Apostles have left us a single precept or example of Infant Baptism. This is a conceded fact. The very first Pedobaptists in history—Cyprian of Carthage and his clergy, (A. D. 253,) did not plead any law of Christ, or Apostolical tradition, for infant baptism. They put the whole thing upon analogy and inference—upon the necessity of infants on the one hand, and the unlimited grace of God on the other. Their own language is an implied and absolute confession that their "opinion," as they call it, had no basis in any New Testament law or precedent. It confesses, in a word, that in advocating the baptism of literally new-born babes, they were introducing an innovation into the Church of Christ—and they defend it only on the ground of necessity.

In stating this historical fact, we are perfectly aware of the views of Dr. Wall, in favor of a different conclusion. And we are perfectly aware of the special pleadings by which he has darkened the clear light of history on this point. Honest, but prejudiced to the last degree, he has propagated for a century and a half a host of delusions among his confiding followers. He has started Wrong at (pg 9) the beginning; and beguiled his own strong intellect by the most unfounded assumptions. His hereditary idea of a State Church is the first grand error—perhaps the real root of all the rest. Then came the convenient argument of Jewish Proselyte Baptism as the model of Christian Baptism—involving a whole series of false assumptions. Then, the language of Christ and his Apostles is tortured, to draw from it meanings it never can have by any fair interpretation.* Then the language of the early Christian Fathers must be put upon the rack, for the same purpose. Could Clement of Rome, Hermas, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, or Origen himself, rise from the tomb, they would protest with solemn indignation at the force that has been put upon their words, and the absolute perversion of their testimony.** Then follows Dr. Wall's ingenious supposition to account for the language of Basil, and Cyril—his grand mistake of the testimony of Augustine and Pelagius—and his miserable attempts to set aside the fact, that every distinguished Christian writer of the first four centuries, whose baptism is recorded, was baptized in adult years,

on his own confession of faith—a fact that also holds true of every Christian emperor in the fourth century, from Constantine to Theodosius.

The infatuation of Dr. Wall is sad enough; but it is outdone by a writer in the North American Review for January, 1854; who has the weakness to affirm in the

* Even the great Schleiermacher says, "He that will find infant baptism in the New Testament, must first put it there." So, in effect, say Neander, Hahn, Hagenbach, Bunsen, and the North British Review.

** The reader will find the clearest evidence of this in the articles of Dr. Sears, in the Christian Review, for March and June, 1838; and still more fully in those of Dr. Chase, in the Bibliotheca Sacra, for November, 1849, and in the Christian Review, for April, 1854.

face of the world—in a lame criticism on Bunsen's Hippolytus—that the evidence for infant baptism "amounts to historical demonstration". The words of the Apostle to Timothy seem here truly applicable: "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth. But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was." The accomplished scholars of the North British Review, in several recent numbers, have frankly confessed the want of scriptural and early authority for infant baptism; and have intimated that even the Archbishop of Canterbury himself, appears to be on this point undergoing a process of "historical conversion."*

But there is one decisive evidence that the primitive Martyrs for three centuries were Baptists. We refer to the document prepared by Eusebius of Caesarea, the ecclesiastical historian, for the signature of all the bishops of the General Council of Nice, (A. D. 325). It is found in his own report of the proceedings, addressed to his flock at Caesarea, as given by Socrates and Theodoret. We subjoin it in Dr. Cave's translation.

"The form proposed by us, and which was read in the presence of the most sacred emperor, and seemed to be liked and approved by all, was in this manner:—The exposition of our faith, as we have received it from the bishops, who were our predecessors, both when we were first instructed in the rudiments of the faith, and when afterwards baptized into it; as we have learned from the

Holy Scriptures, and both believed and taught, not only when we sustained the office of presbyter, but since we came to the episcopal station, so do we still believe, and produce this as the account of our faith: We believe in one God," &c.**

Here is a testimony from the "Father of Ecclesiastical History," produced on the most public occasion, in the presence

* North British Review for August, 1852.
** Cave's Lives of the Fathers, Vol. II. p. 112, Oxford, 1840.

(pg 11)

of 318 bishops of the Catholic Church, besides near 2000 other delegates, presbyters and laymen, convened from all parts of the world—in the most solemn form and for the most solemn purpose conceivable—that according to Christ's Commission, instruction in the principles of Christianity, in all cases preceded baptism.

We have said that there was one exception. Cyprian of Carthage, the father of pedobaptism, was a man of God and a martyr. But we affirm, without fear of contradiction, and invite correction if we are wrong, that he is the only one recorded in the first three centuries. Indeed, that the "opinion" of this distinguished man in favor of the baptism of babes before the eighth day from their birth, refers only to cases of immediate danger of death, is clear, not only from his own words, but also from the fact that Eusebius does not even deem the opinion worthy of mention in his Ecclesiastical History. And, as we have seen, the custom was unknown seventy-two years afterwards, at the Council of Nice. Yet how often is this "opinion" of Cyprian quoted now, as if it were evidence of the universal prevalence of pedobaptism in the first ages!

As now, it appears that pedobaptism had "no recognized existence," even in the so-called Catholic Church, until after the Council of Nice, (nor indeed until the time of Gregory Nazianzen, A. D. 363,) so we have no proof whatever that it ever existed in the Pure Churches, or Cathari, who separated from the Catholics in the preceding century, in the time of Novatian, A. D. 251. This large body of Dissenters from the Catholic communion, were called Novatians by their adversaries; but as the historian Socrates testifies, they called themselves in Greek, Cathari, (in Latin,

Puritani,) signifying the pure; and the name was designed by them to announce the fundamental principle of their separation, which was the preservation

(12 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY.)

of a pure church membership, communion, and discipline. They held that the Catholics had so departed from the original constitution of the Church in this respect, as to have forfeited their claim to that honor; and hence invariably baptized all who joined them from the Catholic churches. Hence they are the first in history who were called Anabaptists, that is, rebaptizers; although, of course, they denied the propriety of the appellation, as they believed the baptism administered by a corrupt church to be null and void.*

Much stress has been laid on the fact, that no catalogue of heresies from Irenaeus to Epiphanius, (A. D. 180, to A. D. 380,) enumerates any sect as deniers of infant baptism. The facts already established furnish the answer: there was then no such Catholic custom as infant baptism to be denied. Tertullian (A. D. 200), did oppose the innovation of Quintilla, who would have given baptism to children too young to give proper evidence of piety; and his voice was not, what it has been strangely misrepresented to be, even by Dr. Schaff, "a solitary voice, without an echo;" it was the voice of the then Catholic church,

* Dr. Wall says, they did not complain of the Catholics for infant baptism: but, as we have seen, for a very good reason, namely, that it did not come into common use for ages after, among the Catholics themselves. Neither do the Donatists—who seceded from the Catholics about sixty years after the Novatians, and for very similar reasons— make any such complaint; although they chiefly resided in North Africa, where Cyprian lived and died, and might be supposed to sympathize with him in opinion and practice. Dr. Wall takes this for proof that they were all Pedobaptists—a consequence of his own previous assumptions. All the positive evidence he adduces, is the canon of a Council which belongs to the fifth century; when some of them may be supposed to have fallen in with the prevailing practice of the State Church, though contrary to the distinctive spirit and tendency of their own secession.

(pg 13) against which none replied.* How could they indeed, when the catechumenical course was universally established, as necessary before baptism?

It is time that men of learning and candor abandoned all such unhistorical positions, and inconsequential reasonings. Infant baptism is an error from beginning to end; corrupt in theory, and corrupting in practice; born in superstition, cradled in fear, nursed in ignorance, supported by fraud, and spread by force; doomed to die in the light of historical investigation, and its very memory to be loathed in all future ages by a disabused Church**. In the realms of despotism it has shed the blood of martyrs in torrents; that blood cries against it to heaven: and a long-suffering God will yet be the terrible avenger. The book before us is a swift witness against it.

Down to the time of Constantine, with the solitary exception of Cyprian, as we have shown, all the martyrs— and their number has been computed at three millions— were BAPTISTS; though with various shades of error gradually gathering over them from the beginning of the third century—perhaps earlier. Already the corruption in Rome, and Carthage, had become so great — not in the ordinances, so much as in the membership — as to

* This whole subject of infant baptism, and the true theory of the sacraments, in Dr. Schaff's otherwise admirable History, needs, and will, we trust, yet receive from its esteemed author, a thorough revision.

** In no boastful spirit, but in the spirit of a martyr before God— stung by the solemn conviction of duty, after thirty-five years of earnest and impartial investigation on this subject—to speak out "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth"—we nail these Theses to the door of every Pedobaptist Church in Christendom; and challenge all the Christian scholarship of the age, not to ignore, evade, or deny them, but to face the inevitable trial, summon the witnesses, sift the evidence, and, if it can, disprove all, or any one of them. And may God help the right.

have led to two great Secessions, for the sake of purity, namely, the Novatians, and the Donatists." When Constantine and Licinius first came into power, (A. D. 312,) they gave equal religious toleration to all their subjects. But the attempt to settle the controversy in North Africa, between the Catholics and Donatists by imperial intervention, (A. D. 316,) was a departure from this impartial protection and equality before the law; and from that fatal

moment, persecution began under the Christian name. The Emperors, whether Orthodox or Arian—the Bishops armed with imperial commissions, whether Ortho dox or Arian—became the persecutors of their brethren of the opposite faith. The Pure Churches, (Cathari,) —confessedly orthodox in all things else—refused all the attempts to bring them into the ROMAN CATHOLIC IMPERIAL CHURCH, organized and established by Constantine; and although for a long time honored and protected by the Catholics themselves, for their virtues, began in the fifth century to feel the heavy hand of Catholic intolerance. Socrates, in his Ecclesiastical History, (A. D. 445,) though he records their sufferings from the Arians in the fourth century, tells us that Innocent I., Bishop of Rome, in the reign of Honorius, "was the first persecutor of the Novatians at Rome, many of whose churches he took away." The same course was pursued by Celestinus, (A. D. 421,) as well as by Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, (A. D. 412).

If, now, we inquire into the cause of this persecution, we shall find it mainly owing to the increased zeal for infant baptism, awakened by the writings of Augustine in this age. Other causes, doubtless, combined with this; but no one who reads the canons of the Council of Carthage at which Augustine presided, (A. D. 414,) one of

* See Mosheim's Commentaries, &c., for a careful examination of these Secessions. Also, Lardner, Robinson, and Neander.

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which runs in the following terms: "WE will that whosoever DENIES THAT LITTLE CHILDREN BY BAPTISM ARE FREED FROM PERDITION AND ETERNALLY SAVED, that they be ACCURSED," can question this. Other evidence in confirmation, if necessary, might be adduced from the letters of Augustine himself. From this influence came, also, the edict of Honorius, and Valentinian III. (A. D. 413,) forbidding rebaptism, (as it was termed,) throughout the Roman empire, under the penalty of death. This edict, though aimed especially at the Donatists — whose numerous and flourishing churches were nearly ruined by its rigorous enforcement—was soon applied to the

Novatians, whose practice it had always been to baptize those who came over to them from the Catholic churches. From this time, therefore, THE PURE CHURCHES, became the victims of perpetual persecutions from the hands of the Roman Catholics.

"The first result of the protectorate of the Christian Emperors," says the Chevalier Bunsen, "was, that in their codes they converted church ordinances, (that about baptism, for instance,) into statute laws. Thus Justinian, in the beginning of the sixth century, ordered new-born infants to be baptized, under a penalty for neglecting it; a law which still passes for a Christian principle in the code of many a Christian State. Evangelical and Christian freedom thus received its death-blow, from the same police crutch which was given it for support."

Under Roman laws like these, enforced as they were in the Middle Ages, with new and most sanguinary edicts in all the States of Europe, what multitudes must have become MARTYRs, may be conjectured from what occurred at the Reformation, when Baptist martyrs were counted by tens and even hundreds of thousands. We are now gravely told by historians that, from the

* Bunsen's Hippolytus, Vol. III., p. 249.

sixth century, the Cathari began to decline; and we are told or led to infer, that they ceased to maintain their pure distinctive principles, and gradually merged in the Roman Catholic Church. Not a shadow of proof is offered for this assertion or inference, but that they disappear from the notice of Roman Catholic writers. But the northern "barbarians," (as they are called,) who broke the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, for a long time refused subjection to the Bishop of Rome, and gave religious toleration to their subjects. Especially was this the case with the Ostrogoths in Italy, under the long and happy reign of Theodoric the Great—when all Italy flourished like a garden. (A. D. 491–527.)

Afterwards, in the East, the Saracens did the same thing, especially to that branch of the succession of the pure churches which went under the name of PAULICIANs. These last maintained themselves, even under the GreekRoman emperors,

amid the fires of persecution, for at least six hundred years, (from A. D. 653, to A. D. 1260) indeed till lost to view by the conquest of the empire by the Turks. The Free Cities of Europe generally—the Italian Republics of the Middle Ages—the Moors in Spain —and the Princes of Provence, or Southern France—all these at times, and even for long periods, gave protection to the persecuted Baptists; who were known alike by their original name of Cathari, THE PURE; and by the subsequent names of Paulicians, Paterines, and Poor Men of Lyons, down to the beginning of the twelfth century—as appears from the successive edicts issued against them.* At this point of time they were joined by some illustrious

* We do not quarrel with Neander for his lamentably distorted and contradictory account of the "Catharists," and some other denominations, of the Middle Ages. He was not satisfied with it himself. His candor would have set all right; but he wanted the real key to the problem.

(pg 17) reformers from the Church of Rome, such as PETER DE BRUIS, (A. D. 1104 to 1124,) HENRY and Joseph, his disciples, (A. D. 1116 to 1148,) and ARNOLD of BRESCIA,(A. D. 1135 to A. D. 1156,) with whom the present volume begins its "Memorials of Baptist Martyrs."

From the rapid review we have now taken of the history of Baptist Martyrs from the beginning, we gather some interesting conclusions:

1. That the Baptists have no difficulty whatever in tracing up their principles and their churches to the Apostolic age. It has been often said by our enemies, that we originated in the German city of Munster, in 1534. Lamentable must be the weakness or ignorance of such an assertion, come from whom it may. It were easy to cite eminent Pedobaptist historians, to refute this calumny— especially Limborch and Mosheim, of the last century. But we prefer to quote two historians of the present century, selected by the King of Holland to draw up a history of the "Origin of the Dutch Baptists," for the use of the government. Dr. Ypeig, professor of theology at the University of Groningen, and Dr. J. J. Dermont, chaplain to the king—both of the Dutch Reformed Church—in the authentic volume thus prepared, and published at Breda, in 1819, come to

the following deliberate conclusions:

"The Mennonites are descended from the tolerably pure evangelical Waldenses, who were driven by persecution into various countries; and who, during the latter part of the twelfth century, fled into Flanderſ, and into the provinces of Holland and Zealand, where they lived simple and exemplary lives —in the villages as farmers, in the towns by trades—free from the charge of any gross immoralities, and professing the most pure and simple principles, which they exemplified in a holy conversation. They were therefore in existence long before the Reformed Church of the Netherlands." Again: "We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses; and who have long in the history of the Church,

(18 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY.) received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Chrisitna community which has stood since the days of the Apostles; and as a Christian Society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all ages. The perfectly correct external and internal economy of the Baptist denomination, tends to confirm the truth, disputed by the Romish Church, that the Reformation brought about in the sixteenth century, was in the highest degree necessary; and at the same time goes to refute the erroneous notion of the Catholics, that their communion is the most ancient"*

Let it be remembered that the learned men who say this, and say it aloud in the ear of majesty, after diligent investigation, are not themselves Baptists. It is a confession of the rarest candor. "Their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges." But what it has cost the Baptists thus to keep their churches pure, through all ages, amidst abounding corruption, heresy, schism, tyranny and persecution, this book of Baptist Martyrs will in some measure show.

2. Baptist principles have always flourished wherever the ruling powers have allowed them toleration. Baptists, it is true, have often lighted up the darkness of history by the flames of their martyrs, and compelled the notice of Chronicles and of Councils, by the very vastness, variety, and intensity of their sufferings. Again and again, as in the primitive times, has the blood of the martyrs been the seed of the Church; but when a little breathing space has been given them in any quarter of the world, they have sprung up like the grass from the scythe of the mower; or, rather, as the oak which

has bowed its lofty head beneath the axe, again renews its branches, its towering trunk, its verdure and its strength.

* It is an interesting fact that as a consequence of this, the government of Holland offered to the Mennonite churches the support of the State. It was politely, but firmly declined, as inconsistent with their fundamental principles.—See Ward's Farewell Letters, 1821.

(pg 19) Witness their rapid growth in the East, in the seventh century— in Italy and France in the twelfth–in all Europe in the sixteenth—under the English Commonwealth in the seventeenth—and in the United States from the period of the American Revolution.*

3. The Baptists have not only their own Martyrs, but it is clear that from the time of Christ down, they have furnished the purest, the most magnanimous, and the most numerous martyrs of all Christendom. This is true from the days of the Apostles, and throughout the Middle Ages. Hear what a Roman Catholic prelate, Cardinal Hosius, president of the Council of Trent, says on this subject, to the Protestants of the Reformation :

"If you behold their cheerfulness in suffering persecution, the Anabaptists run before all the heretics. If you have regard to the number, it is likely that in multitude they would swarm above all others, if they were not grievously plagued, and cut off with the knife of persecution: If you have an eye to the outward appearance of godliness, both the Lutherans and the Zuinglians must needs grant that they far pass them : If you will be moved by the boasting of the word of God, these be no less bold than Calvin to preach; and their doctrine must stand aloft above all the glory of the world, must stand invincible above all power, because it is not their word, but the Word of the living God."**

4. We see another fact, which gives a peculiar and glorious feature to our denomination. Much as the Baptists have suffered from others, they have never retaliated—never, when in power, pleaded for the principle of persecution, or put it in practice; but have stood forth, among persecuting sects, solitary and alone, as the fearless champions and examples of liberty of conscience. This they have done, too, on settled Scriptural principles, peculiar to

* Those who think to do battle against the Baptists as a modern, reactionary, ephemeral sect, will find themselves greatly mistaken.

** Struggles and Triumphs of Religious Liberty, p. 88.

(20 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY.) their views of baptism; and hence have pleaded for liberty of conscience to the fullest extent. Witness the periods of their power in Italy—in Armenia, Syria and Asia Minor—in Southern France—in the Medieval Roman Republic—in Poland in the sixteenth century—in England, Ireland, and especially Rhode Island, in the seventeenth—in the United States at the formation of the American Constitution; and since then in the new Constitutions of the States—in many of which States they were a clear majority of the population. No sect, whose origin dates back two centuries, can share with them this glory. The Quakers, the Moravians, and the Methodists, are of more recent origin. The principle of religious liberty—a distinguishing principle of the Baptists in all ages—we are however happy to add, is now universally adopted by other denominations in the United States— and is fast spreading over the world.

5. The Baptists—though for the most part of the poor of this world, rich in faith only, and unknown to fame, as were the primitive Christians—have yet, in almost all ages, had of their number men of the most eminent learning and ability, who died as martyrs to the faith. From the time of Novatian, indeed, it has been customary with their adversaries to call the whole body by the name of its most distinguished leader—as if they were only a new sect, of which he was the originator. Thus the Cathari were called Novatians—then Paulicians—then Petrobrusians, Henricians, Josephists—then Arnoldists—Waldenses —Lollards—Mennonites; nor were they ever permitted to bear their present name of BAPTISTs, until after their legal toleration, in England, in 1688. Yet to them, as we have seen, belong all the inspired writers of the New Testament—the sources of our Christian literature–Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, James, Jude, Peter, and Paul himself, (pg 21) the accomplished pupil of Gamaliel. To them belong all the Christian writers of the second century, including Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and in the next age, Hippolytus, and even Origen himself. And from the time of the Pure Secession, in A. D. 251, they can produce names among the noblest. Novatian himself had no superior in his own time—as his remaining writings show. But most of their writings have perished. The same

persecutions that robbed them of their churches, liberty, and lives, suppressed their schools, and their books—leaving them only that one Book from which they would never part—the foundation of their principles, the guide of their practice, and the support of their hope, amid the terrors of martyrdom—THE BIBLE. Churches supported by the State, with stereotyped creeds, canons, and forms, could afford to do without the Bible; but the Pure Churches, in their sublime dissent and protest, could not.

6. We learn that the Baptists have A GLORIOUS PAST, whose history is yet almost unwritten; and that, rising from the deep roots of the Past, and spreading with the spread of the Scriptures, and of spiritual religion, aided by historical investigation, and by universal liberty, they have in reserve A GLORIOUS FUTURE. All they want now, in every country on earth, is that same freedom which they have ever given, and rejoice to give, to ensure the ultimate triumph of their principles. As surely as many shall run to and fro, and knowledge be increased—as surely as the light of the moon, according to the beautiful figure of the prophet, shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold, even as the light of seven days—as sure as the time shall come that the saints shall possess the kingdom—and the spirits of the martyrs shall live again in their successors on earth, and reign with Christ for a -

(22 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY.) thousand years—so sure, judging from all the past, and all the present, is the final triumph of Baptist principles. Built on the book of God, in a fair field nothing can stand before them. Already they are winning from all others in the United States, in a steady stream of success* —they are reforming more thoroughly the Reformation in Europe—in Africa, and Asia, in the isles of the ocean, and indeed at every point where earnest piety is pressing on to the conversion of the world, they are gaining power —and the prospect now is, that they will soon be spread over the entire East, including India, Burmah, Siam, and China—nations comprising more than half the population of the globe. So, O Lord, let thy kingdom come!

7. But if these things be so, Baptists have a sacred duty to perform; first to themselves, and then to all Christendom. They must seek among themselves to revive THE MARTYR

SPIRIT-"not the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." They must present their bodies, with their souls, their hearts and all their substance, a living sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable, which is their reasonable service. They must not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their mind and practice in a more eminent degree. They must better estimate the worth of their own Scriptural principles, the glory of their past history,

* It is recorded by Luke, as an evidence of the triumph of Christian Truth in the days of the Apostles, that "the disciples multiplied greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." A competent writer has affirmed recently, that the number of members received into the Baptist churches, for some years past, from other denominations, exceeds 2000 annually; and that the number of ministers so received by change of conviction, is equal to one for every week in the year. This great movement is in principle the very reverse from that of Bishop Ives and the Puseyites. And it is in addition to about 50,000 converts yearly. See Christian Review, January, 1854.

(pg 23) and the grandeur of their position and destiny. They must examine, and cultivate themselves more perfectly, by the help of the Holy Spirit—"that they may know what is the hope of their calling, and what is the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints." They must more fully honor, love and pray for the Lord's people of every name; and study to do them good, to profit by all the grace that is in them, and seek to supply what is yet lacking in their knowledge, faith, or practice. They must more fully display that charity which suffereth long and is kind; which envieth not; which vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly; which seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; which beareth, believeth, hopeth, endureth all things. This is the true spirit of Martyrdom—without which we may give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies to be burned, and it profiteth us nothing.

This was the spirit of the BAPTIST MARTYRs, whose memorials will be found in this book. No memorial of this kind has before appeared in this country, or even in England. Though confessedly far from complete—embracing no sufferers for Christ,

but those who suffered unto death— going back only to the Middle Ages in time, and limited to Europe as its field, and on that limited theatre preferring the principle of selection to that of accumulation —it will be found to embrace a great variety of the most authentic and heart-touching, as well as pure, noble and triumphant examples of the principles of our faith and the power of the Gospel. It gives us names in which, for Christ's sake, Baptists may justly glory, and which the world itself "will not willingly let die." To specify no more—here is ARNOLD of BRESCIA, the brightest name of Italy in the Middle Ages—JEROME of PRAGUE, the most

(24 PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL ESSAY.) accomplished man of his time— and HUBMEYER of RATISBON, the friend of Erasmus, the fellow-laborer of the first Reformers, classed by the Romanists themselves with Luther, Zwingle, and Calvin, as one of the four great leaders of the Reformation. Inferior in rank and learning, but not in interest, is the wise and good HANS of OVERDAM—the bright youthful JACQUES Dosie of Leuwarden—the loving but faithful JERONIMUs SEGERSON of Antwerp—and the sturdy, outspoken, English yeoman, RICHARD WOODMAN of Sussex, whose mind seems as strong as the iron that he worked in his daily toil. Of the softer sex, here is the gentle but heroic ELIZABETH OF LEUWARDEN.— MARIA OF MONJOU, happier than a bride in the hour of her martyrdom—ANNE ASKEW, of the noblest blood of England, but still nobler by her Christian faith and fortitude —and ELIZABETH GAUNT, the never to be forgotten martyr to evangelical Christian Charity, whose name has been embalmed by Bishop Burnet.

Richard Baxter somewhere says, that he "could as soon die for Charity, as for any article of the Creed." While he was uttering this just and beautiful sentiment, Elizabeth Gaunt was exemplifying it in the flames, at Tyburn. The picture of her martyrdom forms the appropriate frontispiece of this volume; which is also embellished by engravings of the drowning of Maria of Monjou, and of the examination of Anne Askew in the Tower of London, and of her suffering at the stake in Smithfield.

There are many noble names, of Baptist Martyrs, that we miss

here; but we cannot have everything, in a single volume of the size of this. We doubt not this excellent book will be warmly welcomed by every genuine Baptist in the Union.[46]

PHILADELPHIA, May 1, 1854.

A History of the Fundamentalist Movement

Since J. Newton Brown introduced the concept of a fundamentalist Christian in 1854 it is appropriate to give a little history of the fundamentalist movement in this context.

The series of Bible conferences springing from Niagara, New York at the close of the 19th century (1833-1897) brought both

46 Brown, J. Newton (John Newton), 1803-1868. Memorials of Baptist Martyrs. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1854. [Public Domain, Formatted by Dr Edward Rice, Pastor Good Samaritan Baptist Church, Dresden NY. Some OCR work was produced by Google, Inc. Google requested that the images and OCR not be re-hosted, redistributed or used commercially. The text is herein presented as public domain under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 copyright and thereby provided for educational, scholarly, non-commercial purposes as Google, Inc. requested. Original from: University of California, digitized by: Google, Generated on 2021-03-18 12:02 GMT, retyped with corrections by Pastor Rice.]

Fundamentalism and Biblical Dispensationalism into the lime light in America. The Fundamentalist became known for separating, holding anti-denominational (independent autonomous local churches), anticlerical (no clergy) and anti-creedal (no creed but the Bible) stances and defending five fundamentals of faith. Any departure from a fundamental tenant would constitute apostasy and result in separation. Such a rule of strict separation was later, under the neoevangelicals, labeled "militant fundamentalism." In his book "*Heart Disease in Christ's Body*", Dr. Jack Van Impe describes the beginnings of the fundamentalist:

> The twentieth century began with a tumultuous conservative uproar over the infiltration of numerous denominations by liberalism. The severity of the situation demanded immediate action. Heretical teachings were captivating and corrupting entire churches, schools and related organizations within multiplied denominations. Therefore, a coalition of interdenominational brethren, following a number of conferences, united around the five 'fundamentals' of the faith. They were:
>
> 1. The inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture
> 2. The deity of Jesus Christ
> 3. The virgin birth of Christ
> 4. The substitutionary, atoning work of Christ on the cross
> 5. The physical resurrection and the personal bodily return of Christ to the earth.
>
> The adherents to these five 'fundamental' truths were naturally labeled 'fundamentalists.' Those opposing them were called 'liberals.' The men joining together around these five points (commonly called 'the doctrine of Christ') were from varied and diversified religious backgrounds. Thus, this amalgamation of 'first generation fundamentalists' included Presbyterians, Baptists, Reformers, Reformed Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Anglicans, Congregationalists, and Wesleyan Holiness brothers. The astounding thing about the

> members of this interdenominational movement was their love for one another.[47]

There was a distinct movement away from such staunch separation, neoevangelicals proposed that the apostate and unbelieving cultures must be constructively engaged. Rather than publicly confronting Church apostasy and separating from it, the neoevangelical advanced repairing it with inclusiveness. They supposed that social acceptance and intellectual respectability would be more effective on the perverse generation in need of correction. Fundamentalists soon dubbed these non-militants as the neoevangelicals.[48]

In writing a report on the review of Dr. Chafer's *Systematic Theology*, particularly on his chapter on the origins of man, it is declared that none of his chapter recites God's aspect, and it actually represses God's revelation about the origin of man. Chafer's work is apologetic to the evolutionist, apologetic to the humanist, apologetic to the philosopher; it is apologetic to the archaeologist and the geologist; for crying out loud, it is even apologetic to the philologist,[49] because that philologist, a historical linguist, "knows" it has taken a hundred thousand years to evolve the human language to where it is today!

There is a need for apologetics and some small amount of apologetic might find its way into a systematic theology, but it should not be the focus of a systematic theology in any arena, and especially not as concerning the origins of man. Dr. Chafer is writing a text that will appeal to 70+ denominations, all of which Dallas Theological Seminary strives to appease and accommodate. Here he does it well, by saying nothing of significance in a chapter that should be very fundamental, very straightforward, and very enlightening.

The whole flavor of a neoevangelical readily seeps from Dr.

47 Dr. Jack Van Impe, "*Heart Disease in Christ's Body*",Jack Van Impe Ministries, 1984, pp. 127-128.

48 The term *neoevangelical* was popularized by one Harold Ockenga in 1947, neoevangelicals were then embarrassed to be called fundamentalists. (From www.theopedia.com accessed 18 Nov 2013).

49 Chafer, *Systematic Theology Vol 2,* 141.

Chafer's chapter on the origin of man. Dr. Chafer is wholly neoevangelical and his writing about the origins of man strives for intellectual respectability and social acceptance in a perverse world of infidelity and Church apostasy. Dallas Theological Seminary is founded on such neoevangelical principle and is, thus, pandering to 70+ denominations in its outreach. Consequently they must be very careful, never confrontational, in their declaration of truth, which never reaches a state implied in the phrase *declaration of truth.* A Baptist is a fundamentalist, even if they retired the name, and need not exercise such careful avoidance of confrontation, we can be militant.

Dr. Don Boys, who was a former member of the Indiana House of Representatives, author of 14 books, frequent guest on television and radio talk shows, and wrote columns for USA Today for 8 years, wrote an insightful 2013 article "Why Did Evangelicals Break Away From Fundamentalism?" Therein he states a history and clarity of the fundamentalist movement as follows:

> Non-Catholic churches in America and Canada can be divided loosely into Modernists (who don't believe the Bible is the Word of God); Evangelicals (who claim to believe in the veracity of the Word but won't fight or even fuss about it);and Fundamentalists (who believe in the fundamentals of the Word of God and are accused of being mad at everyone else).
>
> The title "fundamentalist" is taken from a series of 12 books published in1910-1915 written by 65 leading Christian scholars; however, I believe that such Christians go back to the beginning of Christianity! All believers in the early churches were Fundamentalists until the Gnostics arrived! The early Christians simply believed in "the fundamentals," not only what is essential but what is important.
>
> I gladly wear the badge of "Fundamentalist" because I have discovered in my life that these people are the finest, godliest, kindest, theologically sound, and most sincere

people alive. Yes, we have had and will have a few scoundrels who have embarrassed Christianity but then that was true for Paul and the Corinthian church. The Bible commands us how to deal with public sinners; however, even many Fundamentalist churches usually refuse to follow that command. I'm still thrilled to be a Fundamentalist.

The Modernist-Fundamentalist battle raged back in the 40s and 50s when many mainline churches and seminaries, led by unbelieving pastors and professors,lost hundreds of churches to the Fundamentalist camp. Many of those Modernists confessed to be true Christians at their ordination and at the signing of doctrinal positions but were dishonest, only pretending to be Bible Christians. Some were so radical they climbed into bed with Communists!

The fat hit the fire in the late 40s when many dissatisfied Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, and a few others exposed the rabid unbelief and Communist influence in the churches, colleges, periodicals, seminaries, and mission boards. Error cannot survive with truth just as darkness cannot coexist with light. Over several years, courageous fundamentalist pastors left their church buildings, denominations, friends, pulpits, income, and retirement plans to begin anew in a hired hall or storefront church. It was a singular time in religious history to be compared, with a little hyperbole, to the Egyptian Exodus and the Protestant Reformation.

After the division, the issue was clear: we had unbelieving Modernists on one side and believing Fundamentalists on the other side. Then, in the late 40s and early 50s a formal schism happened when more liberal pastors pulled away from fundamentalism and became "New Evangelicals." The Fundamentalists preached strict adherence to Bible teaching that included a "coming out" principle. They taught that believers should "come out" from unbelieving organizations as many of

them had done. Fundamentalists also taught that they must contend for the faith and exhort people to do the right thing at all times. They also preached what their critics thought was a little too much about Judgment and Hell to come.

Sometimes while preaching, Fundamentalists even took off their suit coat and rolled up their sleeves! Some even sweated profusely to the disgust of the sophisticated in their audience. It seems few want to be associated with the memory of an uncouth John the Baptist; after all, he lost his head. Most New Evangelicals don't have to worry about that. They do lose their senses, if not their composure, when they try to explain why they left their Fundamentalist roots.

Moreover, Fundamentalists preached that people who had been Born Again should live as if they had a new life. Christians were expected to tell the truth,be faithful to a spouse, obey the laws, pay their bills, live godly lives, and train their children to do the same. Some leaders went to extremes and made lists for members to follow. And yes, some things on the lists were silly with no scriptural support. Of course, that was exactly what the Jewish leaders did in Christ's day.

There was concern on the part of Evangelicals that Fundamentalists were not cognizant, concerned, or committed to social problems; however, Fundamentalists believed that their main message was Christ and His death and resurrection. They remembered the debacle in the 1920s when the social gospel was preached and Fundamentalists wanted to steer away from that deadly error.

A snooty Evangelical falsely charged that a Fundamentalist who "was prepared to even speak to a Roman Catholic was often considered liberal and fatally compromised." Intellectually speaking, that is poppycock and a generous portion of hogwash. In more than fifty years in Fundamentalist churches I have never been aware

of that–nothing close to that. That's dishonesty.

Evangelicals were always embarrassed about Fundamentalists' "responsible militancy." Evangelicals only get militant opposing Fundamentalists! I have noticed that the leading Evangelicals are far more patient and kind to unbelievers than to Fundamentalists. Very strange, especially when Evangelicals speak and write so much about love and tolerance. But the love and tolerance do not go to Fundamentalists.

It's a fact: if a Christian is not militant, he is not a Bible-practicing person! Not mad, or malicious, or mean, but militant.

The accusation is made that Fundamentalists always insist on a literal interpretation of scripture–even the metaphors and allegories. Nonsense, all Fundamentalists (even the dumbest among us) are aware that trees don't have hands to clap; however, we do believe that God is trying to tell us something with every Bible passage. Even non-seminarians know that the Bible contains poetry, parables, proverbs, and prophecies as well as history.

A true scholar asks, "What does God want me know about that passage?" Evangelicals may ask the same question, but after finding the truth of the scripture, they refuse to obey it. With them, "love" is far more important than truth; however, truth without love is coldness and love without truth is corruption.

The fact is, we are to be Christians who love people, principle, and precepts.[50]

This examination of fundamentalism rounds out well an examination of True Church History and could be explored with more depth. Here it is included because J. Newton Brown's preliminary historical essay of 1854 first introduced this concept of

50 Don Boys, Ph.D., "*Why Did Evangelicals BreakAway From Fundamentalism?*", Article, February 23, 2013 http://donboys.cstnews.com/why-did-evangelicals-break-away-from-fundamentalism , (Accessed Jun 2013, and 17 Nov 2021).

a fundamental Christian, and because it forms an important chapter in True Church History, albeit part of the Laodicean Church age.

Chapter 5 Bible Ecclesiology vs A Holy Catholic Church

Roman Catholic Religion - The Mother Wolf

The Roman Catholic Church was apostate from its root. When God asked Ezekiel "Son of man, can these bones live?" Ezekiel answered wisely, "O Lord GOD, thou knowest" (Ezek 37:3).

The Roman Catholic Church answered foolishly; "No! The nation of Israel is gone forever, and we the Holy Roman Catholic Church will take its place completely!"

Supposing a Holy Catholic Church will replace Israel in God's plans, God's promises, God's provisions, and God's regathering of Israel at his Son's second coming is apostate to Bible principle, Bible promise, and Bible prophecy. Yet there you have it in Roman Catholic Replacement Theology. In actuality the church was never catholic at all. Catholic means *universal.* Universal mean *all.* There is no "all" church in this present dispensation. Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary itself declares of "catholic," in all strictness, there is no catholic church or universal Christian communion.

The Lord Jesus Christ testifies that the church is not catholic, even as his twelve ordained disciples were not catholic, one was a betrayer. Matthew 13 in 58 verses gives seven parables that defy a catholic church. The sower of seed found stony soil where seedlings died out (vr.5); the tares were present in the wheat (vr.24-30); the unnatural mustard "tree" lodged birds (vr.31-32); the leaven was in three measures of meal (vr.33); the remnant vs catholic is exposed in the hid treasure parable (vr.44); and the goodly pearl parable (vr.45-46); and the parable of the fish net (vr.47-48) exposes how, in the end, God must sever the wicked from among the just (vr.49-50). *"Jesus saith unto them (disciples), Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord"*(vr.51).

In verse 52 Jesus capstones all this with an emphasis that this is new teaching for a new dispensation, and in verses 53-58 it is profoundly illustrated in the rejection of the "carpenter's son." There is no catholic, universal church, only a remnant inside what

came to be called Christendom.

A careful study of the writings of the Apostles, writings which make up the twenty-seven books of the New Testament of the Holy Bible, reveals that they never authoritatively dictated what the local churches did or believed. They implored, they reasoned, they pleaded, in love they confirmed their authority, but they did not dictate, ostracize, banish, crucify, or burn their detractors or dissidents. It is Christ's church, he is the head and in the Holy Bible there is no other one individual, no pope, no vicar of Christ, no church, no archbishop, no denominational head, and no organization that usurps any authority over any other local church. His churches operate with autonomous independence. The Apostles themselves were careful to recognize this autonomous independence; they issued no laws, commands, or edicts. Lets contrast that with what the Roman Saint Constantine the Great (272 – 337 AD) aspired for his Roman Church. A brief history lesson is necessary here.

Roman Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) established the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, and Roman Saint Jerome (Eusebius Hieronymus Sophronius) (346-420 AD) captured them in his Latin Vulgate Bible. Jerome left an ascetic life in the Syrian desert and became secretary to Pope Damasus in 382 AD. In that post he immediately began the translation of the Latin Vulgate finishing his work in 405 AD.[51] His Latin Vulgate Bible encapsulates what can be called his three "P" error: Repentance is always translated "Penance," Presbyter is always translated "Priest," and "Predestination" is dramatically overemphasized.

While Roman Saint Jerome is subtly translating Roman Saint Augustine's doctrines into the Latin Bible, in the background, Augustine is developing the doctrine of two swords. In his letters to Donatists he insists that the Roman Catholic Church has the power and obligation to "compel" people by force into the Catholic

51 Christianity Today, "405 Jerome Completes the Vulgate," http://www.christianitytoday.com/history accessed 12/06/2016 [Christianity Today is ecumenical and modernist and never trusted for doctrine; it is only barely trusted by this author to get history right.]

Church.[52] The immature church under Christ, he supposes, did not yet have the power to do so, but the maturing Catholic Church now has authority to use both the sword of the Spirit, and the sword of the magistrate to compel people to convert and to conform. This became the full fledged doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church:

> Catholic Dictionary: term - Two Swords-
> Definition: a medieval doctrine on the relation of Church and State, as explained by Pope Boniface VIII (reigned 1294- 1303): "We are taught by the words of the Gospel that in this Church and under her control there are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal . . . both of these, i.e., the spritual and the temporal swords, are under the control of the Church. The first is wielded by the Church; the second is wielded on behalf of the church. The first is wielded by the hands of the priest, the second by the hands of kings and soldiers, but at the wish and by the permission of the priests. Sword must be subordinate to sword, and it is only fitting that the temporal authority should be subject to the spiritual" (Unam Sanctam, Denzinger 873). [53]

This doctrine is not Christian, nor is the Roman Catholic Church. That bold assertion needs more emphasis. In establishing itself as The Catholic Church, the Roman church left Christ's teachings about “whosoever will may come,” and took up the sword of kings and soldiers to compel conversions and compel

52 Philip Schaff, “NICENE AND POST-NICENE FATHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH Vol 1 - *NPNF1-01 The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustine, with a Sketch of his Life and Work,”* Christian Classics Ethereal Library, https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf101.html (Accessed 12/07/2016)

53 The Catholic Dictionary, s.v. Two Swords, https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/dictionary/index.cfm?id=36967 (Accessed 12/07/2016) [The Catholic Dictionary is Roman Catholic Church propaganda and never trusted for doctrine, and barely trusted for history; it is only used by this author to document their published error.]

compliance. Constantine the Great used his temporal sword to compel every Roman soldier under his command to become "Christian." Were they converted by grace through faith? No. They were compelled by the new found authority of the Roman Catholic Church which used the twisted doctrines of Roman Saint Augustine of Hippo. The whole of the Roman Empire was now compelled, by force, to become "Christian." Roman Saint Jerome inserted these twisted Roman doctrines into the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate Bible via the three "P" errors just mentioned. This was all diabolical, none of this could be called "Christian," ... but it has been called that for over 1700 years, ever since Constantine the Great forced the Roman Empire to convert to "Christianity," and used his Roman Catholic sword to silence the Bible believing Donatists who opposed Roman Saint Augustine's doctrines. It was diabolical. It is no less diabolical today.

"The Donatists arose in Numidia, in the year 311, and they soon extended over Africa. They taught that the church should be a holy body."[54] This Roman Catholic Church sword was used to annihilate Montanists, Novatians, and Donatists, Paulicians, Adoptionists, and Anabaptists et.al.[55] All Catholic naysayers were labeled heretics, hunted, ostracized, banished and/or killed by the Roman Catholic Church.

Is the Pope Catholic? Yes. Is the Pope Christian? No. Is the church Catholic? No. Churches are local, independent, autonomous bodies of called out, gathered together Bible believers. They are under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and must not surrender that headship to any Pope, Arch-Bishop, Denominational Organization, Denominational property owner, Mother Church or Mother founder applying for that control. Ergo which of the 11,000+ Christian denominations listed in the 1982 3rd edition of

54 Christian, John T., "*A History of the Baptists*", Vol 1&2, The Baptist Bible Institute, New Orleans, Louisiana, first published in 1922, public domain, soft copy www.reformedreader.org/history/christian/ahob1/ahobp.htm, accessed 06/03/2019, Vol 1, pg 28.

55 Carroll, James Milton, "*The Trail of Blood*", 1932, open source, public domain, from https://archive.org/details/TheTrailOfBlood, accessed 06/03/2019.

the *"World Christian Encyclopedia"*[56] are correct? None of them are correct! True Christianity accepts no Pope, Arch-Bishop or Denominational control.

All Protestant and Reformed teachings that the Church is Catholic has its basis in the Roman Catholic Church and are in error. And all Protestant and Reformed churches have such teachings. All denominations are errant in this position. There is no Catholic (universal) Church that is Christian; it has leaven, until the whole was leavened. Further Peter was not in Rome, nor a Pope; he wrote from Babylon (1Pet.5:13). Rome, so very ignorant of Rev.17, and wanting so much to get Peter connected to Rome, even claimed that they were "Mystery Babylon" in 1Pet.5:13.

Protestant's Reformed Theology – An Offspring Wolf

The editors of the Encyclopedia Britannica say:

> Protestant Reformation, the religious revolution that took place in the Western church in the 16th century. Its greatest leaders undoubtedly were Martin Luther and John Calvin. Having far-reaching political, economic, and social effects, the Reformation became the basis for the founding of Protestantism, one of the three major branches of Christianity.

They go on to say that the three major branches of Christianity are, "the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox churches, and the Protestant churches." Such a secular source, of course,

56 David B. Barrett, "*World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World, A.D. 1900-2000*", 1982, Oxford University Press, wherein "a denomination is defined as existing within a specific country and there are 33,000+ total of these "Christian denominations" in 238 total countries." These are subdivided into "6 major ecclesiastico-cultural mega-blocs", and ordering them by denomination size we have: Independents (about 22000), Protestants (about 9000), "Marginals" (about 1600), Orthodox (781), Roman Catholics (242), and Anglicans (168). Making for 11,000+ non-independent denominations. From http://www.philvaz.com/apologetics/a106.htm accessed 06/03/2019.

completely misses the spiritual implications of what the Protestants embodied.

Protestants, as the offspring of the mother wolf, carried the diabolical poisonous fruit of the Roman Catholic Church's error as a leaven which rises in all 33,000 “Christian Denominations.” It was blatant, brazen, and authoritarian in the Roman Catholic Church; it is subtle and disguised in the Protestant Churches springing from the Protestant Reformation.

Protestants Carry on in Error

It has been said that the Protestant Reformation was fine as far as it went, but it did not go near far enough. Sola fide, sola scriptura and sola gratia established exceptional first steps but Protestants carried a ton of Roman Catholic baggage past October 31, 1517, the eve of All Saints’ Day, when Luther posted his 95 theses to the Roman Church door.

Protestants, in general, still hold to four systematic errors of the Roman Catholic Church, 1) the catholicness of the church, 2) the allegorical method of Biblical interpretation, 3) the replacement of Israel by the catholic church, and 4) the dismissal of the Millennial Reign of Christ.

The latter two of these errors, the replacement of Israel and the dismissal of the Millennial Reign, are exposed in great detail in this work Chapter 1, pg 3-16, Chapter 2, pg 31-46, and “Volume 11 Eschatology”, particularly in its Chapter 2 “Dispensational's Alternative, Supersessionism”, and more particularly in its sections “The Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology”, Part 1, 2, 3 and conclusion. Because of that extensive coverage in these sections, there is only cursory attention given to those errors here.

Baptists Are Not Protestants

It needs to be said out loud that Baptists are not Protestants. This is as good a time as any.

Baptists were present prior to the Protestant Reformation and indeed carry a perpetuity all the way back to the New Testament Apostles. Some inaccurately jest that their founder is John the

Baptist, but in actuality the Baptist name did not come from John, but from Christians who never accepted Roman Catholic infant baptism, never assimilated with the Roman Catholic Church, and were given hateful labels by that apostate church. The previous chapter gave extensive coverage this truth from both Shakleford, and Brown, but more can be said. John T. Christian (you have to love that name) captured this truth in his two volumes of "*A History of the Baptists"* In his first volume's Chapter VII "The Origin of the Anabaptist Churches" he succinctly captures and documents the truth about Baptists perpetuity.

> The beginnings of the Anabaptist movement are firmly rooted in the earlier centuries. The Baptists have a spiritual posterity of many ages of liberty-loving Christians. The movement was as old as Christianity; the Reformation gave an occasion for a new and varied history. The statement of Mosheim who was a learned Lutheran historian, as to the origin of the Baptists, has never been successfully attacked. He says:
>
> "The origin of the sect, who from their repetition of baptism received in other communities, are called Anabaptists, but who are also denominated Mennonites, from the celebrated man to whom they owe a large share of their present prosperity, is involved in much obscurity [or, is hid in the remote depths of antiquity, as another translator has it]. For they suddenly started up, in various countries of Europe, under the influence of leaders of dissimilar character and views; and at a time when the first contests with the Catholics so engrossed the attention of all, that they scarcely noticed any other passing occurrences. The modern Mennonites affirm, that their predecessors were the descendants of those Waldenses, who were oppressed by the tyranny of the Papists; and that they were of a most pure offspring, and most averse from any inclinations toward sedition, as well as all fanatical views.
>
> "In the first place I believe the Mennonites are not altogether in the wrong when they boast of a descent from these Waldenses, Petrobrusians, and others, who are usually styled witnesses for the truth before Luther. Prior to the age of Luther, there lay concealed in almost every country of Europe but especially in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland and Germany, very many persons, in whose minds were

deeply rooted that principle which the Waldenses, Wyclifites, and the Husites maintained, some more covertly and others more openly; namely, that the kingdom which Christ set up on the earth, or the visible church, is an assembly of holy persons; and ought therefore to be entirely free from not only ungodly persons and sinners, but from all institutions of human device against ungodliness. This principle lay at the foundation which was the source of all that was new and singular in the religion of the Mennonites; and the greatest part of their singular opinions, as is well attested, were approved some centuries before Luther's time, by those who had such views of the Church of Christ" (Mosheim, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, III. 200).

This opinion of Mosheim, expressed in 1755, of the ancient origin of the Baptists and of their intimate connection with the Waldenses, and of other witnesses of the truth, meets with the approval of the most rigid scientific research of our own times.

Sir Isaac Newton, one of the greatest men who ever lived, declared it was "his conviction that the Baptists were the only Christians who had not symbolized with Rome" (Whiston, Memoirs of, written by himself, 201). William Whiston, who records this statement, was the successor of Newton in Cambridge University, and lectured on Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. He himself became a Baptist and wrote a book on infant baptism.

Alexander Campbell, in his debate with Mr. Macalla, says:

"I would engage to show that baptism as viewed and practiced by the Baptists, had its advocates in every century up to the Christian era and independent of whose existence (the German Anabaptists), clouds of witnesses attest the fact, that before the Reformation from popery, and from the apostolic age, to the present time, the sentiments of Baptists, and the practice of baptism have had a continued chain of advocates, and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced" (Macalla and Campbell Debate on Baptism, 378, 379, Buffalo, 1824).

Again in his book on Christian Baptism (p.409. Bethany, 1851), he says (of Baptists):

> "There is nothing, in all ages and in all countries, (that) has been, as a body, the constant asserters of the rights of man and of liberty of conscience. They have often been persecuted by Pedobaptists; but they never politically persecuted, though they have had it in their power."

Robert Barclay, a Quaker who wrote largely upon this subject, though not always free from bias, says of the Baptists:

> "We shall afterwards show the rise of the Anabaptist took place prior to the Reformation of the Church of England, and there are also reasons for believing that on the Continent of Europe small hidden Christian societies, who have held many of the opinions of the Anabaptists, have existed from the times of the apostles. In the sense of the direct transmission of Divine Truth, and the true nature of spiritual religion, it seems probable that these churches have a lineage or succession more ancient than that of the Roman Church (Barclay, The Inner Life of the Societies of the Commonwealth, 11, 12. London, 1876).

More congenial to civil liberty than to enjoy an unrestrained, unembargoed liberty of exercising the conscience freely upon all subjects respecting religion. Hence it is that the Baptist denomination, in these statements might be worked out in circumstantial detail. Roman Catholic historians and officials, in some instances eye-witnesses, testify that the Waldenses and other ancient communions were the same as the Anabaptists. [57]

Protestants, in general, still hold to four systematic errors of the Roman Catholic Church, 1) the catholicness of the church, 2) the allegorical method of Biblical interpretation, 3) the

57 Christian, John T., "*A History of the Baptists*", Vol 1, CHAPTER VII The Origin of the Anabaptist Churches, The Baptist Bible Institute, New Orleans, Louisiana, first published in 1922, public domain, soft copy www.reformedreader.org/history/christian/ahob1/ahobp.htm, accessed 06/03/2019, Vol 1, pg 56.

replacement of Israel by the catholic church, and 4) the dismissal of the Millennial Reign of Christ. These four errors are, in general, rejected and refuted because, for Baptists, the sole authority of all faith and practice is the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired word of God. Baptists are not Protestants, they have always rejected infant baptism in any form, and they reject these four Roman Catholic doctrines. Many Baptists have been ignorantly seduced, or "leavened", into these errors by those toting Reformed Theology and John Calvin's ill gotten ideas about election (rooted in the Catholic Church being the new elect of God, while supposing Israel is rejected as the elect of God). Do not be deceived when such leaven rises. Baptists still reject such Protestant error.

Ecumenical Bible Changers – Offspring of the Offspring

The thesis of this section is that the Roman Catholic Church is the mother wolf of deception for this brazen error about the catholicness of the church, that the Protestant reformers, as offspring of their mother catholic church, are carrying that error with more subtle ways, and that now, the drive to sell copyright ecumenical bibles to everyone is the ultimate in diabolical subtleness for propagating Satan's line "Yea hath God said?"

A young Christian had heard in Sunday School that the world and the Devil so hated God's word that they would confiscate and destroy every copy. "It would happen in his life time!" he was told. He took and hid his Sunday School award Bible up in his attic and said, "They will never take away my Holy Bible!"

When he was all grown and a junior in seminary he became troubled when an old Baptist preacher gave him a flier that said:

> All modernists ecumenical Bibles completely leave out 20 verses that have always been in the Holy Bible. They say that Matt 17:21 is not supposed to be in the Bible. They take their pen knife and cut it out! Then they take their knife and cut out Matt 18:11, 23:14, Mark 7:16, 9:44 & 46, 11:26, 15:28, Luke 17:36, 23:17, John 5:4, Acts 8:37, 15:34, 24:7, 28:29, Rom 16:24, and 1 John 5:7, then they take Col 1:14 and cut out the clause "Through His Blood" because they think God did not

mean to say that. For over nineteen hundred years believers have considered these 20 verses to be inspired, inerrant, infallible Scripture. **Modernist ecumenical scholars contend that no Bible in existence today is inspired.** Baptists will never agree with such folly. We use the ONLY complete English Bible with these verses still intact, the Authorized King James Bible.

There are 64,000 other reasons detailed in this short study. Many are misinformed about this crucial issue. Many partake in the modernist's diabolical attack against the KJB.[58]

The copyright New International Version New Testament has 64,000 fewer words than the King James Bible's New Testament! Words that are certainly in the Greek New Testament have been completely eliminated. Baptists will not use the NIV[59] or ESV[60], holding instead to the complete and accurate authorized King James Bible.

Baptists, above all others, base all their faith and practice on only the words of the Holy Scriptures. When critical modernists mess with the words they are messing with our faith and practice. It is better to learn that 'thee' is the 2nd person singular of 'you' and 'thou' is its subjective case than to have a sinister textual critic mess with your faith and practice.

When he looked, he found that those verses were not in his Bible. The Bible student scoured through his whole seminary looking for a King James Authorized Bible to see what they said and found none on the premises. He took a bus to his father's old house, climbed up into the attic, and retrieved his old Sunday School award Bible, and there were all twenty of those verses. He made this profound observation, “The Devil never did come and confiscate our Bibles, Christians just forsook them and turned them

58 See “The Defense of Twenty” by Pastor Ed Rice, Good Samaritan Baptist Church, 54 Main St., Dresden NY 14441 www.gsbaptistchurch.com/seminary/landmark/content/defense_twenty.pdf

59 NIV is a registered trademark of the New York Bible Society International, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, standing for “New International Version” and their ecumenical modernist copyright, all rights reserved, 1973 bible.

60 ESV is a registered trademark of the Crossway – Good News Publishers, Wheaton Illinois, standing for “English Standard Version” and their ecumenical, modernist, copyright, all rights reserved, 2001 bible.

over for new modernist versions that do not reflect the infallible, inerrant, verbally inspired Words of God."

The truth in that scenario is already substantiated in the Prolegomena and Bibliology sections of this Systematic Theology, but rehearse here the subtle power of this diabolical deception. Ecumenical bibles do indeed change doctrine.

A case in point, the catholic church, from its roots, has works embedded in its salvation process. It might be Roman, Orthodox, or Episcopalian penance, Presbyterian infant baptism, Methodist methods or Pentecostal baptismal regeneration, there is always something added to belief before salvation is secured. John 3:36 states, "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*" Herein, as throughout the Holy Bible, Salvation is solely based on faith (4102 πιστις pistis as a noun) i.e. what we believe (4100 πιστευω pisteuo exact same Greek word as a verb). Salvation is not based on works that we might do or obedience that we might render.

There are times when the fifty-seven highly skilled linguists, employed and paid by King James from 1603 through 1611, divided into six companies which met in cities of Cambridge, Westminster, and Oxford, as they, under the unction of the Holy Spirit of God, took seven years to translate God's inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Old Testament and New Testament books into an authorized Holy Bible which answered only to the original Hebrew and Greek, well there were times when the context of the text and the doctrine of the whole Bible determined how a word might be translated. Such is the case with the phrase "believeth not" in John 3:36. The Greek word used, (544 απειθεω apeitheo) literally means "not to allow one's self to be perusaded" and could thus be translated disobedient. The highly skilled linguists translating the Authorized Version knew in the context of salvation to translate it "believeth not" as they did eight other times (Acts 14:2, 17:5, 19:9, Rom 11:31, 15:31, Heb 3:18, 11, 31). These expert linguists only translated this Greek word "disobey" when the context called for it in four verses not dealing with soul-salvation (Rom 10:21, 1Pet 2:7,8, 3:20). Modernist ecumenical

translators, however, did not take this care.

How do ecumenical modernist bibles translate the *"believeth not"* phrase in their ecumenical friendly copyright versions?

Perhaps Jesus said, "***he who disobeys*** the Son shall not see life"? As copyright by James A.R. Moffatt D.D., D.LITT., in his 1950 "The Bible – A New Translation". All rights in this book are reserved. No part of the text may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission.

Or was it "***he who does not obey*** the Son shall not see life"? As copyright by The Lockman Foundation in California, in their 1960 NASB (NASB is a registered trademark of the same, standing for the New American Standard Version).

Or was it, "he who ***disobeys*** the Son shall not see that life"? As copyright by the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press in their 1961 NEB (NEB is a registered trademark of the same, standing for the New English Bible).

Or was it "***he who does not obey*** the Son shall not see life"? As copyright by the World Publishing Company in their 1962 RSV (RSV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for Revised Standard Version).

Or was it "***whoever disobeys the*** Son, will not have life"? As copyright by the American Bible Society in their 1966 Good News Bible- Todays English Version.

Or was it "he who does not believe the Son shall not see life"? As copyright by the Oxford University Press, Inc. in their 1967 NKJ (NKJ is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New King James). [Oxford University agreed not to change any underlying Greek in their New Testament translation, only to strip away all second person singular indicators (and make them all plural, you and your) and to remove all verb case indicators ("believeth ... hath" vs Oxford's "believes ... has"). However, these changes could not secure a copyright on their New Testament. They got their copyright because all their required "significant deviations" are found in their Old Testament which did not even use the Masoretic Text.]

Or was it "***whoever disobeys*** the Son shall not see life"? As copyright by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Washington

D.C., in their 1970 NAB (NAB is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New American Bible).

Or was it "***whoever rejects*** the Son will not see life"? As copyright by the New York Bible Society International, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in their 1973 NIV (NIV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New International Version).

Or was it "***he that disobeys*** the Son will not see life"? As copyright by the Watch Tower Bible And Tract Society of Pennsylvania and International Bible Students Association in their 1984 NWT (NWT is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New World Translation). [It is curious that the Watch Tower Society, that does not believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ nor the trinity of the Godhead, predominately change, with brazen boldness, what offends their faulty doctrines.]

Or was it "***no one who rejects*** him will ever share in that life"? As copyright by the American Bible Society in their 1995 CEV (CEV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for Contemporary English Version).

Or was it "***whoever does not obey*** the Son shall not see life"? As copyright by Crossway – Good News Publishers, Wheaton Illinois, All rights reserved, in their 2001 ESV (ESV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for English Standard Version).

These translations of the Greek may not be technically in error, but in the context of receiving "so great salvation" by faith and faith alone, when that is the context, they are grossly in error. In the Bible he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the son shall not see life. In 8 of 11 of these ecumenical modernist bibles it is not unbelief, but disobedience that sends a soul to hell and in 2 of the 11 it is not unbelief but rejection. Shame on those dollar driven, bible societies and more so shame on the Christians who gave up their Bibles without a fight.

Modernist ecumenical translators also use a corrupted Greek text as seen in the next case in point.

The catholic church, from its roots, has made salvation a process that is tied to works and growth. You cannot, they say, be sure of your salvation as an instantaneous "born-again" completed

event wherein one day you were headed to hell and the next you were headed to heaven. Consequently, what will be the leaning of the ecumenical modernist bibles on this new-birth concept? First Peter 2:2 states "*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*" but modernists, via their corrupted Vaticanus and Sinaiticus Greek manuscripts from Alexandria Egypt, add to the Word of God to deny the instantaneous new birth, and make salvation a growing thing. Look what their corrupted Greek text added to their ecumenical translations.

Perhaps, they suppose, Peter said, "Like newly born children, thirst for the pure, spiritual milk to make you **grow up into salvation**"? As copyright by James A.R. Moffatt D.D., D.LITT., in his 1950 "The Bible – A New Translation". All rights in this book are reserved. No part of the text may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission.

Or was it "long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may **grow in respect to salvation**"? As copyright by The Lockman Foundation in California, in their 1960 NASB (NASB is a registered trademark of the same, standing for the New American Standard Version).

Or was it, "Like the newborn infants you are, you must crave for pure milk (spiritual milk, I mean), so that you may thrive upon it to your soul's health"? As copyright by the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press in their 1961 NEB (NEB is a registered trademark of the same, standing for the New English Bible).

Or was it "that by it you may **grow up to salvation**"? As copyright by the World Publishing Company in their 1962 RSV (RSV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for Revised Standard Version).

Or was it "Be like newborn babies, always thirsty for the pure spiritual milk, so that by drinking it you may **grow up and be saved**"? As copyright by the American Bible Society in their 1966 Good News Bible- Todays English Version.

Or was it "a*s newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*"? As copyright by the Oxford

University Press, Inc. in their 1967 NKJ (NKJ is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New King James). [Oxford University agreed not to change any underlying Greek in their New Testament translation, only to strip away all second person singular indicators (and make them all plural, you and your) and to remove all verb case indicators ("believeth ... hath" vs Oxford's "believes ... has"). However, these changes could not secure a copyright on their New Testament. They got their copyright because all their required "significant deviations" are found in their Old Testament which did not even use the Masoretic Text.]

Or was it "Be as eager for milk as newborn babies – pure milk of the spirit to make you **grow unto salvation**"? As copyright by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Washington D.C. in their 1970 NAB (NAB is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New American Bible).

Or was it "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may **grow up in your salvation**"? As copyright by the New York Bible Society International, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in their 1973 NIV (NIV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New International Version).

Or was it "as newborn infants, form a longing for the unadulterated milk belonging to the word, that through it you may **grow to salvation**"? As copyright by the Watch Tower Bible And Tract Society of Pennsylvania and International Bible Students Association in their 1984 NWT (NWT is a registered trademark of the same, standing for New World Translation). [It is curious that the Watch Tower Society, that does not believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ nor the trinity of the Godhead, predominately change, with brazen boldness, what offends their faulty doctrines.]

Or was it "Be like newborn babies who are thristy for the pure spiritual milk that will help you **grow and be saved.**? As copyright by the American Bible Society in their 1995 CEV (CEV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for Contemporary English Version).

Or was it "that by it you may **grow up into salvation**"? As copyright by Crossway in their 2001 ESV (ESV is a registered trademark of the same, standing for English Standard Version).

The Holy Bible never intimates that one can "grow to salvation." It is a new birth, a conversion, a quickening that God does, not a process that man does. In Holy Bible salvation a soul is instantaneously converted, quickened, justified, indwelt, and baptized into Christ. That is not something one can "grow" or "grow up" to. In the ecumenical movement it is, but in the Holy Bible it is not. Their ecumenical modernist bibles are errant and dangerous.

Many will read all these copyright renditions and repeat Hillary Rodham Clinton's line "What possible difference could it make anyhow!" Three important observations on these multiple renditions. First, words are important. Many of the words added by theses translators are not represented at all in the Greek New Testament[61]. Secondly Manuscripts from Alexandria Egypt, where Holy Roman Catholic Saint Origen became the Father of Bible criticism, and the Father of the Roman Catholic's allegorical method, should not determine what is in or not in our Bible; we do not need an ecumenically acceptable bible we need an accurate and authorized Holy Bible. It is our sole authority, it is our final authority.

Thirdly, when there are multiple version which must, by copyright law, have significant deviations from all other versions there is no final authority. Christians wandering from this version to that, none knowing exactly what the Holy Bible says about anything, makes the whole lump, even the soiled evangelicals absolutely apostate, i.e they have abandoned and left what was once believed. The local church needs an absolute authority, found, for English speaking peoples, in the Authorized King James Bible.

61 The corrupted Westcott and Hort Greek text, based on the corrupted Alexandrian Egypt manuscripts, copyright 1966, by The United Bible Societies of the USA, inserted two Greek words "εισ σωταριαν" "unto salvation" in 2Peter 2:2. The Greek Received Text (The Textus Receptus) and the Holy Bible does not include them.

The Bible and the Local, Non-Catholic, Church

Honest Bible students, ignorant of this Roman Catholic development of the Catholic Church, have been led down the garden path to accept a Catholic Church because the Scriptures often speak of the church in the singular, i.e. "*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* (Matt 16:18). The misconception we are addressing is the supposed existence of a catholic (universal) church, whereby all saved people are members of this catholic, universal body of believers. That is not what is portrayed in the Holy Bible, and the distinction is important in church polity.

The Bible mentions the church in the singular in 78 verses while it mentions churches in the plural in only 36 verses. The many uses in the plural certainly cause consternation to a doctrine of a Catholic Church, but might not, in the minds of some, carry the weight to refute it. Of the singular uses of the church the majority are used in consideration of a singular local independent autonomous New Testament church. Certainly, as noted previously, Christ addressing the seven local, independent, autonomous churches in the Revelation of Jesus Christ would cause the serious Bible student to completely abandon the Roman idea of a Holy Catholic Church. The first and last church messages address the church "of" Ephesus, and the church "of the" Laodiceans, the other five messages address the church "in" Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia. These are so obviously non-catholic references that these seven instances can debunk the whole ideology of a Holy Catholic Church. But lets examine other singular references of the church.

Some singular references of course occur when there was only one local church at Jerusalem (Acts 2:47, 5:11, Gal 1:13, Php 3:6). Most of the other singular references are obviously speaking of a local independent autonomous church, such as "*the church which was at Jerusalem*" (Acts 8:1, *3*, 11:22, *26*, *12:1, 5,* 15:4*, 22*) or "*the church that was at Antioch*" (Acts 13:1, *14:27, 15:3*) or "*elders in every church*" (Acts 14:23) or they are used in addresses

similar to, "*Unto the church of God which is... at Corinth/of the Thessalonians*" (1Cor 1:2, 2Cor 1:1, 1Thes 1:1, 2Thes 1:1). Then there are many other singular intimations where a local church is obviously intended, and a Holy Catholic Church cannot be supported, "*And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch*" (Acts 18:22, also 20:17, Rom 16:1, 5, 23, 1Cor 4:17, 6:4, 11:18, 22, 14:4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 35, 16:19, Php 4:15, Col 4:15, 16, 1Tim 5:16, Phm 1:2, James 5:14, 1Pet 5:13, 3 John 1:6, 9, 10).

That leaves only a few verses that might be construed, in some misguided fashion, to speak of a Holy Catholic Church, but in actuality it is obvious that they speak of the church corporately. Some are corporately referencing "*the Church of God*" (Acts 20:28, 1Cor 10:32, 15:9, 1Tim 3:5, 15) and clearly indicate how God addresses the corporate body of the church (the whole called out, gathered together body of believers), without implying that it is a Holy Catholic Church. Let's examine the others (Matt 16:18, 18:17, Acts 7:38, 1Cor 12:28, Eph 1:22, 3:10, 21, 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32, Col 1:18, 24 (his body), Heb 2:12, 12:23).

"*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.... And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican*" (Mat 16:18, 18:17).

In these two texts of Matthew, Jesus is speaking of the formation and function of his *ecclesia* or called out body of believers. It is obvious that he is speaking of the church corporately and not a local, independent, autonomous body of believers assembled at Jerusalem or at Ephesus. But there is no need to establish a Holy Catholic Church ideology for this usage to make sense. In the exact same sense it has been said, "England built their jury to ensure a fair equitable judicial system, and the jury is to hear all the evidence in a criminal proceeding." That is using the term "jury" corporately to reference how twelve people on a local, independent, autonomous jury assembled in the Camden district of London England corporately function. Such is a widely used and accepted means of communicating and their is no

inclination to think that England has a supreme Catholic (Universal) Jury System, and all local juries belong to the Catholic (Universal) entity.

In 1Cor.12:28 "*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*" This corporate usage of the term church is now obvious. And likewise in Ephesians when Paul writes, "*And (God) hath put all things under his (Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places) feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*" (Eph 1:20, 22-23), the church is used in this corporate sense, not in any catholic sense. So to in Eph 3:10, 21, 5:23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32, Col 1:18, 24 (his body), Heb 2:12, and 12:23.

The ideology of a Holy Catholic Church was devised by Origen of Alexandria Egypt in order to supplement his development of a Replacement Theology, wherein, in the mind of this Roman Catholic Church Father, a Holy Catholic Church takes over all the promises made to God's chosen and elect people Israel. When a person gets saved they do not become part of a catholic church, they do not become part of the Bride of Christ, they become part of the family of God; a bride is called that only on the day of the wedding, before that day she is espoused, and is to be a "chaste virgin not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" thus she should be "holy and without blemish," and after that wedding day, wherein she is called a bride, she is called the wife, i.e. a bride is a bride for a day. And so it is for the Bride of Christ, called the bride only when the Bridegroom comes. As part of the family of God, family members are to be baptized by immersion in obedience to Christ's command, and are to unite with a local, independent, autonomous church where they can continue in the doctrine of the Apostles. It is really quite simple, straight forward, and non-catholic.

Chapter 6 When Did Christ's Church Begin?

Many weigh in with opinions about exactly when the church began. Unfortunately most do so without the necessary background to consider why the question is important. There is a transition from the dispensation of law to the dispensation of grace that must be in focus in this consideration. Very simply stated it is the church of Jesus Christ and consequently he is the founder, framer, and former of the church. If it were found, framed, and formed in Acts 2:1-3 it might be called the Church of Pentecost, if in Acts 2:4, the Church of the Holy Ghost, if in Acts 2:14, the Church of Peter, if in Acts 13:2 (as the hyper-dispensationals attest), the Church of Barnabas and Saul, if in Acts 28:26-28 (as the ultra-dispensationals following E. W. Bullinger (1837-1913) attest), the Church of the Gentiles, or the Church of Paul. And I suppose if the church were founded in Genesis 3 and Jeremiah 31, as Covenant Theologians attest[62] it might be called the Church of Roman Catholic Saint Augustine of Alexandria Egypt. Before one weighs in declaring "I believe the church started when ...." they need to better understand some of the disparaging ideologies that are on the table in this consideration.

Independent Baptists love to fight, and like Hatfields and McCoys they often enjoy the fight so much that they forget what the fight started over in the first place. This is exactly the problem when considering the question of when Christ's church got its start. In fifty years as an Independent Baptist I have heard all the arguments for why Christ's church did not begin in Acts chapter two, and all the arguments of why Christ's church must have begun in Acts chapter two. In that exposure, and on both sides of the debate, I have heard eloquent arguments given by very intelligent gifted men of God. I cannot recall any of them bringing into the discussion why the question was of extreme importance. None. Not once in fifty years have I read what you will read in this short

62 Covenant Theologians include Roman Catholic Saint Augustine, John Calvin (via his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2:9-11*)*, Charles Hodge, Jonathan Edwards, B. B. Warfield, R. C. Sproul, John Piper, Harold Camping, et-al.

article. Pay attention. Take notes. Fight smarter, … or better, contend for the faith with wisdom.

Covenant Theology

The Covenant Theologian supposes that the Catholic Church started in the Old Testament, particularly that it was part of God's Covenant of Grace. This Covenant of Grace, they suppose, was made individually with Noah, Abraham, and David, made nationally with Old Testament Israel as a people, and made universally with man in the New Covenant. Thus a prominent feature of all Protestant theology (whether Presbyterian, Reformed Churches, Methodism, Pentecostal, or Reformed Baptists... or Reformed Anything) is that believers in all ages are all 'in Christ,' are all part of the Body and Bride of Christ, and consequently Christ's church began with the Old Testament saints, not with Jesus Christ, and not with the coming of the Holy Spirit of God in Acts chapter two.

Let me reiterate that this is a prominent feature in "all Protestant theology." This leaven leads to their conclusion that Israel has been completely replaced by the Holy Catholic Church, and this leaven is a major influence in all denominations. Baptists are not Protestant, nor reformed, nor per se a denomination, nor denominational. Baptists are independent and autonomous under the headship of our founder the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptists churches have no human entity, head, or denominational authority that they answer to. Beware of the leaven of Protestants.

Hyper-Dispensationalism

Hyper-Dispensationalists suppose that the Christian church had its beginning with the ministry of the Apostle Paul in the early part of the book of Acts. Ergo there are Acts 9 hyper-dispensationalists and Acts 13 hyper-dispensationalists but none that hold to classical dispensationalism nor an Acts 2 church beginning. Their predominate founder is Pastor/Teacher/Author John Cowin O'Hair (1876 – 1958).[63] Hyper-Dispensationalist

63 Dale S. DeWitt, "*The Origins of the Grace Movement – The Early Theology*

Cornelius Stam (1908 – 2003) explains how Peter built the Messianic church, but Paul built the Gentile Body of Christ's church.[64] Hyper-Dispensationalist Charles F. Baker (1905-1994) took the Acts 13 founded church to even greater extremes believing that, since Paul does not seemingly mention baptism by immersion after Acts 13, it is not valid for the current dispensation![65] Baker, and Hyper-Dispensationalists in general, have strong leanings toward Calvinism, and confusion about Israel's place in God's economy. Ergo Hyper-Dispensationalism has no place in any Baptist church, nay, not in any Bible Believing church.

Ultra-Dispensationalism

Ultra-Dispensationalists suppose that the Christian church had its beginning with the ministry of the Apostle Paul in the end of the book of Acts. The most notable proponent of Acts-28 Dispensationalism was E. W. Bullinger (1837-1913). He taught

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of John Cowen O'Hair." Grace Gospel Fellowship, 2002. And Dr. Dale DeWitt and Bryan Ross, "*The Origins of the Grace Movement – The Theology of the John Cowen O'Hair into the Ninteen-Thirties*" as printed in Grace Gospel Fellowship's *Truth Magazine* Vol 63 and 64 in 2014.

64 Cornelius R. Stam, "*Things That Differ – The Fundamentals of Dispensationalism*", Berean Bible Society, Chicago, 1951 [Cornelius R. Stam is founder of Berean Bible Society].

65 Charles F. Baker ,"*A Dispensational Theology"*, 1971, (Baker's 688-page masterwork). [Baker attended Scofield Memorial Church, founded by C. I. Scofield, was editor of the Scofield Reference Bible, and his pastor was Lewis Sperry Chafer, who also founded the Evangelical Theological College, which later became Dallas Theological Seminary. He was first an associate pastor with J.C. O'Hair at North Shore Church in "uptown" Chicago. Later, Baker partnered with C.R. Stam to develop and open the Milwaukee Bible Institute, which later became Grace Bible College. Baker was a graduate of Wheaton College but they qualify his alumni reference with the opening line "If Charles F. Baker represented an extreme form of dispensational theology, his credentials were impeccable." Baker's other books include "Understanding the Book of Acts", "Dispensational Relationships", and "Understanding the Gospels." From http://a2z.my.wheaton.edu/alumni/charles-f-baker and https://www.fellowshipbiblechurchorlando.org/charles-f-baker accessed on 11/07/2019].

that the gospels and Acts were under the dispensation of law, with the church actually beginning at Paul's ministry after Acts 28:28, "*Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."*[66] E.W. Bullinger held that both baptism and the Lord's Supper fall outside of the current, post-Acts dispensation, and suppose that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as well as the epistles written before Acts 28:28 (Acts 13 for mere hyper-dispensationalists) are not meant to be part of the faith and practice of the Gentile Christian Church, i.e. the Church that Paul Built.

The genius of Bullinger is not to be diminished in this rebuke. He eloquently broke from much of the gross error of Covenant Theology, and all the error of Replacement Theology. He strategically broke from the man-made moorings and stated the danger of going to far. And then he went to far. He made this premise:

> We must bring (dispensationalism), as all else, to the bar of the written Word to see whether we have learned from man, or from God, from tradition or from revelation. ... We shall all be agreed that the great subject of the Old Testament prophecies is a restored Israel and a regenerated earth (Matt. 19. 28). ... We are at one with all our readers in taking these prophecies in their literal meaning; and in not attempting to explain them, or rather fritter them away by any spiritualizing interpretation which deprives them of all their truth and power. We all look forward also to the time when "He that scattered Israel will gather him" (Jer. 31:10).[67]

When Ultra-Dispensationalist Bullinger and Hyper-Dispensationalist John Cowin O'Hair, Cornelius Stam and Charles

66 To be fair hyper-dispensationalists who enjoyed Bullinger as a mid-Acts hyper-dispensationalist don't feel that all of his works should be dismissed or invalidated because of an errant conclusion about an Acts 28 Pauline started Gentile Church that he made toward the end of his life.

67 E. W. Bullinger, "*The Foundations of Dispensational Truth*", Samuel Bagster and Sons,

F. Baker broke from Covenant Theology and its Replacement Theology errors about Israel, they went extreme, trying to divide Christ's church into a Peter built Messianic church and a Paul built Gentile church. Therein lies the importance of the argument about when Christ's church began. It did not begin in the Old Testament, as Protestants contend, and it did not begin with the Apostle Paul as hyper-and-ultra-dispensationalists contend. For the Baptists who are wording lengthy arguments on the subject, get familiar with the real contenders in this argument. There is a battle for truth going on, and we dare not be ignorant about it. There is no Jewish church and separate Gentile church. There is but one church, Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female (Gal 3:26-29).

Biblical Dispensationalism

As stated previously, an understanding of dispensationalism is essential for a Biblical ecclesiology. Comprehending the church age, this dispensation of grace and truth, its beginning and its ending will not be Biblically sound without comprehending the Biblical dispensations that God is walking us through. The error of covenant theology and all of its ugly tentacles will not be corrected without understanding dispensations. The over corrections of hyper and ultra dispensationalism cannot be corrected without the basic outline of the dispensations being well in hand. Because one cannot understand the second coming of Christ without discerning that the sixth dispensation, the dispensation of grace, called the church age, must come to a close the dispensations and the errors of covenant theology are thoroughly covered in volume 11. In understanding the doctrine of the church, ecclesiology, one must thoroughly understand that the church age has a beginning and a closing, thus this solid understanding of the seven dispensations is vital to a Biblical ecclesiology. That understanding can be achieved by going through chapter 5 of the Anthropology volume or chapter 3 of the Eschatology volume. The outline of these seven dispensations is included below:

God's Seven Dispensations Outlined

The First Dispensation – Innocence (Gen 1:28 Scofield Note)
The Second Dispensation – Conscience (Gen 3:23 Scof. Note)
The Third Dispensation – Government (Gen 8:20 Scof. Note)
The Fourth Dispensation – Promise (Gen 12:1 Scof. Note)
The Fifth Dispensation – Law (Exod 19:8 Scof. Note)
The Sixth Dispensation – Grace and Truth (Jn,1:17, Eph,3:1-6)
The Seventh Dispensation – The Kingdom (Eph 1:10)

In this study of the doctrine of the church a Biblical look at the sixth dispensation is essential. Between each dispensation there is a transition and one cannot rightly divide the Word of Truth without a consideration of these transitions.

The short survey of the seven dispensations builds the framework for the study of the stewardships of man in anthropology, the study of the church age in ecclesiology, and the study of last things in eschatology. Christendom's many misunderstandings of the Bible and its end times comes from those who have rejected dispensationalism and embraced supersessionism, i.e. Replacement Theology, and Covenant Theology. Be careful to rightly divide the Word of Truth in these areas, and dispensationalism is key to the divisions.

When The Church Age Will Close

> "*He* (Jesus) *answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you* (disciples) *to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them* (the great multitudes) *it is not given."* (Matt 13:11b)

In Scripture a "mystery" is a previously hidden truth which is now revealed by God to contain supernatural, and spiritual discerned elements that were not previously understood. There are eleven greater mysteries referenced in the New Testament and this one is the first mention. (The eleven are delineated well by C. I. Scofield in his 1909 "The Scofield Reference Bible".) the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed in seven parables of Matthew 13 and that revelation tells the disciples, "It will not be

quite like your thinking."

In the opening of the Acts of the Apostles they again ask about the kingdom, "*saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" (1:6). Jesus' response entails "not just yet," but conveys the already revealed truth that Israel will be restored. Such a restoration is spoken of in the Apostle Peter's second preached message.

> *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world* began (Acts 3:19-21).

The Apostle Paul's writings brazenly address this restoration in his writings to the Romans.

> *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance* (Romans 11:25-29).

The second of the eleven greater mysteries is in verse 25 of this text and it is the mystery of Israel's blindness during this age, (the age of the church, the dispensation of grace). Clearly this age is the church age, it is around "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in", and then it will close. That is what ages (dispensations) do, they open and they close. And

> *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up* (2Pet 3:9-10).

The church age will end, Israel will be restored, the seventh and final dispensation will begin and last for its 1,000 years.

Fussing over when the church began must be more focused on refuting Covenant Theology and Hyper-Dispensationalism's false narratives. The church's founder is the Lord Jesus Christ, her empowerment is in the fulfillment of his promise that was fulfilled fifty days after his resurrection. Fussing so over which of these two carries the day is to quite miss the larger case for dispelling false teachings.

Chapter 7 The Church and the First Amendment

> *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. ... Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.* Revelation 3:7,8,10,11

Some suppose it a coincidence that the first amendments to our constitution set before us an open door, and that that door was first opened in the city of Philadelphia, where the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were written and signed. The Declaration of Independence was formally adopted on July 4th 1776. The Constitution was written during the Philadelphia Convention which convened from May 25 to September 17, 1787 and it was signed on September 17, 1787. The First Amendment, along with the rest of the Bill of Rights, was submitted to the states for ratification on September 25, 1789, and adopted on December 15, 1791, all in Philadelphia. These are important milestones in the freedom of religion wherein a door was opened, a door that no mere man can shut.

Satan hates this open door. His attempts to close it are myriad and ongoing. He has tried to flood it with his own followers to where Islam was/is the fastest growing religion in the US. His attacks are furious and unrelenting. In this chapter the Bible student can get familiar with the legal actions taken against this open door.

A pastor need not be a constitutional lawyer, but, in the United States of America, he needs a genuine appreciation for the first amendment and its two clauses, “The Establishment Clause,” which prohibits the government from passing legislation to establish an official religion or preferring one religion over another, and “The Free Exercise Clause” which prohibits the government, in most instances, from interfering with a person's practice of their religion.

The clause "separation of church and state" is found nowhere in the first amendment, nor in these two fundamental clauses, but liberal lawyers suppose that the Establishment Clause enforces such a misrepresented and slippery principle. In an article “What does 'separation of Church and State' actually mean?”, by Neal Hardin, Aug 29, 2019 it is stated:

> “Separation of Church and State” is one of the most misunderstood phrases in modern political discourse. Yet, it is also a phrase with deep roots in Baptist tradition and one that we, as Christians, should have a healthy understanding of as we seek to engage in the public sphere.
>
> Origins of “Separation of Church and State” The phrase “separation of Church and State” originates in a letter that our third president, Thomas Jefferson, wrote to the Danbury Baptist Association of Connecticut in 1802. Understanding the background of this letter is key to understanding the meaning of this infamous phrase.[68]

The misrepresentation of this “separation of church and state” clause might be soundly illustrated by the following. The Village of Dresden, NY, insisted that we of Good Samaritan Baptist

68 Neal Hardin, “What does 'separation of Church and State' actually mean?”, The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Article, 29 Aug, 2019. https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/what-does-separation-of-church-and-state-actually-mean accessed 5/6/2020

Church stop entering the village park and using it for any of our purposes. We had on occasion taken a Sunday School class into the park and sat together under a tree for our Bible lesson. They sited that the constitution insisted on a “separation of church and state” for this redress. Such a brazen ignorance about “separation of church and state”, a clause not even found in constitutional law, prompts the Bible student's consideration of this chapter.

Further, this chapter is added to this volume as a redress of government actions taken during the COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease of 2019) pandemic. In March of 2020 many local and state governments attempted to close the doors of churches on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday with orders meant to protect the general public from the spread of a virus. What the government considered “non-essential” businesses were force to close, and many churches attempted to fit under an umbrella of being an “essential business.” A letter correcting this misnomer was written to an involved Baptist Pastor:

> Dear Pastor
>
> I greatly appreciate your endeavors exposing and righting the government's slighting of the churches constitutional rights. I might only address one contention. In pressing to have the church considered an “essential business”, or even just “essential” one can lessen the actual position of the church as a constitutionally protected entity, with a protected right to exist and operate with its doors open. The church is not an essential business, indeed it is not a business at all. It is not important that local, state, or federal governments consider or call a church essential, it is important that it consider it as the constitutionally protected entity that it is. The focus should be to emphasize, highlight, and re-establish the truth that churches have a constitutional right to exist and operate freely, with doors open to all who would assemble there. This is most clearly stated in both alliterated clauses of the first amendment, “The Establishment Clause,” which prohibits the

> government from passing legislation to establish an official religion or preferring one religion over another, and "The Free Exercise Clause" which prohibits the government, in most instances, from interfering with a person's practice of their religion.
>
> I am a little concerned that we not go off on a path about being "essential" to the neglect of being constitutionally protected whether an official is convinced of our essentialness or not. I am just saying.... and always praying. God bless your efforts in this fight.
>
> Pastor Rice GSBaptistChurch.com, Dresden NY.

As I say we do not need to become constitutional lawyers in this consideration, but knowing the amendment, clauses and legal precedence is going to be helpful. Consider first the first amendment.

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.[69]

An overview of this first amendment is provided by the Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute, Open Access to Law since 1992 (Cornell University is no friend to Christianity):

> **First Amendment: An Overview**
>
> The First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects the right to freedom of religion and freedom of expression from government interference. It prohibits any laws that establish a national religion, impede the free exercise of religion, abridge the freedom of speech, infringe upon the

69 The United States Constitution, Amendment I.

> freedom of the press, interfere with the right to peaceably assemble, or prohibit citizens from petitioning for a governmental redress of grievances. It was adopted into the Bill of Rights in 1791. The Supreme Court interprets the extent of the protection afforded to these rights. The First Amendment has been interpreted by the Court as applying to the entire federal government even though it is only expressly applicable to Congress. Furthermore, the Court has interpreted the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as protecting the rights in the First Amendment from interference by state governments.
>
> **Freedom of Religion**
>
> Two clauses in the First Amendment guarantee freedom of religion. The Establishment Clause prohibits the government from passing legislation to establish an official religion or preferring one religion over another. It enforces the "separation of church and state." However, some governmental activity related to religion has been declared constitutional by the Supreme Court. For example, providing bus transportation for parochial school students and the enforcement of "blue laws" is not prohibited. The Free Exercise Clause prohibits the government, in most instances, from interfering with a person's practice of their religion.[70]

The first clause of the first amendment has been labeled the “Establishment Clause.” The Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute (note that Cornell University is no friend to Christianity) says of the Establishment clause:

> The First Amendment's Establishment Clause prohibits the government from making any law “respecting an establishment of religion.” This clause not only forbids the government from establishing an

70 https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/first_amendment, accessed 5/2/2020

official religion, but also prohibits government actions that unduly favor one religion over another. It also prohibits the government from unduly preferring religion over non-religion, or non-religion over religion.

Although some government action implicating religion is permissible, and indeed unavoidable, it is not clear just how much the Establishment Clause tolerates. In the past, the Supreme Court has permitted religious invocations to open legislative session, public funds to be used for private religious school bussing and textbooks, and university funds to be used to print and public student religious groups' publications. Conversely, the Court has ruled against some overtly religious displays at courthouses, state funding supplementing teacher salaries at religious schools, and some overly religious holiday decorations on public land.

One point of contention regarding the Establishment Clause is how to frame government actions that implicate religion. Framing questions often arise in the context of permanent religious monuments on public land. Although it is reasonably clear that cities cannot install new religious monuments, there is fierce debate over whether existing monuments should be removed. When the Supreme Court recently considered this issue in Van Orden v. Perry, 545 U.S. 677 (2005), and McCreary County v. ACLU, 545 U.S. 844 (2005), it did not articulate a clear general standard for deciding these types of cases. The Court revisited this issue in Salazar v. Buono (08-472), a case which considered the constitutionality of a large white Christian cross erected by members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on federal land in the Mojave Desert. While five justices concluded that a federal judge erred in barring a congressionally ordered land transfer which would place the memorial on private land, there

> was no majority reasoning as to why. Three Justices held that the goal of avoiding governmental endorsement of religion does not require the destruction of religious symbols in the private realm, while Justice Scalia and Justice Thomas concluded that the plaintiff lacked standing to bring this complaint.[71]

Several attacks against this open door to our freedom have set legal precedence for its staying open. It behooves a Bible student to be reasonably familiar with these attacks and the rulings bantered about in their consideration. Five of these court cases are considered below.

Considering that the "Supreme Court has permitted religious invocations to open legislative session" a Washington Post article cited by Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute states:

> Supreme Court upholds legislative prayer at council meetings, By Robert Barnes, May 5, 2014
>
> A divided Supreme Court ruled Monday that legislative bodies such as city councils can begin their meetings with prayer, even if it plainly favors a specific religion.
>
> The court ruled 5 to 4 that Christian prayers said before meetings of an Upstate New York town council did not violate the constitutional prohibition against government establishment of religion; the justices cited history and tradition.
>
> "Ceremonial prayer is but a recognition that, since this Nation was founded and until the present day, many Americans deem that their own existence must be understood by precepts far beyond the authority of government," Justice Anthony M. Kennedy wrote for the court's conservative majority.
>
> The ruling reflected a Supreme Court that has become more lenient on how government may accommodate religion in civic life without crossing the

71 https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/establishment_clause, accessed 5/2/2020.

> line into an endorsement of a particular faith. All nine justices endorsed the concept of legislative prayer, with the four dissenters agreeing that the public forum "need not become a religion-free zone," in the words of Justice Elena Kagan.[72]

The Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute sites similar articles for the Supreme Court Rulings in areas of:

1) public funds to be used for private religious school bussing,

> Appellant: Arch R. Everson
> Appellee: Board of Education of the Township of Ewing
> Location: Everson Residence Docket no.52
> Decided by Vinson Court, Lower court, State appellate court, Citation 330 US 1 (1947) Argued Nov 20, 1946 Decided Feb 10, 1947
> Facts of the case: A New Jersey law authorized reimbursement by local school boards of the costs of transportation to and from schools, including private schools. 96% of the private schools who benefitted from this law were parochial Catholic schools. Arch R. Everson, a taxpayer in Ewing Township, filed a lawsuit alleging that this indirect aid to religion violated both the New Jersey state constitution and the First Amendment. After losing in state courts, Everson appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court on purely federal constitutional grounds.
> Question: Did the New Jersey statute violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment?
> Conclusion: 5–4 decision for Board of Education majority opinion by Hugo L. Black. The New Jersey law reimbursing parents for transportation costs to parochial schools did not violate the Establishment

72 https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/supreme-court-upholds-legislative-prayer-at-council-meetings/2014/05/05/dc142ede-cf9d-11e3-b812-0c92213941f4_story.html

Clause. A divided Court held that the law did not violate the Constitution. Justice Black reasoned that the law did not pay money to parochial schools, nor did it support them directly in anyway. It was rather enacted to assist parents of all religions with getting their children to school.

Justices Jackson, Frankfurter, Rutledge, and Burton dissented.[73]

2) university funds to be used to print and public student religious groups' publications.

Citation: 515 US 819 (1995), Argued Mar 1, 1995, Decided Jun 29, 1995

Facts of the case: Ronald W. Rosenberger, a University of Virginia student, asked the University for $5,800 from a student activities fund to subsidize the publishing costs of Wide Awake: A Christian Perspective at the University of Virginia. The University refused to provide funding for the publication solely because it "primarily promotes or manifests a particular belief in or about a deity or an ultimate reality," as prohibited by University guidelines.

Question: Did the University of Virginia violate the First Amendment rights of its Christian magazine staff by denying them the same funding resources that it made available to secular student-run magazines?

Conclusion: 5–4 decision for Rosenberger majority opinion by Anthony M. Kennedy Yes. The Court, in a 5-to-4 opinion, held that the University's denial of funding to Rosenberger, due to the content of his message, imposed a financial burden on his speech and amounted to viewpoint discrimination. The Court noted that no matter how scarce University publication

73 "Everson v. Board of Education of the Township of Ewing." Oyez, www.oyez.org/cases/1940-1955/330us1. Accessed 2 May. 2020.

> funding may be, if it chooses to promote speech at all, it must promote all forms of it equally. Furthermore, because it promoted past publications regardless of their religious content, the Court found the University's publication policy to be neutral toward religion and, therefore, not in violation of the establishment clause. The Court concluded by stating that the University could not stop all funding of religious speech while continuing to fund an atheistic perspective. The exclusion of several views is as offensive to free speech as the exclusion of only one. The University must provide a financial subsidy to a student religious publication on the same basis as other student publications.[74]

3) the Court has ruled against some overtly religious displays at courthouses:

> Petitioner: County of Allegheny
> Respondent: American Civil Liberties Union, Greater Pittsburgh Chapter
> Docket no. 87-2050, Decided by Rehnquist Court, Lower court, United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, Citation 492 US 573 (1989), Argued Feb 22, 1989, Decided Jul 2, 1989
> **Facts of the case:** Two public-sponsored holiday displays in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, were challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union. The first display involved a Christian nativity scene inside the Allegheny County Courthouse. The second display was a large Chanukah menorah, erected each year by the Chabad Jewish organization, outside the City-County building. The ACLU claimed the displays constituted state endorsement of religion. This case was decided together with Chabad v. ACLU and City

74 "Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia." Oyez, www.oyez.org/cases/1994/94-329. Accessed 2 May. 2020.

of Pittsburgh v. ACLU of Greater Pittsburgh.

Question: Did the public displays violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment?

Conclusion: 6–3 decision for County of Allegheny majority opinion by Harry A. Blackmun. In a 5-to-4 decision, the Court held that the creche inside the courthouse unmistakably endorsed Christianity in violation of the Establishment Clause. By prominently displaying the words "Glory to God for the birth of Jesus Christ," the county sent a clear message that it supported and promoted Christian orthodoxy. The Court also held, however, that not all religious celebrations on government property violated the Establishment Clause. Six of the justices concluded that the display involving the menorah was constitutionally legitimate given its "particular physical setting."[75]

4) state funding supplementing teacher salaries at religious schools:

Appellant: Alton J. Lemon, et al.

Appellee: David H. Kurtzman, Superintendent of Public Instruction of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, et al.

Location: Eastern District Court of Pennsylvania, Docket no. 89, Decided by Burger Court, Citation 403 US 602 (1971), Argued Mar 3, 1971, Decided Jun 28, 1971.

Facts of the case: Both Pennsylvania and Rhode Island adopted statutes that provided for the state to pay for aspects of non-secular, non-public education. The Pennsylvania statute was passed in 1968 and provided funding for non-public elementary and secondary school teachers' salaries, textbooks, and

75 "County of Allegheny v. American Civil Liberties Union, Greater Pittsburgh Chapter." Oyez, www.oyez.org/cases/1988/87-2050. Accessed 2 May. 2020.

instructional materials for secular subjects. Rhode Island's statute was passed in 1969 and provided state financial support for non-public elementary schools in the form of supplementing 15% of teachers' annual salaries.

The appellants in the Pennsylvania case represented citizens and taxpayers in Pennsylvania who believed that the statute violated the separation of church and state described in the First Amendment. Appellant Lemon also had a child in Pennsylvania public school. The district court granted the state officials' motion to dismiss the case. In the Rhode Island case, the appellees were citizens and tax payers of Rhode Island who sued to have the statute in question declared unconstitutional by arguing that it violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The district court found in favor of the appellees and held that the statute violated the First Amendment.

Question: Do statutes that provide state funding for non-public, non-secular schools violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment?

Conclusion: Unanimous decision for Lemon, majority opinion by Warren E. Burger. The Pennsylvania statute is unconstitutional under the religion clause of First Amendment for excessive entanglement of state and church.

8–1 decision for Lemon, majority opinion by Warren E. Burger. The Rhode Island statute is unconstitutional under the religion clause of First Amendment for excessive entanglement of state and church.

Yes. Chief Justice Warren E. Burger delivered the opinion for the 8-0 majority as to the Pennsylvania statute and 8-1 as to the Rhode Island statute. The Court held that a statute must pass a three-pronged test in order to avoid violating the Establishment Clause.

The statute must have a secular legislative purpose, its principal or primary effect must be one that neither promotes nor inhibits religion, and it must not foster "excessive government entanglement with religion." The Court held that both the state statutes in question had secular legislative purposes because they reflected the desire of the states to ensure minimum secular education requirements were being met in the non-public schools. The Court did not reach a holding regarding the second prong of the test, but it did find that the statutes constituted an excessive government entanglement with religion. In the Rhode Island program, the amount of oversight of teachers and curricula required to ensure that there is no unnecessary injection of religion into secular topics would require the government to become excessively involved in the nuances of religious education. The same danger holds true for the Pennsylvania statute, which additionally provides state funding directly to a church-related organization. Government financial involvement in such institutions inevitably leads to "an intimate and continuing relationship" between church and state. The Court also noted the potential political implications of public funding, as there is a risk of religious issues becoming politically divisive.

In his concurring opinion, Justice William O. Douglas wrote that the intrusion of the government into the running of non-public schools through grants and other funding creates the entanglement that the Establishment Clause prohibits. He also argued that non-secular schools are so thoroughly governed by religious ideologies that any amount of public funding supports those doctrines, which the Framers of the Constitution dictated the government must not do. Justice Hugo L. Black joined in the concurrence, and Justice Thurgood Marshall joined in the parts relating to case numbers 569 and 570. Justice William J.

> Brennan, Jr. wrote a separate concurrence in which he argued that the danger was not only that religion would infiltrate the government, but also that the government would push secularization onto religious creeds. An analysis of the statutes in question shows that they impermissible involve the government in "essentially religious activities," which the Establishment Clause is meant to prevent. In his opinion concurring in part and dissenting in part, Justice Byron R. White wrote that the majority opinion goes too far and, in restricting the use of state funds in non-secular schools, creates an obstacle to the use of public funds for secular education. He argued that there was no proof that religion would invade secular education or that the government oversight of the use of public funds would be so extensive as to constitute entanglement.
>
> Justice Thurgood Marshall did not participate in the discussion or decision of case number 89.[76]

It is likely more important for the most part to use this open door of freedom of religion than it is to defend it. God has done the job of keeping the door open, but always be vigilant. God has used jailed Baptist preachers to initiate the First Amendment, and to cry the loudest when Satan attempts to close the door. Cry out with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ for sure, but while crying out keep an eye on that First Amendment and the door it has opened to us.

76 "Lemon v. Kurtzman." Oyez, www.oyez.org/cases/1970/89. Accessed 2 May. 2020.

Chapter 8 Critique of Other Systematic Theology Ecclesiology Works

Critiques of some other systematic theology works are taken directly from the authors “Advanced Systematic Theology II TH80X Written Report, A Written Report Presented to the Faculty of Louisiana Baptist University, In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Doctorate of Philosophy in Theological Studies,” wherein Dr. Chafer's six volumes of “Systematic Theology” was the text assigned for analysis and comparison to other theology works. The critiques are at times harsh and often pointed but are not intended to discredit in any way the genius, character or integrity of Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952), founder and first president of Dallas Theological Seminary, the genius, character or integrity of Charles Hodge (1797-1878), a Presbyterian Minister and Princeton theologian called “the father of the printed systematic theology,” or the genius, character or integrity of Augustus H. Strong (1836-1921), an American Baptist Pastor and president of Rochester Theological Seminary. Each of their magnum opus, “Systematic Theology” works embody the best of the theological reflection and thought in their generations.

A systematic theology is more than a Bible doctrine book in that it systematically reviews other approaches to a doctrine. It needs to review what others assembled as systematic theology works with their belief systems. The "ology" in theology emphasizes a discourse which meanders down every conceivable avenue of consideration for a topic. While a Bible doctrine must detail every straight and narrow consideration of what God has revealed, a thorough "ology" must do that, plus expand and expound on every thread. It must further introduce and explore some of the major broad paths and wide gates of mans creation. It should thereby open some vistas which may not have been considered by the student of doctrine, being ever vigil because the wide paths do lead to destruction. Review of other works of systematic theology pursues this mind broadening purpose.

Critique of Chafer's 1948 Ecclesiology

Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871 – 1952) wrote eight volumes of Systematic Theology, and Volume IV is 249 pages called Ecclesiology and 199 pages called Eschatology. In my studies at Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary I reviewed and critiqued all eight volumes. Consider first that Dr. Chafer and his theology were not as fundamental as is regularly supposed. He was the founding president of Dallas Theological Seminary and long-time editor of Bibliotheca Sacra. His Seminary had the motto "Teach Truth, Love Well" and was representative of 70+ denominations. Dr. Chafer was called a fundamentalist but a militant fundamentalist could not be representative of 70+ denominations. As song leader under C. I. Scofield he became a gifted teacher for the newly formed World's Christian Fundamentals Association (WCFA). And in 1924 his Evangelical Theological College, which became Dallas Theological Seminary, was called fundamental.[77] However, evangelicals became neoevangelicals when they scoffed at the fundamental separatist position and refused the fundamentalist's militant attitude. Dr. Chafer never scoffed, but he never separated either. Dr. Chafer never mocked militants, but he never became one, and he never camped with any. Instead he coddled to 70+ denominations and the neoevangelicals which lived there.

Chafer started with two primary goals in writing his systematic theology. First he was intent on reaching the Presbyterian Denomination with a dispensational doctrine which would hold to a Biblical premillennial return of Christ. This would necessarily debunk their long held Covenant Theology and its underlying Replacement Theology.

Secondly, Chafer strives to write an "unabridged" systematic theology. Dr. Chafer contends that an unabridged systematic theology is "the collecting, systematically arranging, comparing, exhibiting, and defending of all facts concerning God and His works from any and every source recording everything ever

77 Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America,* 160

believed about God!"[78] It was stated previously that in making such a brash definition Chafer unwittingly puts philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato, and Roman Catholics such as Saint Augustine and Saint Aquinas, and Protestants, who persecuted Baptists, i.e. men such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, on equal grounds with Holy Scripture. In writing his eight volumes on Systematic Theology he repeatedly makes this blunder. A Systematic Theology is not to be an unabridged rendition of everything ever believed about God, as Chafer has boasted, it is to be a systematic organization of each truth that God has revealed in his inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired record. These truths are to debunk the theoretical conjectures of previous philosophers and theologians. Chafer uses none of this authority against Presbyterian error or the errors of the 70+ denominations he represents.

The first of these systematic purposes effects Chafer's ecclesiology because he is careful to tiptoe around the 70+ denominations he is representing. In so doing he holds onto much of Presbyterian's Calvinism. However his second purpose, writing an "unabridged theology," causes a systematic flaw which shows up in every avenue of his theology. "Unabridged" means uncondensed. In balancing the huge volume of "everything ever believed about God" Dr. Chafer never captures a systematic organization of any Bible doctrine. His voluminous effort is marked by sentences, paragraphs, and whole sections which have little redeeming value. His theology includes an overage of quotes of other 'theologians', and a famine of quoted or expounded Holy Scripture. In light of these drawbacks, little value can be extracted from Chafer's verbose 249 pages of ecclesiology.

Critique of Chafer's Volume IV Ecclesiology Introduction

A review of Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer's Ecclesiology and Eschatology in Volume IV of his Systematic Theology must begin with a review and documentation of his three most critical and systematic flaws. His whole Systematic Theology is seriously flawed in its organization, in its doctrines, and in its

78 from www.ChristianBook.com book promotion accessed Dec 2013

communication. Dr. Chafer's Ecclesiology is profoundly effected by all these shortcomings, but his Eschatology represents, at least, baby steps away from the flawed doctrine of Protestants, their Reformed Theology, and John Calvin's Covenant Theology.

Dr. Chafer has a very verbose and conglomerated communication method. His work is laden with run-on passive voice sentences. His commentary drones on for pages without significant content, and it takes careful scrutiny to discern his main point. This may be a purposeful style. Pleasing 70 + denominations at Dallas Theological Seminary is easier when many of them do not know exactly what you are saying. It is not, however, a competent way to write a systematic theology.

The doctrines of Dr. Chafer must be drawn out of his verbose commentary. As was stated in critique of his volume on Soteriology, it is easier to draw doctrine out of the Holy Bible than to draw it out of Chafer's voluminous effort. It is doubtless more accurate to do so as well. Again, trying to capture a doctrine agreed to by 70+ denominations is an undue challenge. None the less, this critique will address his doctrines on Ecclesiology and Eschatology, especially as they differ from Bible Doctrine.

The most profound flaw in Dr. Chafer's Systematic Theology is his lacking organization and lack of a system in what he considers systematic. This profoundly effects each volume and each doctrine of his work. Here, in Volume IV of his work, this lack annuls his presentation of a Biblical Ecclesiology and a Biblical, dispensational, premillennial Eschatology.

When one sets out to write a Systematic Theology they must organize every revealed doctrine in the Holy Bible. To some extent every man is a theologian because he organizes, in some fashion, what he knows about God. In that organization he distinguishes which parts he believes. Hopefully that is done consciously. Making such organization systematic entails a considerable effort and focused purpose. To do a systematic analysis each substantial part of a system is partitioned and isolated into a separate subsystem which is carefully defined and understood. Then all the systems are analyzed in concert to understand the larger system.

In a Systematic Theology, in a volume on Ecclesiology and

Eschatology, those topics would be partitioned and isolated and therein carefully and Biblically defined. Dr. Chafer's Volume IV has none of that.

A Critique of Dr. Chafer's Ecclesiology

Dr. Chafer's Ecclesiology section begins with his attempt to divide angels from Gentiles and Jews from Christians. This snafu occurred because Dr. Chafer wants to hold on to John Calvin's election of Christians, but reject John's Covenant Theology where Elect Christians replace God's elect nation, Israel. Calvin brought into Reformed Theology this old Roman Catholic Replacement Theology. Dr. Chafer is intent on advancing Dispensational Theology, but refuses to disbar, or deny, or even define its archenemy Covenant Theology. This dilemma results in a volume on Ecclesiology intent on differentiating between Jew and Christian and Gentile. This is very awkward and not normally a concern of Ecclesiology at all.

> *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*(Gal.3:27-28)

> *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* (1Cor.12:13)

Chafer's Systematic Error, What is Truth?

In his Ecclesiology Dr. Chafer needs both a strong organization of the truth about the church and the church age, and then a relentless attack of the Reformed Theologian's Covenant Theology, Replacement Theology, and Catholicness of the church. Chafer's lacking organization and discipline make such a success unachievable. Chafer's unsystematic system and flawed

organization of material brings about a very flawed doctrine. A flawed doctrine which it conceals in exaggerated verboseness.

Previous theologies have been built as if theology were a science. Dr. Chafer falls into the same trap. A scientific method starts with a hypothesis which it twists and refines with experiment until it holds enough merit to advance to a theory. Theologians have considered theories reliable enough to place in their science based systematic theologies. In the scientific method, after a theory receives more extensive testing and refinement, it becomes a law. As an engineer this author loves and respects the scientific method. Kepler used it expertly to derive the laws of planetary motion. As a theologian this author insists that the scientific method has no place in deriving the "Thus saith the LORD" kind of truth which a true theologian is looking for.

Pilot asked Jesus, "What is Truth?" In my statistics class I taught that truth is discovered by four primary means, only one has proven reliable.

1) Philosophy says "I think therefore I am." In the philosophy field one thinks, reasons, deduces and believes, expecting he has therein discovered truth. Philosophy expounds only subjective rational truth.

2) In the turn of the last century scientists formalized the scientific method, and used it in founding natural laws operating in our universe. In this method a hypothesis is tested, refined, and observed into a theory, which is tested, refined, and observed into a natural law. Leading theologians pounced on this, and considered theology as the chief of the sciences. They filled their Systematic Theology books with theories that they documented into laws expecting that they had discovered the truths about God. But science is only an able tool to lead and surmise the truth about natural laws, not supernatural laws.

3) Statistics had an ugly beginning. It had trouble overcoming its nemesis, "Figures don't lie, but liars figure." The surveys and studies, the analysis and presentation of averages and standard deviations could surely lead to truth. But consider how statisticians and politicians readily misleads people into some grandiose untruths. Know also that philosophy and science can do the same

misleading. In the field of statistics, a majority believing something makes it the truth, and the danger of that reasoning is self-evident.

For philosophy one need only mention Christian Science founder Mary Baker Glover Eddy's idea that this world is only in the mind. And we have come to where science has, with no evidence, elevated the spontaneous generation of life to a theory, and then to law for “scientists”. Evolutionists even settled on the insane idea that "survival of the fittest" had changed beagle dogs into Clydesdale horses, and lizards into bald eagles. Ergo, these three forms of discriminating truth, statistics, science, and philosophy, have their notable flaws.

4) The forth method of discerning truth is the "Thus saith the LORD" method. This is not the religious method. Indeed religion's source of truth is generally some ugly combination of the previous three mentions. Even in Dr. Chafer's Systematic Theology this "Thus saith the LORD" method to often takes a back seat to religion and survey. One would expect a section on Ecclesiology would begin with God's notable definition of the church and its formation. Instead Dr. Chafer first philosophizes about angels, Jews, Gentiles and Christians. He then gives the scientific method a spin and presents theories that have been advanced. Chafer then presents a statistical survey of who believes what.

Organizing theology systematically requires that a baseline of truth be established up front. That base line must proceed with a "Thus saith the LORD" as its sole source. The other methods are fraught with blunder.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer has purposed to "collect and systematically arrange, compare, exhibit and defend all facts concerning God and his works from any and every source." Systematically such an approach is theological malpractice. His lack of organizing thoughts and direction is serious, but his total miss-organizing the "system" in systematic, coupled with his strong reliance on extra Biblical sources make this volume, and his previous three, inexcusable.

Chafer's Ecclesiology

Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the *ecclesia*, translated to English as the *church.*. The origin of the word *church* comes from the Greek word *kuriakos,* meaning "the Lord's house." The English definition was extended some to make it capture the full concept of Christ's *ecclesia*. It had to capture that the *ecclesia* is, "a called out and assembled body of believers," i.e. believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Three integral parts of this basic definition need to be emphasized. The church is "called out", it is "assembled", and it is "a body". Failure to organize an Ecclesiology around this heart beat is a failure indeed. Dr. Chafer exhibits that failure.

I am remiss to effectively critique Dr. Chafer's section on Ecclesiology because of its misdirected or total lack of organization. This critique of Dr. Chafer's volume will expeditiously draw out from his work what should have been said in a logical pursuit of a systematic Ecclesiology.

In his second and seventh chapters on the church, Dr. Chafer makes a noticeable effort in clarifying the long time confused definition. But in these two chapters he speaks of the church as an organism, and the church as an organization. With this classification Chafer attempts to separate the church catholic/universal and the church local. He rightly discerns that a poor distinction between universal-catholic and local "has wrought confusion and damage to an immeasurable degree."[79] He then worsens the confusion. Dr. Chafer never clarifies that the Holy Bible has no catholic church.

Recall that Chafer is leaning and hobnobbing with the neoevangelical in every sense of the word. When fundamentalists drew a clear line and took a staunch separatist position against the apostate church, the neoevangelical determined that they would stay in/with the apostate church to "change them from within." Christ said we were to be "in the world but not of the world," but when it comes to apostasy, he demanded complete separation from it (2Cor 6:14-18[80]) . The neoevangelical decided, on purpose, to be

79 Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology Volume IV*, Dallas Seminary Press, 1948., 36

80 2Cor 6:14-18 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what

in the apostasy but not of the apostasy, and that thwarts every attempt they have made for its reformation. Chafer knows the truth about the Catholic Church. He words the dilemma of the reformers who would not recover the truth about this catholic organization i.e. a church being only a local organization. But Chafer will not confront the ugly distortion of truth. Chafer allows the 70+ denominations he is pursuing to wallow around in some concept of a catholic church which is "invisible," but universal, which is catholic, but no longer "Roman Catholic." However, his "organized" church, his catholic church, is NOT local, NOT independent, NOT autonomous, and NOT Biblical.

The truth that the reformers would not recover out of the early church is, "there is no universal, catholic, or umbrella church which holds together all believers." Chafer panders on about an organism and an organization, but he refuses to uncover the whole truth, insisting rather that he keep a foot hold within the apostate organization; truly leaning neoevangelical to the core.

The fundamental truth is that every New Testament, pre-Roman church was independent and autonomous. There was no other church or head church, denomination, counsel or organization, which usurped dictatorial authority over any other local body of believers. Even the apostles would not use their authority to dictate their will, and their will was indeed the foundation stone of truth. After Paul took and circumcised Timothy, Dr. Luke records, "*And as they went through the cities they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem*" (Acts 16:4). That is as strong as it gets in the Scriptures. When Rome set up its universal, catholic church it not only issued its own decrees, it used

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fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Roman Empire swords to enforce their dictates.

Paul clarifies the organization which Dr. Chafer tries to divide into two different entities. In Ephesians he states clearly "*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the house hold of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*" (Eph 2:19-22).

In this Scripture the body of believers is referred to as the temple and habitation of God and not the Holy, Catholic, Universal Church. And the apostles are shown to be the foundation stones upon which this temple stands. This image is prevalent in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, a book, as you recall, that Martin Luther and John Calvin et al. wanted to tear from the Holy Scriptures and cast into a monastery trash can.[81] The Revelation of Jesus Christ shows us a temple where God tabernacles with man and, "*The foundations of the wall of the city, were garnished with all manner of precious stones...* " (Rev 21:18-20). Sure enough, the twelve precious stones listed represent the twelve (count them 12) apostles that are indeed foundations (Rev 21:14). This Revelation, while we are examining the foundation truths which Reformers refused, depicts this city, called the Bride, the Lamb's wife, as having twelve gates which are the twelve tribes of the children of Israel (21:12), "*And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass*" (21:22). Recall, once more, that Romanism, Protestantism, and the Reformed Theology which flowed from them both, purposely castigated the twelve gates of this city to pretend that the Holy Catholic Church was the replacement for the nation of Israel. Their theology, which threw a disparaging eye on the Revelation of Jesus Christ, established an organization, the holy Catholic Church, which, they indoctrinated,

81 Do not miss the irony here, as the Vatacanus and Sinaticanus manuscripts from Alexandria Egypt were puled from the monastery trash cans and made the mainstay of the Modernist's New Testament texts.

would usher in the kingdom age of Christ here on earth.

In this larger understanding of the systematic error inside of the Roman Catholic Church, an error carried out of the mother church by her protesters and reformers, one can see the enormity of Reformed Theology's error in both Ecclesiology and Eschatology. The task for a critique of Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer's Systematic Theology, should capture how much of this error he understood, and exactly what he did about it in 2000+ pages of expose'. Dr. Chafer's meanderings about an organized church and an organism called church do not bode well for a direct confrontation with this apostasy of catholicness. It is his blind neoevangelical leanings/tolerance which prevents Dr. Chafer from exposing the apostasy in this catholic church concept. It is ripe with the cliche' "Don't let doctrine divide us, let the spirit unite us." The spirit in that trite saying, however, is not the spirit of truth.

The concept that one universal catholic church, visible or invisible, unites and organizes all believers into one body is hatched from the pits of a Roman hell. Protestants protested the Roman Catholic concept of salvation by penance. They protested the exaltation of a Roman priesthood. They even protested the motherhood of the Roman Catholic Church. When their protesting forced their severance from the Roman Catholic Church, their battle cry was for salvation by grace alone. Even then, they carried with them a little baptismal regeneration, some infant baptism, extensive exaltation of clergy, and all the catholicness of the church. When they reformed theology, it was Roman Catholic Covenant Theology, and it included a holy catholic church. Their version of the holy catholic church could no longer be called Roman, so in desperation for its root they called it, "The invisible church." Before this novel ecumenical solution to the contradiction of a catholic church, the Church of England assumed the role of being the true catholic church; then so did the Lutherans, then so did the Presbyterians, then, alas, so did the next Protestant Denomination that popped up. An ecumenical solution to this dilemma finally 'evolved' out of this competition of catholicness and they concluded that the catholic church was an invisible body of believers, the "invisible church." Shame on their reasoning.

How is it that Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer could write 250 pages on Ecclesiology and never address this catholic church issue? Quite simply, a neoevangelical cannot rock the boat or use reproof. They are attempting to stand in the midst of an apostate church, they cannot kick at a cardinal doctrine of the Protestant religion. So Dr. Chafer defends a catholic "organization."

Chafer's Error In Denominationalism

A doctrine rooted in Romanism and connected to the catholic church phenomena is Denominationalism. A denomination is a collection of lessor churches organized under the headship of a greater church or greater authority. One church controlling what another church practices or believes is not found in the Bible, nor in New Testament churches, until the Roman Empire established it as her means of controlling its kingdom.

Rome dictated that there would be one catholic church, and they at Rome would be its head. Denominationalism was hatched by Rome. Prior, all churches were independent, autonomous bodies of baptized believers. After Rome devised and constructed denominational control, autonomous, independent, believer baptizing bodies were called Donatists, Paulicians, Waldensians,... et al., and heretics of Roman control. They still existed, and were present when, after a thousand years, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin finally had their fill of Romanism. We are still here today. Baptists are the original non-denominationals. It is curious, and distressing, how Dr. Chafer tip-toes through the consternation of denominational divisions.

The fact remains that no denomination can possibly be correct, nor Biblical. Any group which attempts to usurp an authority on another, violates the autonomous independence of that other. Every denominational structure that fell out of the Roman Empire and its propensity to control local churches is inherently wicked and in its core, evil.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer is blind/silent to this truth, and tries to reconcile denominational evil with his own rationalizing of "facts". "The fact remains," says Chafer, "that both declarations are true... We are not divided, and, we are sore oppressed by schisms

rent asunder." Chafer's rationalizing continues, "The true church is not divided, nor could it be; yet the visible church is a broken and shattered attempt at the manifestation of a Scriptural ideal."[82] Chafer's 250 pages of Ecclesiology is an unmitigated rationalism which purports both a visible and invisible church, an organized and organism church, a universal and denominational church, a catholic and a fractured church. As a neoevangelical sympathizer Lewis Sperry Chafer is sunk right up to his chin in the apostate church he set out to refute. His whole Systematic Theology, all seven volumes, and particularly this volume on Ecclesiology, is refute with verbose rationalization which keeps him from clarifying the truth. Here his rationalization about the catholic church being invisible and the visible church being denominational clarifies that Dr. Chafer is so buried in the apostasy that he can no longer see the truth. There is no catholic church in the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Word of God, and in that Holy Writ, every denomination which strives to usurp authority over Christ's autonomous, locally assembled body of believer is inherently evil.

Clarifying the Corporate Body

With that much striking clarity stated, it needs consideration that Scriptures do, on occasion, make reference to all believers, Jews, Gentiles, bond, or free, being immersed (baptized) into one body. "*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are as one body, so also is Christ*" (1Cor 12:12). This corporate reference to believers is mitigated in the clear definition of an ecclesia. This clear mitigation is worded well by Baptist Theologians Dr. Emery Bancroft and Dr. Mark Cambron. Bancroft states, "The church as an organism includes all regenerate believers gathered out of the world between the first and second advents of Christ, while as an organization it includes local believers united for service of Christ in any given assembly."[83] Dr. Cambron clarifies that the word "church" is used for A) A Local Assembly (church), B) Local

82 Ibid. 37

83 Emery H. Bancroft, *Elemental Theology,* 1932, Baptist Bible Seminary, 1945, 60, Zondervan, 307

Assemblies (churches), C) The Body of Living Believers (unnumbered), and D) The Complete Body of Christ.[84] As Bancroft and Cambron rightly divide the word of truth, they allow no venue for a universal catholic church, Roman nor Protestant. Nor do they allow for a denominational existence in any form.

Dr. Chafer's Poisonous Root

Dr. Chafer's Catholic Church with Denominational Divides is a poisonous root which renders his whole Ecclesiology of little doctrinal value. The rationalizations that he imagines in this section, illustrate the ever present danger of mixing with apostasy, rather than separating from it. Such is the plight of the neoevangelical who purposefully rejected the staunch separatist position of the early Fundamentalist. When trying to appease 70+ denominations, Chafer is "*conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter*" (Isa 59:13b-14).

Some would contend that Lewis Sperry Chafer was not neoevangelical leaning, and Dallas Theological Seminary was indeed Fundamental. I must let George W. Dollar, Professor of Church History at Bob Jones University answer that. In his 1973 book "A History of Fundamentalism in America", he states,

> Alumni of Dallas Seminary would raise the old claim that all is sound and Fundamental there, although such known sympathizers with New Evangelicalism as H.G. Hendricks, H.W. Robinson, G.W. Peters, and R.H. Seume serve on the faculty.... Each year an array of speakers who travel with New Evangelicals mold the mind of students to a middle-of-the-road position. These speakers have included R.A. Cook, Arnold T. Olsen, H.T. Armerding, Clark Pinnock, F.A. Schaeffer, Carl Henry, Clyde Taylor, and Ted Engstrom.[85]

84 Mark G. Cambron, *Bible Doctrines,* 1954, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 214-215

85 George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, 1973, Bob

Dr. Dollar also clarifies succinctly,

> That the new evangelical strategy must be one of infiltration and not separation. In addition, he (New Evangelical Harold Ockenga, President of Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California[86]) named the new evangelical forces as the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Fuller Seminar, Billy Graham, and *Christianity Today*... In 1960 Ockenga wrote: 'my personal concern as the originator of the New Evangelicalism has been to stir the interest of Evangelical Christianity in meeting the societal problems through content of Biblical Christianity. This is the tradition of Calvin, Luther, and Knox.'[87]

Dollar goes on to clarify that Charles J. Woodbridge, a Fuller Seminary faculty member who left in protest to Ockenga's new direction, called this new and dangerous direction,

> a theological and moral compromise of the deadliest sort. Such a threat is it that the sharpest language must be used to expose its threat and insidious danger... Neo Evangelicalism advocates toleration of error. It following the downward path of accommodation to error, cooperation with error contamination by error, and

Jones University Press, 209

86 Harold John Ockenga (1905-1985) was an American evangelical leader, a Congregational minister, and one of the co-founders of Fuller Theological Seminary. Harold John Ockenga (June 6, 1905 – February 8, 1985) was a leading figure of mid-20th-century American Evangelicalism, part of the reform movement known as "Neo-Evangelicalism". A Congregational minister, Ockenga served for many years as pastor of Park Street Church in Boston, Massachusetts. He was also a prolific author on biblical, theological, and devotional topics. Ockenga helped to found the Fuller Theological Seminary and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, as well as the National Association of Evangelicals. from http://www.theopedia.com/Harold_Ockenga accessed 15 June 2014

87 Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America,* 204

ultimate capitulation to error.[88]

It is reiterated here that Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder of Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924, does not use the sharpest language and does not expose the error of the 70+ denomination that he is pandering to. He is the epitome of neoevangelicalism as herein defined.

A final note of the dangers and growth of Protestant-NeoEvangelicals and their Reformed Theology is from the May, 2014 Ancient Baptist Press Bulletin, which states:

> Following his Strange Fire Conference John MacArthur recently said, "The resurgence of Reformed Theology... is the greatest revival in the history of the church, clearly." This should cause all Bible-believing Baptists to take notice. While independent Baptists are busy planting churches, the Calvinist/Reformed system is finding its way into the libraries of our young pastors and then into their pulpits. This requires a Biblical response. As Laurence Vance has said, "The final authority for a Calvinist is not the Bible at all, it is Reformed Theology."[89]

Chafer's Ecclesiology and dabbling in Reformed Theology is embryo to the neoevangelical sympathies found in Dr. John Walvoord, the successor at Dallas Theological Seminar. Dr. Chafer's tip-toeing and coddling to John Calvin's election of saints, Presbyterian Denominationalism, and Reformed Theology's Covenant Theology made him unable to sound the trumpet of truth when it came to Ecclesiology.

It is distressing that even as I type this report the the Chosen People Ministries reported that "The Presbyterian Church USA recently approved an initiative to divest stock holdings in companies allegedly profiting from Israel's occupation of

88 Ibid. 205

89 Pastor James Alter, Ancient Baptist Press Bulletin 5/15/2014, 137 W Edgewood St., Sidney, OH 45365

Palestinian territories."[90] This comes from the 221st General Assembly of the PCUSA held last week (June 2014) in Detroit. It is herein clear, when the PCUSA votes 310 to 303 to oppose Israels presence in the Promised Land, that Calvin's Covenant Theology is still alive and well inside the Reformed Theology of the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA).

Critique of John Miley's 1892 Methodist Ecclesiology

John Miley (1813-1895), a Methodist, published his Systematic Theology in 1892. Methodists have always been a curious lot striving to unite, as it were, Anglican Church of England with the Holy Bible's holiness.

> Methodism is "itself made up of several parts, deriving from the preaching and ministry of John (1703-91) and Charles (1907-88) Wesley, and initially of George Whitefield. The term 'methodist; was in origin used derisively by opponents of the Holy Club at Oxford, but Wesley used it from 1729 to mean the methodical pursuit of biblical holiness."[91]

The "brethren in America" became the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1787 and in 1844 divided into Methodists, Episcopal, and Episcopal Methodists. These never really united until 1932 in Great Britain, and 1968 in America's United Methodist Church.

Methodists generally endorse the Anglicanism.

> "Anglicanism is an episcopal (with bishops) Church, in continuity with Catholicism, but also accepting much from the reformation. It is thus described as 'both Catholic and reformed'. … There is nevertheless a common focus in that Anglican theology is based on an appeal to scripture, tradition, and reason, expanded in the dictum of Lancelot Andrewes:

90 June Newsletter Mitch Glaser, President, Chosen People Ministries, http://chosenpeople.com

91 John Bowker, "*Oxford Concise Dictionary of World Religions*", Oxford University Press, 2000, c.v. "Methodism", pg 375.

'One canon, … two testaments, three creeds, four general councils, five centuries, and the series of fathers in that period, …to determine the boundary of our faith.' "[92]

Miley's work was reviewed in its entirety during this effort, but, interestingly, there was no insight to what John Miley might have believed about the church, catholic or local, organized or organism, Jew or Gentile, neither or both. Miley, like Hodge, wrote nary a thing on ecclesiology. Two things of note in that, first Methodist John Miley published his *Systematic Theology* twenty three years after Presbyterian Charles Hodge, the "Father of Systematic Theologies." Second Methodist John Miley was most interested in correcting Presbyterian Charles Hodge's presumptions about Calvinism and not much interested in other ologies.

Further I have not found very much written about ecclesiology by Methodists of any stripe. They seem to pretty much go with the Protestant and Reformed flow of Covenant Theology with no investigation or prying into its gross assumptions. I have found that true as I pastor a Baptist church in Yates County, the only NYS county that is predominately Methodist (all other counties up here are predominately Roman Catholic). The few born-again-saved Methodist I have encountered will not leave the church that their great great grandparents were in, and they never heard of the Millennial Reign of Christ, any dispensation, nor any Rapture of the Church, and they are quite content to stay in that blissful ignorance. And, sadly perhaps, I have pretty much resigned myself to leaving them there.

As seen in our volume 4 on Christology the genius of John Miley has made a substantial contribution on some subjects and the interested student is refereed back to that volume for his insights.

It can be seen from his systematic theologies contents below that John Miley's effort did not address ecclesiology at all:

Volume 1 Introduction 1-56
Part I Theism 57-158
Part II Theology 159-354
Part III Anthropology 355-530
Volume 2 Part IV Christology

92 Ibid. c.v. "Anglicanism", pg 40.

Part V Soteriology
Part VI Eschatology
Ch 1 Future Existence
Ch 2 The Intermediate State
Ch 3 The Second Advent
I. Doctrine of the Advent.
1. A Personal, Visible Coming of Christ 440
2. Theory of a Merely Figurative Sense 441
3. The Premillennial Theory 443
II. The Advent in the Light of its Concomitants.
1 . The General Resurrection 443
2. The Final Judgment 444
3. The End of the World 445
Ch 4 The Resurrection
Ch 5 The Judgment
Ch 6 Future Punishment
Ch 7 Future Blessedness
Appendices
Append I Inspiration of the Scriptures
Append II The Angels
Append III Arminian Treatment of Original Sin

The systematic approach John Miley takes codifies the nineteenth century's propensity to make theology a science. In fact he words such a position very clearly:

> The special subjects of systematic theology are the doctrines of Christianity. It is not meant that the doctrines so designated have their only source in the New Testament. All the doctrines of religion which have a ground of truth in either nature or the Old Testament also belong to this form of theology. But as the doctrines from such sources have their recognition and fuller unfolding in the New Testament we may properly designate all as the doctrines of Christianity. The sense of the term doctrine is not hidden. Any principle or law reached and verified through a proper induction is a doctrine, whether in science, philosophy, or theology. Thus there are doctrines of physics, chemistry, geology, ethics, metaphysics. So in theology: certain truths reached and verified through a proper induction are doctrines in the truest sense of the term. We may instance the personality of God, the divine Trinity, the person of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith.

> Systematic theology deals with such truths, and for completeness it must include the sum of Christian doctrines.
>
> The doctrines severally must be constructed in a scientific manner. A system of theology is a combination of doctrines in scientific accord. But the several doctrines are no more at hand in proper form than the system itself. Hence the requirement for the construction of the doctrines severally. This is possible only through a scientific process. Through a careful study of the facts of geology the doctrines of the science are reached and verified, while in turn they illuminate the facts. Through a careful study and profound analysis of the relative facts the great doctrine of gravitation was reached and verified. The multiform facts are thus united and interpreted and set in a light of new interest. So must systematic theology study the elements of doctrinal truth, whether furnished in the book of nature or the book of revelation,...[93]

Although I appreciate Miley's genius and writing abilities his systematic error is clear. Below he defends a departure from Revelation and dependence on nature for a proof that there is a God. This, again, was typical for 19th century systematic theologies.

> On the broadest division there are two sources of theology —nature and revelation. They are very far from any equality; in fullness, clearness, and authority fairly comparable only by contrast. Some great truths of Christian theology are peculiar to revelation. Yet the first question of all religion, the existence of God, must be taken first to nature. The best Christian thinkers agree in these two sources. For the present we are merely stating them. The question of secondary sources will follow their more direct treatment.[94]

Although John Miley's systematic theology does not tell us much about a Methodists position on the church, the complete

93 Miley, John, Systematic Theology Vol. 1 & 2, The Library of Biblical and Theological Literature, New York: Eaton and Mains, 1894, The Internet Archive http://www.archive.org/details/systematictheolo01mile, [John Miley (1813-1895), Methodist Theologian] Vol 1 pg 5.

94 Ibid.

omission of an ecclesiology section tells us something.

Critique of Charles Hodge's 1878 Ecclesiology

Charles Hodge (1797-1878), from Princeton Theological Seminary, may be considered "The Father of the Published Systematic Theology." He was genius, a gifted communicator, and very Presbyterian. He worded a very "Reformed Theology." Even so he made two glaring errors in his overall approach to theology and consequently, these effect all his volumes. Charles Hodge considered theology a science that must follow a scientific method, just like other natural sciences. Thus, for Hodge, theology does not have the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Word of God as its sole source. Instead, theology, following a scientific method, has its source in the hypothesis of men, which is developed and tested into theory, which is developed and tested into "all we know about God," i.e. the truth from "scientific law." That is the scientific method.

True theology starts with the truth, and only debates about how these things can be. We are not theorizing to find truth, the Lord Jesus Christ is truth (John 14:6). Hodge's means of developing theology as a science was very popular in the 19th century because the scientific method was formalized and exalted as infallible at the end of the 18th century. This systematic error is frequent in published systematic theologies of the 20th century. They weigh in about various theories and strive to select the most promising ones, trying to discover truth.

Secondly, Hodge relied on the counsels, creeds, and edicts of the Holy Roman Catholic. He trusted their refining and development of these scientific theories about theology. This is again, a common source of error for all Protestant theology, and particularly all Reformed Theology. (Protestants in general are broken into two major camps which divide along beliefs of Calvinism or Arminianism. Recall that Baptists are not Protestants, and dare not divide between these camps, remaining, instead, as strict Biblicists on the matters of election and predestination.)

Roman doctrine is, obviously, what Reformers were

reforming, and what Protestants were protesting. It is seen in Hodge's development of theology, that they never did abandon the systematic errors of the Roman Catholic Church. Most of these errors were just encased in a wordy rationalism which, using the scientific method, were developed into Reformed Theology. These source errors bleed into all of Hodge's theology with particularly brazen and well documented clarity.

Although Hodge states "a formal vindication of the Protestant doctrine of the nature of the church... belongs to the department of ecclesiology," he has no such department in his Systematic Theology.[95] Instead he contrasts the Romish doctrine of the nature of the church with the Protestant one in considering Vol 1. Chapter V. "Roman Catholic Doctrine Concerning the Rule of Faith." He therein describes the error of the Romanish Church as follows:

> Romanists teach that the Church, as an external, visible society, consisting of those who profess the Christian religion, united in communion of the same sacraments and subjection to lawful pastors, and especially to the Pope of Rome, is divinely appointed to be the infallible teacher of men in all things pertaining to faith and practice. It is qualified for this office by the plenary revelation of the truth in the written and unwritten word of God, and by the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit vouchsafed to the bishops as official successors of the Apostles, or, to the Pope as the successor of Peter in his supremacy over the whole Church, and as vicar of Christ on earth.
>
> There is something simple and grand in this theory. It is wonderfully adapted to the tastes and wants of men. It relieves them of personal responsibility. Everything is decided for them. Their salvation is secured by merely submitting to be saved by an infallible, sin-pardoning, and grace-imparting church.[96]

The problems for maintaining a Rominist church doctrine are myriad. Hodge outlines these well:

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95 Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology: Volume I*, Charles Scribner & Company, 1871, pg 157.

96 ibid. 149-150

> Romanists have transferred the whole Jewish theory to the Christian Church; while Protestants adhere to the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles. Romanists teach, (1.) That the Church is essentially an external, organized community, as the commonwealth of Israel. (2.) That to this external society, all the attributes, prerogatives, and promises of the true church belong. (3.) That membership in that society is the indispensable condition of salvation; as it is only by union with the church that men are united to Christ, and, through its ministrations, become partakers of his redemption. (4.) That all who die in communion with this external society, although they may, if not perfect at death, suffer for a longer or shorter period in purgatory, shall ultimately be saved (5.) All outside of this external organization perish eternally. There is, therefore, not a single element of the Jewish theory which is not reproduced in the Romish.[97]

But Hodge is unable to describe an understandable Protestant solution. He says:

> Winer in his "Comparative Darstellung," thus briefly states the two theories concerning the Church. Romanists, he says, "define the Church on earth, as the community of those baptized in the name of Christ, united under his Vicar, the Pope, its visible head. Protestants, on the other hand, as the communion of saints, that is, of those who truly believe on Christ, in which the gospel is purely preached and the sacraments properly administered."

With no section on ecclesiology Charles Hodge gives almost no other insights to the doctrine of the church. He contends that the Romish ideas cannot be sustained, but he does not explain the Protestant carryover of the Romish Replacement Theology or Covenant Theology into the Protestant thinking. It seems that making the catholic church (visible or invisible) consist of only true believers, instead of any derelict with a Roman Baptismal certificate, was as far as Charles Hodge dared to go.

97 ibid. 154-155

Critique of Augustus Strong's 1907 Ecclesiology

Augustus H. Strong, 1836-1921, was a Yale graduate who taught theology at Rochester Theological Seminary for forty years and became the first president of the Northern Baptist Convention. In title he was a Baptist, but in conviction he was contaminated by both reformed theology and evolutionary Darwinism. His systematic theology has a tremendous depth and scope but his motivation in writing it depicts the grave danger in reading it. Strong strives to mold a traditional reformed emphasis and an evolutionary critical scholarship into the distinctive Baptist conviction. This dangerous combination of reformed theology and atheistic evolution blended into Baptist-Bible doctrine permeates every avenue of his work.

The primary problems of understanding what Strong addresses have to do with the misleadings of the Roman theologians that muddied theology previously. His repeated emphasis on various theories reveals his reliance on the scientific-method to resolve the truth. The Lord Jesus Christ is Truth, and theological truth cannot be resolved via hypothesis, theories, nor scientific methods. Problems of understanding, for the Bible student and theologian, are best resolved by the simply axiom, "God said it, I believe it, and that settles it for me." Below is Augustus H. Strong's extensive ecclesiology outline.

PART VII ECCLESIOLOGY, OE THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH, 887-980
Chapter I. The Constitution of the Church, or Church Polity, 889-929
I. Definition of the Church, 887-894
1. The Church, like the Family and the State, is an Institution of Divine Appointment, 892-893
2. The Church, unlike the Family and the State, is a Voluntary Society, 893-894
II. Organization of the Church, 894-903
1. The Fact of Organization, 894-897
2. The Nature of this Organization, 897-900
3. The Genesis of this Organization, 900-903
III. Government of the Church, 903-926
1. Nature of this Government in General, 903-914

A. Proof that the Government of the Church is Democratic or Congregational 904-908
B. Erroneous Views as to Church Government, refuted by the Scripture Passages, 908-914
(a) The World-church Theory, or the Eomanist View, 908-911
(b) The National-church Theory, or the Theory of Provincial or National Churches, 912-914
2. Officers of the Church, 914-924
A. The Number of Offices in the Church is two, . . . 914-916
B. The Duties belonging to these Offices, 916-918
C. Ordination of Officers, 918-924
(a) What is Ordination? 918-920
(b) Who are to Ordain ? 920-924
3. Discipline of the Church, 924-926
A. Kinds of Discipline, 924-925
B. Eelation of the Pastor to Discipline, 925-926
IV. Eelation of Local Churches to one another, 926-929
1. The General Nature of this Kelation is that of Fellowship between Equals, 926-927
2. This Fellowship involves the Duty of Special Consultation with regard to Matters affecting the common Interest, 927
3. This Fellowship may be broken by manifest Departures from the Faith or Practice of the Scriptures on the part of any Church, , . . . 928-929
Chapter II. The Ordinances of the Church, 930-980
I. Baptism, 931-959
1. Baptism an Ordinance of Christ, 931-933
2. The Mode of Baptism, 933-940
A. The Command to Baptize is a Command to Immerse, 933-938
B. No Church has the Bight to Modify or Dispense with this Command of Christ, 939-940
3. The Symbolism of Baptism, 940-945
A. Expansion of the Statement as to the Symbolism of Baptism, 940-942
B. Inferences from the Passages referred to, 942-945
4. The Subjects of Baptism, 945-959
A. Proof that only Persons giving Evidence of being Regenerated are proper Subjects of Baptism, 945-946
B. Inferences from the Fact that only Persons giving Evidence of being Regenerate are proper Subjects of Baptism, 946-951
C. Infant Baptism, 951-959
(a) Infant Baptism without Warrant in the Scripture 951-952
(b) Infant Baptism expressly Contradicted by Scripture, 952-953
(c) Its Origin in Sacramental Conceptions of Christianity, 953-954
(d) The Reasoning by which it is supported Unscriptural, Unsound,

and Dangerous in its Tendency, 954-956
(e) The Lack of Agreement among Pedobaptists, 956-957
(f) The Evil Effects of Infant Baptism 957-959
II. The Lord's Supper 959-980
1. The Lord's Supper an Ordinance instituted by Christ, 959-960
2. The Mode of Administering the Lord's Supper, 960-962
3. The Symbolism of the Lord's Supper, 962-965
A. Expansion of the Statement as to the Symbolism of the Lord's Supper, 962-964
B. Inferences from this Statement, 964-965
4. Erroneous Views of the Lord's Supper, 965-969
A. The Romanist View, 965-968
B. The Lutheran and High Church View, 968-969
5, Prerequisites to Participation in the Lord's Supper, 969-980
A. There are Prerequisites, 969-970
B. Laid down by Christ and his Apostles, 970
C. The Prerequisites are Four, 970-975
First, Regeneration, 971
Secondly, Baptism, 971-973
Thirdly, Church Membership, 973
Fourthly, An Orderly Walk, 973-975
D. The Local Church is the Judge whether these Prerequisites are fulfilled, 975-977
E. Special Objections to Open Communion, 977-980

Some has already been said about the failings of Storng's 1907 Systematic Theology, but his thoroughness and comprehensiveness in handling problems of understanding is still noteworthy.

Critique of Thiessens' 1949 Ecclesiology

A thorough critique of Henry Thiessen's "*Lectures in Systematic Theology Part VII Ecclesiology,"* is presented in the author's report to the Faculty of Louisiana Baptist University in June 2011, for his Master's in Theological Studies Degree. This very thorough coverage of Henry Clarence Thiessen's *Lectures in Systematic Theology's* ecclesiology chapters 35-38, is presented herein because he was so close to the truth, yet so muddied with error and compromise. It is extensive and included here because in 2011, the review of Thiessen's theology convinced and persuaded this author to document a legitimate, Bible based, Systematic Theology. This critique is not intended to detract from Thiessen's genius, character, or integrity, although it is often a direct and a harsh critique of his work. It is only intended to guard against such error and compromise in present day students of the Holy Bible.

For the sake of completeness the Q&A portion o this report was included here. It presents though provoking questions and answers on Thiessen's chapters 35-38, and is, as stated previous, a harsh critique of Thiessen's error and compromise. The inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired Word of God is profitable for doctrine (what is right), for reproof (how to get right), for correction (how to stay right), and for instruction in righteousness (how to teach right). A "reproof" takes one all the way back to the drawing board, as it were, while "correction" is more like course correction for a slightly skewed rocket trajectory. The Q&A section critiquing Thiessen's work is often more of a reproof than a correction, but both are done without apology.

LBU's TH504 course assignment was to read Thiessen's ecclesioloy chapters and prepare and show the answers to at least eight (8) questions which could be an appropriate final exam in developing this course for a college or Christian school. Thiessen's page numbers for each question and answer are given, and that written report is presented below.

Who is Dr. Henry Clarence Thiessen ?

The Master's College was originally founded as Los Angeles Baptist College and Theological Seminary on May 25, 1927 to meet the need for a fundamentalist Baptist school on the West Coast. The intention was to provide a biblical and Christ-centered education consistent with those doctrines of the historic Christian faith.

Dr. William A. Matthews, pastor of Memorial Baptist Church of Los Angeles, became the founder and first president. The seminary was extended an invitation to be temporarily housed at Calvary Baptist Church in the Los Angeles area. Several more moves followed until the seminary moved onto its own property in Los Angeles in 1942.

Dr. Mathews died at his home on August 18, 1943. He was succeeded by presidents C. Gordon Evanson, Floyd Burton Boice, and **Henry C. Thiessen.** In 1946, the seminary became a graduate-level school and initiated a separate undergraduate and liberal arts program. **Following Dr. Thiessen's death in 1947,** Dr. Herbert V. Hotchkiss and Dr. Milton E. Fish, a Harvard graduate, strengthened the school scholastically and spiritually.
... To facilitate accreditation of the undergraduate program, the seminary moved to Tacoma, Washington in 1974, resulting in the founding of Northwest Baptist Seminary.

In May 1985, John MacArthur became the next president of the college... The Master's Seminary started in 1986 with the specific goal of producing Bible expositors. ... The seminary is steeped in the tradition of conservative, premillennial Dispensationalism.[98]

In a 5 March 2011 correspondence, after reading a draft version of this report, Dr. Robert L. Sumner, editor of The Biblical Evangelist, sent these staunch corrections to the characterizations of his friend Dr. Thiessen:

1. Thiessen was not Reformed. He was a Baptist.

98 From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Master's_College, although wikipedia is not a trusted source for citing one's research it was the only available source that revealed Dr. Thiessen as a past president of the Los Angeles Baptist College and Seminary which later became Master's College.

2. Thiessen was not Augustinian. He was a moderate Calvinist who denied unconditional election, limited atonement and irresistible grace.

3. Thiessen was not a neo-evangelical. He was a Fundamentalist and a separationist.

4. Thiessen was not a past president of MacArthur's Master's College. He was a past president of the Los Angeles Baptist College and Seminary and went to Heaven long before the school was divided, the Seminary going north to Tacoma and becoming the Northwest Baptist Theological Seminary and the college taken over by MacArthur. Mac renamed it Master's College, but Thiessen had nothing to do with that, of course.

I knew Thiessen personally. He was a good man. I heard him teach the entire Book of Revelation in one sermon one night (he was pretrib and premil) when he had just become president of L.A.B.C & S.

Dr. Robert L. Sumner, Editor, THE BIBLICAL EVANGELIST, 134 Salisbury Circle, Lynchburg,VA 24502-5056

The staunch criticism of Thiessen's work was not significantly altered after Dr. Sumner's critique was received, while criticisms of Thiessen's character and integrity more guarded in the final draft.

TH504 Report on Thiessen's Ecclesiology

The conservative theology books of Mark G. Cambron, Millard J. Erickson, Charles C. Ryrie, Roy Mason[99], and C. I. Scofield were read and considered in light of what Thiessen covered on the course objectives (1. the theological issues of the church; 2. its definition and founding; 3. its organization and ordinances; 4. as well as its mission and destiny; 5. how this age closes with final apocalyptic events is researched.)

Specific differences from Thiessen's work are analyzed according to the Objectives below:

Objective 1. The theological issues of the church;

The theological issues of ecclesiology is most contrasted from Thiessen's catholic church concept by Cambron's local church description. Therein Cambron states:

99 Mason, Roy, "The Church the Jesus Built", Challenge Press, Lehigh Valley Baptist Church, Emmaus PA

> "While we believe that the Body of Christ is composed of all believers form Pentecost to the Rapture, we do stress the importance of the *local* church, or assembly. The local assembly is the physical body by which the Body (church) is manifested. God stresses the importance of the local church by giving it officers and ordinances. He who is ashamed of the local assembly is ashamed of that which was established at Pentecost. The local church, as well as the Body of Christ, was established at Pentecost."[100]

That opening paragraph modestly captures the Bible and Baptist emphasis on the local church rather than the catholic church which Thiessen continually emphasizes. I did not find a theology book which emphasizes the local church enough to counteract Thiessen's exaggeration of the Catholic Church. Cambron, however, comes close. Thiessen's strong emphasis on the catholicness of the church overspreads all of his ecclesiology.

Objective 2. The Church definition and founding.

While Thiessen soft shoes and completely side steps the exactness of the word *ecclesia*, Cambron and Ryrie both accentuate its importance. The fact that the Bible and Baptists exaggerate the Local Church over the Catholic Church is captured effectively in the assembling and assembly ingredients of the definition of *eccleisa*. Thiessen leaves it off completely because it does not fit his concept of his Catholic Church which will not be assembled until the Rapture. A thorough definition of *ecclesia* is essential to seeing the Bible and the Baptist's emphasis on the assembly of the Local Church.

When it comes to the founding of the church no theology book addresses the Bible truth as thoroughly as Roy Mason does. His purpose in writing is to show the perpetuity of the Baptist's Biblical doctrine and he thus puts great emphasis on the founding and organization of the local church over any "universal, invisible

100Cambron, Mark G., "Bible Doctrines, Beliefs That Matter", 1954, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pg 221-222.

theory" of a church. Mason establishes well that Jesus founded the church, not at Pentecost when all the theologians insist, but prior to his ascension. When Jesus was with them, he establishes, the body of assembled believers, (*the ecclesia*) which 1) had the Gospel, 2) were baptized believers, 3) had an organization, 4) had the proper Head, 5) had both the proper ordinances, 6) had the Great Commission, and 7) had met and were meeting prior to Pentecost. That is a description of a founded Local Church; NOT invisible, NOT catholic, but founded and local.

Objective 3. The Churches organization and ordinances.

Ryrie and Cambron do not pussy foot around with a church office of Deaconess as does Thiessen. The implication of the neo-evangelical[101] is that the King James translators describe our sister Phebe as a 'servant', instead of what they like, a 'deaconess', in Romans 16:1. It certainly detracts from such a woman held office of the church. Certainly the epistles to Timothy and Titus are the greater detraction of such an unBiblical office without help from any translators, but neo-evangelicals, and Thiessen himself, have already dismissed these epistles as just Paul's opinions. It is unfortunate that Thiessen pussy foots with neo-evangelicals

101From Theopedia http://www.theopedia.com/Neo-evangelicalism "The Neo-Evangelical movement was a response among orthodox evangelical Protestants to the separatism of fundamentalist Christianity beginning in the 1930s. The term was coined by Harold Ockenga in 1947, to identify a distinct movement within the broader evangelical fundamentalist Christianity of that day. What has been termed a split within the fundamentalist movement, came about as they disagreed among themselves about how Bible-believing Christians ought to respond to an unbelieving world. ... Neo-evangelicals held the view that the modernist and liberal parties in the Protestant churches had surrendered their heritage as Evangelicals by accommodating the views and values of the world. ... The term neo-evangelicalism no longer has any reliable meaning except for historical purposes. It is still self-descriptive of the movement to which it used to apply, to distinguish the parties in the developing fundamentalist split prior to the 1950s. The term is now used almost exclusively by conservative critics, to distinguish their idea of Evangelicalism from this movement. They claim that a loss of Biblical authority was evident early, which would later bear fruit in more and more accommodation: ... **neoevangelicals deny, or too severely qualify their belief in, the doctrine of biblical inerrancy**

instead of standing on the clear inerrant Scriptures and decrying such foolishness.

Concerning the ordinances Cameron shoots strait, keeps it concise, defeats Catholic Sacramental Doctrine, and hangs tight to all the Baptist distinctives, including the two ordinances. While Thiessen hobnobs with Ironside to pretend that any saved person is a member of the catholic church and eligible to receive the Lord's Supper of some group, Cambron denies it. He states:

> "No one but a baptized child of God should participate in the Lord's Supper. Those who ate with Him at the Last Supper had been baptized. Baptism is the symbol of the commencing of the new life, and the Lord's Supper is a symbol of that life."[102]

Clear, concise and Biblical, you have to love Cambron's argument here.

Objective 4. as well as the Churches mission and destiny.

While Thiessen dismisses the Biblical commissioning of the church when considering the mission of the church, Ryrie and Cambron make it paramount. It is hard to understand how one's systematic theology could not, but Reformed Augustinian Theologies do not consider the Great Commission the mission of the church. Thiessen does not; Erickson does not, Hodge does not; even Strong, the Reformed Baptist does not. Remember that their Covenant Theology has the formation of the Church in the Old Testament and the Catholic Church as the replacement of Israel! What Thiessen considers "The Missions of the Church" Ryrie lists under "Other Ministries of the Church." Therein he considers 1) The Ministry of Discipline, 2) The Ministry of Widows, and 3) The Ministry of Charity. Ryrie thus gives a more Biblical approach which leaves the real mission of the church as the real mission of the church.

102Ibid. Cambron, pg 222-223.

Objective 5. How this age closes with final apocalyptic events is researched.

I found no other theologians who addressed this particular objective under ecclesiology. It seems a fitting ending, and Thiessen herein appropriately points out that the church will not convert the world and it will occupy a place of blessing and honor throughout eternity, however such considerations are given under eschatology by others. C. I. Scofield does make both points abundantly clear in his short work on prophecy entitled "Prophecy Made Plain."[103] In light of Catholic eschatology, and the lack of dispensational grasp among most Protestants it certainly needs a greater herald than Thiessen.

103Scofield, C. I., "Prophecy Made Plain", chap II "God's Purpose in this Age" pg 21-37.

Thiessen's Chapter 35 Q&A Obj. 1 & 2

Introductory: Definition And Founding Of The Church
pg 403-411

In consideration of Objective 1. The theological issues of the church AND Objective 2. The church definition and founding:

1. What is Thiessen's primary definition of Church?

Ans pg 405-407. Thiessen's does not readily give a definition of church, nor does he address the misgivings about its definition. He points out 3 things the church is not, (not Judaism improved, the kingdom, or a denomination) and then says the church (yet undefined) is considered in two senses, catholic (universal) and local. Finally on pg 408 under his universal sense he gives a secondary definition of "A group of people called out from the world and belonging to God."

2. What is a good working definition of Church?

Ans Ryrie pg 394, Cambron pg 213. The 'church' is an English rendition, (not a translation or a transliteration) for the NT word '*ecclesia*' which is properly defined as: the called together (often misnomered 'called out') assembly of believers in Jesus Christ. Although the assembly is not to be confused with a catholic church, a universal body, or an invisible church, there are a few uses of the *ecclesia* to refer to the people themselves whether assembled on not.

3. Where does the English word 'church' come from?

Ans pg 407. "The English word 'church' comes from the Greek word *kuriakos,* which means 'belonging to the Lord.' This adjective occurs only twice in the New Testament: It is used of the Supper of the Lord (1Cor 11:20) and of the Lord's Day (Rev 1:10)"

4. How would you contend Thiessen's assertion that Matt 16:18 (the built Church) is speaking specifically of a catholic, universal Church?

Ans pg 407. The Bible Says in Mat 16:18 "*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" The word *ecclesia* is used in 4 ways, #1 a local assembly, "*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth ...*"; #2 local assemblies, "*unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace ...*"; #3 the body of living believers unnumbered "*beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it ...*"; and #4 the complete body of Christ, "*Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ...*"; but NEVER as a catholic body assembled and organized to be head over any other part of the body! In Mt. 16:18 Jesus is speaking speaking of the church as in definition #4, as the complete body of Christ.

5. How would you contend Thiessen's assertion that 1Cor 15:9, Gal 1:13, and Phil 3:6, with cf Acts 8:3 (the persecuted church) is speaking specifically of a catholic, universal church?

Ans pg 407. The Bible Says 1Co 15:9 "*For I am the least of the apostles,*

that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God....", Ga 1:13 "*For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: ...*", Php 3:6 "*Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless ...*", Ac 8:3 "*As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.*" The word *ecclesia* is used in 4 ways, #1 a local assembly, "*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth ...*"; #2 local assemblies, "*unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace ...*"; #3 the body of living believers unnumbered "*beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it ...*"; and #4 the complete body of Christ, "*Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ...*"; but NEVER as a catholic body assembled and organized to be head over any other part of the body! In these references the church is referenced as in definition #3, as the body of living believers unnumbered .

6. How would you contend Thiessen's assertion that Eph 5:25,26, and 27 (the sanctified church) is speaking specifically of a catholic, universal Church?

Ans pg 407. The Bible Says Eph 5:25-27 "*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*" The word *ecclesia* is used in 4 ways, #1 a local assembly, "*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth ...*"; #2 local assemblies, "*unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace ...*"; #3 the body of living believers unnumbered "*beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it ...*"; and #4 the complete body of Christ, "*Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ...*"; but NEVER as a catholic body assembled and organized to be head over any other part of the body! In these references Christ is speaking speaking of the church as in definition #4, as the complete body of Christ.

7. How would you contend Thiessen's assertion that Eph 1:22, 5:23, and Col 1:18 (the headship of the church) is speaking specifically of a catholic, universal church?

Ans pg 407. The Bible Says Eph 1:22 "*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, ...*", Eph 5:23 "*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ...*", Col 1:18 "*And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*" The word *ecclesia* is used in 4 ways, #1 a local assembly, "*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth ...*"; #2 local assemblies, "*unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace ...*"; #3 the body of living believers unnumbered "*beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it ...*"; and #4 the complete body of Christ,

"*Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ...*"; but NEVER as a catholic body assembled and organized to be head over any other part of the body! In these references God is speaking of the church as in definition #4, as the complete body of Christ.

8. How would you contend Thiessen's assertion that 1Cor 12:28, Eph 3:10 and Heb 12:23 (other references to the church) is speaking specifically of a catholic, universal church?

Ans pg 407. The Bible Says 1Co 12:28 "*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues ...*", Eph 3:10 "*To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, ...*". Heb 12:23 "*To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,*" The word *ecclesia* is used in 4 ways, #1 a local assembly, "*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth ...*"; #2 local assemblies, "*unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace ...*"; #3 the body of living believers unnumbered "*beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it ...*"; and #4 the complete body of Christ, "*Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it ...*"; but NEVER as a catholic body assembled and organized to be head over any other part of the body! In these references the church is referenced as in definition #3, as the body of living believers unnumbered.

9. What is horribly wrong with Thiessen's lead sentence of his Section II, "The founding of the Church"?

Ans pg 408. Thiessen's lead sentence of his Section II, "The founding of the Church" implies that there are two churches founded, a Universal (Catholic) Church and local churches. Later he calls the Universal (Catholic) Church the 'true church' (pg 414) making it clear which one he believes in.

10. Why does Thiessen insist that 'both' Churches he defines were founded at Pentecost? And refute his premise.

Ans pg 409-410. Thiessen says that 1Cor 12:13 "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit ....*", dictates that the church was founded at Pentecost because that is when believers were first baptized in the Holy Spirit. If this were the case the Holy Spirit would be more founder of the church than Christ was. It was not necessary for the church to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be founded as a local assembly of baptized believers. They were already commissioned, given the ordinances, had a business meeting, and were assembled for a prayer meeting before the Pentecost filling. That is amply sufficient for its founding by Jesus Christ.

Thiessen's Chapter 36 Q&A Obj. 3.

The Foundation of the Church,
The Manner of the Founding,
and The Organization of the Churches
pg 412-421

In consideration of Objective 3. The Churches organization and ordinances:

1. With growing disdain for Thiessen's ecclesiology give his primary, secondary and tertiary sources for the foundation of his catholic church.

Ans pg 412-413. It is very un-Baptist and ergo very troubling that Thiessen never uses the Holy Bible as his primary source. In defending the founding of a catholic church he uses "The consensus of Biblical writers on this subject" (pg 413) as his primary source; citing that *'petra'* and *'petros'* is "nowhere confounded in literature" makes secular literature his secondary source; and his tertiary sources involve "those who heard him say this" and "Jesus spoke Aramaic and we cannot tell whether the distinction in terms was made in the Aramaic!" Nowhere in this consideration does he use or treat the Holy Scripture as the authoritative, inerrant, infallible, inspired word of God on the subject. Indeed that he would be more concerned about exactly what Jesus said in Aramaic than exactly what was recorded and preserved in His Greek is very very troubling.

2. Thiessen completely eludes the elementary Greek consideration of Matthew 16:18 which any freshman Greek student could infer, what is it?

Ans pg 412-413. It is elementary in Greek that pronouns will always agree in gender with the nouns which they point to. In Matthew 16:18 the *os* ending on *Petros* (Peter) makes it a masculine noun, and the *a* ending on both *tauta* (this) and *petra* (rock) make them feminine nouns. Thus the 'this(F) rock(F)' upon which Christ will build his church cannot be Peter(M). It is clearly the *aletheia*, truth(F), presented previously by Peter(M); the truth(F) presented was that "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." and this(F) is indeed the cornerstone upon which

Christ founded his church. (Notice the feminine ending *a* on *aletheia*, truth, making 'truth' a feminine noun.) Elementary Greek.

The words of Matthew 16:18 with their direct English translation below each Greek word are:

καγω δε σοι λεγω οτι συ ει πετροϖ και επι ταυτη τη πετρα
And also I unto thee I say that thou art Peter (M) and upon this (F) the rock (F)

οικοδομησω μου την εκκλησιαν και πυλαι
I will build my the church (F) and the gates

αδου ου κατισχυσουσιν αυτηϖ
of hell not shall prevail against it (F)

3. Thiessen completely eludes the elementary Greek consideration of Matthew 16:18 and instead gently pokes at the errant Roman Catholic doctrine of ecclesiology; how so and why?

Ans pg 412-413. In regards to Thiessen's catholic church not being built upon Saint Peter, as the Romans built their catholic church, Thiessen can only cite “the consensus of Biblical writers”, the confirmed use of 'petra' or 'petros' in secular literature, and the speculative possibilities of what Jesus may or may not have said in Aramaic. He then muddies up his allegations even more by testing the likely hood and trends of Jesus speaking of himself in the third person. These are indeed not the defenses of a Bible believer, nor do they display any propensity to believe the written Word of God as a final authority.

4. A mainstay and errant treatise of Saint Augustine's ecclesiology is that the church that Jesus founded was but an embryo and must needs 'evolve' into the more matured fully developed establishment that Augustine himself helped fashion; what is Thiessen's position on this errant philosophy?

Ans pg 414. Thiessen and other Reformed Augustinian Theologians must needs conform to a mainstay and errant treatise of Saint Augustine's ecclesiology that the church that Jesus founded was but an embryo and must needs 'evolve' into the more matured fully developed establishment that Augustine himself helped fashion. Such a premise is supported when Thiessen says

"The universal or true Church ... was not 'organized' but 'born'", and thus called "the church of the firstborn ones.[104]" Thiessen is completely ignoring the Holy Scriptures that say, "*that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1Tim 3:15). Thiessen then says, "At first there was no organization, ... gradually, however, ... Because the believers were already members of the true Church, they felt impelled to organize local churches ... for the common good." He even musters the rash accusation that "it is doubtful whether the Scriptures contemplate rigid denominational organizations" (pg 415), as if God did not know how to document for the leaven that would get into the church! This with his later reference to the 'primitive church' contrasted with the developed catholic church is absolute and unfounded balderdash.

5. What is obvious but never examined in Thiessen's Section III "Organization of Churches"?

Ans pg 415. Thiessen must talk of the organization of local churches because there is never any organization of Thiessen's, Rome's, or the Reformed Augustinian Theologian's catholic Church. The Bishops with their Dioceses, along with Synods of Presbyters with theirs, is all fabricated without a shred of information from the Bible. Indeed in the Bible there is never a body of believers given any authority over another local church; even the apostles only provided recommendations to churches where they were founders but not members.

6. Why should Thiessen and Reformed Augustinian Theologians say "We prefer to speak of the organization of *churches*, rather than of the *Church*"?

Ans pg 415. Thiessen and Reformed Augustinian Theologians say

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104This reference is taken completely out of context by Thiessen to make it say what he wants to believe. The whole sentence says "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." (Heb 12:22-24)

"We prefer to speak of the organization of *churches*, rather than of the *Church",* because the leading indicator that there is no catholic church is found in the Bible being silent about its organization. No where in Scripture will you find an apostle usurping an authority over any group of local churches. All instructions, organization, and communications are directed at local churches, none at any catholic church.

7. What is wholly absent from Thiessen's defense for "the fact of organization"?

Ans pg 415. It is disturbing that Thiessen attempts to defend the 'fact' of church organization without opening a Bible and looking at the 'act' of church organizing. Paul did write to Timothy on the subject stating, "*But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*" He then expands on how the churches should be organized with two distinct offices, as prescribed in one of our Baptist distinctives.

8. What does Thiessen site for his authority for officers of the Church, and what does he omit?

Ans pg 417-419. Rather than use the Holy Scriptures as his authority for the local church offices, Thiessen states, "If early practice is to be our guide today, then there are to be in the churches the same offices." Shame, shame on Thiessen.

9. What is brazenly wrong with Thiessen's presentation of an office of 'Deaconess'?

Ans pg 420. Three gross errors of Thiessen's preference for an office called 'deaconess': 1) Thiessen has already established that his perception of 'early practice' is to be his guide when, for a true theologian, the Scripture should be our guide and final authority; 2) The Holy Scripture provides no characterization or qualifications of such an office, even if Thiessen can imagine such; and 3) I Timothy 2 would clearly invalidate any such office with women not allowed to lead, usurp authority, teach, or lead in prayer. Shame, shame on Thiessen for attempting the defense of such an idea.

Thiessen's Chapter 37 Q&A Obj. #3

The Ordinances of the Church
pg 422-431

In consideration of Objective 3. The churches organization and ordinances:

1. No matter how long you study your Bible you will never find the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church which Thiessen lists; what are they?

Ans pg 422. Thiessen lists the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church as: "ordination, confirmation, matrimony, extreme unction, penance, baptism and the eucharist."

2. Thiessen's definition of 'sacrament' does not build a large enough wall of separation from an ordinance; reinforce this wall.

Ans pg 422. Thiessen tampers with the word 'sacrament' without the brazen exposure that it deserves and he implies that the catholics have 'evolved' the word from its origins to make it more palatable. He says "Originally this word meant *to make sacred, to dedicate to gods or sacred uses."* He is careful not to expose that all of its uses, including uses to which Roman Catholics 'evolved' the word towards, includes a mystical attachment to the act or item. In other words when something is declared a sacrament, it leaves the ordinary, leaves the physical and becomes metaphysical; it takes on a mystical, spiritual ability to alter the physical.

Baptist's insistence on the ordinances being called just that and never called a 'sacrament', especially a 'holy sacrament' is to: 1) ensure the complete separation from the catholic use of these symbols; 2) to emphasize that they are symbols that have a witnessing and mental image only, and no mystical or metaphysical effect; and 3) to ensure that these symbols do not take on any initiation rites of their own, or 'means of grace', as protestants call it, as in the catholic use wherein they, supposedly, mystically perform the uniting with the body of Christ (which they call the Holy Catholic Church); wherein they supposedly, mystically perform the crucifying of, and the eating and receiving of the body of Christ; and wherein they supposedly, mystically drink of his actual blood. Baptist's will always be staunch in denying all these definitions of catholic sacraments. There are but two ordinances and, by a genuine Bible believer, they should never be referred to as 'sacraments.'

3. After Thiessen's inadequate coverage of the mysticism within sacraments, he accuses G. Campbell Morgan of being mystical concerning baptisms that are not directly connected to water; use Heb 6:1-2 to refute what he says about Morgan's doctrine.

Ans pg 423. Although Hebrew 6:1-2 states that one of Christianity's first principles of the oracles of God is the 'doctrine of baptisms' (plural), Thiessen refused to believe there is any baptism other than water baptism. G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945) was an extraordinary, expository Bible preacher and teacher, who's 90 essays in The Fundamentals were foundational to

fundamentalists; and Thiessen accuses that his explanations of Baptism are 'mystical.' Morgan, the Bible, and John the Baptist, point out that there is a baptism other than water baptism; "Mt 3:11 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*" Jesus will baptize (wholly immerse) with the Holy Ghost, but Thiessen will not hear of it. Morgan, the Bible and the Apostle Paul distinguish a baptism into the Body of Christ, creating our union with Christ. "1Co 12:13 *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*" Our union with Christ is accomplished by being (God's words) "*baptized into one body*"; but Thiessen will not hear of it. The precedence has been well established and Thiessen ignores and dismisses Holy Scripture to believe that all baptisms in the Bible are water baptisms. Shame, shame on Thiessen.

4. Thiessen shares and sites Ironside's argument that like views on baptism are not required for communion at the Lord's table, refute this.

Ans pg 425-426. As Ironside states it "Scripture never intimates that like views of baptism are required to fit saints for communion at the Lord's table. ..." Thiessen, and evidently Ironside, believe that everyone who is saved is immediately made a member of the holy catholic church and is thus eligible to receive communion at the Lord's table. In actuality a believer is eventually made a member of a local body of believers, which is what Christ organized, commissioned, and authorized; the local body of believers administers the ordinances to its members; (more particularly the ordained ministers in the office of bishop/pastor (singular) and deacons (plural) administer the ordinances to its members) and that new believer is not one of those members until they have administered the ordinance of baptism and made a member eligible for the receipt of communion at the Lord's table. Ergo a Scriptural baptism, accepted by like views of a body of believers, called a local church, is indeed required to fit saints for communion at the Lord's table of that local assembly. Thiessen again dismisses this logic in his closing paragraph of this chapter on page 431.

5. What verses commissioning the ordinance of communion does Thiessen, dismiss form Scripture?

Ans pg 426. Words of instruction about the ordinance of the Lord's Supper found in Luke 22:17-20 are reported by Thiessen as being 'not certainly authentic.' Thiessen, Robertson, and Plummer then only have the testimony of St. Paul, and Thiessen has already clarified that he does not consider St. Paul's testimony to be God's testimony. There is a very dangerous precedence in Thiessen, a precedence of dismissing Scriptures like "*And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood,*

which is shed for you." (Luke 22:17-20)

6. How did Thiessen connect the dots of John 8, Eucharist, transubstantiation, and the Roman Catholic teaching?

Ans pg 426-427. Thiessen tries to the connect John 6:35, "*And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst*", to Bengel's assertion that this is related to the Holy Supper, which W. K. Kelly connects to the Roman development of the sacrament of Eucharist, which includes transubstantiation, " a doctrine which must be 'repudiated by all Romanists or Protestants save by such as are utterly blinded by superstition.' Thiessen then reports that, "The Roman Catholic Church interprets the words of Christ literally, when He says: "This is my body," He does not say, *This is the figure of my body* – but *This is my body* (2 Council of Nice, Art. 6)" This provides a fine summary of the whole error about this ordinance, and Thiessen has waded in, to stand in the middle of the error.

7. What is the Lutheran position on The Lord's Supper?

Ans pg 428-429. According to the Lutherans "the communicant partakes of the true body and blood of Christ, *in, with,* and *under* the bread and wine. The elements themselves remain unchanged, but the mere partaking of them after the prayer of consecration communicates Christ to the participant along with the emblems. This is know as the doctrine of consubstantiation."

8. Luther and Calvin did not land very far from the Roman Catholic teaching of Holy Eucharist; where did the reformed view take it and what does Thiessen think of their position?

Ans pg 429-430. The reformed position on the Lord's Supper is "Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporeally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death: the body and blood of Christ being then not corporeally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves to their outward senses. (Westminister Confession, XXIX, vii.)" To this Thiessen says "It may be questioned whether even this view does not go beyond the teaching of Scripture. The Biblical view seem to represent the Lord's Supper as a memorial to the death of Christ..." Bravo Thiessen, finally! The Reformers did not go far enough from Catholicism, the Reform view did not go far enough from the Reformers, and Thiessen, here, finally, goes away from the Reformed View, but again, he does not go far enough away.

Thiessen's Chapter 38 Q&A Obj. 4

The Mission and Destiny of the Church
pg 432-439

In consideration of Objective 4. The church's mission and destiny.

1. According to Thiessen what are the 7 missions of the Church?

Ans pg 432-436. Thiessen supposed that the 7 missions of the Church are: 1) to Glorify God, 2) to Edify itself, 3) to Purify itself, 4) to Educate its Constituency, 5) to Evangelize the World, 6) to Act as a Restraining Force, and Enlightening Force in the World, and 7) to Promote All that is Good. Note that Thiessen's missions include no preaching of the gospel!

2. If the mission of the Church is in the Commission of Christ what did Thiessen hit or miss?

Ans pg 432-436 and Matt 28:19-20. In Matthew 28 Jesus commissions the church to "*19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*" This threefold commission might be aligned with Thiessen's shortlist of seven as follows 1) to 'preach the Gospel to every creature' may align with Thiessen's 5th, to Evangelize the world; 2) to 'Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the the Holy Ghost' aligns with nothing that Thiessen mentions; and 3) to' teach them to observe all things' might in some way align with Thiessen's 4th, 'to Educate its Constituency?' It would certainly be better to take the mission of the church from the Holy Bible.

3. Explain the inconsistency between Christ's commission to the church and Thiessen's listing of missions of the Church.

Ans pg 432-436. Thiessen's inconsistency with what Christ commissioned for His church and what he lists as the mission of the Church likely stems from differing understandings of 'mission of the church'. In obvious literal understanding the Mission of the church would involve what the church was commissioned to do, but Thiessen seems to consider the mission of the Church to be what the Church seems to accomplish, (his item 1, 5, and 6) what is done to the Church, (his item 2 and 3) and what Thiessen wants that the church would do (his item 4 and 7).

4 Is it the mission of the church to edify itself and purify itself?

Ans pg 433. Although Thiessen considers edifying itself and purifying itself as missions of the church they are not what the organized church proper sets out to include in its mission statement. Saints are to edify one another, and saints are to purify themselves. Thiessen considers church discipline under its purification but in general admits that the Bible teaches that Christ is the one who edifies the church, and Christ is the one who purifies that church. Ergo these do not truly fit as missions of the church.

5. Is 'Acting as a Restraining Force in the World' really a direct mission of the Local Church?

Ans pg 435. Although the believers are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world", it is the Holy Spirit present in the believer which is the restraining force in the world. (see 2Thes.2) Again Thiessen considers the church to be the

whole of all saved believers and not an organization, yeah an organism, headed and commissioned by Christ. Acting as a Restraining Force in the World, is not a directed mission of Christ's organized body of believers.

6. Rather than use Scripture, Thiessen uses analogy to support his idea that it is a mission of the Church to 'Promote all that is Good'; how does this connect him to neo-evangelicalism?

Ans pg 436. According to Theopedia "The Neo-Evangelical movement was a response among orthodox evangelical Protestants to the separatism of fundamentalist Christianity beginning in the 1930s. The term was coined by Harold Ockenga in 1947, to identify a distinct movement within the broader evangelical fundamentalist Christianity of that day. ... What has been termed a split within the fundamentalist movement, came about as they disagreed among themselves about how Bible-believing Christians ought to respond to an unbelieving world. The neo-evangelicals urged that fundamentalists must engage the culture directly and constructively, and they began to express embarrassment about being known to the world as fundamentalists. .... The term is now used almost exclusively by conservative critics, to distinguish their idea of Evangelicalism from this movement. They claim that a loss of Biblical authority was evident early, which would later bear fruit in more and more accommodation: which they perceive to have happened wherever neo-evangelicals deny, or too severely qualify their belief in, the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy ... the Fundamentalist name does not apply to the Evangelical movement because of the neo-evangelical division."[105] Although Thiessen states "The work of reformation must be definitely subordinated to the work of evangelization .... So also in the case of philanthropy..." he gives this 'promoting of social good' and 'reformation' equal weight in the church's mission statement. It has a neo-evangelical, social-gospel flavor no matter how he rationalizes the church's devoting itself to 'social service.'

7. What is the unstated necessity for Thiessen giving good justification that 'The Church Will Not Convert the World'?

Ans pg 436-437. The Roman Catholic Church has a mixed up eschatology wherein the Catholic Church would convert the world and usher in some sort of kingdom for Christ that is not a millennial kingdom at all. Thiessen refutes this concept without alluding to the Roman Catholic error.

8. What overriding error in Thiessen's ecclesiology is insignificant in his section on the destiny of the church?

Ans pg 436-437. Thiessen considers every believer a part of the church rather than just a part of the family. This generalization causes error in his consideration of the founding, organization, and mission of the church, because founding, organization and commissioning of the church is only done in a local church level. After the rapture, when considering the destiny of the church, there will be but one *ecclesia*, or gathering, of the believers and Thiessen's generalizations about there being only one-all-inclusive church will indeed be

105From Theopedia http://www.theopedia.com/Neo-evangelicalism

accurate.

Critique of Geisler's 2002 Ecclesiology

Norman L. Geisler wrote a tremendous single volume, 1600 page book that he called "Systematic Theology."[106] It is an unabridged compilation of "everything ever believed about God" from an "evangelical" point of view. The thesis of this effort, in contrast to Geisler's effort, is to systematically layout everything revealed by God in sixty-six books, 1,189 chapters, of his revelation. That is less effort, involving less research than what was undertaken by Dr. Geisler. His work is exceptional reference material, but his premise that truth is determined by what the majority of orthodox theologians believed is dangerous and often fickle.

Of Norman L. Geisler's *Systematic Theology in One Volume*[107], Dr. Paige Patterson, President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary said,

> Great theologians are best when they are outstanding philosophers also. Then, of course, you often cannot fathom what they are saying. Norman Geisler has the unique ability as a philosopher and theologian to deal with profound concepts in ways that the common man can easily grasp. Consequently, this systematic theology will not only sit on the desk of the scholar but also of the pastor, and on the coffee table of many a layman[108].[109]

Geisler's single volume of systematic theology is indeed

106 Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology In One Volume,*Bethany House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2002, 3, 4, 5, 11.

107 Ibid.

108 This author objects to the Roman Catholic categorization of Christians being clerics, or clergy, who are denominationaly trained to read and interpret the Holy Bible, and laity or laymen, who were not trained and professional in their denomination. True, Bible believing, Born-again ones, are indwelt by the Christ and have eyes made to see, and ears made to hear. Such exude the priesthood of all believers.

109 Ibid., flyleaf

superior to Charles Hodge, and Augustus Strong's work. Charles Hodge was a meticulous and scholarly Princeton graduate but he was first and foremost a Presbyterian with a staunch reformed theology. Augustus Strong was a Baptist, equally meticulous and scholarly, but desiring to meld Baptist doctrine with reformed theology and atheistic evolution. Where Dr. Henry Thiessen did not believe that an inspired, inerrant, infallible Holy Bible was in existence in his day, Dr. Geisler uses such as his prima facie source, and at times his sole source for his doctrine. Dr. Geisler's work in one volume is also superior to Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer's verbose eight volumes of systematic theology.

Whereas Dr. Chafer blundered into ecclesiology without script, clarity or soundness, Dr. Geisler's concise style and organized coverage of it excels past Dr. Chafer's verboseness. Just the same, Geisler is hopelessly mired in the Roman made quagmire concerning the catholicness of the church, and whether it is visible or invisible. His hundred pages outline in his TOC illustrate this confusion.

Part Seven: The Church [Ecclesiology][110]

70 The Origin of the Church	1077
71 The Nature of the Universal Church	1092
72 The Nature of the Visible Church(es)	1105
73 The Government of the Visible Church	1130
74 The Ordinances of the Visible Church	1152
75 The Ministry of the Visible Church (Spiritual Gifts)	1176
76 The Relationship of the Church to the State	1193

Although Geisler is often thorough he is always thoroughly embedded in the decrees of God for everything he believes. Notice that it even lunges headlong into his ecclesiology.

The Ordination of the Church by God[111]

> Like every other work of God, the church is not an afterthought; He ordained the church from all eternity. Since God is eternal and immutable, (see chapter 32), whatever He wills, He unchangeably

110Ibid. TOC.
111Ibid. pg 1078.

wills from eternity. “He chose us in him [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight” (Eph. 1:4; cf 2Cor 5:17). God's decrees are eternal and final (Rom 11:29); He is the source and initiator of all salvation, (see chapter 59), including of those in the New Testament church, for we are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God.” He knew and ordained not only the church in general but also each person in particular who would be in it. His foreknowledge is infallible (see chapter 36), and His providence is specific and minute (see chapter 51).

It is thus obvious that Geisler will insist that his Calvinist, Reformed, Westminster Confession derived, decree driven election of souls for heaven and hell before the foundation of the world will invade every doctrine of his effort. Here it brazenly invades his ecclesiology.

A second besetting problem with Geisler's ecclesiology is his everlasting confusion about the universal-catholic church and its apportionment between a visible entity and an invisible entity. In fairness, Geisler does lay out distinctions with less smoke and mirror than others, but the artificial brokering of a visible flawed local church against an invisible unflawed catholic church is still a preposterous attempt to reform and correct Roman Catholic error wedged into Protestant Reformed theology. Geisler does break from their Covenant Theology in favor of Bible truth, but he remains in the quagmire about an invisible church.

The Invisible Church Is Universal.

Other than the early post-Pentecost church in Jerusalem, there never has been and never will be a truly catholic (universal) church on earth. Neither the Roman nor the Greek branch of Christendom is truly catholic; the only truly catholic church today is the spiritual body of Christ, which is all true believers in whatever local church or denomination. Never does the Bible use the word *church* to denote one visible ecclesiastical union that is the sole organization representing Christ on earth; the repeated use of the word *churches* reveals that only in a general, collective sense can we speak of the many self-governing, independent churches that are based on New Testament teaching as the “church” on earth. Only the invisible church is truly universal.

Thus Geisler, as a Protestant Evangelical theologian, evades a Holy Roman Catholic Church with an invisible universal church evasion. He does tiptoe through the invisible quagmire with more finesse than others, and he seems to reasonably land on his feet in the end, but he is still thoroughly muddied with the election of individual souls for heaven or hell, even after he breaks them out of their Covenant Theology, and Replacement Theology.

Geisler, as I said previous, has his moments. For a Bible student that has a sound Biblical systematic theology, Norman Geisler's "Systematic Theology" is a good reference book. But for the Bible student that does not have a solid KJV foundation for what God has reveled to man, reading Geisler will quickly gender instability whereby a student is awash in learned opinions of orthodox theologians using ecumenical, sometimes Evangelical, bible translations which express what scholarly men think God meant to say. Geisler is thorough at documenting what orthodox theologians believed, but such Roman bias makes it dangerous for the Bible student striving to determine absolute Bible truth.

Chapter 9 Ecclesiology Conclusion

> *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church (1577 εκκλησια ekklesia ek-klay-see'-ah); and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* (Matthew 16:16-18)1

Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the ecclesia, translated to English as the church. The origin of the word church comes from the Greek word kuriakos, meaning "the Lord's house." The English definition was extended to some extent to make it capture the full concept of Christ's Ecclesia. It had to capture that the Ecclesia is "a called out and assembled body of believers," i.e. believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Three integral parts of this basic definition need to be emphasized. The church is "called out", it is "assembled", and it is "a body."[112] The King James Bible consistently translates the Greek word 1577 εκκλησια ekklesia ek-klay-see'-ah "church" one-hundred-and-fifteen times, and appropriately translates it assembly three times in Acts 19:32, 39, 41.

The Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant theology and doctrine have all and always considered the church to be one united catholic, universal, entity, The Holy Catholic Church, originated in The Holy Roman Catholic Church. After Protestants broke from their mother, The Holy Roman Catholic Church, there was consternation about this doctrine and many devised a solution whereby the Holy Catholic Church was... invisible, but still Catholic.

Baptists have historically held to the Biblical view that the church is a local, independent, autonomous body with no

112 Rather than distinguish these three attributes separately some theologians, i.e. Ryrie and Bancroft, call it "called together" rather than "called out." Such semantics are accurate and may be, at times, more helpful.

denominational head, only Christ is head of the church. The corporate body of Christ being built and referenced in Matthew 16:18, is not a Holy Roman Catholic Church, nor a Holy Catholic Protestant Church, nor an invisible Catholic Church. It was seen in soteriology that a genuine born-again-saved individual is by the miraculous power of God, instantaneously converted, justified, quickened, indwelt, and baptized into Christ. In the latter of the simultaneous, instantaneous acts the individual is wholly immersed (baptized) into the corporate body of Christ and is made one with him. In this world that believer is called upon to be baptized and united with other believers in a local, independent, autonomous body called a church and continue in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship (Acts 2:40-41). There is no unified, universal, catholic church with a visible or invisible, human or denominational head otherwise involved in this operation.

That local church doctrine is espoused in this work, but before detailing it, and distinguishing it, it is important to understand the historical background of why Christendom went through the wide gate and travels on the broad way of the Roman Catholic Church, its Covenant Theology and its Replacement Theology.

Without understanding the errors of Covenant Theology, and grasping the truths of Biblical Dispensationalism, it is quite impossible to comprehend Biblical ecclesilogy. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ has a beginning and founding in the Lord Jesus Christ, and an ending that is pending in its rapture before the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant and Ironside both give superb exposition of Jesus' prophetic history of the church given in Revelation 2-3, and that stands in stark contrast to any Roman Catholic Church history.

The perpetuity of Christ's church, and consequently of Baptists, is clearly presented by both Shakelford, in his “Compendium of Baptist History”, and by J. Newton Brown's “Memorials of Baptist Martyrs – Preliminary Historical Essay” given in Chapter 4 of this volume. True church history is thereby set in stark contrast to Roman Church history. Also with a Biblical dispensational understanding of the Bible comes a church age with a distinct beginning and a distinct ending. Hyper-Dispensationalist

seem to understand the distinct ending but completely muck up the distinct beginning. Their idea that Paul started a Gentile Church distinct and separate from a “Jewish Church” is foreign to scripture and dangerous to a Bible student seeking Bible truth. No one ever became a Hyper-Dispensationalist by reading the Bible. No one every became a Calvinist by reading the Bible. No one ever became a Roman Catholic by reading the Bible. So so LDS, JW, SDA, et al. Hyper-Dispensationalist ideas are refuted in chapter 6 of this volume.

Satan in The Holy Roman Catholic Church has formed and guided hallmarks of error that assault Biblical ecclesiology. The church of our Lord Jesus Christ is not "Holy Roman", "Wholly Roman" nor "Catholic", united under an infallible human Pope. When Protestants crawled out from under their Roman Pope they kept Satan's leaven that the church is still catholic. Reformed theologians knocked heads about how a denominationally splintered yet universally united catholic church could still exist and devised a ludicrous position that the united catholic church is now invisible, but still united, and still catholic. They supposed, in their bitter denominational struggles, that there is a visible church where we attend and fight with other denominations, and an invisible church wherein we are all united as one in catholic union and harmony. Yeah, invisible. Balderdash in every whit.

The church of our Lord Jesus Christ is not catholic, in whole or in part. There is coming a day when Christ will call out and assemble his church, it will, on that day, be his bride, but until then saints need to leave off with the Holy Roman Catholic Church's teachings that the church is catholic.

Next the Holy Roman Catholic deceiver came up with his scheme of Replacement Theology wherein the Catholic Church replaces God's chosen people Israel and the Holy Roman Catholic Church becomes the new “elect of God” chosen before the foundation of the world. The doctrine is that they, the Roman Catholic Church and not Israel, will dominate the whole world in the last days, and that they, and not Israel, will rule the world and reign with Christ for a completely figurative, completely allegorical thousand-years. This, they suppose, covers what is

mentioned in the very suspect rantings of the apocalyptic allegorical Book of Revelation. They invented the allegorical method of hermeneutics and took Bible-criticism to an art form, to bolster such balderdash. Protestants were offended by the Roman Church's sale of indulgences, but as they left it they were carrying boat loads of their Replacement Theology, and a despise for God's real chosen people, Israel.

With the catholic church being the replacement of Israel as the new "Elect of God" comes a concept that the Catholic Church has always existed, and did not start with Christ, but with their teachings of Covenant Theology. All Protestants and particularly John Calvin's Presbyters, Institutes, and Reformed Theologies are sullied by a Catholic Church holding to a Replacement Theology, and an ever existent church in their Covenant Theology. John Calvin's errant teachings on a God who chose and elected some souls for heaven and the rest for an eternity in hell is only one ugly part of his whole maligned package where a Holy Catholic Church replaces Israel in a Covenant Theology.

The culmination of these three hallmarks of error in ecclesiology is the forth where they hold a complete and vehement denial of the dispensational teachings of the Holy Bible. To suppose that the church age will come to a close and God will again take up his dealings with his chosen people Israel, and initiate a millennial reign from his Holy Hill of Zion is completely contrary to all Catholic Church teachings and all of "Orthodox Christianity."

No previous systematic theology has completely stepped out of these errors, nor exposed them for what they are. The vast majority of Christendom is in lock step with these error. This Systematic Theology for the 21st Century Volume 09 – Ecclesiology, is unique in its effort to expose "The Emperor With No Clothes."

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traveled to Europe and the Orient as a missionary. Gordon authored some twenty-five books, the majority of which were devotional books under the general theme, Quiet Talks, e.g. Quiet Talks on Prayer, Quiet Talks on Service, etc. The Quiet Talks series has been collected and reprinted many times, having sold in the neighborhood of some two million copies.]

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About the Author

Pastor Ed Rice is a retired USAF Systems Engineer surrendered to be a Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Saved in 1960 at the age of eight he grew up tutored in the Scriptures through Tuscorora Baptist Church in Addison NY, where he married his high-school sweetheart Beverly Cook Rice. Drafted into the military off of the dairy farm in 1972, Ed and Bev Rice raised 3 boys while serving as a Missile Technician in the USAF. After completing a USAF AECP bootstrap program he graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in electrical engineering and was commissioned in the USAF where he served until 1995 as a systems engineer and weapons integration specialist at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, and Rome Laboratories, Rome NY. He finished his Masters degree in Electrical Engineering through The Air Force Institute of Technology in 1990.

After being commissioned as a USAF officer in 1982 he pursued his systems engineering work in several classified research and development programs. While moving around the USA in his twenty three year military career he was a youth pastor and associate pastor in Independent Baptist Churches near his station. In 1995 he became Captain Rice, USAF retired, and surrendered to be a Baptist Pastor.

In 1998 he took the senior pastorate at Good Samaritan Baptist Church, in Dresden, New York where he pursued his theological studies at Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary. At LBU Pastor Rice received his second masters degree in 2013, and his PhD in Theology in 2017. His son Michael is US Army retired living near Fort Hood Texas, Shane is an Independent Baptist Missionary pastoring Chiesa Biblica Battista, Mazara Del Vallo, Italy, and Matthew is serving our Lord Jesus Christ near Hamilton NY. Capt Rice has spent seven years teaching math and science with the ABeka Christian High School Curriculum, and seven years teaching college mathematics, a love of his life, at community colleges near his church.

Dr. Rice's staunch belief in the preserved accuracy of the inspired Scriptures and his extensive background in systems engineering make him uniquely qualified to assemble “A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century.”

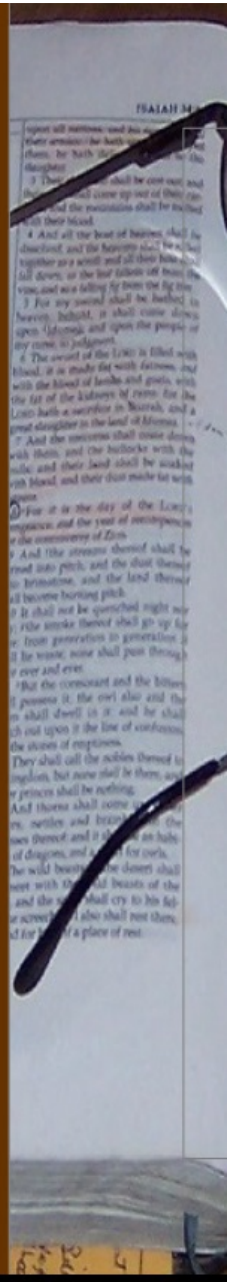
Personal Testimony of Pastor Edward Rice.

I was saved in 1960 at the age of eight. My father and mother were saved and founding members of Fellowship Baptist Church in Gang Mills New York. In 1958 my dad, Levi O. Rice, an agnostic, was invited by Cecil Palm to be a founding member of that church; both of my parents were born-again-saved two weeks later. My mother, Doris was converted form Roman Catholicism, and became a Christian. She stopped her Roman penance and practiced Bible repentance, stopped praying to Mary and called upon the Lord Jesus Christ to save her. She was thus converted from Roman Catholicism to the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone needs converted from something. Mom and Dad were now born again, and two years later I was saved in revival services with Evangelist Dale and Opel Linbaugh. Opel cut the flannel graph burden of sin off little Christian's back in her Pilgrim's Progress presentation, and I was born-again-saved before it hit the basement floor. In 1995 I retired from the USAF as a systems engineer and became an ordained Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 18:3). Being converted is quite like a new birth, Jesus said so. If you have not been converted you should trust Christ today, and you must tell him that that is your intent. (see Romans 10:9-13).

This is a Systematic Theology work that has the inerrant, infallible, verbally inspired word of God as its sole authority. Baptists, by definition, have the Holy Bible as their sole authority for all faith and practice. They should have a systematic theology book that does as well. Dr. Rice's staunch belief in the preserved accuracy of the inspired Scriptures and his extensive background in systems engineering make him uniquely qualified to assemble a systematic theology. This book contains Volumes 9 and 10 of "A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century" covering the Bible doctrines of Ecclesiology, the Doctrine of the Church, and Angelology, the Doctrine of Angels.

Vol 09 Ecclesiology The Doctrine of the Church
Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the *ecclesia*, translated to English as the *church*. The origin of the word *church* comes from the Greek word *kuriakos*, meaning "the Lord's house." The English definition was extended to some extent to make it capture the full concept of Christ's *Ecclesia*. It had to capture that the *Ecclesia* is "a called out and assembled body of believers," i.e. believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Three integral parts of this definition need to be emphasized. The church is "called out", it is "assembled", and it is "a body."

Vol 10 Angelology The Doctrine of Angels
Much has been written about angels, more has been presumed and misunderstood. The Holy Bible has no dissertation or thesis on the subject, but it does provide tremendous insights to angels. Even though it is not a theme of the Bible, there is much that could be learned about angels, and that learning can greatly benefit the believer. *"Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty....Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire..." Psalm 104:1,4*



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