

Simon Magus and the Greatest Conspiracy of All History!

Far, far, far beyond and above the speculations of men and their “conspiracies,” there is a far more ancient, vast and fundamental conspiracy which was perpetrated on the human race. It has been carefully camouflaged, disguised, “covered up” and hidden from popular view by its agents, perpetrators and proponents. This awesome massive cover-up and conspiracy involves the very origins and teachings of the vast professing Christian churches around us, today!

William F. Dankenbring

We live in a conspiratorial world! The true facts of history reveal that a tremendous, horrendous, awesome religious conspiracy has enslaved the minds of men and women in the western world, going back at least four thousand years, and still maintains a seismic grip on the minds of men.

This great conspiracy goes back much further than the fourth century after Christ – its sinuous thread goes back to at least 2,000 years before Christ walked upon the planet earth!

This vast, global conspiracy has deceived the entire world. It foreshadowed the Messiahship of Christ and subsequently hi-jacked the infant, toddling Christian Church, subverting it from the inside out, cloaking itself with “Christian” code words!

This plot should have astounded the world – but the world is still BLIND to its existence, power, scope, and diabolical purpose and goal – the destruction of all humanity.

Religious Deception Foretold

The “Christianity” we see all around us today, celebrating Easter, Christmas, Valentine’s Day, and which parades itself as the true Church of Christ, is *NOT THE CHRISTIANITY BROUGHT BY JESUS CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES!* It is a far different “religion.” It is in reality anything but “Christian.” Millions of people have been deceived – blind-sided – and have no idea of the truth!

The plot was foretold long ago. In the Bible itself we read of “that serpent of old, called the Devil, and Satan, *who deceives the whole world*” (Rev.12:9). This vast, global and ancient conspiracy began in the earliest days of the human race, when that old serpent beguiled Eve in the garden of Eden, leading her to question God, His motives, His authority, and appealing to her desire for wisdom, tricked her into disobeying the commandment of God, and her husband with her (Gen.3:1-7). At that time, God promised Adam and Eve that one day there would be a “Seed” from the woman who would “bruise” the head of the devil (the deceiver), and deliver mankind from his deceptive clutches – the first promise of a future Deliverer or Messiah (Gen.3:15). The Hebrew word for “bruise” here is *shuwph*, meaning “go gape, i.e. snap at, fig. to overwhelm: -- break, bruise, cover.” To “break” his head means to destroy him (Heb.2:14). When that would be fulfilled was not mentioned at that time.

From the beginning the devil tried to palm himself off as the true “God” and invented many religions to lead mankind to worship him in various guises and forms. He inspired men to begin different religions, to counterfeit the truth of God, to lead them away from the true God. Before the Flood, he used Adam’s son Cain to begin his diabolical apostasy and false religion. In this religion, the “cross” began to be worshiped and used as a talisman or good luck charm (supposedly the “mark” God placed on Cain to prevent men from killing him, after he had killed Abel his brother).

Cain saw himself as the “promised Messiah” and began his own religion, a religion of gross sensuality and wickedness, eventually leading the whole world before the Deluge into a time of corruption and violence, the end-result of religious perversion (Gen.6:11-12). This false religion was called “the way of Cain” (Jude 11). This is in contrast to “the Way” of the Christian, the “Way” which the world calls “a sect,” or “heresy” (Acts 24:14).

Cupid-Nimrod

This evil, seductive religious “way” manifested itself this side of the Flood, through the agency of Cush, the son of Ham, the son of Noah, and Cush’s son Nimrod and his wife Semiramis. Nimrod became the first “mighty man” after the Flood – the first world ruling tyrant and oppressor (Gen.10:8-10). He led the building of the Tower of Babel, to “emancipate” mankind from the rulership of the God of heaven. He became the world’s first “Messiah” figure this side of the Flood, and became worshipped in many nations around the world of that time, under different names in different nations and languages.

Semiramis was called “the mother of the gods.” Semiramis also became Nimrod’s wife. Says Alexander Hislop, in *The Two Babylons*, “The Chaldean Mysteries can be traced up to the days of Semiramis, who lived only a few centuries after the flood, and who is known to have impressed upon them the image of her own depraved and polluted mind. That beautiful but abandoned queen of Babylon was not only herself a paragon of unbridled lust and licentiousness, but in the Mysteries which she had a chief hand in forming, she was worshiped as Rhea, the great ‘MOTHER’ of the gods, with

such atrocious rites as identified her with Venus, the MOTHER of all impurity, and raised the very city where she had reigned to a bad eminence among the nations, as the grand seat at once of idolatry and consecrated prostitution” (*Two Babylons*, p.5).

Mother and Child

The arrogance and conceit of Nimrod and Semiramis knew no boundaries. Says Hislop, “The Babylonians, in their popular religion, supremely worshiped a goddess Mother and a Son, who was represented in pictures and in images as an infant or child in his mother’s arms. From Babylon this worship of the Mother and the Child spread to the ends of the earth. In Egypt, the Mother and the Child were worshiped under the names of Isis and Osiris. In India even to this day as Isi and Iswara; in Asia as Cybele and Deoious; in Pagan Rome as Fortuna and Jupiter-puer, or Jupiter, the boy; in Greece, as Ceres, the Great Mother, with the babe at her breast, or as Irene, the goddess of Peace, with the boy Plutus in her arms; and even in Tibet, in China, and Japan, the Jesuit missionaries were astonished to find the counterpart of Madonna and her child as devoutly worshiped as in Pagan Rome itself; Shing Moo, the Holy Mother in China, being represented with a child in her arms” (Hislop, p.20-21).

Semiramis was worshiped by the Babylonians and other eastern nations as Rhea, the great Goddess “Mother.” However, she derived her own glory from her son, as well as her claims to deification and divinity. Her son, Nimrod, or Cupid, was a person of great stature and immense powers, as well as personality and charisma – great personal magnetism. He was widely admired, and worshipped, and among the pagans was also known as Tammuz, and Bacchus, that is to say, “The Lamented One.” Thus Ninus-Nimrod-Cupid, the son of Semiramis, was a counterfeit “Son of God.” Women adored him.

A Satanic Counterfeit

Notice how this whole pagan panoply of gods and traditions were a satanic COUNTERFEIT of the coming of the TRUE CHRIST, Yeshua the Messiah, who came and died for our sins on the stake in 30 A.D. Christ was the true “woman’s seed” who would one day defeat Satan the devil (Gen.3:15). But the pagans projected this great prophecy upon their own “Messiah”-“Saviour”, Nimrod, in his many forms and guises! They claimed he was the true “Christ”, a title which means “Anointed One.”

When in the fullness of time, the true Christ came on the scene, as recorded in the gospels of the New Testament, the old pagan Messiahs had preceded him, and even “died” in a counterfeit of the death of Christ, and were supposedly “resurrected”, in the pagan religious beliefs.

What very few people realize is how these ancient pagan beliefs, customs, and even religious holidays later became BLENDED in with the “Christianity” of the world, over the centuries, beginning most pronouncedly in the days of Constantine, emperor of Rome circa 325. A.D.!

Early Church Problems

Yet in the first century of the Church, problems were already cropping up. The apostle Paul had to excoriate the Corinthian Church for its pride and divisive conduct. He rebuked them saying, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for *you are still carnal*. For where there are envy, strife, and DIVISIONS among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not carnal?” (I Cor.3:1-4, NKJV).

These disputes and divisions did not disappear from the church after Paul’s rebuke. Over the course of the first century, eventually entire churches split off and became independent. Paul warned the churches in Galatia, “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a *different gospel*, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal.1:6-7).

The entire New Testament is filled with warnings to God’s people about apostasy, divisions, false teachers causing division in the flock, and the need to be steadfast, steady, and hang on to the truth and Word of God.

Paul warned the church at Ephesus, when he was about to leave them, saying, “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure *savage wolves* will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also *from among yourselves* men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after themselves. Therefore watch and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears” (Acts 20:27-31).

By the time the apostle John wrote his third epistle, about 90 A.D., he warned a church in Asia Minor, “I wrote to the church but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us . . . prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, *putting them out of the church*” (III John 9-10).

Clearly, the church ran into serious spiritual headwinds, and opposing forces tore at the church, from its very inception. Some of the ministers in the church began to have divisions among themselves, and others broke away entirely with their flocks, with many of them becoming “independent” in authority and government, and the very teachings of the original church began to be watered down, changed here and there, and doctrinal differences and disputes arose over time.

The history of the church has not been a pretty picture. It has been a scene of

carnage, persecution, apathy, compromise, division, and apostasy. Many fell away from the truth entirely. Paul wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith, saying, “This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me” (II Tim.1:15). He warned, “But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (II Tim.3:13).

The apostle Paul warned the Corinthian Church in his day, “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the SIMPLICITY that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, ye might well bear with him” (II Cor.11:3-4).

Paul continued, “For such are FALSE APOSTLES, deceitful workers, transforming THEMSELVES into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (II Cor.11:13-15). It was only a matter of time.

Apostasy Foretold

The apostle Paul warned that many ministers would be using subtilty, subverting the very word of God in their clever arguments and reasonings, leading many astray from the true path. He wrote, “For we are not as MANY WHICH CORRUPT THE WORD OF GOD: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ” (II Cor.2:17).

In the early days of the church, members met in each others’ homes and held Bible studies and Sabbath services. As the churches grew, they would meet in larger halls and rented auditoriums. However, persecution soon set in, and the church members in Jerusalem “were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles” (Acts 8:1).

Although several thousands were converted by this time, they never constituted a great proportion of the population. Persecution kept the numbers of true Christians relatively small, although many cleaved to them with flattery, who respected their devout, godly lives and behavior, but who were fearful of becoming one of them.

Gradually, as the early apostles died, false leaders rose up and led entire congregations of the Church astray, into error.

The early apostles foretold apostasy and subversion would occur. The apostle Peter wrote, warning, “There will be false teachers among you, who will SECRETLY bring in destructive heresies” (II Pet.2:1). He said, “Many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the WAY of TRUTH will be blasphemed” (v.2). The word translated “secretly” here is *pareisago* and means “to lead in aside,” “introduce surreptitiously.”

Jude also wrote, “For certain men have crept in UNNOTICED, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 4). The Greek word for “unnoticed” here is *pareisduno*, meaning “to settle in alongside,” “lodge stealthily,” “creep in unawares.”

It began happening during the first century itself. Paul warned the Galatian church, “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a DIFFERENT GOSPEL” (Gal.1:6).

Soon whole churches began falling away from the truth and going astray. Paul warned, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned to fables” (II Tim.4:3-4). The apostasy spread quickly, so much so that Paul wrote to Timothy saying, “This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me” (II Tim.1:15).

It had begun to happen, just as Paul had predicted. He described the process this way – “For the *MYSTERY* [“hidden truth,” margin] of lawlessness is already at work” (II Thess.2:7). The word for “mystery,” *musterion*, literally means “to shut the mouth,” “a secret or mystery (through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites).”

This age-old conspiracy is called here the “MYSTERY of lawlessness,” or “the mystery of iniquity” (KJV), “secret power of lawlessness” (NIV), “Mysterious Wickedness” (Good News Bible), “

The *Amplified Bible* describes it as “that hidden principle of rebellion against constituted authority.”

Simon Magus – the First “Heretic”

The first great heretic to enter the stage was a sorcerer and magician named Simon Magus (or “Simon the Magician”). He is mentioned in Acts, chapter 8. This man saw the miracles performed by the servants of Christ, and marveled, and “believed” and was baptized. He was a Samaritan, who practiced magical arts. We read: “But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘this man is the great power of God.’ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time” (Acts 8:9-11). This Simon was baptized and followed Philip, watching all the miracles being performed.

Later, when the apostles came to Samaria, praying for the baptized converts to receive the Holy Spirit, Simon saw his opportunity, and offered them money, saying,

“Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit” (v.19).

Peter rebuked him on the spot, exclaiming, “Your money perish with you, because you thought the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity” (vs.20-23).

The Phillips Translation has this: “But Peter said to him, ‘*To hell with you and your money!* How dare you think you could buy the gift of God? You can have no share or place in this ministry, for your heart is not honest before God.’” In a footnote, Phillips explains, “These words are exactly what the Greek means. It is a pity that their real meaning is obscured by modern slang usage.”

Simon replied, “Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me” (v.24). Notice that he did not repent, but his statement implies a feeling of terror of those things Peter warned about. The word “simony” originates from this passage, which is using money to purchase spiritual offices.

Eusebius in *The Church History*, writes of Simon, “Simon has gained such fame by the wizardry with which he controlled his victims that he was believed to be the Great Power of God. But even he was so overwhelmed by the wonders Philip performed through divine power that he insinuated himself [into the faith], hypocritically feigning belief in Christ even to the point of baptism. (This is still done by those who continue his foul heresy to the present day: following the practice of their progenitor, *they fasten onto the church like a noxious and scabby disease, destroying all whom they succeed in smearing with the dreadful, deadly poison hidden in them*)” (p.59, a new translation by Paul L. Maier).

Justin Martyr wrote of Simon, “Simon, a Samaritan from a village called Githo, worked wonders through magic in Claudius’ time, thanks to the demons who possessed him. He was deemed a god at Rome and honored as a god with a statue in the river Tiber between the two bridges. It carries this inscription in Latin: SIMONI DEO SANCTO. Nearly all Samaritans and a few in other nations also acknowledge him as their chief deity and worship him [like the Pope!]. And a woman named Helen, who traveled around with him but had previously lived in a brothel [at Tyre], they call the First Emanation from him” (p.72).

The writings of Justin Martyr, born about A.D. 114, recorded in the *Ante-Nicean Fathers*, in his “First Apology,” declare:

“. . . [A]fter Christ’s ascension into heaven the devils put forward certain men who said that they themselves were gods; and they were not only not persecuted by you [Romans] but were even deemed worthy of honors. There was a Samaritan, Simon, a native of the village called Gitto, who in the reign of Claudius Caesar,

and in your royal city of Rome, did mighty acts of magic, by virtue of the devils operating in him. He was considered a god, and as a god was honored by you with a statue, which statue was erected on the river Tiber . . . And almost all the Samaritans, and a few even of other nations, worship him, and acknowledge him as the first god; and a woman, Helena, who went about with him at that time, and had formerly been a prostitute, they say is the first idea generated by him. And a man, Meandeer, also a Samaritan, of the town Capparetaea, a disciple of Simon, and Inspired by devils, we know to have deceived many while he was in Antioch by His magical art. . . . And there is Marcion, a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive, and teaching his disciples to believe in some other god greater than the Creator. And he, by the aid of the devils, has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies, and to deny that God is the maker of this universe, and to assert that some other being, greater than He, has done greater works. *All those who take their opinions from these men, are, as we have said, CALLED CHRISTIANS just as also those who do not agree with the philosophers in their doctrines, have yet in common with them the name of philosophers given to them* (Ante-Nicean Fathers, "The First Apology of Justin," XXVI, p.171-172).

Notice that these men were known as and commonly called "CHRISTIANS"!!! Clearly, the Church was already being led astray, suborned, and deceived – even Rome, during the days of Claudius Caesar!

Says church historian Eusebius, "According to tradition, Simon was the ORIGINAL AUTHOR OF ALL HERESIES. From his time down to ours, his followers, *WHILE PRETENDING CHRISTIANITY, prostrate themselves before pictures of Simon and Helen, worshiping them with incense, sacrifices, and libations. Their more secret rites are so full of frenzy, madness, and degradation that they cannot be reported in writing or words. Whatever is more disgusting than the foulest crime imaginable is surpassed by the utterly repulsive heresy of these men, who, drenched in vice, make sport of wretched women*" (p.72).

After Peter rebuked Simon, in Acts 8, and exposed him for what he was, the magician "quickly fled overseas from East to West so that he could live as he wished. Arriving in Rome, he achieved such success that the citizens erected his statue and honored him as a god" (*ibid.*).

Simon and his heresies reached Rome, before the apostle Peter arrived there. Says Eusebius, "With faith in our Lord Jesus Christ reaching all people, the enemy of salvation planned to capture the imperial city in advance and sent Simon there . . . and by assisting his sorcery took possession of many in Rome and led them astray" (p.71).

We read in *Eusebius: The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, translated by G. A. Williamson, "Simon, we are given to understand, was the prime author of every heresy." Eusebius adds, "Of such vices was Simon the father and contriver, raised up at that time by the evil power which hates all that is good and plots against the salvation of mankind, to be a great opponent of great men, our Savior's inspired apostles. . . . Consequently, neither Simon nor any of his contemporaries managed to form an organized body in those apostolic days, for every attempt was

defeated and overpowered by the light of the truth and by the divine Word Himself . . .” (page 87).

The forceful attempt at subverting the church and replacing it with a pagan counterfeit did not succeed while the apostles were still alive. But Satan is persistent, clever, and pugnacious – and never gives up. In the succeeding centuries and generations, he worked his wiles and schemes and succeeded in leading the great preponderance of Christians astray.

Simon’s Great Deception

Says the *Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Critical Experimental Commentary*, tradition represents this “miserable man as turning out a great heresiarch, mingling Oriental and Greek philosophy with some Christian elements.”

The New Bible Dictionary points out that he had “swept the Samaritans off their feet with his magical arts” (NEB, verse 9). “In essence, a Levantine mountebank, Simon cultivated the legend that he was a divine emanation—‘that Power of God which is called the Great Power.’ The concept and the title were pagan enough, but the Samaritans would by ‘God’ intend Yahweh, and Simon must have acclimatized himself to his religious surroundings. He already represents, then, a significant *syncretism of magical, Hellenistic, and erratic Jewish elements*” (“Simon Magus,” p.1189).

Simon was obsessed with the idea of power. He conceives of the apostles as “super-magicians.” He sought to purchase this ‘power’ at a high price. Tradition paints him as a man of striking ability and charismatic personality, and real psychic powers, and education, combining the charlatan with the heresiarch. His companion was Helen, a former prostitute, widely regarded as his first divine “idea,” while the multitudes proclaimed him as a divinity. “Indeed, Roman adulation had erected a statue inscribed *Simoni Deo Sancto*, ‘to Simon the holy God’. (This statue may actually have been erected to the Sabine deity Semo Sancus, but the Simonians, who worshipped at statues, perhaps saw opportunities in this one.)” (*ibid.*).

Irenaeus and Epiphanius describe the doctrines of Simon. “He seems to have developed his old theme of ‘the Great Power of God’ into a *Trinitarian scheme*: *Simon appeared to the Samaritans as the Father, to the Jews as the Son* (he only seemed to suffer), and to the world at large as the Holy Spirit. He had a redemption myth in which he rescued Helen (‘the lost sheep’) from the bondage of successive transmigrations in various female bodies; and he preached *salvation by grace*, requiring faith in Helen and himself, but allowing unrestrained liberty in morals afterwards. But Simon also borrowed heavily from Greek paganism and Greek philosophy, and some concepts appear which occur in more sophisticated Christian Gnosticism. Irenaeus and the others regard him as the **FIRST MAJOR HERETIC**, the initiator of a long chain of interrelated errors” (*ibid.*).

Irenaeus, who lived from 120-202 A.D., wrote of him:

“Simon the Samaritan was that magician of whom Luke, the disciple and follower of the apostles, says, ‘But there was a certain man, Simon by name, who beforetime used magical arts in that city, and led astray the people of Samaria, declaring that he himself was some great one, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This is the power of God, which is called great. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had driven them mad by his sorceries.’ This Simon, then – *who feigned faith, supposing that the apostles themselves performed their cures by the art of magic*, and not by the power of God ; and with respect to their filling with the Holy Ghost, through the imposition of hands, those that believed in God through Him who was preached by them, namely, Christ Jesus – *suspecting that even this was done through a kind of greater knowledge of magic, and offering money to the apostles*, thought he, too, might receive this power of bestowing the Holy Spirit on whomsoever he would, --was addressed in these words by Peter: ‘Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God can be purchased with money: thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God; for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.’ He, then, not putting faith in God a whit the more, *set himself eagerly to contend against the apostles, in order that he himself might seem to be a wonderful being, and applied himself with still greater zeal to the study of the whole magic art, that he might the better bewilder and overpower multitudes of men*. Such was his procedure in the reign of Claudius Caesar, by whom also he is said to have been magic power. This man, then, was glorified by many as if he were a god; and he taught that it was himself who appeared among the Jews as the Son, but descended in Samaria as the Father, while he came to other nations in the character of the Holy Spirit. He represented himself, in a word, as being the loftiest of all powers, that is, the Being who is the Father over all, and he allowed himself to be called by whatsoever title men were pleased to address him.

“Now this Simon of Samaria, from whom all sorts of heresies derive their origin, formed his sect out of the following materials: Having redeemed from slavery at Tyre, a city of Phrenicia, a certain woman named Helena, he was in the habit of carrying her about with him, declaring that this woman was the first conception of his mind, the mother of all, by whom, in the beginning, he conceived in his mind . . .

“For this purpose, then, he had come that he might win her first, and free her from slavery, while he conferred salvation upon men, by making himself known to them” (*Ante-Nicean Fathers*, vol.1, “Against Heresies,” XXIII, p.347).

What were the major doctrines of this self-deified creature of darkness? Irenaeus continues:

“[Simon Magus] so that he might appear among men to be a man, while yet he was not a man ; and that thus he was thought to have suffered in Judea, when he had not suffered. Moreover, the prophets uttered their predictions under the inspiration of those angels who formed the world; for which reason those who place their trust

in him and Helena no longer regarded them, *but, as being free, live as they please; for men are saved through his grace*, and not on account of their own righteous actions; For such deeds are not righteous in the nature of things, but by mere accident, just as those angels who made the world, have thought fit to constitute them, seeking, by means of such precepts, to *bring men into bondage*. On this account, he pledged himself that the world should be dissolved, and *that those who are his should be freed from the rule of them who made the world.*”

Notice! This false teacher taught GRACE – freedom from God’s Law and His Commandments! He taught REBELLION against the “rule of them who made the world” – God the Father and the Logos! He taught men should live as they pleased, and that there was no need to obey God’s law, or righteousness – that the law was “bondage”!

“Thus, then, the *mystic priests belonging to this sect both lead profligate lives and practise magical arts*, each one to the extent of his ability. They use exorcisms and incantations. Love-potions, too, and charms, as well as those beings who are called ‘Paredri’ (familiars) and ‘Oniropompi’ (dream-senders), and whatever other curious arts can be had recourse to, are eagerly pressed into their service. They also gave an *image of Simon fashioned after the likeness of Jupiter, and another of Helena in the .shape of Minerva ; and these they worship. . . .* they have a name derived from Simon, the author of these most impious doctrines, being called Simonians; and from them ‘knowledge, falsely so called,’ received its beginning, as one may learn even from their own assertions” (*ibid.*, p.347).

Here was the beginning of IMAGES used by so-called Christians, and the image of the heavenly “Father” and “Mother,” fashioned like the pagan Jupiter (Zeus) and Minerva (Venus, Aphrodite). This was nothing more than the BEGINNING OF *CHRISTIAN PAGANISM!* Notice, too, that his ministers were known as “PRIESTS”!

What great “church” body descended from this pagan root – this blasphemous duo – this wretched abomination, which set up its religious business empire at the seat of the Roman Empire, in Rome itself? Why, the Roman Catholic Church! The fruits are in the pudding! This was the origin of “*CHRISTIAN IDOLATRY!*”!

The early church writer Hippolytus (A.D. 170-236) explains more about this dastardly figure and his apostate church deception:

“Simon then, after inventing these (tenets) , ! not only by evil devices interpreted the writings of Moses in whatever way he wished, but even the (works) of the poets. For also he fastens an allegorical meaning on (the story of) the wooden horse and Helen with the torch, and on very many other (accounts), which he transfers to what relates to himself and to Intelligence

[Helen] subsequently she stood on the roof of a house in Tyre, a city of Phrenicia, and on going down thither (Simon professed to have) found her. For he stated that, principally for the purpose of searching after this (woman) , he had arrived (in Tyre), in order that he might rescue her from bondage. And after having thus redeemed her, he was in the habit of conducting her about with himself, alleging that this (girl) was the lost sheep, and affirming himself to be the Power above all things. But the filthy. fellow, becoming enamoured of this miserable woman called

Helen, purchased her (as his slave) , and enjoyed her. person. He, (however,) was likewise moved with shame towards his disciples, and concocted this figment. But, again, those who become followers of this impostor – I mean Simon the sorcerer – indulge in similar practices, and irrationally allege the *necessity of promiscuous intercourse . . .*” (Hippolytus, *Ante-Nicean Fathers*, “The Refutation of All Heresies,” XIV, vol.5, p.80).

Simon claimed to have appeared among the Jews as “Son,” and among the Samaritans as “Father,” and among the rest of the Gentiles as “Holy Spirit.” Thus with him we also see the beginning of the TRINITY DOCTRINE in the Church! Hippolytus says he appeared “in Judea as ‘Son,’ and in Samaria as ‘Father,’ and among the rest of the Gentiles as ‘Holy Spirit’”

Those who believe on Simon and Helen, Hippolytus declares, “do whatsoever they please, as persons free; for they allege that they are saved by grace” (*ibid.*).

“And journeying as far as Rome, he fell in with the Apostles; and to him, deceiving many by his sorceries, Peter offered repeated opposition.” Ultimately, he said that if he were buried alive, he would rise the third day. He ordered a trench to be dug by his disciples, and directed that he be interred there. Says Hippolytus, “whereas he remained (in that grave) until this day, for he was not the Christ” (p.81).

Nevertheless, he laid the foundation *in Rome*, for the great apostasy which swept the world and continues down to our day, today, in this “end-of-days” generation! He dogged the footsteps of Peter, seeking confrontations with him, showing that he had a fixation on Peter. As a “Simon” himself, it is possible that later followers confused him with the apostle Simon Peter. Literature such as the Clementine romance and the “Acts of Peter” have many imaginative stories of encounters between Simon and Peter in Rome. “According to Hippolytus, his final exhibition misfired. He was buried alive, promising to reappear in three days; but he did not, for, in Hippolytus’ laconic phrase, ‘he was not the Christ’” (*ibid.*).

The Age of Shadows

Famed historian Edward Gibbon in his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* writes about the establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire. He declares, “The theologian may indulge the pleasing task of describing Religion as she descended from Heaven, arrayed in her native purity. A more melancholy duty is imposed on the historian. He must discover the inevitable mixture of error and corruption which she contracted in a long residence upon earth, among a weak and degenerate race of beings” (volume 1, chapter 15, pages 382-383).

Jesse Lyman Hurlbut in *The Story of the Christian Church*, asserts, “We name the last generation of the first century, from 68 to 100 A.D., ‘The Age of Shadows,’ partly because the gloom of persecution was over the church; but more especially because of all periods in the history, it is the one about which we know the least” (p.41).

Hurlbut adds, “We have no longer the clear light of the book of Acts to guide us;

and no author of that age has filled the blank in the history” (*ibid*).

Says Hurlbut, “For fifty years after St. Paul's life a CURTAIN HANGS OVER THE CHURCH, *through which we strive vainly to look* – and when at last it rises, about 120 A.D. with the writings of the earliest church-fathers, we find a church in many aspects VERY DIFFERENT from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul.”

After the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the Church no longer had a visible headquarters. Many Jewish Christians in Jerusalem fled to a small town at Pella, in the Jordan valley. A small number of Jewish Christians endured at Pella for two centuries, in ever-decreasing numbers. They were known as Ebionites, a people by themselves, scarcely recognized by the general church and despised as apostates by their own race” (p.43).

Although the apostolic Church practiced baptism by immersion, by 120 A.D. baptism by pouring water over the head was already a custom in some churches. Although the early Christians observed the Sabbath day, by this time many began observing "the Lord's day," as they called it, or Sunday, instead (p.45).

Fierce persecution struck the Church in the first century, first under Nero (A.D. 66-68), and then Domitian (A.D. 90-95). From 110 to 313 A.D. there were systematic and empire-wide attempts to crush the faith.

Simeon, the successor of James as the head of the church at Jerusalem, a brother of Jesus Christ, is said to have attained an age of 120 years. He was crucified by order of the Roman governor of Palestine in 107 A.D. during the reign of Trajan.

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch in Syria, was thrown to wild beasts in the Roman amphitheatre in 108 or 110 A.D. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna in Asia Minor, died in 155 A.D. When he was brought before the governor and commanded to curse the name of Christ, he answered, “Eighty and six years have I served him, and he has done me nothing but good; and how could I curse him, my Lord and Saviour!” Polycarp was burned to death.

The worst persecution of all occurred in the reign of Diocletian and his successors, from 303 to 310 A.D. In a series of edicts it was ordered that every copy of the Bible should be burned, and that all churches should be torn down, and that all men who would not renounce the Christian religion should lose their citizenship and be without the protection of the law.

During this time, the true Christians fled to safety, many of them moving to central and western Europe, to get beyond the reach of the tyrannical Roman emperors. The Churches that remained in the confines of the Roman empire became more and more pagan in their faith and doctrines, embracing the pagan holidays of Saturnalia, but calling it "Christmas," and the day of “Ishtar” or “Astarte” (pronounced “Easter”!), in the spring, calling it the day of Christ's resurrection (though Christ was not resurrected

at sunrise on Easter Sunday at all, but before daybreak, while it was yet dark).

Gradually the great visible Church made its peace with the empire and the world, becoming one with paganism in doctrine and practice in many respects. Many old pagan gods were dusted off and became adored as Christian “saints.” Many old pagan temples were transformed into Christian ‘churches.’

Writes Hurlbut, “The ceasing of persecution was a blessing but the establishment of Christianity as the state religion became a curse. Everybody sought membership in the church, and nearly everybody was received. Both good and bad, sincere seekers after God and hypocritical seekers after gain, rushed into the communion. Ambitious, worldly, unscrupulous men sought office in the church for social and political influence.”

Hurlbut adds, “The services of worship increased in splendor, but were less spiritual and hearty than those of former times. The forms and ceremonies of PAGANISM gradually crept into the worship. Some of the old HEATHEN FEASTS BECAME CHURCH FESTIVALS with change of name and worship” (p.79). Hurlbut continues: “About 405 A.D. images of saints and martyrs began to appear in the churches, at first as memorials, then in succession revered, adored, and worshipped. The adoration of the Virgin Mary was substituted for the worship of Venus and Diana; the Lord's Supper became a sacrifice in place of a memorial; and the elder evolved from a preacher into a priest” (p.79).

The visible Church had been totally overcome by the world! Says Hurlbut, “The humility and saintliness of an earlier age was succeeded by ambition, pride, and arrogance, among churchmen.” The church historian adds, “But *the church and the state become one* when Christianity was adopted as the religion of the empire, and out of the unnatural union arose two evils, one in the eastern, the other in the western provinces. In the east the state dominated the church until it lost all energy and uplifting life. In the west . . . the church gradually usurped power over the state, and the result was not Christianity but a more or less corrupt HIERARCHY controlling the nations of Europe, making the church mainly A *POLITICAL MACHINE*” (p.80).

A Dark Shadow Over the Church

In 324 A.D., this revised, paganized “Christianity” became “recognized as the official religion of the Roman Empire, and a Christian emperor held supreme authority, with a court of professed Christians around him,” writes Jesse Lyman Hurlbut in *Story of the Christian Church* (page 73). He adds, “It seemed but a single step from facing lions in the amphitheatre to a place beside the throne of the world!” This was the age of Constantine.

Says Hurlbut, “It was two generations after Constantine when *images* began to appear in the churches; the early Christians having a horror of all that might lead to idolatry” (p.75).

The changes in the church began to flow thick and fast. “The ministers of the church soon became a privileged class, above the law of the land” (p.76). “The first day of the week was proclaimed as a day of rest and of worship, and its observance soon became general throughout the empire” (p.77).

Paganism crept into the church, and by stealth, subverted and overcame it! The teachings of Christ and the apostles became buried under an avalanche of pagan doctrine, holidays, rituals, and observances!

The Growing Papal Power

Thus the widespread professing church did not transform the world; the world transformed the CHURCH into its own image and likeness! Administrative regions of the Church were modeled after the administrative regions of the Empire. Thus the church evolved into the “image” of the “Beast”!

At the same time the pagan church was growing in scope and power, the Jewish Christians and those faithful to the laws of God became increasingly persecuted, scorned, and objects of animosity, hatred, and contempt.

After Constantine’s “conversion,” which was politically motivated, “the Jews were oppressed with new restrictions and exactions, and Christians were forbidden to associate with them. Constantine banished the rabbis (337), and made the marriage of a Jew with a Christian woman a capital crime” (*The Story of Civilization*, vol.4, p.347).

Up until the time of Emperor Hadrian (A.D. 117-138), the Jerusalem headquarters church, “composed primarily of Judaeo-Christians, had been loyal to the basic Jewish religious institutions, such as Passover and the Sabbath,” writes Samuele Bacchiocchi, in *From Sabbath to Sunday* (p.163). By the time of Polycrates, division was rending the church, as western churches, following Victor, the Bishop at Rome, observed an Easter Sunday, instead of the Biblical (Jewish) Passover. This controversy, known as the “Quartodeciman controversy,” threatened to wreak havoc in the church, as many church bishops in Asia and the East observed the Jewish Passover, with the Jews (see page 199).

Hadrian hated the Jews and everything connected with them. He crushed their rebellion under Simon Bar Kochba in 135. He “adopted a policy of radical repression of Jewish rites and customs” (*From Sabbath to Sunday*, p.200).

A Church Free from Jewish Influence

Writes Bacchiocchi, “The conflict and tension between Judaism and the Empire, which became particularly acute under Hadrian, may well have induced Bishop Sixtus to take steps to *substitute* those distinctive Jewish festivities as the Passover and the Sabbath with *new dates* and theological motivations, *in order to avoid any semblance of Judaism*” (*ibid.*, p.203).

By A.D. 196, Victor of Rome went so far as to excommunicate all the churches in Asia who followed the apostolic custom of celebrating Passover on the same day as the Jews. “When notified of the Asian bishops’ refusal to accept Easter-Sunday, Victor drastically ‘declared all the brethren there wholly excommunicated.’” Says Bacchiocchi, “This is perhaps the most explicit evidence of the authority of the Roman Bishop to enforce a new custom, and even to cut off from the communion of the Church an entire dissident community” (p.210).

The controversy was not “settled” in favor of the growing pagan western church, until the Council of Nicea, in 325 A.D. Emperor Constantine desired “to establish a religion completely free from any Jewish influences” (p.206). To this end, he issued a decree which revealed his true anti-Semitic nature and ill will:

“It appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul. . . *Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd:* for we have received from our Saviour a different way. . . Strive and pray continually that the purity of your souls may not seem in anything to be sullied by fellowship with the customs of these most wicked men. . . All should unite in desiring that which sound reason appears to demand, and in *avoiding all participation in the perjured conduct of the Jews*” (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, quoted in *From Sabbath To Sunday*, p.206).

Writes Bacchiocchi, “Specific anti-Sabbath measures were taken by the Church of Rome. The Sabbath was made a day of fasting to show, among other things, contempt for the Jews. Similarly, to avoid appearing to observe the day with the Jews, the eucharistic celebration and religious assemblies were forbidden on the Sabbath” (p.207).

The Bishop of Rome (not yet called a “pope”) was asserting his superiority and primacy over the far-flung Christian church. The Church at Rome was becoming more and more assertive, powerful, influential, and authoritarian.

Notice how far the western church strayed from the original teachings and doctrines of the early New Testament Church of God!

The Popes of Rome

Let’s take a brief look at some of the more dubious popes down through history.

From 870 to 1050 was the darkest age of the Roman church. “The 200 years between Nicolas I and Gregory VII is called by historians the MIDNIGHT OF THE DARK AGES. Bribery, Corruption, Immorality and Bloodshed, make it just about the Blackest Chapter in the Whole History of the Church,” wrote Henry H. Halley in *Halley’s Bible Handbook* (page 774).

In 896, Pope Stephen VII began the trial of the late Pope Formosus, who had been a rival and had been dead for nine months. He had the corpse of Formosus dragged from its tomb, sat upon a throne in the council chamber, and began accusing the dead pope of crimes and misdeeds, screaming and raving at it. Pope Stephen himself was strangled to death a few years later.

Pope Sergius III (A.D. 904-911) is said to have had a mistress, Marozia, who, with her mother and sister, filled the papal chair with their paramours and bastard sons and made the papal palace into a “den of iniquity” and robberies. This began a period known in history as “The Rule of the Harlots” (from 904-963). Later, Marozia had her own illegitimate son appointed pope (Pope John XI, 931-936).

John XII (955-963), a grandson of Marozia, was guilty of almost every crime – violated virgins and widows, high and low, lived with his own father’s mistress, and turned the papal palace into a brothel.

Pope Benedict V (964-967) was another scoundrel. He raped a young girl and ran off to Constantinople with the papal treasury. When the money ran out and he was destitute, he returned to the Vatican. Church historian Gerbert called him “the most iniquitous of all the monsters of ungodliness.” He was finally killed by a jealous husband. His corpse, with one hundred dagger wounds, was dragged through the streets and hurled into a cesspit, a fitting end to a papal miscreant.

Pope Boniface VII (984-985) murdered Pope John XIV and maintained on the “blood stained papal throne by a lavish distribution of stolen money” (*Halley’s Bible Handbook*, p.774). The Bishop of Orleans called him and John XII and Leo VIII “monsters of guilt, reeking in blood and filth; Antichrist sitting in the Temple of God” (*ibid.*).

In October 1032, the papal throne was purchased by powerful families that ruled Rome, for an 11-year old boy, who became Benedict IX (1033-1045). He surpassed all before him “in wickedness; committed murders and adulteries in broad daylight; robbed pilgrims on the graves of martyrs; a hideous criminal, the people drove him out of Rome” (*ibid*, p.775).

Gregory VII (1073-1085) was a great forger of documents and had a whole school of forgers working for him, creating documents bearing the papal seal of approval. In his time the two prevailing sins of the church were immorality and simony – the purchase of church offices with money, a la Simon Magus who tried the same stunt with the apostle Peter (Acts 8:9-24). Gregory is the pope who formalized the celibacy doctrine of the Catholic Church. His purpose was to curb the need to provide gifts of church lands and resources to all the illegitimate children being sired by Catholic priests, prelates and bishops.

How wanton were many of the popes? Catholic historian Peter de Rosa in his book *Vicars of Christ* wrote, “Popes had mistresses as young as fifteen years of age, were

guilty of incest and sexual perversions of every sort, had innumerable children, were murdered in the very act of adultery.”

The most powerful of the popes was Innocent III (1198-1216) who claimed to be “Vicar of Christ,” “Vicar of God,” “Supreme Sovereign over the Church and the World,” and who claimed the right to depose kings. He boasted, “All things on earth and in heaven and in hell are subject to the Vicar of Christ.” All European monarchs obeyed his will. He ordered two crusades, decreed the doctrine of transubstantiation, decreed that the Popes “can never in any way depart from the Catholic faith.” He condemned the Magna Carta, forbade the reading of the Bible in the vernacular, and launched exterminations of all “heretics” – he began the Inquisition, massacred the Albigenses, and shed more blood than any other predecessor or successor until the 16th and 17th centuries. Says Halley, “One would think Nero, the Beast, had come to life in the Name of the Lamb” (p.776).

The following Pope, Gregory IX, perfected the Inquisition, or ‘Holy Office,’ as it was known, for detection and punishment of heretics. All people were required to become informants against supposed “heretics.” The proceedings were secret, sentence was pronounced, and the victim was given to the state authorities for imprisonment for life or for burning. The victim’s property was confiscated and divided between the church and the state.

Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) in his famous Bull, said, “We declare, affirm, define, and pronounce that it is altogether necessary for Salvation that every creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” He himself was so corrupt that the poet Dante called the Vatican during his reign a “sewer of corruption” and assigned him, together with Nicholas III and Clement V, to the lowest parts of hell.

Pope Innocent VIII (1484-1492) had 16 children by various married women. He multiplied church offices and sold them for vast sums of money. He decreed the extermination of the Waldenses. He appointed the brutal Thomas of Torquemada Inquisitor General of Spain, and ordered all rulers to deliver up heretics to him.

Pope Alexander VI (previously known as Rodrigo Borgia), reigned from 1492-1503. He committed his first murder at the tender age of 12. When crowned pope, he exclaimed, “I am Pope, Vicar of Christ!” Historian Edward Gibbon referred to him as the “Tiberias of Rome.” He was licentious, avaricious and depraved. He bought the papacy and made many cardinals for money. Alexander fathered many children, and had ten illegitimate children by his favorite mistress, Vannozza Catanei. When she lost her bloom, he took a 15-year old as his lover and made her brother a Cardinal in the Church (he later became Pope Paul III).

Leo X who reigned from 1513-21, during the time of Martin Luther, was famous for his widespread usage of “indulgences” – the payment of money to have sin blotted out, to escape purgatory and insure one’s entrance into the pearly gates. He was appointed to 27 different church offices before he was 13 years of age. He bargained for

the papal chair, sold church honors, and church offices were for sale. He appointed one cardinal at the age of 7! He maintained the most luxuriant and licentious court in all Europe. A deacon accused of murder could have the crime pardoned for a mere 20 crowns. Two hundred years earlier his predecessor John XXII had similarly granted indulgences for such crimes as incest and sodomy. The evil lurking in the Catholic hierarchy seemed to know no boundaries.

Leo X commissioned the sale of indulgences which released one's soul from purgatory. Dominican friar Tezel used to exclaim, "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs!"

Not to be lacking in wantonness, Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484) sanctioned the Spanish Inquisition and decreed that monetary pay-offs would deliver souls from Purgatory. He made eight of his nephews cardinals and used the papacy to enrich himself. He imposed a tax on Roman brothels and whorehouses. (In 1490, there were 6,800 registered prostitutes in Rome.) He rivaled the old Caesars in wealth and pomp.

And on and on the wanton story continues, filling books and volumes with the distasteful facts and figures.

The Inquisition

Of course, the most iniquitous episode in all church history is the sad tale of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages, when the papacy caused the deaths of millions of innocent people whom it regarded as heretics. Canon Llorente, the Secretary of the Inquisition in Madrid, Spain, from 1790-92, estimated the total number of people condemned to death in Spain alone to have been greater than 3 million souls. Some 300,000 were burned alive at the stake.

Says Henry Halley, "It is stated that in the 30 years between 1540 and 1570 no fewer than 900,000 Protestants were put to death in the Pope's war for the extermination of the Waldenses. Think of Monks and Priests, in holy garments, directing, with Heartless Cruelty and Inhuman Brutality, the work of Torturing and Burning alive Innocent Men and Women, and doing it in the Name of Christ, by the direct order of the 'Vicar of Christ.' The Inquisition was the Most Infamous and Devilish Thing in Human History. It was devised by Popes and used by them for 500 years to Maintain their Power" (p.777).

After Martin Luther led the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Church countered by instituting the order of the JESUITS, founded by Ignatius Loyola, a Spaniard, on the principle of absolute and unconditional obedience to the Pope. Its purpose was to counter the Protestant Reformation and reconquer territory lost to the Protestants and Mohammedans, and the conquest of the entire heathen world for the Roman Catholic Church. Their supreme aim was the utter destruction of all heresy, and to accomplish this any act, deception, untruth, immorality, vice – even murder – was deemed "justifiable."

There is an interesting historical footnote to the Napoleonic Wars. When Napoleon conquered Spain in 1808, the Dominicans who were in charge of the Inquisition blockaded themselves in the monastery in Madrid. When his troops forced their way into the monastery, the inquisitors denied the existence of any torture chambers. The soldiers made a thorough search, and found them hidden beneath the floors. The torture chambers were filled with prisoners – all of them naked, and many of them having gone insane. Napoleon’s men, repulsed by the scene, emptied the chambers and blew the monastery to kingdom come.

Ancient Paganism Subverts the Church

Ancient paganism infiltrated the church. It wormed its way inside and gradually “took over” the reins of the visible churches. It did this covertly, so that almost no one was the wiser. Only a few caught on to the destruction and corruption that was occurring in the church around the Mediterranean world. The ancient PAGAN gods were incorporated into the church as “saints,” their festivals as “Christian” festivals, renamed, and their rites and ceremonies were now “baptized” and sprinkled with “holy water” to make them acceptable to naïve and unsuspecting church members.

For example, today’s Easter celebration is universally believed to be “Christian” in origin. But it has its roots deep in ancient paganism – centuries before the birth of Christ – and its rites have scarcely changed.

Says Ralph Woodrow in *Babylon Mystery Religion*:

“The word itself, as the dictionaries and encyclopedias explain, comes from the name of a Pagan Goddess – the goddess of Spring. Easter is but a more modern form of Ishtar, Eostre, Oстера, or Astarte. Ishtar, another name for Semiramis of Babylon, was pronounced as we pronounce ‘Easter’ today! And so the name of the Spring Festival, ‘Easter,’ is definitely paganistic, the name being taken from the name of the Goddess” (p. 152).

The Easter “egg” was a sacred symbol of the ancient Babylonians. They believed an old fable about a huge egg which supposedly fell from heaven into the Euphrates River. From this egg, says the legend, the goddess Astarte (Easter) was hatched. From Babylon the idea of the mystic, sacred egg spread abroad to many nations.

Admits the *Encyclopedia Britannica*:

“The egg as a symbol of fertility and of renewed life goes back to the ancient Egyptians and Persians, who had also the custom of colouring and eating eggs during their spring festival” (article, “Easter”).

Says Alexander Hislop regarding the festival of Easter:

“Then look at Easter. What means the term Easter itself? It is not a Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the

queen of heaven, whose name, as pronounced by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country. That name, as found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments, is Ishtar”(*The Two Babylons*, p. 103).

Adds Hislop:

“Such is the history of Easter. The popular observances that still attend the period of its celebration amply confirm the testimony of history as to its Babylonian character. The hot cross buns of Good Friday, and the dyed eggs of Pasch or Easter Sunday, figured in the Chaldean rites just as they do now. The ‘buns,’ known too by that identical name, were used in the worship of the queen of heaven, the goddess Easter, as early as the days of Cecrops, the founder of Athens – that is, 1500 years before the Christian era” (p.108).

Says Woodrow:

“Now since the true saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, *in reality* did rise (not merely in nature, plants, etc.); and since his resurrection was in the *spring* of the year – though slightly earlier than the pagan festival of olden times – it was not too hard for the church of the fourth century (now greatly departed from the true faith anyway) to merge the pagan spring festival into Christianity – attaching the various phases of it to Christ. In this way, it would appear to be a *Christian* festival, yet at the same time, it would retain many of its ancient customs” (*op. cit.*, p. 157).

There is no record in the New Testament of the early Christians ever observing Easter. But there is evidence that, as Christ commanded, they continued observing the Passover each spring, *on the 15th of Nisan*, commemorating Christ’s sacrifice for our sins! How, then, did Easter creep into the professing Christian Church?

How Easter Replaced Passover

Says historian and scholar Alexander Hislop:

“The difference, in point of time, betwixt the Christian Pasch, as observed in Britain by the native Christians, and the Pagan Easter enforced by Rome, at the time of its enforcement, was *a whole month*; and it was *only by violence and bloodshed*, at last, that the Festival of the Anglo-Saxon or Chaldean goddess came to supersede that which had been held in honour of Christ” (*The Two Babylons*, p. 107).

After the New Testament was completely written and after all the original apostles had died, a change occurred.

Says Alan W. Watts in *Easter, Its Story and Meaning*: “It would be tedious to describe in detail all that has been handed down to us about the various rites of Tammuz, Adonis, Kore, Dionysus, and many others. . . . Some of them were celebrated at the vernal equinox, or thereabouts, and some at midsummer. But their universal theme – the drama of death and resurrection – makes them the forerunners of the Christian Easter, and thus the *first ‘Easter services’*” (p. 58).

The church leaders of that day felt that for “Christianity” to conquer the world, it would be wise to compromise with pagans throughout the Empire. Since the common people were habituated to their pagan customs and reveled in their pagan holidays, church leaders devised a method to reconcile paganism and nominal Christianity. They simply “baptized” pagan customs, thereby making them “Christian” in appearance and name. The result? Pagans began to flock into the Church in droves. They kept the same days and performed the same rituals, but now they did it to “Christ” instead of to Astarte or Tammuz!

Origin of Christmas

What about Christmas? Christians claim it celebrates the birth of Christ. But is this really true?

Although the whole world celebrates Christmas as a “Christian” holiday, including millions of non-Christians, Christmas is not really “Christian” at all! Satan has pulled the wool over the eyes of MILLIONS!

Consider this fact: Look high and low throughout the pages of the Bible, and you will find not *one single solitary word* of “Christmas” being celebrated by any of God’s people! It is not even mentioned once! Neither Christ nor any of His apostles ever observed this holiday, nor the New Testament Church!

Yet on the other hand the pagan, heathen world observed this day for thousands of years BEFORE Christ was even born!

We read in Werner Keller’s book *The Bible as History* the following admission:

“December 25 is referred to in documents as Christmas Day in A.D. 324 for the first time. Under the Roman emperor Justinian [A.D. 527-565] it was recognized as an official holiday. *An old Roman festival played a major part in the choice of this particular day. December 25 in ancient Rome was the ‘Dies Natali Invictus’ ‘the birthday of the unconquered,’ the day of the winter solstice* and at the same time, in Rome, *the last day of the Saturnalia*, which had long since degenerated into a week of *unbridled carnival . . .*” (p.331).

Writes Ralph Woodrow in *Babylon Mystery Religion*, December 25 “was the very day and season on which the pagans for centuries had celebrated the birth of the *Sun-god!*” He goes on, “In pagan days, this birth of the sun-god was especially popular among that branch of the ‘Mysteries’ known as Mithraism. . . . And not only was Mithra, the sun-god of Mithraism, said to be born at this time of the year, but Osiris, Horus, Hercules, Bacchus, Adonis, Jupiter, Tammuz, and other sun-gods were also supposedly born at what is today called the ‘Christmas’ season – the winter solstice!” (page 163).

Says Woodrow, “Now the fact that the various sun-gods that were worshiped in different countries were all believed to be born at the same season (in the old fables),

would seem to indicate that they were but different forms (under different names) of the original son of the sun-god, Tammuz, of Babylon, the land from which sun-worship originally spread” (*ibid.*).

Woodrow asserts, “In Babylon, the birthday of Tammuz was celebrated at the time of the winter solstice with great feasts, revelry, and drunkenness – the same way many celebrate it today! The ancient celebration spread and became so much an established custom that ‘in pagan Rome and Greece, in the days of the Teutonic barbarians, in the remote times of ancient Egyptian civilization, in the infancy of the race East and West and North and South, the period of the winter solstice was ever a period of rejoicing and festivity.’”

“When this mid-winter festival came to Rome, it was known as the Saturnalia – Saturn being but another name of Nimrod or Tammuz as ‘the hidden god.’ This feast was the most vile, immoral feast that ever disgraced pagan Rome. It was a season of license, drunkenness, and debauchery where all restraints of law were laid aside. And it was from this very feast at Rome that that the merry-making of this season passed into the Roman Catholic Church and on down to our present civilization!” (p.163-164).

In the book *History of Rome*, by Michael Grant, we read this startling revelation:

“Yet there was also another pagan belief during this same epoch, that much more nearly competed with Christ for the control of the Western world. This was the cult of the Sun, which was revered by millions of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, and its religion for a time even became the state worship. . . .

“In Rome, the divinity of the Sun came very early on; and then, centuries afterwards, in the superb dome of Hadrian’s Pantheon, the central opening, surrounded by star-like rosettes, represented the solar orb. . . . Before long, the emperor Aurelian established a massive temple of the Unconquerable Sun as the central and focal point of the entire religious system of the state (274). *The birthday of the god was to be on DECEMBER 25, AND THIS, TRANSFORMED INTO CHRISTMAS DAY, WAS ONE OF THE HERITAGES THAT CHRISTIANITY OWED TO HIS CULT*” (p.391-392, emphasis mine).

Notice! The world’s version of “Christianity” took over the birthday of the sun god, the cult of the sun, and by sleight of hand and devious “magic” transformed it into “CHRISTMAS,” the “birthday” of Jesus Christ! It was in reality the birth day of the pagan sun god, worshipped by millions throughout the Roman Empire! Our articles, “The Shocking Origin of Christmas,” and “When Was Jesus Really Born?” show conclusively that Christ was born nowhere near December 25th or “Christmas.”

So why does the great and universal Christian religion observe this pagan day?

Historian Jack Finegan, in *Myth & Mystery: An Introduction to the Pagan Religions of the Biblical World*, writes:

“. . . But the worship of the sun-god continued widely throughout the empire, and under Aurelian (A.D. 270-275) the cult was restored to its former high estate. In the

year 274 Aurelian declared the god – now called Deus Sol Invictus – the official deity of the Roman Empire; he built a splendid temple of the sun in Rome . . . *and set the sun's birthday celebration (naturalis solis invicti) ON DECEMBER 25, the date then accepted for the winter solstice (also in his solar character the BIRTHDAY OF MITHRAS)*. In the time of Constantine the cult of Deus Sol Invictus was still at its height, and the portrait of the sun-god was on the coins of Constantine . . . Likewise it must have been in this time and with the intent to transform the significance of *AN EXISTING SACRED DATE that the birthday of Jesus*, which had been celebrated in the East on January 6 . . . *was placed in Rome ON DECEMBER 25, THE DATE OF THE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SOL INVICTUS*. This date appears in a list of dates probably compiled in A.D. 336 and published in the Roman city calendar, edited by Filocalus, for the year 354” (Finegan, p.211-212, emphasis mine).

Thus another diabolical deed was done. The Church threw away the divine Holy Days which God commands to be observed, and replaced them with pagan-originated festivals which were used in the worship of ancient Nimrod and Semiramis, the pagan Messiah and his whore mother!

Sir James Frazer, in his authoritative book *The Golden Bough*, discusses how the pagan celebration of the birth of the sun-god on December 25 weaved its way into the professing Roman Catholic “Christian” Church. Frazer points out that the contest for supremacy between the early Christians and the worshipers of Mithra was hanging in the balance in the early centuries of the church. Both religions were fighting for the hearts and minds of men. Frazer asserts that “there can be no doubt that the Mithraic religion proved a formidable rival to Christianity.”

Says Frazer:

“Indeed the issue of the conflict between the two faiths appears for a time to have hung in the balance. An instructive relic of the long struggle is preserved in our *festival of Christmas, which the Church seems to have borrowed directly from its heathen rival*. In the Julian calendar the twenty-fifth of December was reckoned the winter solstice, and it was regarded as the Nativity of the Sun, because the day begins to lengthen and the power of the sun to increase from that turning-point of the year. The ritual of the nativity, as it appears to have been celebrated in *Syria and Egypt*, was remarkable. The celebrants retired into certain inner shrines, from which at midnight they issued with a loud cry, ‘*The Virgin has brought forth! The light is waxing!*’ The Egyptians even represented the new-born sun by the *image of an infant which on his birthday, the winter solstice, they brought forth* and exhibited to his worshippers. No doubt the Virgin who thus conceived and bore a son on the twenty-fifth of December was the *great Oriental goddess whom the Semites called the Heavenly Virgin or simply the Heavenly Goddess; in Semitic lands she was a form of Astarte*. Now Mithra was regularly identified by his worshippers with the Sun, the Unconquered Sun, as they called him; hence his nativity also fell on the twenty-fifth of December. *The Gospels say nothing as to the day of Christ's birth, and accordingly the early Church did not celebrate it*. In time, however, the Christians of Egypt came to regard the sixth of January as the date of the Nativity, and the custom of commemorating the birth of the Saviour on that day gradually spread until by the fourth century it was universally established in the East. But at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century the *Western Church*, which had never recognized the sixth of January as the day of the Nativity, *adopted the twenty-*

fifth of December as the true date, and in time its decision was accepted also by the Eastern Church. At Antioch the change was not introduced till about the year 375 A.D.” (*The Golden Bough*, page 416).

What were the real motives for the church leaders to incorporate Christmas into the church’s calendar of festivals? States Frazer, again:

“What considerations led the ecclesiastical authorities to institute the festival of Christmas? The motives for the innovation are stated with great frankness by a Syrian writer, himself a Christian. ‘The reason,’ he tells us, ‘why the fathers transferred the celebration of the sixth of January to the twenty-fifth of December was this. It was a custom of the heathen to celebrate on the same twenty-fifth of December the birthday of the Sun, at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and festivities the Christians also took part. Accordingly *when the doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival*, they took counsel and resolved that the true Nativity should be solemnized on that day and the festival of the Epiphany on the sixth of January. Accordingly, along with this custom, the practice has prevailed of kindling fires till the sixth.’ The heathen origin of Christmas is plainly hinted at, if not tacitly admitted, by Augustine when he exhorts his Christian brethren not to celebrate that solemn day like the heathen on account of the sun, but on account of him who made the sun. In like manner Leo the Great rebuked the pestilent belief that Christmas was solemnized because of the birth of the new sun, as it was called, and not because of the nativity of Christ.”

Truth Replaced by Superstition

Says Alexander Hislop, further:

“Indeed, it is admitted by the most learned and candid writers of all parties that the day of our Lord’s birth cannot be determined, and that within the Christian Church *no such festival as Christmas was ever heard of till the third century, and that not till the fourth century was far advanced did it gain much observance.* How, then, did the Romish Church fix on December the 25th as Christmas-day? Why, thus: Long before the fourth century, and long before the Christian era itself, a festival was celebrated among the heathen, at that precise time of the year, in honour of the birth of the son of the Babylonian queen of heaven; and it may fairly be presumed that, *in order to conciliate the heathen, and to swell the number of the nominal adherents of Christianity, the SAME FESTIVAL WAS ADOPTED by the Roman Church, giving it only the name of Christ.* This tendency on the part of Christians to MEET PAGANISM HALF-WAY was very early developed. . . . Upright men strove to stem the tide, but in spite of all their efforts, *the apostasy went on, till the Church, with the exception of a small remnant, was SUBMERGED under PAGAN SUPERSTITION*” (p.93).

Hislop goes on,

“*That Christmas was originally a Pagan festival, is beyond all doubt.* The time of the year, and the ceremonies with which it is still celebrated, prove its origin. In Egypt, the son of Isis, the Egyptian title for the queen of heaven, was born at this very time, ‘about the time of the winter solstice.’ The very name by which Christmas is popularly known among ourselves – Yule-day – proves at once its Pagan and Babylonian origin. ‘Yule’ is the Chaldee name for an ‘infant’ or

‘little child;’ and as the 25th of December was called by our Pagan Anglo-Saxon ancestors, ‘Yule-day,’ or the ‘Child’s day,’ and the night that preceded it, ‘Mother-night,’ long BEFORE they came in contact with Christianity, that sufficiently proves its real character” (pp.93-94).

It is a fact that December 25 was celebrated for thousands of years before the birth of Christ as the birth day of an ancient pagan god – THE SUN GOD!

The Greatest Conspiracy

Asserts James George Frazer in *The Golden Bough*,

“Taken altogether, the coincidences of the Christian with the *heathen festivals are too close and too numerous to be accidental*. They mark the *compromise* which the Church in the hour of its triumph was compelled to make with its vanquished yet still dangerous rivals. The inflexible Protestantism of the primitive missionaries, with their fiery denunciations of heathendom, had been exchanged for the supple policy, the easy tolerance, the comprehensive charity of *shrewd ecclesiastics, who clearly perceived that if Christianity was to conquer the world it could do so only by relaxing the too rigid principles of its Founder*, by widening a little the narrow gate which leads to salvation” (page 419).

It is just absolutely amazing how ancient paganism has wrapped its tentacles around “Christianity,” so that the modern church is much more pagan than Christian.

As historian Will Durant wrote in *The Story of Civilization*, volume 3, “Caesar and Christ,” not long after the church began, the pagans began their onslaught to infiltrate it, subvert it, and destroy it. Says Durant,

“Christ was assimilated to the religious and philosophical traditions of the Hellenistic mind. Now the pagan world – even the ant-Semitic world – could accept him as its own. Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it. The Greek mind, dying, came to a transmigrated life in the theology and liturgy of the Church . . . The Greek mysteries passed down into the impressive mystery of the Mass. Other pagan cultures contributed to the syncretist result. From Egypt came the idea of a divine trinity . . . From Egypt the adoration of the Mother and Child, and the mystic theosophy that made Neoplatonism and Gnosticism, and obscured the Christian creed. . . . From Phrygia came the worship of the Great Mother; from Syria the resurrection drama of Adonis; from Thrace, perhaps, the cult of Dionysus, the dying and saving god” (page 595).

In fact, says Durant,

“The Mithraic ritual so closely resembled the eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass that Christian fathers charged the Devil with inventing these similarities to mislead frail minds. *CHRISTIANITY WAS THE LAST GREAT CREATION OF THE ANCIENT PAGAN WORLD*” (*ibid.*).

What a shocking indictment of professing global “Christianity”! This should be astonishing – dumbfounding. Yet the evidence is irrefutable. What was the real

significance of the submergence of Christian doctrine with pagan practices? What was the purpose and aim?

Satan's Greatest Deception

It was all part of Satan's Great Deception! He instilled "Christian" code words to mask over ancient PAGAN observances! When we pull back the curtains, we see a REAL conspiracy, throughout the ages, of the ancient PAGAN religion of BABYLON!

The ancient "Mysteries" of the Chaldeans, have been incorporated into the far-flung "Christian" church to deceive millions into THINKING they are worshipping Christ, but are in reality worshipping the way of Satan the arch-deceiver of mankind!

Says Sir James George Frazer in *The Golden Bough*:

"When we reflect how often the Church has skillfully contrived to plant the seeds of the new faith *on the old stock of paganism*, we may surmise that the Easter celebration of the dead and risen Christ was grafted upon a similar celebration of the dead and risen Adonis, which, as we have seen reason to believe, was celebrated in Syria at the same season. The type, created by Greek artists, of the sorrowful goddess with her dying lover in her arms, resembles and may have been the model of the *Pieta* of Christian art, the Virgin with the dead body of her divine Son in her lap, of which the most celebrated example is the one by Michael Angelo in St. Peters" (page 401).

Notice those words again. He declares, "When we reflect how often the Church has skillfully contrived to plant the seeds of the new faith on the *OLD STOCK OF PAGANISM*, we may surmise that the Eastern celebration of the dead and risen Christ was *grafted upon a similar celebration of the dead and risen Adonis*, which . . . was celebrated in Syria at the same season" (p. 401).

Astounding! Clearly paganism grew inside the professing Christian church like LEAVEN, until the whole lump was thoroughly leavened and saturated with SIN! The whole chemistry of the Church was changed with the yeast of PAGANISM! The body of the church became riddled with the infection of spiritual CANCER!

Ancient PAGANISM has now been RENAMED AS "CHRISTIAN"! But it is still the beating, thumping, pumping PAGAN heart of rebellion against God – the same PAGAN RELIGION BEGUN BY NIMROD AND SEMIRAMIS!

Only the "names" were changed. Thus paganism crept in and hi-jacked the Christian church as a whole. Names were changed to hide the disgusting, despicable truth. For example:

Pagan Name	Christian Name
Saturnalia	"Christmas"
Lupercalia	St. Valentine's Day
Floralia	Pentecost

Festival of Tammuz	St. John's Day
Worship of Rhea, Venus	Worship of Mary
Tammuz, Bacchus, Adonis	"Christ"
Samhain	Halloween
Pagan Trinity	"Christian" Trinity
Birth of Sol Invictus	Birth of Christ
Baal-Berith	Christmas Tree
Day of Cybele (mother of Babylonian messiah)	Annunciation Day
Ishtar, Astarte	"Easter"
Chaldean Lent	"Lent"
Apotheosis of Ariadne	Feast of the Assumption
Madonna of Babylon	Madonna of Rome
Pagan "Mass"	Sacrifice of the "Mass"
Pagan "Cross"	Veneration of the "Cross"
Pontifex Maximus	Pope, Pontiff
Pagan College of Pontiffs	College of Cardinals
Keys of Janus and Cybele	"Peter's keys" (worn by Popes since 431 A.D.)

Says Alexander Hislop, in *The Two Babylons*, the pope laid claim to Peter's keys in A.D. 431 and thereafter. "Some time was allowed to pass away, and then, when the secret working of the Mystery of iniquity had prepared the way for it, for the first time did the Pope publicly assert his eminence, as founded on the keys given to Peter. About 378 was he raised to the position which gave him, in Pagan estimation, the power of the keys referred to. In 431, and not before, did he publicly lay claim to the possession of Peter's keys" (p.207).

Anciently there was a "Peter" at Rome who occupied the highest place in the pagan priesthood. In primitive Chaldee, his title was pronounced "Peter" – which meant, "the interpreter." As the revealer of hidden things, he was decorated with the two keys of the divinities whose mysteries he unfolded. Thus the keys of Janus and Cybele came to be known as the "keys of Peter" – but not the Peter of the New Testament! This ancient "Peter" was Hermes Trismegistus, the great "Interpreter of the gods."

This paganized, syncretic "Peter" was none other than SIMON MAGUS, the false "Peter," who was the real "Peter" or "Interpreter" who began paganized "Christianity" and founded his surreptitious church at ROME!

Thus a pagan "Peter" came to be transformed into the apostle Peter – and the ancient Pagan Mysteries broadened and survived under new names, and the truth of God was hijacked in a great pagan heist engineered by Satan and his demons!.

Declares Hislop, "Hence, from the *mere jingle of words*, persons and things essentially different were CONFOUNDED; and Paganism and Christianity *jumbled together*, that the towering ambition of a wicked priest might be gratified; and so, to the

BLINDED Christians of the APOSTACY, the Pope was the representative of Peter the apostle, while to the initiated Pagans, he was only the representative of Peter, the interpreter of their well-known Mysteries. Thus was the Pope the express counterpart of 'Janus the double-faced.' Oh! what an emphasis of meaning in the Scriptural expression, as applied to the Papacy, 'The Mystery of Iniquity'!" (*Two Babylons*, page 210).

In analyzing the strange customs of the pagans and their astonishing similarity to certain "Christian" customs today, Alan W. Watts was moved to write,

"At first sight it is surprising to find so many of these stories and symbols of death-and-resurrection in so many different places. The points of resemblance between the Christ story, on the one hand, and the myth and ritual of ancient and 'pagan' cults, on the other, is at times *startling enough to look like a CONSPIRACY*" (*op. cit.* p. 22).

Notice carefully! "Startling enough to look like a CONSPIRACY"! Yes, a "conspiracy"! Who would engineer such a conspiracy? The apostle John tells us in plain language:

"And the huge dragon was cast down and out – that age-old serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, he who is the *seducer (deceiver)* of ALL HUMANITY THE WORLD OVER . . ." (Rev.12:9, Amplified Parallel Bible).

What had happened? The answer is in the Bible – a conspiracy to introduce pagan customs under the name "Christian" had been formed in the days of the apostle Paul (see Gal.1:6-9; II Cor.11:13-15; II Tim. 4:3-4). By the last days of the apostle John, this conspiracy had grown so great that in some areas, *true* Christians were being cast out of the established local churches! (III John 9, 10). A few centuries later, the universal church was no longer observing the Biblical holidays, but replacing them with pagan holidays.

Great End-Time Apostate Church

A great end-time Church was prophesied in your Bible. Jesus Christ Himself foretold in the Mount Olivet prophecy, speaking about the time just before His second coming, "TAKE HEED that no man DECEIVE you. For MANY shall come in my name [many shall come claiming to be His ministers, representing Him!], saying, I am Christ [admitting that Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One of God]; *and shall DECEIVE MANY*" (Matt.24:4-5).

He added, "And many false prophets [preachers, teachers] shall rise, and shall DECEIVE MANY" (Matt.24:11). Many today are being misled by the ecumenical movement. They are being led to "compromise" proven truths, and to join forces with apostate religion – to "shake hands with the devil," as it were – to embrace the legions of spiritual darkness! This will not lead to worldwide enlightenment, but to a new onrushing period of GREAT DARKNESS – *a new spiritual DARK AGE!*

A New DARK AGE Coming

But, Jesus said, this end-time “Dark Age” will be darker, and worse, and more deadly and sinister, and fraught with peril and terror, than any comparable period in the history of humanity, or the history of the world! He warned, “For in those days shall be AFFLICTION, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, nor shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved [alive]: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days” (Mark 13:19-20).

We are entering a final age of worldwide RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION, tyranny, and evil! The apostle Paul also foretold it. He prophesied:

“This know also, that in the LAST DAYS perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, TRAITORS, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a FORM of godliness, but denying the power thereof: *from such turn away*” (II Tim.3:1-5).

Paul said of this end time that men would be “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (verse 7). He added, “But evil men and seducers shall wax WORSE AND WORSE, *deceiving and being deceived*” (verse 13).

Paul admonished Timothy, in warning about these days:

“For the time will come when they will NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE [‘truth’ no longer matters to them, but rather ‘church growth,’ group psychology, advertising and promotion]; 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 [including many Catholic ‘fables’!] ‘ (II Tim.4:3-4).

That time has come! We are now seeing, worldwide, a wholesale departure from what truth remains within the Evangelical churches and the remaining bastions of “Protestantism” and a widespread stampede – like a whole herd of millions of buffalo stampeding across the ranges of the Wild West hundreds of years ago – back into the fold of “the [un-] holy Father,” who calls himself the “vicar of Christ”!

The resurgence of wickedness in the last days, and the parallel arising of the Great False Church, was also foretold by Paul in the prophecies in the book of II Thessalonians. He wrote, forcefully:

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the day of Christ's return -- see verses 1-2] shall not come, except there be a FALLING AWAY [that is, a tremendous APOSTASY] first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. . . . For the mystery of iniquity doth already work [underground, behind the scenes]: only he who now restraineth [Greek] will restrain, until he be taken out of the way. AND

THEN [when the restraining powers are demolished and subverted] SHALL THAT WICKED [ONE] BE REVEALED, whom the Lord shall consume [destroy] with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is AFTER THE WORKING OF SATAN with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with ALL DECEIVABLENESS of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the LOVE OF THE TRUTH, that they might be saved” (II Thess.2:3-10).

The Philips Translation puts this passage in clearer, more modern English. He translates: “Evil is already insidiously at work, but its activities are restricted until what I have called the ‘restraining power’ is removed. When that happens the lawless man will be plainly seen” (v.7-8)

What is this “restraining power”? Clearly, the power that has held back the advance of Catholicism and a world Catholic superstate, during the past 500 years, has been the Protestant Reformation in Europe, and the independence of European Protestant nations refusing to come under the yoke of Catholicism. Also, the power of the Anglo-Saxon nations, Great Britain (which formed the Church of England as a counter-balance against Catholic power and extremism), and the United States of America – the world's two most powerful Protestant nations – has up to now stood in the way of Catholic revanchism.

Few understand it, but the Catholic Church knew the danger of a strong Protestant America to her own ambitions, and Catholic and Jesuit plotting was involved in the cause of the Civil War in America, with the Catholic Church supporting the South in its attempt to break up and sever the Union. The Catholic Church was also involved in the plot to assassinate Abraham Lincoln (see *50 Years in the "Church" of Rome: The Conversion of a Priest*, Charles Chiniquy).

Is this great End-Time Church-State system mentioned in Bible Prophecy?

We read in the book of Revelation, “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the GREAT WHORE that sitteth upon many waters [nations]: with whom the *kings of the earth* have committed [spiritual and political] fornication [adultery], and the inhabitants of the earth have been made DRUNK with the wine of her fornication” (Rev.17:1-2).

A great “whore” in the Bible is descriptive language which means a great “false church.” It is a great church which “sells itself” and its support, politically, to the nations of this world in turn for which it seeks recognition as the “official church,” and the support of the state – and the long arm of the state which it seeks to use to ferret out and destroy all “heretics.”

In the Middle Ages the nations of Europe joined forces with the Papacy to launch “crusades,” not only against the Moslems in the Middle East, but against the Albigenses and Waldensians in France, independent Christian groups which foreshadowed the Protestant Reformation by several hundred years, and “crusades” against the Jews in Eastern Europe. The “cross” of the Church was bathed in blood from one end of Europe

to the other, and in Asia.

Blood Bath of the Great Inquisition

Says Adam Clarke in his Commentary, regarding the Church of Rome:

“ ‘Who can make any computation,’ says Bishop Newton [Sir Isaac Newton, scientist and renown physicist who became a bishop of the Church of England], ‘or even frame any conception, of the numbers of pious Christians who have fallen a sacrifice to the BIGOTRY AND CRUELTY OF ROME? Mede upon the place hath observed, from the authorities, that in the war with the Albigenses and Waldenses there perished of these poor creatures IN FRANCE ALONE A MILLION. From the first institution of the Jesuites in 1580, that is, in little more than 30 years, NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS WERE SLAIN, and these all by the common executioner. In the space of scarce thirty years the inquisition destroyed, by various kinds of torture, a HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND CHRISTIANS. Sanders himself confesses that an INNUMERABLE MULTITUDE OF LOLLARDS [SABBATARIANS] and Sacramentarians were BURNT THROUGHOUT ALL EUROPE, who yet, he says, were not put to death by the pope and bishops, but by the civil magistrates.’ The dragon in a new shape, or Roman empire of Germany, acted a very conspicuous part in this nefarious WARFARE against the remnant of the woman's seed, who kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus Christ. See the imperial edict of Frederic II, against heretics, in Limborch's History of the Inquisition” (Vol.3, p.1019, Rev.13:7 comment).

When the Protestant Reformation began, it was met head on with military power, and the armies of Catholic Europe sought viciously to suppress the fledgling new movement, and to destroy it before it hatched. But to no avail. God was behind the Protestant Reformation, and wanted the world to have several centuries of religious freedom -- before the crushing weight of Roman Catholic power would once again rise to the surface, and attempt to stamp out and destroy all dissent, in one final bloodbath at the end of this Age!

In the Middle Ages, millions died – were martyred – gave their lives for religious freedom, liberty, and the right to worship God according to their conscience, and the Word of God! The Bible, which had long been suppressed in Catholic lands, and kept from the hands of the laity, was translated into the common tongue, and men everywhere began reading it, and it opened their eyes to see the evils of Popery and Catholicism. But before religious freedom could be achieved, bloody wars were fought in Ireland, England, and across the European continent, as the Catholic Church struggled to maintain her dominion over the entire western world.

The Coming Great Holocaust

This great martyrdom of the Middle Ages, however, was merely a forerunner – a type – of what Bible prophecy says is going to occur once again during these LAST DAYS! Our generation will not be exempt! We read in the book of Revelation:

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were SLAIN FOR THE WORD OF GOD, and for the testimony which they

held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, UNTIL THEIR FELLOWSERVANTS also and their BRETHREN, THAT SHOULD BE KILLED AS THEY WERE, should be fulfilled” (Rev.6:9-11).

Jesus Christ Himself declared, of these last, fateful, days pregnant with labor and strife: “They shall put you out of the synagogues [churches, meeting places]: yea, and the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service” (John 16:2).

The ecumenical movement will end in disaster. It will end up in the greatest Holocaust, and Persecution, and Inquisition, and Tribulation, that this old world has ever witnessed in all of human history!

The “woman” and her “daughters” – the Great False Church that John saw in vision – represents the reunion of apostate Rome with her “Protestant” daughters, all coming together in one final evangelical “Mission” for the Third Millennium to stamp out *true religion* from the face of this earth!

It will be “The *Final CRUSADE*”!

Blood will flow like rivers around the world. John sees this woman, dressed in purple, and scarlet, and decked with precious stones and gold and pearls, with a cup in her hand full of “abominations and filthiness of her fornication.” John says:

“And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

“And I saw the woman DRUNKEN WITH THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS, and with the BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS OF JESUS” (Rev.17:4-6).

This wicked “Jezebel” Church masquerades as the “bride of Christ” (compare Rev.19:7-9) which is the true Church of God, and which will “marry” Christ when He returns in power and glory to set up the Kingdom of God on this earth. But this false church, this abominable WHORE, this spiritual Prostitute which commits lewdness with the nations of THIS world, this abominable Worldwide Church of Satan the Devil, will *persecute and cause to be killed* those who belong to God’s true people – all dissidents, and “heretics,” and those who refuse to come into her fold and under her teaching and control!

What Should We Do?

Truly, the whole world has been deceived by Satan the devil and his clever masquerades and machinations (Rev.12:9).

But Jesus Christ said to His disciples, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really

my disciples. Then you will KNOW THE TRUTH, and the *truth will set you FREE* – free from the shackles of error, superstition, mythology, and pagan deception! (John 8:32, NIV).

God says to His people, ‘Learn NOT the way of the heathen’ (Jeremiah 10:2).

God says to His people today, “What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial [Baal, Nimrod, Bel, or Satan]? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the Temple of God with IDOLS? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them, and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be My people.’

“COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, says the LORD. *DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN, and I will receive you.*’ I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty” (II Cor.6:14-18, NKJV).

God’s commands to His people are crystal clear! We are to have NOTHING WHATSOEVER to do with these diabolical doctrines of demons foisted upon the church ages ago, or with any churches which teach such abominations in the sight of God!

God commands, “Depart, depart, go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, BE CLEAN, you who bear the vessels of the LORD” (Isaiah 52:11).

The Hebrew word here for “clean” is #1305 in Strong’s Concordance, *barar*, and means “make bright, be cleansed, clean, polished, pure, purify, purge, purge out.” *Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* defines it as “TO SEPARATE, TO SEVER,” “to stand apart from one’s companions,” “to separate and remove unclean things, to cleanse,” and is applied to pure and upright words and deeds. Another definition, according to the Lexicon, is “to explore, to search out, to prove,” which is done by separating; to investigate the truth. It also means “to purge oneself from the defilement of idolatry and sin, to reform.” And “to act truly, graciously,” as it is used of God who “will show Himself pure with the pure.”

Are you willing to take God seriously, at His Word? Are you willing to come OUT of this wicked worldly religion of idolatry, paganism, sham, pretense, and abominations? In the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, the apostle John declares, “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, *COME OUT OF HER, my people, lest you share in her SINS, and lest you receive of her PLAGUES.* For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities” (Rev.18:4-5).

This is God’s command to His people. Will you listen, take heed, and obey His final warning, before it is too late?