

Section I - Catholicism "Babylon Mystery Religion" by Ralph Woodrow

CHAPTER ONE Babylon – Source of False Religion

The MYSTERY RELIGION of Babylon has been symbolically described in the last book of the bible as an ill-famed woman. In vision, the Apostle John saw a woman "arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:1-6).

Now what is the meaning of this unusual vision that was given to John? It is well known that in the symbolic language of the Bible, a woman pictures a church. The true church, for example, is likened to a bride, a chaste virgin, a woman without spot or blemish (Ephesians 5:27; Rev. 19:7, 8). But in striking contrast to the true church, the woman of our text is spoken of as an unclean woman, a defiled woman, or to use the Bible wording – which is sometimes very plain – she is a whore. It is evident then that the church system here described is a counterfeit system – a defiled and *fallen* church! In big capital letters, the Bible calls her: "MYSTERY BABYLON."

When John was inspired to write the Revelation, Babylon – as a city – had already been destroyed and left in ruins. It has remained a desolate waste ever since – inhabited only by wild animals – even as the prophets foretold. (Isaiah 13:19-22; Jeremiah 51:62). But though the city of Babylon was destroyed, we shall see that the *religion* of Babylon continued on and was well represented in many nations of the world. And since John was speaking of a church, a *religion*, under the symbol of a woman name Babylon, it is evident that the reference is to Babylonish religion. But just what was the religion of ancient Babylon? How did it all begin? And what significance does it hold in modern times?

Let us turn the pages of time back to the period shortly after the Flood. In those days, men began to migrate from the east "and it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there" (Genesis 11:2). It was in this land of Shinar that the city of Babylon was built and this land became known as Babylonia or later as Mesopotamia.

Here the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers had built up rich deposits of earth that could produce crops in abundance. But there were certain disadvantages here, which the people faced. The land was overrun with *wild animals*, which were a constant threat to the safety and peace of the inhabitants. (Cp. Exodus 23:29, 30). Obviously anyone who could successfully provide protection from these wild beasts would receive great acclaim from the people.

And so at this point, a large powerfully built man by the name of Nimrod appeared on the scene. He became famous as a mighty HUNTER against the wild animals. The Bible tells us: "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a MIGHTY ONE in the earth. He was a MIGHTY HUNTER before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD" (Genesis 10:8, 9). Now there is a very significant meaning in these verses – a meaning that is seldom noticed:

It was Nimrod's success as a "mighty hunter" that caused him to become famous among those primitive people. As the scripture declares, he became "a mighty one" in the earth – a famous leader in worldly affairs. "Nimrod was so powerful, and the impression which his achievements made upon the minds of men so great, that the East is filled even to the present time with traditions of his extraordinary career."¹

Gaining this prestige among the people, Nimrod devised a better means of protection. Instead of constantly fighting the wild beasts, why not organize the people into cities and surround them with walls of protection? Then why not organize these cities into a KINGDOM and appoint a king to rule over them? Evidently this was the thinking of Nimrod, for the Bible tells us that he organized such a kingdom! "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar" (Genesis 10:10). And so the kingdom of Nimrod became established and is the first kingdom mentioned in the Bible.

All of these advances made by Nimrod might have been well and good, but Nimrod was an *ungodly ruler*. The scripture says that he was "a mighty one." Not only does this indicate that he became famous and politically powerful, but the expression also has a hostile meaning. The expression comes from the Hebrew word "gibor" which means TYRANT; while the name Nimrod means, "let us rebel." As THE JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA SAYS, Nimrod was "he who made all the people rebellious against God."²

This same rebellious nature of Nimrod may also be seen from the expression that he was a mighty hunter "BEFORE the Lord." The word "before", in this instance, also carries a hostile meaning. In other words, Nimrod set himself up BEFORE God, the word "before" being the translation of a Hebrew word meaning "AGAINST" the LORD.³

But not only was Nimrod against the true God, he was also a priest of devil – worship and of heathenism of the worse kind, as we shall see. Then finally, Nimrod, the priest-king of Babylon, died. According to the old stories, his body was cut into pieces, burnt, and the pieces were sent to various areas. Similar practices are mentioned even in the Bible (Judges 19:29; I Sam-

¹ Ancient History in Bible Light, p.54

² Volume 9, p. 309

³ See Strong's Concordance; cp. Num. 16:2; I Chronicles 14:8; II Chronicles 15:10

uel 11:7). The death of Nimrod was greatly mourned by the people of Babylon. But though Nimrod had died, the Babylonian religion of which he played a prominent part, continued on and developed further under the leadership of his wife.

After Nimrod's death, his wife, Queen Semiramis, claimed that she was now the Sun-god. And later, when this adulterous and idolatrous woman gave birth to an illegitimate son, she claimed that this son, Tammuz by name, was Nimrod reborn. Now the queen-Mother of Tammuz had no doubt heard the prophecy of the coming Messiah to be born of a woman, for this truth was known from the earliest times (See Genesis 3:15). Satan had first seduced a woman, Eve; but later through a woman was to come the savior – our Lord Jesus Christ. Satan, the great counterfeiter, also knew much about the Divine Plan. Thus, he began to set up counterfeits of the true plan centuries before Jesus came. Queen Semiramis, as an instrument in Satan's hands, claimed that her son was supernaturally conceived and that he was the promised seed, the "savior." However, not only was the child worshipped, but the woman, the MOTHER, was also worshipped as much (or more) than the son! As we will see in the pages that follow, Nimrod, Semiramis, and Tammuz, were used as puppets in Satan's hand to produce false religion – though often appearing as the true! –and this corrupt system filled the world.

Much of the Babylonian worship was carried on through mysterious *symbols* – thus it was a "Mystery" religion. The golden calf, for example, was a symbol of Tammuz, son of the Sun-god. Since Nimrod was believed to be the Sun-god or Baal, fire was considered as his earthly representation. Thus, as we shall see, candles and ritual fires were lighted in his honor. In other forms, Nimrod was symbolized by sun – symbols, fish, trees, pillars, and animals.

Centuries later, Paul gave a description, which perfectly fits the course that, the people of Babylon followed: "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God . . . but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an IMAGE made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things . . . they changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the CREATURE more than the CREATOR . . . for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections" (Romans 1:21-26).

This system of idolatry spread from Babylon to the nations, for it was from this location that men were scattered over the face of the earth (Genesis 11:9). As they went from Babylon, they took their worship of the Babylonian family and its various mystery symbols with them. And so, to this day, we find evidence of the religion of Babylon – in one form or another – in all the false religions of earth! Truly Babylon was the "Mother" – the originator – of false religion and the idolatry that has spread throughout the earth. As the scriptures declare, all nations drank from her cup of false doctrine. (Jeremiah 51:7; Revelation 18:3).

In addition to the scriptural proof that Babylon was the Mother, the source of pagan religion, we also have the testimony of noted historians. Herodotus, the world traveler and historian of antiquity, for example, witnessed the Mystery religion and its rites in numerous countries and mentions how Babylon was the primeval source from which ALL systems of idolatry flowed.¹ Bunsen says that the religious system of Egypt was derived from Asia, and "the primitive empire in Babel." In his noted work entitled NINEVEH AND ITS REMAINS, Layard declares that we have the united testimony of sacred and profane history that idolatry originated in the area of Babylonia – the most ancient of religious systems.²

Now when Rome became a world empire, it is a known fact that she assimilated into her system the gods and religions from the various pagan countries over which she ruled.³ And since Babylon was the source of the paganism of these countries, we can see how the early religion of pagan Rome was but the Babylonish worship that had developed into various forms and under different names in the countries to which it had gone.

Bearing this in mind, we notice that it was during this time when Rome ruled the world, that the *true* savior, Jesus Christ, was born, lived among men, died, and rose again. He then ascended into heaven, sent back the Holy Spirit, and the New Testament church was established in the earth. And what glorious days they were! One only has to read the book of Acts to see how much God blessed his people in those days. Multitudes were added to the church – the true church. Great signs and wonders were performed as God confirmed his word with signs following. True Christianity, anointed by the Holy Spirit, swept the world like a prairie fire. It encircled the mountains and crossed the oceans. It made kings to tremble and tyrants to fear. It was said of those early Christians that they had turned the world upside down! -- so powerful was their message and spirit.

Before too many years had passed, however, men began to set themselves up as "lords" over God's people in place of the Holy Spirit. Instead of conquering by spiritual means and by truth – as in the early days – men began to substitute *their* ideas and *their* methods. Attempts to merge paganism into Christianity were being made even in the days when our New Testament was being written, for Paul mentioned that the "MYSTERY of iniquity" was already beginning to work. He warned that there would come a "falling away" and that many would "depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" – the counterfeit doctrines of the pagans! By the time that Jude wrote the book that bears his name, it was Necessary for him to exhort the people to "earnestly contend for THE faith that was ONCE delivered unto the saints", for certain men had crept in and were attempting to substitute things that were not a part of the early true faith of Christ and the Apostles. (Jude 1:3, 4).

Christianity came face to face with the Babylonian paganism in its various forms that had been established in the Roman Empire. The early Christians refused to have anything to do with its customs and beliefs. Much persecution resulted. Many Christians were falsely accused, thrown to the lions, burned at the stake, and in other ways tortured and martyred. But then great changes began to be made. The Emperor of Rome professed conversion. Imperial orders went forth throughout the empire that persecutions should cease. Bishops were given high honors. The church began to receive worldly recognition and power. But for all of this, a great price had to be paid!

¹ Herodotus' History, Bk. 2, p. 109

² Volume 2, p.440

³ The Legacy of Rome, p.245

Many compromises were made with paganism. Instead of the "church" being separate from the world, it became a part of this world system. The Emperor, showing favor, demanded a place of leadership in the church; for in paganism, emperors were believed to be gods. From here on, wholesale mixtures of paganism into Christianity were made, as all historians know.

As shocking as it may sound, the very paganism that originated in Babylon and spread to the nations, was now thoroughly mixed with Christianity, especially at Rome. This MIXTURE produced what is known today as the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH – as (we believe) the pages, which follow, will prove.

It is not our intention to treat lightly or to ridicule any one whose beliefs we may here disagree with. Instead, it is our desire that this book would be a call to all sincere people – regardless of church affiliation – to forsake Babylonish doctrines and concepts and turn to the Bible and to THE faith that was ONCE delivered to the saints.

CHAPTER TWO Mother and Child Worship

One of the most outstanding examples of how Babylonian paganism has continued to our day may be seen in the way the Romish church invented Mary worship to replace the ancient worship of the Mother Goddess of Babylon. As we mentioned in Chapter One, after the death of Nimrod, his adulterous wife gave birth to a child who she claimed was supernaturally conceived. She taught that he was a god-child; that he was Nimrod, their leader, reborn; that she and her child were divine.¹ This story was widely known in ancient Babylon and developed into a well established worship – the worship of the Mother and the Child. Numerous monuments of Babylon show the Goddess Mother Semiramis with her child Tammuz in her arms.²

Now when the people of Babylon were scattered to the various parts of the earth, they carried the worship of the Divine Mother and her god-child with them. This explains why it is that all nations in ancient times worshipped a divine Mother and the god-child – in one form or another – centuries before the true savior, our Lord Jesus, was born into this world! In the various countries where this worship spread, the Mother and Child were called by different names, due to the dividing of the languages at Babel, but the basic story remained the same.

Among the Chinese, the Mother Goddess was called Shingmoo or the "Holy Mother." She is pictured with child in arms and rays of glory around her head.³ The ancient Germans worshipped the Virgin "Hertha" with child in arms. The Scandinavians called her "Disa" who was also pictured with a child. The Etruscans called her "Nutria" and among the Druids, the "Virgo-Paritura" was worshipped as the "Mother of God."⁴ In India, she was known as Indrani, who was also represented with child in arms.

The Babylonian Mother was known as Aphrodite or Ceres to the Greeks; Nana, to the Sumerians; and as Venus or Fortuna to her devotees in the olden days of Rome, and her child was known as Jupiter.⁵ For ages, Isi, the "Great Goddess" and her child Iswara, have been worshipped in India where great temples were erected for their worship.⁶ In Asia, the Mother was known as Cybele and child as Deoius. "But regardless of her name or place", says one writer, "she was the wife of Baal, the virgin queen of heaven, who bore fruit although she never conceived."⁷

When the children of Israel fell into apostasy, they too were defiled with this Mother-Goddess worship. As we read in Judges 2:13, "They forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth." Ashtaroth or Ashtoreth was the name by which the Goddess was known to the children of Israel. It is pitiful to think that even those who had known the true god would depart from Him and worship the heathen Mother. But this is *exactly* what they did.⁸ One of the titles by which the Goddess was known among the Israelites was "the queen of heaven", as we read in Jeremiah 44:17-19. The prophet Jeremiah rebuked them for worshipping her, but they rebelled against his warning and thus brought upon themselves swift destruction from the hand of God!

In Ephesus, the Great Mother was known as Diana. The temple dedicated to her in that city was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world! And not only at Ephesus, but throughout all Asia and the world was the Mother-goddess worshipped (Acts 19:27).

In Egypt, the Babylonian Mother was known as Isis and her child as Horus. Nothing is more common on the religious monuments of Egypt than the infant Horus seated on the lap of his mother.

The worship of the Mother and Child was also known in England in olden times, for in 1747, a religious monument was found at Oxford, of pagan origin, on which is exhibited a female nursing an infant. "Thus we see," says the historian, "that the Virgin and child were worshipped in pagan times from China to Britain . . . and even in Mexico the 'Mother and child' were worshipped."⁹

This false worship, having spread from Babylon to the various nations, in different names and forms, finally became established at Rome and throughout the Roman Empire. Says a noted writer of this period: "The worship of the Great Mother . . . was

¹ Two Babylons, p. 21

² Encyclopedia of Religions, Volume 2, p. 398

³ The Heathen Religion, p. 60

⁴ Bible Myths, p. 334

⁵ Two Babylons, p.20

⁶ Ibid, p. 20

⁷ Strange Sects and Curious Cults, p.12

⁸ Judges 10:6; I Samuel 7:3, 4; 12:10; I Kings 11:5; II Kings 23:13

⁹ Bible Myths, p. 334

very popular under the Roman Empire. Inscriptions prove that the two (the Mother and the Child) received divine honors . . . not only in Italy and especially at Rome, but also in the provinces, particularly in Africa, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, and Bulgaria."¹

Now it was during this period when the worship of the Divine Mother was very prominent that the savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, founded the *true* New Testament church. And what a glorious church it was in those early days! By the third and fourth centuries, however, what was known as the "church" greatly departed from the original faith, falling into that great apostasy about which the apostles had warned. When this "falling away" came, much paganism was mixed with Christianity. Unconverted pagans were taken into the professing church and in numerous instances were allowed to continue many of their pagan rites and customs – usually with a few reservations or changes to make these pagan beliefs appear more similar to some Christian doctrine.

One of the best examples of such a carry over from paganism may be seen in the way the professing church allowed the pagans to continue their worship of the Great Mother – only in a slightly different form and with a new name! You see, many pagans had been drawn to Christianity, but so strong in their mind was the adoration for the Mother-goddess, that they did not want to forsake her. Compromising church leaders saw that if they could find some similarity in Christianity with the Mother-goddess worship of the pagans, they could increase their numbers by bringing many pagans into their fold. But who could they use to replace the Great Mother of paganism? Of course Mary, the Mother of Jesus was the most logical person for them to choose. Why then couldn't they allow the pagans to *continue* their prayers and devotion to the Goddess, but call her by the name of Mary instead of the former names by which she was known? This would give the pagan worship of the Mother the *appearance* of Christianity, and in this way, both sides could be pleased – as it were – and drawn into the Romish system.

And this is exactly what happened! Little by little, the worship and doctrines that had been associated with the pagan Mother came to be applied to Mary. Thus the pagan worship of the "Mother" continued – hiding now right within the professing church!

It is evident that this Mary – worship was not the worship of Mary at all, but a continuation of the old pagan worship of the pagan Mother. For while Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a fine, dedicated, and godly woman – especially chosen to bear the body of our savior – yet never was she considered as a DIVINE person or a goddess by the early true church. None of the Apostles or even the Lord Jesus himself ever hinted at the idea of Mary worship. As the ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA states, during the first centuries of the church, no emphasis was placed upon Mary whatsoever.² It was not until the time of Constantine – the early part of the fourth century – that anyone began to look to Mary as a goddess. But even at this period, such worship was frowned upon by the church, as is evident by the words of Epiphanius who denounced certain women of Thrace, Arabia, and elsewhere, for worshipping Mary as an actual goddess and offering cakes at her shrine. Yet, within just a few more years, Mary worship was not only condoned by what is known today as the Catholic Church but it became one of her main doctrines – as it is to this day.

Since Rome had long been a center for the worship of the Goddess of paganism, we need not be surprised that this was one of the first places that Mary worship became established within the "Church", a fact that plainly reveals that Mary worship was the direct result of pagan influence!

Another city where the ancient pagan Mother worship was very popular was Ephesus; and here too, attempts were made to merge it into Christianity. In Ephesus, from the primitive times, the Mother Goddess had been called Diana (Acts 19). Here, the pagans had worshipped her as the goddess of Virginity and Motherhood.³ She was said to represent the generative powers of nature and so was pictured with many breasts. A tower shaped crown, a symbol of the tower of Babel, adorned her head.

When beliefs are held by a people for centuries, they are not easily forsaken. So church leaders at Ephesus – when the falling away came – also reasoned that if they would let the pagans continue their old worship of the Great Mother, they could bring them into the "church." So here too, at Ephesus, the Mother Goddess worship was mixed into Christianity, the name of Mary being substituted in the place of the name Diana. The pagans continued to pray to the Mother Goddess, they kept their idols of her, and the professing church allowed them to worship her along with Christ. But such a mixture was not God's way of gaining converts!

When Paul had come to Ephesus in earlier days, no compromise was made with paganism. People were *truly* converted in those days and destroyed their idols of the Mother-goddess (Acts 19:24-27). How tragic that this church in later centuries compromised and even adopted the abominable Mother-goddess worship – hiding it under a cloak of professing Christianity! And finally, when the worship of Mary was made an official doctrine of the Catholic church in 431 AD, in what city did it take place? It was at the Council of Ephesus – the city of the pagan Mother Diana! The pagan influence in such a decision is apparent.

Another stronghold for the worship of the Great Mother of heathenism was Alexandria, Egypt. Here she was known by the name Isis. As Christianity spread to Alexandria, similar compromises were made as had been made at Ephesus and Rome. The pagan Mother worship was skillfully injected into "Christianity" by the church theologians of this city. Now the very fact that it was in cities like Alexandria, Ephesus, and Rome, where the worship of the pagan Mother was first mixed into Christian worship, clearly shows how such was the direct continuation of the old paganism.

Further proof that Mary-worship is but the outgrowth of the old popular worship of the Pagan Mother Goddess, may be seen in the TITLES that are ascribed to her. Let us notice how the pagan titles by which the Mother Goddess was known were smoothly transferred to Mary, and much of the old worship continued!

For example, Mary is often called "THE MADONNA." But such a title had absolutely nothing to do with Mary, the mother of Jesus! Instead, this expression is the translation of one of the titles by which the Babylonian Goddess was known! In deified

¹ The Golden Bough, Volume 1, p. 356

² Volume 14, p. 309

³ Fausset's Bible Encyclopedia, p. 484

form, Nimrod came to be known as Baal. The title of his wife, the female divinity, would be the equivalent of Baalti. In English, this word mean "My Lady"; in Latin, "Mea Domina", and in Italian, it is corrupted into the well-known "*Madonna*"!

Among Phoenicians, the Mother Goddess was known as "The Lady of the Sea"² and even this title is applied to Mary – though there is no connection between Mary and the sea whatsoever!

The scriptures make it plain that there is ONE mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2:5). Yet Roman Catholicism teaches that Mary is also a "mediator." And therefore, prayers to her form a very important part of Catholic worship. But how was it that Mary came to be looked upon as a mediator? Again the influence of paganism is obvious. You see, the Mother Goddess of Babylon bore as one of her names, "Mylitta", that is, "The Mediatrix." And so this too passed into the apostate church which to this day speaks of Mary as the Mediatrix or Mediator!

Another title that was borrowed from paganism and applied to Mary is "the queen of heaven." But Mary, the mother of Jesus, is *not* the queen of heaven, for the "queen of heaven" was a title of the pagan Mother-goddess that was worshipped centuries before Mary was ever born! Yes, way back in the days of Jeremiah, the people were worshipping the "Queen of Heaven" and practicing rites that were sacred to her. As we read in Jeremiah 7:18-20: "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven." And in this connection, it is interesting to note that right down to modern times at Paphos, in Cyprus, the women made offerings to the Virgin Mary as Queen of heaven, in the ruins of the ancient Temple of Astarte.³

As we have seen, the name of the Mother-goddess in Egypt was Isis and her son's name was Horus. Now one of the titles by which Isis was known was the "Mother of God." Later this same title was applied to Mary by the theologians of Alexandria.⁴ This again was obviously an attempt to make Christianity appear similar to the ancient paganism with its Mother-goddess worship. Now we know that Mary was the mother of Jesus, but *only* in the sense of his human nature, his humanity. The Catholic title and the original meaning of the title, however, went beyond this. It attached a glorified position to the MOTHER and in much the same way, Roman Catholics are taught to think of Mary today!

The worship of Isis, the Egyptian form of the Babylonian Mother Goddess, was not limited to Egypt. It was introduced into Rome about 80 BC when Sulla founded an Isiac college there. And to show to what extent that paganism was mixed with "Christianity" at Rome, we need only to mention the fact that Isis, the pagan "Mother of God", was worshipped in a shrine that "stood on the Vatican Hill where now stands St. Peter's, the center of the church which worships the 'Mother of God' in just that capacity!"⁵

And so the titles "queen of heaven", "Lady of the Sea", "Mediatrix", "Madonna", "Mother of God", and others – all of which were the titles of the *pagan* Mother-Goddess – were, little by little, applied to Mary. Such titles plainly show that the SUPPOSED worship of Mary today is in reality the continuation of the Goddess worship of pagan times. But there is further proof of this that can be seen in the way that Mary came to be represented in the *art* of the fallen church:

So firmly written in the paganistic mind was image of the Mother Goddess with child in her arms, that when the days of the great falling away came, "the ancient portrait of Isis and the child Horus was ultimately accepted not only in popular opinion, but by formal episcopal sanction, as the portrait of the Virgin and her child."⁶

Representations of Isis and her child were often enclosed in a framework of flowers. This practice too was applied to Mary who is often pictured the same way, as those who have studied Medieval Art well know.

The Egyptian goddess Isis was often represented as standing on the *Crescent moon* with *twelve* stars surrounding her head.⁷ Even this was adopted and applied to Mary, for in almost every Roman Catholic church on the continent of Europe may be seen pictures of Mary exactly the same way!

To satisfy the superstitious minds of the heathen, leaders of the falling away attempted to make Mary appear similar to the goddess of paganism and exalt her to a divine plane to compete with the pagan Mother. And even as the pagans had *statues* of the Goddess, so likewise, statues were made of "Mary" – even though the scriptures forbid such a practice! In some cases, the VERY SAME statues that had been worshipped as Isis (with her child), were simply renamed as Mary and the Christ child – and the old worship continued! "When Christianity triumphed", says one writer, "these paintings and figures became those of the Madonna and child without any break in continuity: No archaeologist, in fact, can now tell whether some of these objects represent the one or the other."⁸

All of this shows how far apostate leaders went in their attempt to merge paganism with Christianity. Many of these re-named figures are crowned and adorned with jewels – in exactly the same way as the images of the Hindoo and Egyptian Virgins. Now Mary, the mother of Jesus was not rich, put poor. From where then came the jewels and the crowns seen on these statues that are supposedly of her? Obviously such representations are not Christian, but are of a pre-Christian origin instead!

And so by compromises – some very obvious, others more hidden – the worship of the ancient Mother of the pagans was continued within the "church", the church of the falling away, with the name of Mary being substituted in place of the old names. And this slight change has deceived the world!

¹ Two Babylons, p.20

² Harper's Bible Dictionary, p. 47

³ The Paganism in Our Christianity, p. 133

⁴ Ibid, p. 130

⁵ Ibid, p. 128-129

⁶ Man and His Gods, p. 216

⁷ Kenrick's Egypt, volume 1, p. 425; Isis Unveiled, p. 49

⁸ The Paganism in Our Christianity, p. 129

CHAPTER THREE Mary Worship

Perhaps the most outstanding proof that Mary worship is a continuation of the old pagan worship (and not of Mary at all) may be seen from the fact that in pagan religion, the MOTHER was worshipped as much or more than her son! Here then is an outstanding clue to help us solve the Mystery of Babylon today! True Christianity teaches that the Lord Jesus – and HE alone – is the way, the truth, and the life; that only HE can forgive sin; and only HE, of all earth's creatures, has ever lived a life that was never stained with wrong; and HE is to be worshipped – NEVER HIS MOTHER. But Roman Catholicism – showing the influence that paganism has had in its development – exalts the MOTHER also! In fact, in many ways the Mother is exalted *more* than the Son.

Of course, some might try to deny that the Catholic church attributes such a divine position to Mary. But one can travel the world over, and whether in a massive Cathedral or in a village chapel, the statue of Mary will occupy the most prominent position. In reciting the Rosary prayers, the "Hail Mary" is repeated nine times as often as the "Lord's prayer." Say what one will, Mary is the most important name in Catholicism. In a very similar way as the ancient Babylonians glorified their Mother-goddess, so do those in Modern Babylon today – only they use the name Mary instead of the former names by which the goddess was known.

Catholics are taught that the reason for praying to Mary is that she can take the petition to her Son, Jesus; and since she is his MOTHER, he will answer the request for her sake. The inference is that Mary is more compassionate, understanding, and merciful than her son, the Lord Jesus. Certainly such a position is blasphemous and utterly contrary to the scriptures! Yet this idea is often repeated in Catholic writings.

One noted Roman Catholic writer, Alphonsus Liguori, wrote at length telling how much more effectual prayers are that are addressed to Mary rather than to Christ. And that his writings carried Catholic approval is evident from the fact that he was canonized as a "saint" by Pope Gregory XIV in 1839 and declared a "doctor" of the Catholic church by Pope Pius IX.

In one portion of his writings Liguori describes an imaginary scene in which a sinful man sees two ladders hanging from heaven. Mary is at the top of one; Jesus at the top of the other. When the sinner tries to climb the one ladder, he sees the angry face of Christ and falls defeated. But when he climbs Mary's ladder, he ascends easily and is openly welcomed by Mary who brings him into heaven and presents him to Christ! Then all is well. The story is supposed to show how much easier and more effective it is to go to Christ through Mary.¹

This same Catholic writer said that the sinner who ventures to come directly to Christ may come with dread of his wrath. But if he will pray to the *Virgin*, she will only have to "show" that son "the breasts that gave him suck" and his wrath will be immediately appeased!² Certainly such a heathenistic idea is contrary to the scriptures. In fact, the scriptures give us an illustration that fully refutes such a position: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee", a woman once said to Jesus, "and the paps that thou hast sucked!" But Jesus answered, "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:27, 28).

Obviously then the idea that Jesus would be persuaded to answer a prayer because of Mary shows him the breasts that he had sucked, is contrary to the scriptures. But such ideas about the breasts, on the other hand, were not foreign to the worshippers of the pagan Mother-goddess. Idols of the Goddess have been unearthed which often show her breasts extremely out of proportion to her body. Or, as in the case of Diana, to symbolize her "fertility", she is pictured with as many as one hundred breasts!

Catholicism has further attempted to exalt Mary to a glorified position as evidenced by the doctrine of the "*Immaculate conception*." Now such a teaching, it should seem, is only a further effort to make Mary more closely resemble the Goddess of paganism, for in the old myths, the goddess was also believed to have had a supernatural conception! These old fable stories varied, but all told of supernatural happenings in connection with her entrance into the world. They taught that she was superior to ordinary mortals; that she was divine. And so, little by little, to make the teachings about Mary harmonize with the pagan teachings, it was necessary to teach that Mary's entrance into this world was supernatural also!

The supernatural element in the Roman Catholic teaching about Mary is that she was born without the stain of original sin. But of such a birth the scriptures are silent. Concerning Mary, the Bible *does* say that she was a chosen vessel of the Lord; she was a Godly and virtuous woman – a *virgin* – but she was as much a HUMAN as you or I. And as a human, she was a member of Adam's family – a *fallen* family. As the scriptures declare, ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God", and the only exception to this is the Lord Jesus himself. Like everyone else, Mary needed a savior! And this she plainly admitted when she said: "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my SAVIOR" (Luke 1:47).

Obviously if Mary needed a savior, then she was not a savior herself. If she needed a savior, then she needed to be saved, forgiven, and redeemed – even as others. The fact is: Our Lord's divinity did not depend on his Mother being some type of exalted, super-human person. No; instead he was divine because he was the only begotten *Son of God*. His divinity came from his Heavenly Father.

Let us understand that it was JESUS that was born of a supernatural conception, not his mother! The idea that Mary was superior to other human beings was utterly refuted by Jesus Himself! One day while he was preaching, "his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him." Then someone said, "Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to

¹ Roman Catholicism, p. 147

² Two Babylons, p. 158

speak with thee." But Jesus answered: "Who is my mother? And who are my brethren?" And stretching forth his hand toward his disciples, he said: "Behold my mother and my brethren! For WHOSOEVER shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and MOTHER" (Matthew 12:46-50). Plainly enough then, if we serve the Lord – if we do his will – then we are on the same level with Mary or any other Christian. Certainly this oneness in Christ shows an EQUALITY in the sight of God and refutes the idea that Mary was a super-human person.

However, Romanism had adopted from paganism the idea of praying to the Divine Mother and so it *had* to teach that Mary was a superhuman person – how else could she hear so many prayers as those that are addressed to her? Each day Catholics the world over recite the Hail Mary, the Rosary, the Angelus, the Litanies of the Blessed Virgin, and others. Multiplying the number of these prayers, times the number of Catholics that recite these prayers each day, it has been figured that Mary would have to listen to 46,296 petitions a *second* – and this is a conservative estimate! Obviously, no one could do this but God himself. Nevertheless Catholics believe that Mary hears all of these prayers; and so of necessity, they have had to exalt her to the Divine level – scriptural or not!

Attempting to justify such undue exaltation of Mary, Catholic leaders have sought for a *scriptural* basis for the belief. The words of Gabriel to Mary, "Blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28) have often been referred to in this connection. Now most assuredly the words of Gabriel indicate that Mary was chosen of the Lord. But simply because she was "blessed among women" would not make her a *divine* person, for 1300 years before, a similar blessing was pronounced upon Jael, of whom it was said "Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be . . ." (Judges 5:24). It seems quite evident then that the words which tell us Mary was "blessed among women" do not prove that we should worship her, pray to her, or think of her as a goddess.

Before Pentecost, Mary was gathered with the other disciples waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit. We read that the apostles "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and MARY the mother of Jesus, and his brethren" (Acts 1:14). Certainly the scriptures do not say that the disciples were praying to Mary, were worshipping her, or that she even took any prominent position. But typical of Catholic ideas concerning Mary, the accompanying illustration (as seen in the Catholic Catechism books) attempts to give to Mary a *central* position.¹ But as all students of the Bible know, the disciples were not looking to Mary on that occasion, they were looking to their resurrected and ascended CHRIST to outpour on them the gift of the Holy Spirit! We notice that in the drawing that not only are the disciples pictured as looking to Mary, but even the Holy Spirit (as a dove) is seen hovering over her! However, as far as the scriptural account is concerned, the only one upon whom the Spirit in this form ever descended was Jesus Himself – not his mother! On the other hand – and this sounds almost incredible – but the pagan Virgin Goddess under the name of Juno was often represented with a dove on her head, as was also Astarte, Cybele, and Isis!² And so the pagan influence in such pictures seems apparent.

Further attempts to glorify Mary – to exalt her to a position the scriptures nowhere assign to her – may be seen in the Catholic doctrine known as the PERPETUAL VIRGINITY of Mary. This is the teaching that Mary remained a virgin throughout her life. But *never* was this doctrine taught by Christ or the Apostles. As the ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA explains, the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary was not taught until about three hundred years AFTER our Lord's return to heaven! It was not until the meetings of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 that this fabulous quality gained the official recognition of Rome.³

Quite contrary to Catholic teachings, however, the scriptures plainly show that Mary did NOT remain a virgin throughout her life. The scriptures teach that our Lord Jesus was born to the virgin Mary – virgin born – supernaturally born (Matthew 1:23). We *most assuredly* believe in the virgin birth of Christ! But, *after* Jesus was born, Mary gave birth to other children – the natural offspring of her union with Joseph, her husband:

In Matthew 1:25, we read that Jesus was Mary's "FIRSTBORN" son. The Bible does not say that Mary brought forth her ONLY child; it says, instead, that Jesus was her firstborn child. Now the fact that Jesus was her "firstborn" child, would certainly infer that she later had a second-born child, possibly a third-born child, etc.

But beyond this line of reasoning, the scriptures leave no room for doubt as to the fact that Mary did have other children after Jesus was born. Their names are listed in the Bible as follows: James, Joses, Simon, and Judas (Matthew 13:55). Besides these four brothers, the passage goes on to mention the sisters of Jesus. The people of Nazareth said: "And his sisters, are they not *all* with us?" (verse 56). The word "sisters" is in the plural, so we know that Jesus had at least two sisters. But a still closer look at the passage indicates that Jesus not only had two sisters, but at least three or more! Notice that the verse speaks of "all" his sisters. Usually if we are referring to only two people, we would say "both" of them, not "all" of them. That the expression refers to at least three sisters is definitely implied. If we then figure three sisters and four brothers, half-brothers and half-sisters to Jesus, this would make Mary the mother of eight children all together.

The Lord Jesus was born to Mary supernaturally – born of virgin birth. The remaining seven children that were born to her were born by natural birth, children that Mary conceived from her husband Joseph. But the Catholic position is that Joseph kept Mary as a virgin all of their married life. However, she remained a virgin – according to scripture – *only* until after Jesus was born. "Joseph . . . knew her not *until* she had brought forth her firstborn son: and He called his name JESUS" (Matthew 1:25). Joseph "knew her not" until after Jesus was born, but after that, Mary and Joseph did come together as husband and wife and children were born to them – as we have seen. Considering then how the scriptures plainly teach these things, is not the doctrine of the "perpetual virginity" of Mary utterly erroneous?

¹ Official Baltimore Catechism, Number 2 (Lesson 11)

² Doane, p. 357

³ Volume 14, p. 999

During the times of the great falling away, to more closely identify Mary with the Mother Goddess that the nations had been worshipping for centuries, men also began to teach that Mary's body never saw corruption, that she bodily ascended into heaven, and that she is there today as the "queen of heaven", to receive worship and prayers! It was not until this present century, however, that the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary was *officially* proclaimed as a doctrine of the Roman Catholic church. It was in 1951 that Pope Pius XII proclaimed that Mary's body saw no corruption, but was taken to heaven. Obviously then, the doctrine of the Assumption of the Virgin was not a part of New Testament doctrine.

The following words of St. Bernard sum up the Catholic position in this connection: "On the third day after Mary's death, when the apostles gathered around her tomb, they found it empty. The sacred body had been carried up to the Celestial Paradise . . . the grave had no power over one who was immaculate . . . But it was not enough that Mary should be received into heaven. She was to be no ordinary citizen . . . she had a dignity beyond the reach even of the highest of the archangels. Mary was to be crowned Queen of Heaven by the eternal Father: she was to have a throne at her Son's right hand . . . Now day by day, hour by hour, she is praying for us, obtaining graces for us, preserving us from danger, shielding us from temptation, showering down blessing upon us . . ."

Now the worship of Mary – in its entirety – is based upon this belief that she bodily ascended into heaven. But the Bible says absolutely nothing about the so-called Assumption of Mary. On the other hand, John 3:13 says: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" -- our Lord Jesus Christ. HE is the one that is at God's right hand, HE is the one that is our mediator, HE is the one that showers down blessings upon us – not his mother!

The Bible nowhere tells us to pray to a woman – Mary or anyone else. Such false worship is repeatedly forbidden in the Bible. True prayers must be addressed to our Lord himself. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5). The very idea of "praying to Mary" as a "mediator", as the "queen of heaven", is but paganism disguised with the name Mary.

Closely connected with the prayers that are prayed to "Mary" is the Rosary, which, as we shall see is equally pagan in origin: As an instrument, the rosary is a chain with fifteen sets of small beads, each set marked off by one large bead. The ends of this chain are joined by a medal bearing the imprint of Mary. From this hangs a short chain at the end of which is a crucifix, a cross with a dead savior hanging on it.

The beads on the rosary are for counting prayers, prayers that are repeated over and over. Such an instrument, as is well known, is a very important part of Catholic worship. But like so many things in the Catholic Church, the rosary is not a Christian instrument, but a pagan invention. Long before there ever was a Catholic church, the rosary was in common use in almost every pagan nation!

A medal has been found at Citium, in Cyprus, colonized by the Phoenicians, which bears a circle of beads resembling a rosary. This rosary was used in the worship of Astarte, the Mother Goddess, about 800 BC!¹ This same "rosary" is seen on some of the early Phoenician coins.

The Brahmans have from early times used rosaries with tens and hundreds of beads. The worshippers of Vishnu give their children rosaries of 108 beads. A similar rosary is used by millions of Buddhists in India and Tibet.² The Moslem constantly fingers the Tasbih rosary with 99 beads for the 99 names of Allah.³ The worshippers of Siva has a rosary upon which he rehearses, if possible, all the 1008 names of his god.⁴

When Catholic missionaries first visited India, Japan, and Mexico – places that had never heard of Christ – they were shocked to find rosaries already in use by pagans! The demon worshipers of Thibet and China use rosaries in their rituals. Rosaries are often mentioned in the sacred books of the Hindoos.⁵ The rosary was used in Asiatic Greece and such was the purpose (according to Hislop) of the beads that are seen on the statue of Diana.⁶ Literature of the second and third centuries BEFORE the Christian era, mentions the use of rosaries among various heathen religions. And not only was the rosary in evidence in all these countries and among these religions that we have mentioned, necklaces worn by the women were not merely for ornamental reasons – but for the REMEMBRANCE of prayers in their heathenistic religion – the word necklace, "Monile", meaning "Remembrancer."⁷

That the rosary instrument was used in pre-Christian times and by non-Christian religions none can deny. Even the CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA says: "In almost all countries, then, we meet with something in the nature of prayer – counters or rosary-beads."

However, neither Christ or the Apostles ever taught us to use an instrument to count our prayers! Memorizing a prayer, then repeating it over and over, while we count rosary beads, actually becomes more of a "memory test" than a spontaneous expression of prayer from the heart. Considering that its use is without scriptural support and that its origin was among heathen tribes, the rosary is but another example of how paganism was mixed into the Catholic religion.

¹ The Cross in Tradition, History, and Art, p. 21

² Encyclopedia of Religions, Volume 3, p.203

³ Ibid, p. 205

⁴ Ibid, p. 203

⁵ Doane, p. 344

⁶ Two Babylons, p.187

⁷ Ibid, p. 188

The most oft-repeated prayer and the main prayer of the rosary is the "Hail Mary" which is as follows: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of death, Amen."

In all, reciting the complete rosary takes about 15 minutes. It involves repeating the Hail Mary 53 times, the Lord's Prayer 6 times, 5 mysteries, 5 meditations on the Mysteries, 5 glory Be's and one repeating of the Apostles' Creed (so called). Now let us notice where the emphasis is placed. Which prayer is repeated the most? It is the prayer to Mary! In fact, the Hail Mary prayer is repeated almost NINE TIMES as often as the Lord's Prayer. But we ask: is a prayer composed by men and directed to Mary nine times as important or effective as the prayer taught by Jesus and directed to God himself? Such an extreme emphasis on the "MOTHER" again plainly shows the mixture of paganism into the system of Rome!

Repeating a prayer over and over is shown in the Bible to be a practice of the heathen! For example, repetitious prayers were used in connection with Diana worship at Ephesus. These prayers consisted of a short religious phrase repeated over and over, as we read in Acts 19:34. In this passage, the worshippers of the Mother Goddess "all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians." They kept saying this over and over. And even as those worshippers of Diana used repetitious phrases in their worship, even so today, the same type of unscriptural praying continues in the Catholic church – now supposedly to Mary!

But Jesus Christ was directly opposed to the practice of repeating a prayer over and over – and plainly said so! "When ye pray", he declared "use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him" (Matthew 6:7-13). In this passage, our Lord in no uncertain terms told us NOT to pray a little prayer over and over. Jesus said it was heathenistic. Will we believe Him and will we obey?

Of all the rosary prayers, the only one that is taken directly from the Bible is "The Lord's Prayer." But even this prayer was not to be repeated over and over, for after the Lord told us not to use repetitions as the heathen do, in the very next verse, he said: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven. . ." and he gave the disciples this sample prayer. In the very same passage in which he warned of vain repetition, the Lord Jesus gave this prayer as an OPPOSITE to the heathen type of prayer. And yet, in direct disobedience to the scriptures, Catholics are taught to repeat this prayer over and over. And if even the "Lord's Prayer" was not to be repeated over and over, how much less should we repeat over and over a little man-made prayer to Mary, his human mother?

CHAPTER FOUR Saints, Saints' Days, and Symbols

In addition to the prayers and devotions that are directed to "Mary", Roman Catholics also honor and pray to various "saints." Now these saints – according to the Catholic position – are martyrs or other notable people of the "church" who have died and whom the Popes have pronounced saints. In this chapter we shall see the astounding proof, however, that the idea of praying to saints was but a continuation of the old devotion that the pagans gave to the gods and goddesses of their religion from the earliest times! But before we notice this evidence, let us first look into the Holy Scriptures and see what the Bible teaches concerning saints.

According to the Bible, ALL true Christians are saints! There is certainly no indication that a person becomes a saint after he is dead. And it is not a pope that makes anyone a saint. This is *God's* business! In the scriptures, saints are *living* people, never the dead. For example, when Paul wrote to the Ephesians, his letter was addressed: "To the saints that are at Ephesus" (Ephesians 1:1). The book of Philippians was written "to all the saints that are at Philippi" (Philippians 1:1). The early Christians in the church at Rome were called saints (Romans 1:7; 16:15) as were also those Christians who lived at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:2; II Corinthians 1:1).

Therefore, if we want a "saint" to pray for us, we should find a Christian and let him join us in prayer. But if we try to contact people that have died, what else could it be but a form of spiritism? Repeatedly the Bible condemns all attempts to commune with the dead, for such is actually demonism (see Isaiah 8:18, 20). Yet many recite the "Apostles' Creed" that says: "We believe . . . in the communion of saints" and believe that such has reference not only to the living, but to the "departed" as well – "a mutual sharing in help, satisfaction, prayer, and other good works, a mutual communication" (New Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 4, p. 41.)

But the scriptures are against the idea of the living being blessed or benefited by prayers to or through those who have already died. Such teachings are completely foreign to the Bible. How then did these things enter into the Romish Church?

Again we look back to the "Mother" of false religion – Babylon. Here, from the earliest times we find that the people prayed to and honored a plurality of gods. In fact, the Babylonian system developed until it had some 5000 gods and goddesses.¹ And in much the same way as Catholics believe about their "saints", the Babylonians believed that their gods and goddesses had at one time been living heroes on earth, but were now on a higher plane.² "Every month and every day of the month was under the

¹ In the Beginnings, p. 65

² Encyclopedia of Religions, Volume 2, p. 78

protection of a particular divinity."¹ Some of these gods and goddesses were associated with various seasons, others with certain events in life, and others were connected with various occupations.

From Babylon – like worship of the Great Mother – the worship of these “gods” spread to every nation. The Buddhists in China, to cite one of many examples that could be given, have their “worship of various deities, as the goddess of sailor, the god of war, the gods of special neighborhoods or occupations.”²

When Rome conquered the world, this system of gods and goddesses was absorbed in like manner into the religion of pagan Rome. Bright, for example, was goddess of smiths and poetry. Juno Regina was the goddess of womanhood, marriage, and maternity; Minerva was the goddess of schools – of wisdom, handicrafts, and musicians; Venus was the goddess of sexual love and birth; Vesta was the goddess of bakers and sacred fires; Hercules was the god of joy and wine; mercury was the patron deity of merchants, orators, and thieves; Ops, was the goddess of wealth; Bellona was the goddess of war; the pagan gods Castor and Pollux were the protectors of Rome and of travelers at sea; Apollo was the god of medicine and health; Cronus was the guardian of oaths; and Janus was the god of doors and gates.³

And so the Babylonish idea of gods and goddesses associated with various days and events in life became established in pagan Rome. Then later when the great falling away came, this very same practice was merged into the “church” at Rome. Since new converts from paganism were reluctant to part with their “gods” unless they could find some satisfactory counterpart in Christianity – these old gods and goddesses were simply renamed and called “saints.” And even as the pagans had believed in divinities associated with various *occupations* – each with its special *day* – so this *same* belief continued and is a very important part of the Catholic church to this day! This is seen in the following table of Catholic saints, the occupations they are associated with and their special days:

Actors	St. Genesius	August 25
Architects	St. Thomas	December 21
Astronomers	St. Cominic	August 4
Athletes	St. Sebastain	January 20
Aviators	Our Lady of Loreto	December 10
Bakers	St. Elizabeth	November 19
Bankers	St. Matthew	September 21
Barbers	S.S. Cosmas & Damian	September 27
Beggars	St. Alexius	July 17
Book Sellers	St. John of God	March 8
Bricklayers	St. Steven	December 26
Builders	St. Vincent Ferrer	April 5
Butchers	St. Hadrian	September 28
Cab Drivers	St. Fiarce	August 30
Candle-makers	St. Bernard	August 20
Comedians	St. Vitus	June 15
Cooks	St. Martha	July 29
Dentists	St. Appollonia	February 9
Doctors	St. Luke	October 18
Editors	St. John Bosco	January 31
Fishermen	St. Andrew	November 30
Florists	St. Dorothy	February 6
Grocers	St. Michael	September 29
Hat makers	St. James	May 11
Housekeepers	St. Anne	July 26
Hunters	St. Huber	November 3
Laborers	St. James the Greater	July 25
Lawyers	St. Ives	May 19
Librarians	St. Jerome	September 30
Merchants	St. Francis of Assisi	October 4
Miners	St. Barbara	December 4
Musicians	St. Cecilia	November 22
Notaries	St. Mark the Evangelist	April 25
Nurses	St. Catherine	April 30
Painters	St. Luke	October 18
Pharmacists	St. Gemma Galgani	April 11
Plasterers	St. Bartholomew	August 24

¹ The Historians' History of the World, Volume 1, p. 518

² The Story of the World's Worship, p. 621

³ Durant, Volume 3, p. 61-63; World's Worship, p. 179; Life in the Roman World, p. 377

Policemen	St. Michael	September 29
Postal workers	St. Gabriel	March 24
Printers	St. John of God	March 8
Sailors	St. Brendan	May 16
Scientists	St. Albert	November 15
Shoemakers	St. Crispan	September 29
Singers	St. Gregory	March 12
Steel workers	St. Eliguis	December 1
Stenographers	St. Genesius	August 25
Students	St. Thomas Aquinas	March 7
Surgeons	S.S. Cosmas & Damian	September 27
Tailors	St. Boniface of Credtion	June 5
Tax Collectors	St. Matthew	September 21
Teachers	St. Gregory the Great	March 12

The accompanying illustration shows the way Catholic calendars designate certain of their "saints" for certain days (as we have mentioned). In addition to the "saints" that are dedicated to the various occupations, Catholics are taught to pray to the following "saints" for help in connection with these *afflictions*:

Arthritis	St. James	Epilepsy, nerves	St. Vitus
Bite of dogs	St. Hubert	Fever	St. George
Bite of snakes	St. Hilary	Foot diseases	St. Victor
Blindness	St. Raphael	Gall stones	St. Liberius
Cancer	St. Peregrine	Gout	St. Andrew
Cramps	St. Murice	Headaches	St. Denis
Dearness	St. Cadoc	Heart trouble	St. John of God
Disease of breast	St. Agatha	Insanity	St. Dymrna
Disease of eyes	St. Lucy	Skin disease	St. Roch
Disease of throat	St. Blase	Sterility	St. Giles

The Catholic church also has "saints" for the following:

Barren women	St. Anthony	Old maids	St. Andrew
Beer drinkers	St. Nicholas	Poor	St. Lawrence
Children	St. Dominic	Pregnant women	St. Gerard
Domestic animals	St. Anthony A.	Television	St. Clare
Emigrants	St. Francis	Temptation	St. Syriacus
Family troubles	St. Eustachius	To apprehend thieves	St. Gervase
Fire	St. Lawrence	To have children	St. Felicitas
Floods	St. Columban	To obtain a husband	St. Joseph
Lightning storms	St. Barbara	To obtain a wife	St. Anne
Lovers	St. Raphael	To find lost articles	St. Anthony

Beyond all possibility of doubt, the Catholic system of patron saints is nothing more nor less than a continuation of the ancient heathen beliefs in gods devoted to days, occupations, and the various needs of human life. Since the worship of saints is really a continuation of these false gods, Romanism is found guilty of worshipping "other gods" beside the true GOD! -- a practice that is repeatedly condemned in the scriptures.

This method of substituting "saints" in the place of the pagan "gods" became so popular that by the 10th Century, 25,000 "saints" had been canonized by the Roman Catholic church. By mixing the two religions together, both the pagans and the professing Christians swelled the numbers of the Romish system.

However, to make such an apparent mixture appear less obvious, when it was possible, the leaders of Romanism would substitute a Christian sounding name that was SIMILAR to the name of the old pagan god it replaced! For example, the goddess Victoria of the Basses-Alpes was renamed as St. Victoire! The pagan god Osiris was renamed as St. Onuphris, Cheron as St. Ceraunos, Artemis as St. Artemidos, Dionysus as St. Dionysus, Apollo as St. Apolinaris, and Mars as St. Martine!¹

The pagan Goddess Bright (regarded as the daughter of the Sun-god and who was represented with a child in her arms) was smoothly renamed as "Saint Bridget." In pagan days, her chief temple at Kildare was served by Vestal Virgins who tended the sacred fires. When the days of the falling away came, the temple became a convent and her vestals, *nuns*! They continued to tend the ritual fire dedicated to the Goddess, only it too was renamed and called "St. Bridget's Fire."²

¹ Man and His Gods, p. 227; Durant, p. 745; Doane, p. 396

² Festivals, Holy Days, and Saints' Days, p. 26

The best preserved ancient temple now remaining in Rome is the PANTHEON which in olden times was dedicated (according to the inscription over the portico) to "Jove and all the gods." However, it was reconsecrated by Pope Boniface IV to "The Mother of God and all the *saints*." Another pagan temple at Rome which was formerly sacred to the "Bona Dea" (the Good Goddess), was "Christianized" and dedicated to the Virgin Mary. In a place formerly sacred to the god Apollo, there now stands the church of St. Apollinaris! And where there anciently stood the temple of Mars, may now be seen the church of St. Martine!¹

In a further attempt to merge paganism into Christianity, church leaders of the falling away taught that Jesus was born in a *cave*. Of course there is no scriptural authority for such an idea. To the contrary, the cave that is shown at Bethlehem as the birth place of Jesus is actually a rock shrine in which the Babylonian god TAMMUZ was worshipped! This was mentioned by Jerome, a noted Christian writer of the Fourth Century.²

And so, throughout the Roman Empire, paganism died only to live again in the Roman Catholic church! Pagan temples and shrines were renamed. The pagan gods and goddesses were also renamed and their worship continued – now posing as Christian saints! And in merging all of this paganism into Christianity, not only did the devotion to the old idol gods continue, but even as the pagans had idols or statues of their gods, so the Roman Catholic church also adopted the use of statues into their worship.

In some cases, the very same statue that had been worshipped as a pagan god was renamed as a Christian saint – and the devotion continued! A statue of Jupiter, for example, was slightly changed and renamed as "Peter" (which we will mention in a later chapter). Other idols and statues were "Christianized" and Satan's old pagan idolatry continued – now in disguise. And through the centuries, more and more statues have been made and venerated, until today there are churches in Europe that contain as many as two, three, and four THOUSAND statues.³ Whether in great impressive Cathedrals, in small chapels, at wayside shrines, on the dashboards of automobiles, or smiling frozenly in the cluttered dens of harlots – in all these places the idols of Catholicism may be found in abundance. And the use of such idols and images clearly identifies the Roman Catholic church as a continuation of paganism, not the pure, undefiled, church spoken of in the Holy Scriptures.

The use of idols – regardless of what name men may place upon them – is Babylonish; for, as Herodotus mentions, Babylon was the source from which ALL systems of idolatry flowed to the nations. Repeatedly God has warned his people not to follow the practice of using idols in their worship:

The Bible says: "Thou shalt not make unto thee ANY graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water . . ." (Exodus 20:4), "Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image . . ." (Leviticus 26:1). "Idolaters . . . shall (not) inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:9, 10). "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (I John 5:21).

Quite plainly then, the scriptures are AGAINST the use of idols and images in church worship. The early church – the true church – never used them. But when the "falling away" came, and paganism and Christianity were mixed together, free and full use was made of the old pagan idols to which the "church" fell heir. Apostate church leaders felt that since some of these statues were so valuable – some covered with silver and gold – they should be re-dedicated and their use continued. But what does God say about such reasoning? "The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire", our Lord commanded, "thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein; for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God" (Deuteronomy 7:25).

And not only were the Israelites to destroy the idols of the heathen nations they conquered, but they were to "destroy all their PICTURES" also (Numbers 33:52). These were pictures of heathen deities. And so, not only is the use of idols condemned in the scriptures, but since pictures are often venerated in a superstitious way, these too bring no virtue to true worship. It is strange that some religions will condemn the use of statues, yet will make full use of pictures of the statues! But what difference is there? The statue is three dimensional, while the painting is on a flat surface. But neither was used by the apostles or the church of the New Testament. It was not until the FIFTH century that pictures of Mary, Christ, and the "saints", were made and used as objects of worship.

And even as the pagans place a *circle* or aureole around the heads of their gods, so the fallen church continued this practice in connection with her "saints." The illustration at the right is the way St. Augustine is shown in Catholic books – with a circular disk around his head. All of the "saints" of Catholicism are pictured in this same way. But to see that this practice was borrowed from heathenism, we need only to notice the drawing of Buddha at the left, which also features the circular symbol around his head! Actually, this practice is Babylonish, for the artists and sculptors of ancient Babylon used the disk or aureola around any being they wished to represent as a god or goddess.⁴ This custom continued among pagan religions even until the days of the Roman Empire. The Romans depicted Circe, the pagan goddess daughter of the sun, with a circle surrounding her head. From its use in pagan Rome, the same symbolism passed into Papal Rome and has continued to this day, as evidenced in thousands of paintings and pictures of "Mary" and of the "saints."

When the falling away came, pictures that were supposed to be portraits of Christ were painted with "golden beams" surrounding his head. This was exactly the way the sun-god of the pagans had been represented for centuries! And so this was but another compromise in the attempt to merge paganism and Christianity together.

¹ Bible Myths, p. 396

² epistle Ad Paulinum.

³ Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, art. "Images and Idols."

⁴ Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism, p. 35

Today both Catholic and Protestant churches (for the most part) make use of pictures of Christ. But the scriptures do not give us any description of the physical features of Jesus. No picture was made of him during his earthly life. The church of the first four centuries had no pictures of him. It is evident then that the so-called pictures of Christ, like those of Mary and the saints, are only the product of artists' imaginations. We only have to make a short study of religious art to find that in different centuries and among different nationalities, many different pictures of Christ – some very different – may be found. Obviously all of these cannot be what Jesus looked like, for they differ one from the other!

Let us suppose that someone who had never seen you, knew nothing of your features, and had no way to know what you looked like – suppose he decided to paint a picture of you! Of course the finished picture would look nothing like you. Suppose then they put your name under it and told people that this was a picture of you. Would you appreciate this? Of course not. And neither should we think that Christ has ever put his approval upon men's conceptions of what they *think* he looked like!

I know that to write these things is not popular. But I believe that we can all agree that no man – not even the best artist in the world – could ever portray our Lord in his true and full glory! Any picture, even at its best, is a poor substitute – a mere image or idol in modified form – and such can never show how wonderful our Lord *really* is. True worshippers must worship God "in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) and the veneration of pictures, images, or idols, does not help true worship, it hinders it.

CHAPTER FIVE Obelisks, Temples, and Towers

Among the ancient heathen nations, not only were statues of the gods and goddesses in *human* form made, but many objects were venerated that had a symbolical, a hidden, a MYSTERY meaning! An outstanding example of this can be seen in the worship of the ancient obelisks, one of which is seen in the accompanying illustration.

Diodorus says the Queen Semiramis erected an obelisk at Babylon which was 130 feet in height.¹ And so we know that the obelisks were used in the religion of Babylon. But it was especially in Egypt that their use became the most prominent. (As is well known, Egypt became a great stronghold for paganism and the Mystery system from the earliest time.) There are a number of these ancient obelisks that are still in Egypt, though a number of them have been removed to other nations. One is in Central Park in New York, another in London, and many of them (as we shall see) were transported to ROME!

Originally, these obelisks were associated with sun-worship. They were symbols of Nimrod or Baal in deified form.² Those ancient people – having rejected the knowledge of the true creator – seeing that the sun gave life to plants and to man, looked upon the sun as God, the Great Life Giver. But not only were the obelisks sun-symbols, they were recognized as sex-symbols also. These ancient people knew that through the sex act, life was produced. And so – as is well known by "all who study into it – the phallus (the male organ of reproduction), was also considered (along with the sun) as the symbol of life – and as such, a symbol of their sun-god. And it was this sun-sex belief that was symbolized by the obelisk!³

Considering then the vile significance of the obelisks, we need not be surprised to find that their use was forbidden in the Bible. The word "images" that appears in our bible is translated from several different original words, having different shades of meaning. One of these words is "*matzebah*", meaning "standing images", that is, obelisks. This word is used in I Kings 14:23; II Kings 18:4; 23:14; Jeremiah 43:13; Micah 5:13. Another original word that often refers to the obelisks is "*hammanim*", which means "sun-images"; that is, images dedicated to the sun, or obelisks. This word is found in the original text of Isaiah 17:8 and 27:9.

Now in order for these obelisks to carry out their heathenistic symbolism, they were placed upright – *erect*. Thus they pointed UP – toward the sun. As a symbol of the phallus, the ERECT position also had an obvious significance. Considering how important this erect position of an obelisk was to those worshippers of the Mysteries, it is interesting to notice what God said in warning of his wrath against such false worship. Our Lord declared that their "images" – obelisks – "shall not stand up" (Isaiah 27:9). Thus our Lord's displeasure with these erect images, the obelisks, is plainly revealed!

When the backslidden children of Israel mixed heathen worship with their worship of the true God, they too erected an "image of jealousy in the *entry*" of the temple! (Ezekiel 8:5). This image was probably an obelisk, the symbol of the phallus; for, as Scofield says in commenting on this chapter, these people were "given over to PHALLIC cults."⁴ This practice of placing an erect obelisk at the entrance of a heathen temple was an established custom of the time. An obelisk stood at the entrance of the temple of Tum, for example, as well as in front of the temple of Hathor, the "abode of Horus" (Tammuz).⁵

Considering the use of the obelisk at the ENTRANCE of the temples of ancient paganism, we need not be too alarmed to find *exactly* the same thing in connection with modern Babylon – the Roman Catholic church! Yes, not only was an obelisk placed at the entry of the temples of the ancient sun-worshippers, but in front of the entrance of ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL at Rome, the *very same* symbol is found today! The photo on the following page shows St. Peter's church – posing as the "Mother" church of all Christianity – and right before it stands the image of jealousy, the obelisk, a symbol of the phallus! Here then is an amazing clue to help us identify modern Babylon.

¹ Encyclopedia of Religions, Volume 3, p. 264.

² Fausset, p. 511.

³ Encyclopedia of Religions, p. 33; Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism, p. 99

⁴ Scofield Bible, p. 847, note.

⁵ Encyclopedia of Religions, p. 33.

How is it that this very abominable thing came to be placed here? As we study into this, we discover that as the Mystery religion spread to Rome, along with it came the use of the obelisk as a symbol. And not only were obelisks made and erected at Rome, but the very obelisks of Egypt – at great expense – were hauled to Rome and erected by the emperors and dedicated to the sun-god in pagan days. And such was the case with the obelisk that stands before St. Peter's. It is not a mere *copy* of an Egyptian obelisk, but it is the *very same* obelisk that was worshipped in Egypt in ancient times! Caligula, in AD 37-41, had this obelisk transported from HELIOPOLIS, Egypt to his circus on the Vatican Hill, where now stands St. Peter's Cathedral.¹ Now Heliopolis, the city from which the obelisk was originally transported, is but the Greek name of Bethshemesh, which was the center of Egyptian sun-worship in olden days! And this was the very place of which we read in the Bible of the false worship that existed there and in which special mention is made of the "images (Obelisks) of Bethshemesh (the House of the Sun)" (Jeremiah 43:13).

And so, the very same obelisk that once stood at the ancient pagan temple at the CENTER of Egyptian paganism (Heliopolis or Bethshemesh) now stands before the temple that is the CENTER of modern paganism – the so-called Cathedral of St. Peter, the "Mother" church of Catholicism. This seems like more than a mere coincidence.

The red granite obelisk of the Vatican is itself 83 feet high (132 feet high with its foundation) and weighs 320 tons. In 1586, to make certain that this obelisk was centered right directly at the entry of the Cathedral, it was moved a short distance to its present location – St. Peter's square – by order of Pope Sixtus V. Of course the moving of this heavy obelisk – especially in those days – was a very difficult task. Many movers refused to attempt the feat, especially when the Pope had attached the DEATH PENALTY if the obelisk was dropped and broken.² (Such a regulation in itself indicates how much importance that the Pope and his people accredited to this abominable idol!)

Finally a man by the name of Domenico Fontana accepted the responsibility of the moving and erection of the Vatican obelisk. With 45 winches, 160 horses, and a crew of 800 workmen, the task of moving began! The date: September 10, 1586. Multitudes crowded the extensive square. While the obelisk was being moved, the crowd – UPON PENALTY OF DEATH – was required to remain silent until the erection was made. (Again we see how much importance the Romish church attributed to this idol!) Finally, after near failure, the obelisk was erected – to the sound of hundreds of bells ringing, the roar of cannons, and the loud cheers of the multitude. The idol was dedicated to the "cross", mass was celebrated, and the Pope pronounced a blessing on the workmen and their horses.³

The accompanying drawing shows how the cross-shaped St. Peter's Cathedral and circular court in front of its are laid out. In the center of this court (A) is the pagan obelisk. This circular court is formed by 248 Doric style columns which cost approximately one million dollars! The use of such pillars was borrowed directly from the styling of pagan temples!

We show here a drawing of the old temple of Diana, as one of many examples of how the columns were used in heathen temples. And, like the obelisk, the columns were often regarded as "Mystery" forms of the phallus. In the vestibule of the pagan temple of the goddess at Hierapolis, for example, an inscription referring to the columns reads: "I, Dionysus, dedicated these *phalli* to Hera, my stepmother."⁴ And yet these columns were used in abundance to form the circular St. Peter's square which surrounds the Egyptian obelisk.

Even the choosing of the Vatican Hill for the location of the "Mother" church of Catholicism was the result of a mixture with paganism. You see, in olden times, this hill, as the very word indicates, was "a place of divinations" (*Vaticinia*). The name is said to have come from the name of the Divination – deity VATICANUS who had headquarters on this hill!⁵

Then at a later period, the hill was used for the annual festivals in honor of Attis or Tammuz, son of the Great Mother. At this festival a pine tree was felled and to its trunk an effigy of the god was fastened. This effigy was later buried in a tomb. Such rites are still carried on today in all Catholic countries – rites that are a *mixture* of ancient paganism with Christianity. Since some of the ancient rites in honor of Tammuz were similar to events that had happened in the life of Christ (his death, burial, etc.), paganism and Christianity were merged "almost without interruption, for these pagan ceremonies were enacted in a sanctuary on the VATICAN HILL, which was afterward taken over by the (Roman Catholics) and the Mother church of St. Peter now stands upon the VERY SPOT!"⁶

Even as Catholic leaders borrowed other things from paganism, we need not be surprised that they also copied the idea of building elaborate and expensive temples – as their main church, St. Peter's, which is the largest church in Christendom. The worldly-minded church thought they should build such a *temple* – a temple of greater splendor than those of the old Roman religion. And so fashioning its design after the pattern of the Pantheon of pagan Rome, only more elaborate, St. Peter's was finally completed – at an estimated cost of 50 million dollars! And to this day, many still suppose that God wants his people to build costly and elaborate temples of worship. In fact, church construction has become big business!

But is the practice of putting multiplied thousands and sometimes million of dollars into a fancy church building in accordance with the scriptures? Did Jesus or the Apostles give any such plan or teaching? What is God's plan in this connection?

¹ Harper's Bible Dictionary, p. 500; Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 13, p.371.

² Ancient Monuments of Rome, p. 175-177.

³ Ibid, p. 177.

⁴ Hastings, Art. "Phallism."

⁵ Ancient Monuments of Rome, p. 75.

⁶ The Paganism in Our Christianity, p. 123; A Traveler in Rome, p. 270.

We know that God directed his people under the rulership of King Solomon to build a temple – in the Old Testament – and the Lord chose to put his presence there. But coming to the New Testament, the Holy Spirit no longer dwells in temples made with men's hands (Acts 17:24). Now, God dwells in his *people* – his true church – by the Spirit! And so, says Paul: "YE are the temples of God the Spirit of God dwelleth in YOU" (I Corinthians 3:16).

Understanding this truth, the early church – FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT – never went forth to build temples of stone and steel! They went forth to preach the gospel of the Kingdom – the message of that glorious kingdom to come. Emphasis was never put on a building. They did not resort to financial drives and oppressive pledges in an attempt to build a fancier building than a temple down the street! No, their time and money was put into the MESSAGE, not a building. In fact, we have no record of a church building (as such) being erected prior to 222-235 AD!¹

Of course we do not mean to suggest that it is wrong to have a church building. No doubt the reason why church buildings were not built earlier was because the first Christians were not allowed to own title to property, due to the persecutions which they faced. But had they been allowed this privilege, we feel certain that such building would have been built *simply* – not for outward show. They would not have tried to compete with the expensive styling of the heathen temples of splendor – like the temple of Diana at Ephesus or the Pantheon of Rome.

But the fallen church of Rome – through compromise and mixing with the world – came to political power and great wealth under the reign of Constantine. They set a pattern for building expensive church buildings – a pattern that has been followed to this day – a pattern of building church edifices far more elaborate than what is necessary. And this idea has become so implanted in the minds of the people, that the word "church" (to most people) means a BUILDING; whereas, the word church, in its true Biblical meaning, refers to a group of people who are – themselves – the temples of the Holy Spirit!

Now the majority of the expensive church buildings that have been built through the centuries, have featured a TOWER. And so we ask: Why do Roman Catholic churches almost invariably have a tower? Why do most Protestant churches also follow this pattern of featuring a tower in connection with their buildings of worship? Each generation of church builders have copied the former generation, never questioning the origin of the idea.

Some church towers have cost fortunes to build. But for what? Obviously they have no spiritual value. The millions of dollars that have been spent on these towers could have gone toward the furtherance of the gospel or to help those in need. It seems evident that the only purpose for such towers is for mere outward show. Of course there is no instruction in the Bible to build such towers. Our Lord never built such a structure when he was here, nor did he give any instructions like this to be followed by the disciples after his departure. How then did this tower-tradition in church architecture begin?

We are all familiar with the great tower of Babel and how God's displeasure was displayed against it. We have seen how various other ideas spread from Babylon. Could this be the source of the idea of featuring a tower in connection with buildings of religion? During those early days of Babylon, the people said: "Go to, let us make brick . . . let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven" (Genesis 11:3, 4). Now the expression "unto heaven" is no doubt a figure of speech for great height. Such an expression is also found in Deuteronomy 1:28 which mentions cities whose walls reached "up to heaven." Likewise, the tower of Babel was to be a tower of great height. But we are not to suppose that the Babel builders intended to build clear up into the heaven of God's throne! No, they did not desire to be in His presence! Instead, there is sufficient evidence to show that the tower was connected with their religion – with sun-worship.

Historians refer to the Babel tower as a "Ziggurat." "Of all the lofty monuments of Babylon, the towering 'Ziggurat' must certainly have been one of the most spectacular constructions of its time, rising majestically above its huge encircling wall of a thousand towers . . . around the vast square, chambers were set aside for pilgrims, as well as for the priests who looked after the 'Ziggurat', and Koldewey called this collection of buildings the 'Vatican of Babylon'."² So while Babylon was famous for its huge tower of long ago, it also had numerous *other* towers for which it was known.

It has been suggested that one of the meanings of the name of the Goddess Astarte (Semiramis), written as "Asht-tart", means "the woman that made towers."³ The Goddess Cybele (who also has been identified with Semiramis) was known as the tower bearing goddess, the first (says Ovid) that erected towers in cities and thus was represented with a tower-like crown on her head, as was also Diana. In the symbolism of the Catholic church, a tower is emblematic of the virgin Mary!⁴ So we see a definite connection between the mother-goddess worship and the towers of Babylonian religion.

Now some of the ancient towers were built for military purposes – for watchtowers – as we all know. But many of the towers that were built throughout the Babylonian Empire were exclusively *religious* towers, associated with sun-worship, connected with a temple! In those times, a stranger entering a Babylonian city would have no difficulty in locating the temple, we are told, for high above the flat roofed houses, ITS TOWER COULD BE SEEN!⁵

Each town in the Babylonia Empire had its temple and each temple had its tower.⁶ We have seen how certain other basic ideas originated in Babylon and spread to the nations, and so it is not out of reason that Babylon was also the original source of the towers of religion! Especially does this seem probable when we remember that it was while they were building the huge tower of Babel that the dispersion began. As men migrated to the various land, they took the idea of a "tower" with them. And though

¹ Halley's Bible Handbook.

² Ancient Cities and Temples.

³ Two Babylons, p. 307.

⁴ A Dictionary of Symbols, p. 326.

⁵ The Cambridge Ancient History—Egypt and Babylonia, Volume 1, p. 533

⁶ The Greatness that was Babylon, p. 355

through the ages since that time, these religious towers have developed into different forms in different countries, yet the towers in one form or another remain! Let us briefly notice how towers are used by the different religions of the world:

Towers have long been established part of the religion of the Chinese. The accompanying illustration shows one of their many "pagodas." (The root meaning of this word is "goddess"!)

Concerning the towers used by the Hindu religion, we read: "Scattered above the large temple enclosures are great pagodas or towers . . . rising high above the surrounding country, everywhere they could be seen by the people, and thus their devotion to their idolatrous worship was increased . . . Many of these pagodas are several hundred feet high, and are covered with sculptures representing scenes in the lives of the gods of the temple, or of eminent saints."¹

Among the Mohammedans also, though in a somewhat different form, can also be seen the towers of religion. These towers are called minarets, at Mecca. Towers of this style were also used at the famous Church of Sophia at Constantinople.

And the use of towers is also carried out by Christendom – Catholic and Protestant. The tower of the great Cathedral of Cologne rises 515 feet above the street; while the Protestant cathedral of Ulm in Germany has one 528 feet in height. Not only on great Cathedrals, but even on small chapels, a tower of some kind is usually included in the design. And the only reason for so doing is simply because of tradition – a tradition that is never questioned.

At the top of many of these church towers, a spire often points to the sky! Actually, the spire or steeple – which is so familiar to us all and in such general use that its origin is seldom questioned – is just a modified form of the obelisk, or which we spoke in the first part of this chapter! Numerous writers mention how the spire or steeple was originally but another form of the obelisk – a symbol of the pallas.² "There are still in existence today remarkable specimens of original phallic symbols . . . steeples on the churches . . . and obelisks . . . all show the influence of our phallus-worshipping ancestors." (Customs of Mankind, p. 55.)

At the top of the spire or steeple on churches, a cross is almost invariably placed. The expensive Cathedrals and church buildings of which we have written in this chapter, are often decorated with crosses in many ways. At the top of the obelisk that stands at the entry of St. Peter's, a cross has been placed to "Christianize" it. But is the *cross*, as an image, a piece of wood, really a Christian symbol? It is this question that we discuss in the chapter that follows...

CHAPTER SIX Is the Cross a Christian Symbol?

The cross is recognized as one of the most important symbols of the Roman Catholic church. It is displayed at the top of the roofs and towers of their churches. It is seen on their altars, furnishings, and ecclesiastical garments. The floor plan of the majority of Catholic churches is laid out in the shape of the cross. All Catholic homes, hospitals, and schools have the cross adorning the walls. Everywhere the cross is outwardly honored and adored – in hundreds of ways!

In like manner, the *sign* of the cross is often used in the Catholic rites. When an infant is sprinkled, the priest makes the sign of the cross upon the infants forehead saying: "Receive the sign of the cross upon thy forehead." During confirmation, the candidate is signed with the cross. On Ash Wednesday, ashes are used to make a cross on the foreheads of Catholic members. When they enter the church building, they dip the forefinger of the right hand in the "holy water", touch the forehead, the chest, the left and the right shoulder – thus tracing the figure of the cross. The same sign is made before eating meals. During Mass, the priest makes the sign of the cross 16 times and blesses the altar with the cross sign 30 times.

Protestant churches, for the most part, do not believe in making the sign of the cross with their fingers. Neither do they bow down to it or use it as an object of worship. They have recognized that these things are unscriptural and superstitious. But they have made use of the cross on their steeples, on their church roofs, on pulpits, and in various other ways. And so, to one degree or another, Christendom – both Papal and Protestant – has assumed that there is virtue in the cross image; that our church buildings should be decorated with it; that it is a Christian symbol. But we ask: Is the cross which took our savior's life a thing to be *adored*? Should we parade the instrument of death before the world and be *proud* of it? Do the scriptures anywhere teach that we are to take the cross and place it upon our buildings or wear it around our necks?

Personally, I had never questioned the use of the cross on churches and their furnishings. Like others, I assumed that the cross was a Christian symbol. But a study of historical evidence plainly reveals that the cross symbol is of pagan origin! The early Christians did not consider the cross as a virtuous symbol, but rather as "the accursed tree", a device of death and "shame" (Hebrews 12:2). They did not trust in an old rugged cross. Instead, their faith was in *what was accomplished* on the cross; and through this faith, they knew the full and complete forgiveness of sin!

It was in this sense that the apostles preached about the cross and gloried in it (I Corinthians 1:17, 18). Such references to the cross in the epistles *never* refer to a PIECE OF WOOD on which he might wear around his neck or carry in his hand. The message of the apostles was concerning the ONE that hung and died on the cross. When they spoke of the cross, they were speaking of the suffering of Calvary, the supreme sacrifice that was made there, and the eternal purpose of God that was accomplished. But never did those of the early church consider a piece of wood as a protector, a good luck charm, or as an object of worship. No, such use of the cross came much later.

It was not until Christianity began to be paganized that the cross came to be thought of as a Christian symbol. It was in 431 AD that crosses in churches and chambers were introduced, while the use of crosses on steeples did not come until about

¹ The Story of the World's Worship, p. 269

² Isis Unveiled, p. 5; Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism, p.14.

586 AD¹ In the 6th Century, the crucifix image was introduced and its worship sanctioned by the church of Rome.² It was not until the second council at Ephesus that private homes were required to possess a cross.³ Such use of the cross then was obviously not a doctrine of the early *true* church. It was not a part of *“the faith that was once delivered to the saints.”* From where then did it come?

In the following pages, we will give historical PROOF that the cross was an object of worship centuries *before* the Christian Era. We will see that the cross sign is Babylonish and that its entrance into the professing church was but a further attempt to mix paganism with Christianity.

Centuries before the Christian era, the cross was honored as a religious symbol by the people of Babylon. It is seen on their oldest monuments.⁴ Historians say that it was a symbol associated with TAMMUZ.⁵ But what was the significance of the cross symbol in Babylon and how was it associated with the false “savior” Tammuz?

The cross symbol – in its original form – came from the first letter of the name Tammuz, the “T”. “The same sign of the cross that Rome now worships was used in the Babylonian Mysteries”, says Hislop, “...that which is now called the Christian cross was originally no Christian emblem at all, but was the mystic Tau of Chaldeans and Egyptians – the true original form of the letter T – the initial of the name of Tammuz . . . and was used in every variety of way as the most sacred symbol . . . it was used as an amulet over the heart; it was marked on the official garments of the priests, as on the official garments of Rome today.”⁶

From Babylon, this cross symbol spread to Egypt, where monuments preserved to this day give abundant evidence of its use there. In ANY book on Egypt that shows the old monuments and walls of their ancient temples, one can see the kings and gods of antiquity holding crosses in their hands.

Says a noted historian in reference to Egypt: “Here unchanged for thousands of years, we find among her most sacred hieroglyphics the cross in various forms . . . but the one known specially as the ‘cross of Egypt’, or the Tau cross, is shaped like the letter T, often with a circle or ovoid above it, yet this mystical symbol was not peculiar to this country, but was revered . . . among the Chaldeans, Phoenicians, Mexicans, and EVERY ancient people in both hemispheres.”⁷

As the cross worship spread to various nations, it took on varied forms and was used in varied ways: Among the Chinese, “the cross is . . . acknowledged to be one of the most ancient devices . . . it is portrayed upon the walls of their pagodas, it is painted upon the lanterns used to illuminate the most sacred recesses of their temples.”⁸

The cross has been a sacred symbol in India for centuries among non-Christian people. “In Northern India, the cross is used to mark the jars of sacred water taken from the Indus and Ganges . . . In Southern India the cross is used as an emblem of disembodied Jaina saints . . . The east Indians (revere the cross symbol) . . . centuries before our Lord appeared upon earth.”⁹ In the central part of India, two rude crosses of stone have been discovered which date back to a time centuries before the Christian era. One of these crosses is over 10 feet high; the other over eight feet.¹⁰ Among the Hindoos of India, the cross was regarded as sacred to their god Agni.¹¹ The Buddhists, and numerous other sects of India, marked their followers on the head with the sign of the cross.

On the continent of Africa, “at Susa, in Abyssinia . . . the natives plunge a cross in the River Gitche . . . the Kabyle women although Mohammedans, tattoo a cross between their eyes . . . In Wanyamwizi, or the land of the moon, the inhabitants decorate their walls with crosses . . . the Yaricks established a line of kingdoms from the Niger to the Nile . . . on their shields (was) painted the image of a cross.”¹² Here then is mention of the use of the cross by numerous heathen tribes in Africa who knew nothing of Christ!

When the Spaniards first landed in Mexico, “they could not suppress their wonder”, says Prescott, “as they beheld the cross, the sacred emblem of their own (Catholic) faith, raised as an object of worship in the temples of Anahuac. The Spaniards were not aware that the cross was the symbol of worship of the highest antiquity . . . (and was used by many) pagan nations on whom the light of Christianity had never shown.”

In Palenque, Mexico, founded by Votan in the 9th century before the Christian era, is a heathen temple known as “the temple of the cross.” There inscribed on an altar slab is a central cross six and a half by eleven feet in size!¹³

In olden times, the Mexicans worshipped the cross as TOTA (Our Father). This practice of addressing a piece of wood with the title “father” is also mentioned in the Bible. When God’s people of the Old Testament mixed idolatry with their religion, they worshipped pagan gods and said to a stock, “Thou art my Father” (Jeremiah 2:27)! But it is contrary to the word of God to call a piece of wood (or a priest!) by the title “father.”

¹ Harper’s Book of Facts.

² Fausset, p. 145.

³ The Cross in Tradition, History, and Art, p.157

⁴ Doane, p. 342.

⁵ The Greatness that was Babylon, p. 496, 498.

⁶ Two Babylons, p. 197.

⁷ The Cross in Tradition, History, and Art, P. 2, 3.

⁸ Ibid, p. 13.

⁹ Ibid, p. 10.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 12.

¹¹ Monumental Christianity, p. 14

¹² The Cross in Tradition, History p. 9.

¹³ Encyclopedia of Religions, Volume 3, p. 70.

Ages ago in Italy, before the people knew anything of the arts of civilization, they believed in the cross as a religious symbol. Even at this early period, they believed it was a protector and it was placed upon tombs.¹ Through the centuries, it was used as a religious symbol right on up to the days of the pagan Roman empire. In 46 BC, Roman coins show Jupiter holding a long scepter terminating in a cross.² This was his symbol.³ The vestal Virgins of pagan Rome wore the cross suspended from their necklaces, as the nuns of the Roman Catholic church do now.⁴

The Greeks depicted crosses on the head band of their god corresponding to Tammuz of the Babylonians. In the Eleusinian Mysteries, a cross was placed on the breast of each initiate.⁵ Porcelli mentions how that Isis was shown with a cross on her forehead. Her priests carried processional crosses in their worship of her. The temple of Serapis in Alexandria was surmounted by a cross. The temple of the Sphinx when it was unearthed was found to be cruciform in shape. Ensigns in the form of a cross were carried by the Persians during their battles with Alexander the Great (BC 335).⁶

The cross was used as a religious symbol by the Aborigines of South America in ancient times.⁷ New born children were placed under its protection against evil spirits. The Patagonians tattooed their foreheads with crosses.⁸ Ancient pottery in Peru has been found that is marked with the cross as a religious symbol.⁹

Monuments show that Assyrian kings wore a cross suspended on their necklaces,¹⁰ as did some of the foreigners that battled against the Egyptians. These warriors wore a small cross suspended to a necklace or to their collar. The cross was also figured upon the robes of the Rot-n-no – as early as the 15th century before the Christian era.¹¹

Much more could be said about the many uses of the cross as a religious symbol and object of worship among those who lived in olden times. But enough has been said to well establish the fact that the cross was in use long before the Christian era. To sum it up, there is hardly a pagan tribe where the cross has not been found.¹² "In some form, all through the ages, the cross has existed and has had a vital significance and influence."¹³

As an instrument of death, of crucifixion, the cross is also very ancient – and pagan. "The cross was used in ancient times as a punishment for flagrant crimes in Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Palestine, Carthage, Greece, and Rome . . . Tradition ascribes the invention of the punishment of the cross to a woman, the queen SEMIRAMIS!"¹⁴

"But since Jesus died on a cross", some ask, "does this not make it a Christian symbol?" No. The fact that Jesus was killed on a cross shows that it was already an established form of punishment and death – among pagans. It was not a Christian symbol when Jesus hung on it, and nothing has ever changed to make it a Christian symbol now! As one has asked: Suppose Jesus had been killed with a shot gun; would this be any reason to have a shot gun hanging from our necks or on top of the church roof? Would this make a shotgun a Christian symbol of virtue? No. It is not *what* killed our Lord, but *what his death accomplished* that is important!

As the cross symbol spread to the ancient nations (as we have seen it did), it took on different forms in different countries until there were many forms of the pagan cross. Catholicism, adopting the pagan idea of cross worship, also adopted these various forms of the cross. Thus, to this day, the Catholic church does not adore just ONE type of cross, but numerous types, some of which are shown in the accompanying illustration. Now we ask: If the Catholic use of the cross originated with the cross of Christ, then WHY are so many *different* forms of the cross used? It is evident that Christ only hung on ONE cross. If cross worship originated with the cross of Christ, would it not seem that only *one* type would be used?

The fact is that cross worship did not originate with Christ and all of these various forms of the cross were pagan symbols before the Christian era. Says a noted writer: "Of the several varieties of the cross still in vogue, as national and ecclesiastical emblems, distinguished by the familiar appellations of St. George, St. Andrew, the Maltese, the Greek, the Latin, etc., there is not one amongst them the existence of which may not be traced to the *remotest antiquity*!"¹⁵

Let us notice a few examples of how these different crosses were actually sacred symbols long before the Christian era: That form of the cross which is known as the TAU cross was widely used in Egypt (as we have seen already). What is known as the GREEK cross may also be found on Egyptian monuments. This form of the cross was used in Phrygia where it adorned the tomb of Midas (BC 718).¹⁶ In the ruins of Nineveh, a king is shown wearing a MALTESE cross on his bosom. The form of the cross that is today known as the LATIN cross was used by the Etruscans. Its use on an *ancient* pagan tomb with winged angels to each side of it.

¹ The Cross in Tradition, History and Art, p. 22.

² Ibid, p. 26.

³ Encyclopedia of Religions, Volume 1, p. 495.

⁴ Two Babylons, p. 198.

⁵ Bible Myths, p. 343.

⁶ Ibid, p. 346.

⁷ Curiosities of Popular Customs, p. 297.

⁸ Encyclopedia of Religions, Volume 1, p. 495.

⁹ Ibid, p. 386.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 494.

¹¹ Wilkinson, Volume 1, p. 376.

¹² Two Babylons, p. 199.

¹³ The Cross – Its History and Symbolism, p. 16.

¹⁴ The Cross in Tradition, History, and Art, p. 64.

¹⁵ The Pentateuch Examined, Volume 6, p. 113.

¹⁶ Doane, p. 344; The Cross in Tradition, p. 21.

What has been called the ST. ANDREW'S cross was highly venerated among the Cumas in South America. It was regarded as a protector against evil spirits.¹ It appeared on those of Baktrian kings about 140 to 120 BC (Needless to say, this was long before "St. Andrew" was ever born!).

The cross which we show at the right is today called the CALVARY cross, yet the cross in this illustration is taken from an ancient inscription in Thessaly which dates from a period prior to the Christian era.

Now the fact that these various forms of the cross have ALL been adopted by the Romish Church, makes it obvious that such cross-sacredness did not originate with the cross of Christ, for he died on only ONE cross!

What type of cross was it upon which Jesus died? The word "cross" in the Bible is translated from "stauros" which comes from the root "sta", that is, "to stand." As far as the word itself is concerned, there is no indication of any cross piece whatsoever.

In his scholarly "Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words", W.E. Vine states that the Greek word "stauros" means simply an upright stake and is "to be distinguished from the ecclesiastical form of a two beamed cross . . . (which) had its origin in ancient Chaldea, and was used as a symbol of the god Tammuz (being in the shape of the Mystic Tau, the initial of his name) in that country and in adjacent lands, including Egypt . . . In order to increase the prestige of the apostate ecclesiastical system, pagans were received into the churches apart from regeneration by faith, and were permitted largely to retain their pagan signs and symbols. Hence the Tau or T, in its most frequent form, with the cross-piece lowered, was adopted to stand for the cross of Christ" (page 256).

As to the exact shape of the cross upon which Christ hung, we need not be too concerned, for it is not the shape of the cross that is the important thing. It is the ONE that hung there and what HE accomplished that is ALL important.

CHAPTER SEVEN Constantine and the Cross

An outstanding factor that caused the adoration of the cross image to become firmly established in the church of the falling away was the famous "vision of the cross" and the "conversion" of the Roman emperor Constantine.

On the day before the Battle of Milvian Bridge, Constantine prayed to his sun-god and there appeared a cross – we are told – over the setting sun with the inscription: "In hoc signo Vinces"; that is, "In this sign conquer." The next day, Constantine advanced the battle behind a standard portraying a CROSS. He was victorious in this battle and professed conversion. Of course such a *seeming* victory for Christianity – the conversion of the emperor – as the result of the cross vision – did much to further the use of the cross in the Roman Church.

But are we to suppose that the LORD JESUS gave such a vision to the Emperor Constantine? Actually there is little reason to consider this vision as authentic, especially since it has no real historical basis. The only authority from whom the story has been gathered by historians is Eusebius, who confessedly was prone to edification and was accused as a "falsifier of history."

If Constantine ever did – in reality – have such a vision, we can be sure its author was *not* God. The very idea that our Lord would command a pagan emperor to make a military banner embodying the cross and to go forth conquering and killing in that sign, is altogether inconsistent with the general teaching of the Bible and with the spirit of true Christianity.

This Roman empire (of which Constantine was the head), had been described in the scriptures as a "Beast." Daniel saw four great beasts which represented four world empires. These were Babylon (lion), Medio-Persia (bear), Greece (leopard), and Rome. This fourth beast, the Roman Empire, was so horrible in the eyes of God that it could not be compared to any earthly beast. (Daniel 7:1-8). Considering then how wicked this beastly Roman Empire was in the eyes of God, are we to suppose the *Lord Jesus* became the leader of this beast system? Or would Jesus give a wicked emperor a vision and tell him to kill and fight as his representative? Did Jesus ever tell his people to go forth to kill others under a cross-banner supposedly representing him? Of course not! The very basis of Christianity is opposed to the unfairness of war, hate, and murder. Why then should we suppose that Christ would tell Constantine to conquer in his name and sign to further the Beast system of Rome? Obviously, such a vision came not from our Lord Jesus Christ!

But if the vision was not of God, how was it that Constantine was converted as a result? The fact is that the "conversion" of Constantine was a hoax! Even though this man had much to do with the establishment of certain doctrines and customs within the fallen church, the facts plainly show that he was not truly converted – not in the Bible sense of the word. Historians admit that the conversion of Constantine was "nominal, even by contemporary standards."²

Probably the most obvious indication that he was not *truly* converted may be seen from the fact that AFTER his supposed conversion, he committed several *murders* -- including the murder of his own wife and son! According to the scriptures, "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:15).

Constantine's first marriage was to Minervina, by whom he had a son name Crispus. His second wife was named Fausta who bore him three daughters and three sons. Now Crispus, his first born son, became a great soldier and a help to his father in the battles. Yet, in 326 – very shortly after directing the *Nicaean Council!* – Constantine had this son put to death. The story is that Crispus had made love to Fausta, Constantine's wife. At least he was so accused by Fausta. But this may have been her way of

¹ Encyclopedia of Religions, Volume 1, p. 494.

² Man and His Gods, p. 220.

getting Crispus out of the way, so that *her* sons would have claim to the throne! However, Helena, Constantine's mother, persuaded him that his wife "had yielded to his son." And so, Constantine had Fausta murdered also.¹

But these were not the only murders he committed. About the same time that Constantine had his son murdered, he decreed the execution of Licinianus, his sister's son. Constantine also put Licinus, his sister's husband to death – even though he had promised her that he would spare his life!²

After Constantine's supposed conversion, he still remained the Pontifex Maximus or High Priest of the pagan state religion.³ As Pontiff, he was required to carry out the ceremonial of the traditional cult. Likewise, when he dedicated Constantinople, he used both pagan and Christian rites in the dedication. Further evidence of how Constantine attempted to unite and *mix* together both paganism and Christianity, is seen on coins of the period which he had made. On these coins he put a cross (to please the professing Christians) while on the same coins were representations of the Mars or Apollo. While professing on one hand to be a Christian, yet on the other hand, he continued to believe in pagan magic formulas for the protection of crops and the healing of disease.⁴

Constantine did show numerous favors toward the Christian faith however. He abolished death by crucifixion. He gave interest and support to the Roman church and the "clergy." He stopped the persecutions of the Christians which had become so cruel at Rome. Why then, if he was not truly a Christian, did he do these things? The answer to this is also clearly written in history.

Persecutions had not destroyed the Christian faith. Constantine knew this. And since his position was being challenged by a rival emperor and because of his dire need for support from every quarter, he turned to the Christians. Instead of the empire constantly being *divided* – the pagans opposing the Christians – why not take such steps as might be necessary to MIX both paganism and Christianity together, and thus bring a UNITED force to the empire? This was clearly the reasoning of Constantine. By this time, most of the church leaders were thinking in terms of numbers and popularity, rather than in terms of spirituality and truth anyway. And thus were ready to make compromises with paganism. Especially was this the case at Rome.

So by adopting the cross as a symbol on the banners of his army, Constantine figured he could establish a UNITY among his troops. The apostate Christians would think they were fighting for the cross of Christ; the pagans could not object because the cross was also one of their sacred emblems. Says the noted historian Durrant: "To the worshipper of Mithra (the pagans) in Constantine's forces, the cross could give no offense, for they had long fought under a standard bearing a mithraic cross of light."⁵ And thus the so-called Christians and pagan Mithraists in the army of Constantine were united and successfully fought the battle.

Another factor that contributed to cross-worship in the church at Rome centered around *Helena*, Constantine's mother. In 326, when she was almost eighty – according to the legend – she made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and there by the help of a Jew who understood her superstitious tastes, found three crosses. The original cross was identified – we are asked to believe – because it is said to have worked miracles at the suggestion of Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem. The other two crosses produced no miracles. And so Helena – according to the story – had found the original, the true cross! But that the true cross was found is no doubt false, for laws among the Jews required crosses to be burned after being used for crucifixion.⁶

That Helena did visit Jerusalem seems to be historically correct. But the story of her discovery of the original cross was evidently a later addition, for it did not appear until 440 AD – 114 years later!⁷

But let us just suppose that someone did find the actual cross upon which Jesus died. Would there be any virtue in that piece of wood? No, absolutely none. The Calvary cross served its purpose even as the brazen serpent had served its purpose when the children of Israel were bitten by snakes. We will remember that Moses had made a brazen serpent and raised it up on a pole. This was a type of the way that Christ was to be lifted up. (John 3:15). Nevertheless, after the brazen serpent had served its purpose, the Israelites kept it around and finally began to worship it. (II Kings 18:4). They made it a relic and attempted to copy the heathenistic use of relics and mix it into their religion! And so Hezekiah "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord" by breaking the brazen serpent to pieces. In like manner, if we actually had the original cross – if it were still in existence – there would be no reason to set it up as an object of worship. Why? Because its purpose has been fulfilled. If then there would be no power in the ORIGINAL cross, how much less is there in a mere piece of wood in its shape? In view of these things, it becomes obvious that the use of the cross – in sign or symbol, in any shape or form – as an object of worship, is a mockery to true worship, which is the worship of Christ himself!

But each century brought more superstition into the Romish church in connection the cross image. It came to be recognized as a protector. Had it not helped Constantine win the battle of Milvian Bridge? Had not the cross worked miracles for Helena? And so it came to be regarded as an image that could scare away evil spirits. It was worn as a charm. It was placed high up on church steeples to frighten away lightning. But because of the high position of the cross upon the steeple, it was often the very thing that cause lightning to strike the building! The use of the cross in private homes was supposed to ward off trouble and disease. And so even as the pagan Egyptians had set up obelisks, not only as a symbol of their god, but in some cases the very im-

¹ The Story of Civilization—Caesar and Christ, p. 663.

² Ibid, p. 663; Medieval Italy, p. 4.

³ The Growth of the Christian Church.

⁴ The Story of Civilization, p. 656

⁵ Ibid, p. 655.

⁶ Fausset, p. 145.

⁷ Encyclopedia of Religions, Volume 1, p. 494.

age was believed to possess supernatural powers, even so did people come to worship the cross. Thousands of pieces of wood – supposedly pieces of the “original cross” – were sold as protectors and charms.

Section II – Jehovah Witnesses Background and Teachings

Jehovah's Witnesses, best known for its door-to-door approach to evangelism, is a rapidly growing “Christian” cult whose members are instilled with missionary zeal and urgency.

The founder of the organization that came to be known as Jehovah's Witnesses was Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916). Raised in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, USA where he was indoctrinated in the teachings of the Congregational Church, Russell became the manager of several clothing stores in North Pittsburgh.

Early, Russell had a strong fear of hell, but he later abandoned the idea of eternal punishment when he got involved in the teachings of Seventh-Day Adventism. He began to teach Bible classes (which is how he got the title “Pastor” Russell, though he was never ordained), and to write books and pamphlets. His teaching and writing was strongly influenced by Adventism, especially in his view of hell and the time of Christ's coming.

When Russell began to disagree with the Adventists on several points (especially the Atonement), he launched his own magazine, *Zion's Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence*. Five years later, in 1884 he founded Zion's Watchtower Tract Society and incorporated it as a nonprofit religious organization. In 1896 the Society was renamed the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, and in 1908 the headquarters were moved to Brooklyn, New York.

Russell promoted his modified Adventism extensively through his voluminous writings. His most important work was a seven volume series called *Studies in the Scriptures*. The first volume appeared in 1886 and the seventh volume was published in 1917 after his death. The last several years of his life were spent in extensive traveling and speaking.

An extremely egotistical man, “Pastor” Russell made absurd claims about himself and his writings. He allowed his followers to be classified with such men as St. Paul, Wycliffe, and Luther. He said that if people had to make a choice between reading his books and reading the Scriptures, they would do better to choose his books. His wife successfully sued him for divorce in 1913 on the grounds of adultery, conceit, egotism, and domination. He personally controlled the finances of the Tract Society since he owned 990 of its 1,000 shares of stock. He was charged with fraudulent activities by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* and clearly perjured himself in court. Under oath he testifies that he knew the Greek alphabet, but when he was unable to identify the letters of the alphabet on request, he was forced to retract.

It is not surprising, then, that Jehovah's Witnesses disclaim any connection with Charles Russell. They dislike being branded “Russellites,” yet the facts of history prove that he was their founder and organizer. It is also obvious that his doctrines are the same as the doctrines of the Jehovah's Witnesses movement today.

“Pastor” Russell was succeeded as president of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society in 1917 by Joseph Franklin Rutherford. Rutherford was a lawyer and an assistant judge in Booneville, Missouri and later moved to New York. Soon after Rutherford became president at the Society, several Russellites left and started a number of smaller sects. Rutherford warned them that they would suffer destruction if they did not return. During Rutherford's leadership from 1917 to his death in 1942 at age 72, he increased his power and control of the movement until he reached the point of unquestioned authority. Any who opposed him were ousted immediately.

Taking his cue from Isaiah 43:10, Rutherford decided in 1931 to call his organization Jehovah's Witnesses in an attempt to eliminate any connection with “Pastor” Russell. Rutherford also scathingly denounced all organized religions and generated among his followers a tone of unmitigated hostility toward Christian churches. This hatred of other religions and institutions has become an earmark of this cult and has caused a good deal of trouble for the Witnesses.

Rutherford's work differed from Russell's in that he had almost no public ministry. He was surrounded by an air of mystery, but he was at least as effective as Russell in providing guidance as an organizer and administrator. Rutherford was an even more prolific writer than Russell. He wrote many books and booklets and these enjoyed a circulation of millions of copies per year. His writings supplanted those of Russell, but the doctrines were embellished, not changed.

Nathan Homer Knorr became the third president of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society in 1942. Knorr proved to be a strong administrator, and under his leadership the Jehovah's Witnesses stressed the training of their people. He was a less conspicuous figure than his two predecessors and he changed the image of the movement. The constant torrent of Watchtower literature that poured from the presses during Knorr's administration was anonymous. Just as Rutherford minimized the writings of Russell, so Knorr ignored most of the works of Rutherford. Frederick William Franz is the Society's current president.

Jehovah's Witnesses are trained to become ordained ministers at the Gilead Missionary Training School in South Lansing, New York. All laymen are trained on Sundays in “Kingdom Halls,” and other studies are available during the week. The doctrines of the Jehovah's Witnesses place reason above the teaching of the Bible and reject anything in Scripture that is beyond man's understanding. This has led to a systematic denial of most of the doctrines of historic Christianity, especially the Oneness of God and the deity of Jesus Christ. Jehovah's Witnesses deny the deity of Jesus Christ and they also deny Christ's bodily resurrection and His second coming.

Though they claim that the Bible is their final authority for truth, the Jehovah's Witnesses' real authority is their official system of interpretation. The literature and doctrine of the Witnesses act as *infallible interpreters* of Scripture, and no deviations are tolerated. The original doctrines of Russell are imposed on the Scriptures with the practical result that no Jehovah's Witness has a

right to his own inductive judgment. Jehovah's Witnesses officially claim that there is no infallible human authority, but in practice they slavishly follow an authoritarian system.

Jehovah's Witnesses have produced their own "translation" of the Bible, known as *The New World Translation*. As with other Witness literature, this translation is being widely distributed around the world and its producers are anonymous. Thus, there is no way of knowing the credentials of its translators and whether they worked from the original languages or from interlinear editions and other translations. In spite of the astonishing claims made for this translation, it is clearly not a competent piece of work. It often distorts passages in order to make them conform to the erroneous doctrines of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Here are examples:

- a) John 1:1 is rendered "the Word was a god" in order to deny the deity of Jesus Christ, but this is contrary to Greek grammar. There is no indefinite article in Greek corresponding to our "a" and "an". So when John writes, "The Word was God," there is no call for including an English indefinite article. The only reason for using an English indefinite article would be if more than one true God was revealed anywhere in the Old or New Testament. Then *a* god (i.e., one among others) might be translated. But the Bible nowhere suggests the existence of more than one true God. Therefore the standard translation is the only one that can make any sense in the Bible.
- b) *The New World Translation* of the New Testament uses the name "Jehovah" for God. While the Witnesses believe that Jehovah is the only true name for God, this word is never used for God in the original Scriptures. In the Old Testament it is actually a combination of the Hebrew consonants for YHVH and the vowels from Adonai (meaning Lord). Thus the Tetragrammaton (YHVH) is better rendered Yahweh. But this word does not occur in any of the New Testament manuscripts, contrary to *The New World Translation*.
- c) This translation adds words that are not in the Greek (e.g., Colossians 1:16, "By means of him all *other* things were created") in an unscholarly attempt to support Jehovah's Witnesses dogmas. It also distorts or deletes many other words from the original text for the same purpose.

Jehovah's Witnesses also deny the deity of the Holy Spirit. They teach that the Holy Spirit is not of God and refer to the Holy Spirit as an "it," "which," or "that." They liken him to a radar beam or a controlled force.

They deny the deity of Jesus Christ. Using their inaccurate translation of the Bible to play down His divinity, they distort the meaning of such terms as "only begotten," "greater than I," "firstborn," and "Son of God" to support their unbiblical conclusions about Him. They assert that Christ was the first creation of Jehovah, and that Jehovah used Christ to create everything else. Before His incarnation He was known as Michael, the captain of Jehovah's hosts.

Jehovah's Witnesses also distort the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, saying that Christ simply changed His nature from a spirit creature to a human, when He was known as Jesus. The Jehovah's Witnesses therefore deny the central truth of Christianity, that God became a Man and offered Himself for our sins. In order to maintain this false position they must ignore or abuse many passages of Scripture, including Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, Micah 5:2, John 1:1, 8:58, Philippians 2:11, Colossians 2:9, Titus 2:13, and Hebrews 1:3, 8. Jehovah's Witnesses desperately cling to their grammatical arguments and proof texts in order to deny Christ's deity because they know if Jesus really is Jehovah God, they are doomed.

Though Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Christ was sinless, they minimize His redemptive work on the cross. They teach that Christ offered only a partial atonement for sins. His death removed the effects of Adam's sin and put man in a position to work out his own salvation. Christ did not provide a true ransom for sins but merely gave man an opportunity to merit his salvation either now or in the Millennium.

Jehovah's Witnesses also distort the biblical doctrines of the bodily resurrection and return of the Lord Jesus. They claim that Christ was raised as a spirit; the body of Jesus "dissolved in gases," and the man Jesus is forever dead. It follows from this that the Witnesses also believe that Christ's return to the earth would be a spiritual and invisible return. As in the case of other doctrines the Jehovah's Witnesses must engage in considerable exegetical gymnastics in order to arrive at this position.

But there is more: Witnesses teach that Christ's second coming to earth has already taken place! It involved 3 stages: in 1874 Christ came to the "upper air" and later caught up the apostles and dead members of the 144,000 who will be immortal; in 1914 Christ ended the times of the Gentiles and began to reign; and in 1918 he came to the spiritual temple and began the judgment of the nations.

Jehovah's Witnesses are now eagerly awaiting not the return of Christ, but the imminent Battle of Armageddon in which Christ will lead Jehovah's forces to victory over evil. Only the faithful Witnesses will escape death in this battle. Then there will be an earthly resurrection of all the dead (the heavenly spiritual resurrection of the 144,000 members of the body of Christ will have been completed). Everyone who was annihilated (the Jehovah's Witnesses' concept of death) will be recreated and given a second chance during the Millennium to believe and obey Jehovah. Those who fail during the probationary period will be permanently destroyed. All who remain on the earth after this will be "Jonadabs" who will enjoy a perfect earth forever. The 144,000 will remain in heaven with Christ.

Satan and his demons will be released to test the faith of those on earth at the end of the Millennium, and they will be destroyed. Thus, for Jehovah's Witnesses the goal of all history is the vindication of the name of Jehovah. Jehovah's Witnesses emphatically deny the biblical concept of hell and claim that Sheol and Hades mean only "the grave." They fall into one of their common errors at this point, that of forcing a word to have only one meaning regardless of its context. This they do despite the

many passages which clearly teach that hell is a place of torment and conscious separation from God (see Matthew 8:11-12, 13:42, 50, 22:13, Luke 13:24-28, 16:19-31, and Revelation 14:9-11).

Jehovah's Witnesses deny conscious punishment and argue instead for painless extinction (absence of being). This implies a superficial view of the evil of sin and of the holiness of God. It also involves the corollary teaching that man does not possess an immortal soul. They claim that man *is* a soul. But the Bible teaches that the soul exists as a conscious entity after it departs from the body (cf. Luke 20:37-38, Revelation 6:9-11), and that it will be joined to a glorified resurrection body.

Jehovah's Witnesses are known for their negative views on blood transfusions and human government. They make the incredible application from Leviticus 17:13-14 that since the Israelites were commanded not to eat blood, Jehovah's Witnesses should refuse blood transfusions. And they believe that it is idolatry to salute the flag of any nation, because they should show no allegiance to any government except Jehovah's (but see Romans 13:1-7 and I Peter 2:13-14).

Biblical Evaluation

- (1) As we have seen, the theology of the Jehovah's Witnesses denies or distorts almost every significant biblical truth including the deity of Christ, the Virgin birth, the Resurrection, the Second Coming, the work of the cross, the nature of man, hell, and eschatology.
- (2) The Jehovah's Witnesses arrived at their position by imposing a false system of doctrine on the Scriptures. This system is directly traceable to the writings of Charles Taze Russell. It is therefore not incorrect to call them Russellites in spite of their protests to the contrary.
- (3) This cult violates every sound principle of hermeneutics (biblical interpretation) to support its teachings. Its leaders are especially guilty of taking strings of verses out of context and of making Hebrew and Greek words mean only what they want them to mean. Because of their policy of anonymity, none of their writers and "translators" can be made to answer for their many blunders in exegesis and translation.
- (4) This is another works system (autosalvation) because it minimizes the efficacy of Christ's redeeming blood.

Things to Keep in Mind

- (1) Jehovah's Witnesses are impelled with a great sense of urgency which make them bold and aggressive. As a result, their movement is growing rapidly. They are zealous missionaries because their only test of "faithfulness" is the degree to which they canvass neighborhoods and promote their system. They believe that the destruction of Armageddon is coming one day, and they work diligently in order to be counted worthy to escape this judgment.
- (2) Uninformed Christians are easy prey for the Witnesses, who know proof texts for all of their doctrines. Christians should spend more time in systematic Bible study so that they know how to biblically support true doctrines. Believers should also know how to examine the *contexts* of passages used by the cult.
- (3) We must challenge Jehovah's Witnesses to be willing to abide by the verdict of the Bible regardless of the official teaching of the organization. Jehovah's Witnesses are not allowed to think independently. The Society, not the Bible, become their real authority for truth because it offers its interpretations as infallible.
- (4) The deity of Christ should be the central issue in any discussion with Jehovah's Witnesses. We should be able to present a clear biblical case for Christ's deity because their whole system crumbles when Christ is seen to be Jehovah (Yahweh) God.

Section III - MORMONISM

Background and Teachings

Mormonism is one of the most effective counterfeits of biblical Christianity ever devised. It is a rapidly growing church whose influence far exceeds its numbers. Today there are over 6 million adherents of Mormonism, and it continues to multiply because of its zealous missionary program. Many of its young people spend two years as full-time missionaries. As a result, the church has about 18,000 missionaries who spend all their time promoting Mormonism. These missionaries are well trained, and they quote the Bible extensively. They work anywhere, but often concentrate on college towns.

Mormonism claims many influential and distinguished scientists, businessmen, and politicians. It exalts education (e.g., Brigham Young University and many seminaries) and has a strong literature campaign. The church, which is run like a giant corporation, has a huge annual income because of its many holdings and business investments. The church owns a great deal of land and is constantly erecting new buildings. All Mormons are required to tithe their incomes to the church and to give special offerings as well (for instance, "fast offerings").

Mormons have a good reputation with the general public because of their emphasis on high moral standards and on the family. They take care of their bodies, avoiding such indulgences as tea, coffee, Coca-Cola, alcohol, and tobacco. The church has not always enjoyed good public relations, however, and has tried to cover up its questionable early history.

The founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, Jr., was born on December 23, 1805 in Sharon, Vermont, USA. His father spent much time in Vermont and New York digging for buried treasure (he was looking for Captain Kidd's plunder). He also got into trouble for trying to mint his own money. A poorly educated and superstitious youth, Joseph Smith accompanied his father on digging expeditions and made extensive use of divining rods and peek stones in his attempt to find buried treasure. Smith's habits earned him a bad reputation among those who knew him as he was growing up in Palmyra, New York.

In 1820 Smith claimed he had received a vision in which both God the Father and God the Son appeared to him. He was told in this vision that all churches were abominations to God and that he was being charged as a prophet to restore the true gospel to the world. In 1823 the angel Moroni allegedly appeared to Smith and told him about a number of golden plates which he would later uncover and translate. (In one account, however, Smith contradicted himself by calling this visitor Nephi rather than Moroni. This error, like many other grammatical and factual errors in Smith's writings, was "corrected" in later editions of his work.) Smith said that he finally uncovered the golden plates in 1827 in the hill Cumorah near Palmyra. These plates were inscribed with "reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics," which Smith was able to translate by means of a huge pair of spectacles called the "Urim and Thummin." From 1827 to 1829 he "translated" these plates, and in 1830 he published the result as *The Book of Mormon*.

After receiving the Aaronic priesthood from John the Baptist in a vision in 1829, Smith moved to Fayette, New York and founded the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." He built a core of followers and moved again in 1831 because of a "revelation" that the Mormons should settle in Ohio and Missouri. Kirtland, Ohio, and Zion, Missouri became the Mormon headquarters for several years. Mormons were accused of a number of crimes in those places and were required to leave Missouri by order of Governor Boggs in 1839.

Smith led the Mormons to Illinois, where they built a city named Nauvoo. There he instituted the practice of polygamy. Criticism began to mount in Illinois because of Smith's excesses, and when he tried to destroy a local newspaper office because of its stand against the Mormons, he and his brother Hyrum were placed in jail in Carthage, Illinois to await trial. Unfortunately, an angry mob stormed the jail on June 27, 1844 and shot Smith and his brother, thus making them martyrs for the cause of Mormonism.

Most of the Mormons soon submitted to the leadership of Brigham Young as the new "First President" and prophet of the church. He led thousands of Mormons on a strenuous journey toward the Southwest until they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley of Utah in July 1847. There Young announced, "This is the place!" He guided the church in the office of First President until his death in 1877. He encouraged the practice of polygamy and took 25 wives for himself. He literally ruled the church and also had considerable influence on Mormon theology. One of the lowest points in Mormon history occurred when Young ordered Bishop John D. Lee in 1857 to destroy a group of non-Mormon immigrants (this incident was called the Mountain Meadow Massacre).

The Mormons vehemently resisted the U.S. government's efforts to make Utah a state and later resisted the laws forbidding polygamy. They officially repudiated this practice only when the United States government threatened them with the loss of their property.

Today the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah) is divided into a series of "wards" and "stakes," and led by a First President, a Council of Twelve Apostles, and a Council of Seventy. There are also bishops, counselors, and teachers. In addition, most Mormon males serve as deacons or elders. Males over 12 years old are also members of the Mormon priesthood of Aaron or Melchizedek. The idea is that the Mormon church restored both priesthoods. (Hebrews 7-9 clearly refutes this doctrine by teaching that the Aaronic priesthood has been replaced by the new priesthood of Melchizedek. This is the priesthood of Christ and it is untransferable. All Christians today are priests by virtue of their belief in Christ.)

Mormons view all non-Mormons as "Gentiles," charging that for many centuries there was no church at all until the restoration of the true church by Joseph Smith. It is interesting that during the time when Smith said all the churches were apostate they were actually going through one of the greatest periods of revival in church history. Mormons charge that the Bible is not an adequate revelation because it has not produced unity. But even the Mormons have undergone splits of their own. There are at least 6 Mormon sects. By far the largest is the Utah "Brighamite" Mormon church which accepts Brigham Young as the true successor of Joseph Smith. The second largest group is the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints with headquarters in Independence, Missouri. This sect, also known as the "Josephite" church, claims that the President of the church must be a descendant of Joseph Smith. However, they had no descendant of Smith to be their president until 16 years after his death. They also repudiate polygamy and some of the doctrines of Brigham Young. They accept Smith's "Inspired Version" of the Bible, while most "Brighamites" do not. Other Mormon sects include the "Hendrickites," the "Bickertonites," the "Cutlerites," and the "Strangites."

The scriptures of Mormonism include the Bible, *The Book of Mormon*, *Doctrines and Covenants*, and *The Pearl of Great Price*. *The Book of Mormon*, which supposedly was written by several people from about 600 BC to AD 428, tells of the migration of an ancient people from the Tower of Babel to Central America. These people, known as the Jaredites, perished because of apostasy. A later migration occurred in 600 BC, when a group of Jews were supposedly told by God to flee Jerusalem before the Babylonian Captivity. These Jews, led by Lehi and his son Nephi, crossed the Pacific Ocean and landed in South America. There they divided into two opposing nations, the Nephites and the Lamanites. The Lamanites, cursed with dark skin because of their iniquity, were the ancestors of the American Indians. Similarly, the black people are said to have been cursed with dark skin because they are descendants of Cain, the first murderer. Until recently, Mormons have not allowed blacks to enter their priesthood.

The Nephites recorded prophecies about the coming of Christ, and after His resurrection Christ visited them in South America. He instituted communion, baptism, and the priesthood for the Nephites. They were annihilated in a battle with the La-

manites in AD 428. Before they were killed in this battle, Mormon, the compiler of the divinely revealed *Book of Mormon*, and his son Moroni took the golden plates on which the "revelation" was recorded and buried them. These plates were uncovered 1,400 years later by Joseph Smith.

Here are just a few of the problems with *The Book of Mormon*:

- (1) Joseph Smith allowed only a few "witnesses" to see the alleged golden plates, which were then taken into heaven by the angel Moroni. There were two sets of witnesses, a group of three (Oliver Cowdry, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris), and a group of 8 people. The people in the first group were later denounced by Smith as men of low character. Furthermore, their stories did not agree, and Harris admitted that he only saw the plates "by the eye of faith." Of the second set of witnesses, four were Whitmers, the fifth was married to a Whitmer, and the remaining 3 were Smith's father and two brothers. The Whitmers were later expelled from the church as apostates and repudiated by Smith. This leaves no reliable witnesses of the plates.
- (2) Though *The Book of Mormon* was buried in AD 428, it contains about 25,000 words *verbatim* from the AD 1611 *King James Version of the Bible*! This is a 1,200 to 2,200 year anachronism (depending on what book within *The Book of Mormon* is being considered). The words of Christ, Peter, Paul, John and other New Testament writers are indiscriminately placed in the mouths of people who lived centuries before Christ, and all copied from the *King James Version*. This is especially interesting since these plates were allegedly translated by Smith from "reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics." In addition to these obvious plagiarisms, *The Book of Mormon* is written in a wordy imitation of the biblical style of the early 17th Century.
- (3) The book is full of historical and factual errors. For instance, the American Indians are of Mongoloid extraction, not Semitic, as *The Book of Mormon* claims. There is no archeological evidence to support the existence of the huge civilizations described in *The Book of Mormon*. Everything known about pre-Columbian archeology of the Americas contradicts Mormon claims.
- (4) Over 2,000 corrections have been made in *The Book of Mormon* since the 1830 edition. Many of these changed the meaning of the text. This is strange, since Smith claims his translation was divinely given. In spite of all these correction, the book still abounds with factual and grammatical errors, anachronisms, contradictions, and false prophecies. Smith even copied translation errors of the *King James Version* as he was plagiarizing verses.
- (5) There is no such thing as "reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics," and certainly this was not the language spoken by the inhabitants of the Americas.
- (6) Most researchers on the subject agree that *The Book of Mormon* is actually Smith's expansion of a romance called *Manuscript Found*, written by a retired minister named Solomon Spaulding. The story behind Smith's "translation" of the *Pearl of Great Price* is even more bizarre. Smith purportedly bought from a traveling showman some mummies which were wrapped in papyrus sheets containing the writings of Abraham!

Yet the Mormon attitude toward the Bible is that it is not very reliable since it supposedly contains many translation errors. Mormons accept the *King James Version* only "insofar as it is correctly translated." What determines when it is correctly translated? Mormon doctrine. Whenever Mormon doctrine is contrary to biblical passages, those passages are said to be improperly translated. However, it is interesting that the thousands of verses plagiarized from the *King James Version* in *The Book of Mormon* were adopted unchanged. Those verses at least were not corrupted.

Mormon theology is definitely not a form of Christianity. Smith's earlier writings were monotheistic, but his view of God degenerated in his later work. He said that, "God was once as we are now and is an exalted man." God was not always God, but developed into His present state. God has a body of flesh and blood.

Smith, Young, and other Mormon authorities teach that men have the potential to become gods themselves. These Mormon theologians, unable to think beyond the realm of the physical, distort biblical passages to support their views. They refuse to allow any aspect of God to be incomprehensible to man. Mormon doctrine asserts that there are many worlds, which are controlled by different gods. It appears that Mormon theology is actually henotheistic. That is, it exalts one God (the Father-God) above the other gods in the universe.

The Holy Spirit causes problems in the Mormon system. While they say that the Father and the Son each have physical bodies they are unable to say the same for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is usually regarded as an impersonal substance of spiritual "fluid" which is dispensed in varying degrees to individuals.

Jesus Christ's deity is minimized in the Mormonism. Mormons say He is really not so different from other men. He is eternal, but the spirits of all men are eternal in the same way. Mormon theology teaches that the gods produced spirit children from eternity, but that they had to wait for incarnate men to provide bodies for them by procreation. Christ was one of these spirit children (the brother of Lucifer) who received a body and is now elevated to the level of deity. The real difference between Christ and men is one of time rather than nature. He is referred to as "our elder brother."

Most Mormons believe that Jesus Christ is the natural offspring of Mary and Adam (or Adam-God, the god of our world), not the Holy Spirit. It was the Adam-God who came into the Garden of Eden and brought Eve, one of His celestial wives. Christ was a polygamist (he married the two Marys and Martha) and produced children. If he had had no offspring He would not have been exalted to the level of deity according to Mormon reasoning.

Mormons teach that Christ's death and atonement only removes guilt for past sins. This places man in a position in which he can earn his own salvation by means of good works. Justification by faith is clearly denied in Mormonism. Salvation involves faith in Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion, obedience to the teaching of the Mormon church, good works, and baptism by the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. Hear the words from an official Mormon text: "Salvation in the kingdom of God is

available because of the atoning blood of Christ. But it is received only on condition of faith, repentance, baptism, and enduring to the end in keeping the commandments" (*What Mormons Think of Christ*, B. R. McConkie).

Salvation is progression toward becoming a god. When one attains godhood, he is able to create and populate worlds of his own, and thus the process continues forever.

Mormons deny the doctrine of original sin and actually teaches that the fall of man was a good and necessary thing. Man had to disobey one of God's commands (do not eat the fruit) in order to obey another (procreation). Thus there is no imputed sin nature from Adam, and children are born in a state of complete innocence. However, all children eventually sin and reach an age of accountability for their sins.

Polygamy is an important doctrine in Mormonism. Since the Mormons were forced to abandon this practice in 1890, they have substituted the practice of "celestial marriage." Marriages must be sealed in the Mormon secret temples in order for them to endure for eternity. A man can seal up for himself several wives for the future life by engaging in special rites in Mormon temples. This arrangement is also thought to benefit the women, since apart from celestial marriage they cannot attain the highest glory. Procreation now and in the hereafter is considered essential (this violates Christ's teaching, see Matthew 22:30).

Perhaps the most widespread practice in Mormon temples is baptism for the dead and laying on of hands for the dead. Since Mormons believe that baptism by immersion in the Mormon church is necessary for salvation, they compile elaborate genealogies of their "Gentile" ancestors and baptized them by proxy. Millions of the dead have in this way been "baptized" and thus assured of salvation.

According to Mormonism, all people will be resurrected, and those who have solemnized "celestial marriages" through the Mormon church will keep their wives in the next world. There will be no new marriages.

Mormons lean toward universalism in that they minimize hell and say that all men will go to one of three heavens. Unbelievers go to the telestial heaven, religious non-Mormons go to the terrestrial heaven, and good Mormons go to the celestial heaven. The celestial heaven is itself subdivided into three sections corresponding to one's services rendered the church on earth as deacon, teacher, priest, elder, bishop, the 70, apostle, or president. The highest eventual reward is for one to become a god and to create and rule a separate planet with his family.

Biblical Evaluation

- (1) Mormon theology is far removed from biblical Christianity. It is a system which denies or perverts every cardinal Christian doctrine.
- (2) Mormonism places Joseph Smith's writings on a higher plane than the Bible. It says that wherever the Bible is at variance with Mormon doctrine, the Bible is incorrectly translated.
- (3) Mormonism denies justification by faith and offers a works system in which salvation is actually progress toward godhood.

Thing to Keep in Mind

- (1) Mormons present their doctrines in a subtle way, so as to preserve a veneer of orthodoxy.
- (2) Mormonism is growing because it provides significant benefits. It offers social security – the church always takes care of the needs of its people. It strives to build the youth (scouting, recreation, dances). This results in a very low rate of juvenile delinquency. The church challenges its laymen to be actively involved and provides a host of things for them to do. Mormonism is pervaded with the idea that everything practiced in the church is a result of divine revelation. These are appeals the evangelical Christian church ought to have.
- (3) Since the teachings of Mormonism cannot be reconciled with the Bible, Mormons can be delivered from this cult by an honest study of the Bible. They should be challenged to compare the Bible with the teachings of Mormonism.
- (4) No Mormon can claim that he *has* eternal life in Christ. Their works system of salvation leads to lack of certainty. This is an important area for Christians to develop with Mormons, because the New Testament emphasizes that certainty of salvation is available for those who base their salvation on Christ's finished work on their behalf (John 20:31)

Section IV - SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM

Background and Teachings

Evangelical scholars differ over the question of whether Seventh-Day Adventism should be classed as a cult or as a Christian denomination. Adventism has undergone significant changes over the decades, and today appears to hold an orthodox view of the cardinal Christian doctrines. Thus, it would seem improper to classify Adventism in the same category with such cults as Mormonism, Christian Science, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Nevertheless, definite doctrinal problems and emphases remain which make it hard to view the Seventh-Day Adventists as just another branch of evangelical Christianity.

A number of people were influential in founding the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, which grew out of the widespread excitement in the 1840's that Christ's coming was imminent. Many people in America and abroad had come to the conclusion that

Christ was due to return sometime in 1843 or early 1844. One of these people was William Miller (1782-1849), a New York farmer who became a Baptist minister. He was an avid student of the Bible, but he lacked theological training. Taking the "2,300 evenings and mornings" of Daniel 8:14 to mean 2,300 years, he concluded that Christ would return sometime between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. Miller began to spend all of his time lecturing. An Adventist periodical called *The Signs of the Times* promoted his teachings. But March 21, 1844 came and went without Christ's return.

A few weeks later, however, a follower of Miller named Samuel Snow restored the hopes of the Millerites by suggesting that the real date of Christ's return would be October 22, 1844. A new fervency appeared. A number of Adventists gave up their jobs in the "last days" and spent their time attending church meetings. Some writers say that the Millerites wore white ascension robes and climbed mountains at this time, but the historical evidence is to the contrary. When October 22 passed, the Adventists' hopes were again crushed. This came to be known as the Great Disappointment of 1844.

It should be obvious that it is a mistake to place a date on the second advent of Christ (see Matthew 24:36, 42, 44, and 25:13). But some of the Millerites refused to learn this lesson. It is to the credit of William Miller that he admitted his error and removed himself from any further chronological speculation. He never accepted the Seventh-Day Adventist doctrines and he remained a devout Christian until his death.

After Miller died, the influences of three people combined to form the Seventh-Day Adventist movement. The first of these was Hiram Edson, who received a "revelation" the morning after the Great Disappointment that Miller was right about the time but wrong about the place. Edson said that Christ indeed began to cleanse the sanctuary as Miller had predicted, but the sanctuary is in heaven, not on earth. Christ had moved from one "apartment" of the heavenly sanctuary to another and had begun a final work known as "investigative judgment." Thus, He is presently "investigating" the works of believers to determine who is worthy of eternal life. When He is through with this work, He will return to the earth. Edson's reinterpretation of Daniel 8 was expanded and promoted by O.R.L. Crosier.

A second formative figure in Seventh-Day Adventism was Joseph Bates, who taught that the Saturday Sabbath was a perpetual ordinance which the church should practice today.

The third figure influential in forming Seventh-Day Adventism was Mrs. Ellen G. White. Her "inspired" interpretations of the Bible are known by Seventh-Day Adventists as "the Spirit of prophecy" (this term comes from Rev. 19:10). Born Ellen Gould Harmon in Maine in 1827, she married James White, one of the leaders of the Adventist movement. Seventh-Day Adventists believe that Mrs. White had a unique gift of prophecy and most of the doctrines especially identified with Seventh-Day Adventism today are a direct result of her highly revered interpretations and "revelation." Ellen White was the foremost leader of the Seventh-Day Adventists until her death in 1915.

The Adventists set up their headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan in 1855, and there arrived at the name "Seventh-Day Adventists" in 1860. In 1903 they moved the headquarters to Takoma Park, Washington, D.C. Today there are over 3 million Seventh-Day Adventists around the world. Their members give sacrificially to the church to support extensive missionary and literature programs. Adventists also place strong emphasis on education (they have a large school system) and on health and welfare projects. They also make effective use of radio and television.

Certain psychological difficulties have accompanied this movement as a result of its history, particularly in connection with the Great Disappointment of 1844. Because of the failures in ascertaining the date of Christ's return, the Adventists were humiliated and renounced by most Christian groups. This produced a separatist attitude which was reinforced by the special revelations of Ellen White. Seventh-Day Adventists came to regard themselves as the remnant people and made repeated attacks on the Christian churches. These attacks only further estranged them from other Christians. In addition, the Seventh-Day Adventists' tactic of camouflaging their identity in the media and in their public lecture series encouraged charges of deception and propagandizing.

In their recent material Seventh-Day Adventists make it clear that they have an orthodox biblical position regarding the important doctrines of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, the deity of Christ, the bodily resurrection and second coming of Christ, and the way of salvation. However, there are several Seventh-Day Adventist doctrines which are definitely unbiblical, and some of these will now be considered.

One problem is the Seventh-Day Adventist position on the writings of Ellen G. White. Seventh-Day Adventists insist that the "Spirit of prophecy" was given to her, and that her interpretations of the Bible are inspired. Though some Seventh-Day Adventists go so far as to place Mrs. White's writings on a par with Scripture, this is not the official position of the church, which claims that the Bible is its only source of authority. Theory differs from practice, however, and in a practical sense, Mrs. White's interpretations of the Bible are accepted without reservation by Adventists as completely authoritative. Apart from her "revelations" and writings it is doubtful that the Seventh-Day Adventist church would exist today. Whatever follows the standard Adventist phrase "Ellen G. White comments" is regarded as the last word in interpretation regardless of how many biblical scholars disagree.

The most distinctive doctrine of the Seventh-Day Adventism is that the church should worship on Saturdays. Adventists claim that Sunday worship will soon be required by law. When this happens, those who yield and do not worship on Saturday will receive the mark of the beast. Seventh-Day Adventism received its sabbatarian emphasis from Joseph Bates and Ellen G. White. Their attempts to support this doctrine from the Bible and history are weak. Mrs. White claimed that Sunday worship was instituted by one of the popes, but there is no evidence to support this. It is clear from the writings of the early Christians that the first and second century church worshiped on Sunday, which they regarded as the Lord's Day, evidently because Christ rose from the dead and first appeared to His disciples on the first day of the week. His disciples were assembled on the following Sunday and Christ once again appeared to them. The Holy Spirit came and the church was born on a Sunday (the Day of Pentecost). Christians assembled on the first day of the week (Acts 20:5-7), and Paul told them to make their offerings on Sunday (I Corinthians 16:2).

According to the New Testament, the Adventists' rebuke of the churches for not keeping the Saturday Sabbath is entirely out of place. We read, "Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day, things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17). Romans 13:8-10 and Galatians 4:9-11 also refute the sabbatarian position.

Perhaps the clearest rebuttal of Sabbath legalism comes from Romans 14:4-6: "Who are you to judge the servants of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God" (see also verses 10-13).

Paul clearly stresses that it is wrong to judge other Christians for not worshiping on a particular day. Unfortunately, Seventh-Day Adventists have been heavy in their condemnation of other Christians in this matter, and some even say that one's redemption may be at stake. They teach that salvation is a free gift but that evidence of salvation is obedience to God's commandments including Sabbath keeping, the fourth of the Ten Commandments. They blow this issue all out of proportion.

In addition, Adventists are not consistent in their obedience to Old Testament laws. For instance, they don't observe the Passover even though this feast is emphasized as strongly in the Old Testament as the observance of the Sabbath. Part of the problem is that they draw a false dichotomy between what they call the "moral law" (the Ten Commandments) and the "ceremonial law" (the rest of the Mosaic Law). They claim the moral law is still valid while the ceremonial law is not. This false assumption has led to a spirit of legalism among Adventists as well as a divisive attitude that they are the only commandment keeping church. But the New Testament refers to the entire Law as a unit, and either the entire Law is in force today or it is not in force at all. This is not to say that believers are lawless; they are under "the law of Christ" (I Corinthians 9:21), which in the New Testament includes nine out of the Ten Commandments, but does not include the Sabbath.

Adventists promote White's teaching of the "investigative judgment," in which Christ transferred the record of the sins of believers to the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 and began to review the cases of believers to see who is worthy of receiving eternal life. This places all Adventists under the threat of judgment, contrary to the clear teaching of passages such as John 5:24 and Romans 8:1.

Along with this teaching a number of Adventist writers have said that Christ's work of atonement has not yet been completed. It will only be completed when the sanctuary is finally cleansed after the investigative judgment is finished. Then the sins of believers will be blotted out and Christ will return to the earth in glory. At this time Satan will be annihilated because he caused sin to enter the universe (Seventh-Day Adventists view Satan as Azazel, the scapegoat of Leviticus 16).

This brings up one more Seventh-Day Adventist doctrine, the annihilation of the wicked. They teach that the wicked will be raised from the grave and burned alive in a great fire which will cover the earth. The righteous dead will also receive resurrected bodies but they will spend the Millennium in heaven. The wicked will eventually die (complete annihilation) rather than bear eternal torment, and then the New Jerusalem will come down on the earth. This annihilation concept is refuted by a number of Scriptures, including Matthew 8:11-12, 10:28, 18:8, 25:41, Mark 9:47-48, John 3:36, II Thessalonians 1:9, Revelation 14:9-11 and 20:10. Seventh-Day Adventists make the mistake of equating "destruction" with "annihilation," but this is contrary to the meaning of the Greek word.

Seventh-Day Adventists are known for their strong emphasis on health. Like the Mormons, they prohibit the use of alcoholic beverages, coffee, tea, and tobacco. They also follow the food restrictions of the Law of Moses. This means that they abstain from foods such as pork, oysters, clams, crabs, lobsters, and rabbits. Many Seventh-Day Adventists are vegetarians.

Adventists have concluded that "Michael" is another title for Christ rather than the name of an angel. The problem with this view is that Jude 9 says that Michael did not dare rebuke Satan. This could be true only if Michael were an angel and not Christ Himself.

Seventh-Day Adventists have arrived at these doctrines because of the system of Ellen G. White, not because of an inductive study of the Bible. Their theories of the sanctuary and investigative judgment were developed to compensate for their initial chronological errors related to Christ's return. Adventists try to support Mrs. White's "revealed" interpretations by taking verses out of context and ignoring their relationship to other passages of Scripture.

Adventists acknowledge that people in other churches may have salvation in Christ, but their system implies that they may lose their salvation if they do not change their minds about the Sabbath, among other things.

Biblical Evaluation

- (1) Seventh-Day Adventism cannot be labeled a non-Christian cult. Its' teaching about the person and work of Christ and the inspiration of the Scriptures are essentially biblical. It also teaches that salvation is by grace through faith in Christ, but the problem here is the emphasis on keeping the Old Testament commandments to give evidence of salvation, or to retain it.
- (2) Seventh-Day Adventist doctrines of the nature of man (man is a soul), the annihilation of the wicked, the sanctuary, investigative judgment, the scapegoat, and the Sabbath are unbiblical.
- (3) Seventh-Day Adventists have revered Ellen G. White and her writings to a dangerous extent. In practice, her interpretations are accepted as divinely authoritative. Adventists have distorted several scriptural teachings in order to support Mrs. White's "visions."

- (4) A legalistic spirit in Seventh-Day Adventism places its followers under the law. Saturday worship is such an issue that it is practically made a test of one's salvation.

Things to Keep in Mind

- (1) Seventh-Day Adventists are to be commended for their strong emphasis on moral purity, the family, physical well being, and their missionary, medical, welfare and educational programs.
- (2) Adventists place an inordinate emphasis on the Sabbath. They make such an issue out of this and other distinctive Seventh-Day Adventist doctrines that they sometimes develop an unhealthy attitude toward other churches. Christians should know how to defend the fact that they are no longer under the sabbatical law.
- (3) Seventh-Day Adventists should challenge us to study and know the Scriptures, so that we can handle accurately the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15).

Section V– ISLAM

From the Book: *Cults, World Religions and the Occult* by Kenneth Boa
1990 by SP Publications

Background and Teachings

Today Islam claims over one billion followers around the world. Mohammed is its founder. The word *Islam* essentially means "surrender" or "submission" to the will of Allah. *Muslim* (or Moslem) is related to this word, and it means "one who submits."

Islam is an intensely monotheistic religion whose primary name for God is Allah. This word probably came from *al illah*, which means "the God." So extreme is the monotheism of Islam that the greatest and unpardonable sin in *shirk*—associating Allah with anything created. The only true way to define Allah is by the negative way; that is by eliminating all the things that Allah is *not*. Also, metaphor or analogy may be used sparingly in describing Allah; that is "the merciful" or "the compassionate."

Islam combines elements from the Old Testament and Christianity and accepts Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, John, and others as prophets of Allah. It claims, however, that Mohammed is the last and greatest of the prophets and that Islam is the true continuation of the Old Testament faith.

Mohammed, whose original name was Ubu'l Kassim, was born in A.D. 570 in Mecca (near the southwest coast of the Arabian Peninsula). His father Abdullah, a member of the powerful Quraish tribe, died shortly before his birth, and his mother, Amina, died when he was six years old. His grandfather cared for him for a short time, and then he was brought up by Abu Talib, his uncle. He became a camel driver and his uncle often took him on lengthy caravan journeys, sometimes as far as Syria and possibly Egypt. Because of this, Mohammed had extensive contacts with people of different religions and nationalities, and this later influenced his thinking.

When Mohammed was 25, he was employed by Khadijah, a wealthy widow in the caravan trade. He served her so well that she decided to marry him even though she was 15 years his senior. None of their children survived to maturity except a daughter named Fatima. As Khadijah's husband, Mohammed no longer had to work. Instead, he began to occupy himself with meditation and reflection on the meaning of life.

The Arabian people were polytheistic idolaters who had a pantheon of deities (including Allah), as well as angels and demons (*djinn*). Mecca was a religious center with 360 shrines and a small temple known as the Kaaba, which housed the Black Stone. This stone (probably a meteorite) was thought to have been given to Abraham by Gabriel.

Mohammed was disturbed by the idolatrous practices of his countrymen and came to the conclusion that Allah was the one true God. He spent many hours of thought in a cave in Mount Hira, a few miles from Mecca. In A.D. 610, when he was 40, he began to receive frightening revelations, which were accompanied by violent seizures. He was not sure whether the visions were divine or demonic, but his wife encouraged him to submit to the revelations, which were supposed to be coming from the angel Gabriel. He was told to recite the revelation he received, and his followers recorded these after his death in the Koran (Qur'an, or Recitation). As a prophet of Allah, Mohammed received visions for 22 years until his death in A.D. 632.

Mohammed's first convert was Khakijah, and his second was Ali, a young cousin. Probably the most important early convert was a merchant named Abu Bakr. For several years Mohammed had little success in gaining followers. When he began to openly proclaim his message about Allah, he ran into immediate opposition. Meccan businessmen depended on pilgrimages to the shrines, and Mohammed was denouncing all forms of idol worship. Everything he taught was against the moral and social order of Mecca.

Mohammed's followers were persecuted, and the prophet himself was protected only because of his influential wife and his uncle, Abu Talib. Both of them, however, died in A.D. 620. A number of Muslims moved to the nearby city of Yathrib because of the pressure in Mecca. Later, the Meccan opposition became so intense that Mohammed also decided to leave, and accepted an offer to become the leader of the city of Yathrib. He just managed to escape a plot to assassinate him as he secretly fled Mecca on July 16, 622 with his disciple Abu Bakr. The two of them had to hide in a cave for three days before they could set out for Yathrib.

Mohammed's escape to Yathrib was called the Hegira (*Hijrah*, or "flight"). This is the most important date in Islam since it marks the official beginning of Islam as a religion. Muslims reckon their calendars from this day using the designation A.H. (in the year of the Hegira). The year of Mohammed's death (632), for example, is 10 A.H.

After Mohammed became the magistrate of Yathrib, its name was changed to Medina, the "City of the Prophet." Mohammed was successful in his leadership of Medina, and most the people became Muslims. He set up a theocracy, combining politics with the new religion. Mohammed was both king and prophet. At this stage it seems he used his "divine revelations" to establish new laws and policies which aided his career of conquest. In Medina he also started a harem, with 10 to 12 wives.

For a time, Mohammed tried to win over the Jewish population of Medina. But when he was rejected by the Jews, he stopped praying toward Jerusalem and began to face Mecca instead. He also persecuted the Jews because of their rejection.

Mohammed replenished the treasury of Medina by plundering the caravans of pilgrims to Mecca. This led to war with the Meccans, and Mohammed's years in Medina were marked by almost constant warfare. There were military reverses, and the prophet himself was wounded in one of the battles. But the Medinese were eventually victorious and a number of tribes submitted to Mohammed. He finally took Mecca, tore down the idols, and rebuild the Kaaba with its Black Stone. By continuing the ancient pilgrimage ritual to the Kaaba, Mohammed made Mecca the most holy city of Islam. Mohammed died not long after his return to Mecca, but by the time of his death he was ruler of all Arabia.

Soon after the prophet's death it was agreed that his successor (*caliph*) would be Abu Bakr. He died in A.D. 634 after a reign of only 2 years. The second caliph, Omar, reigned 10 years (A.D. 634-644). He was quite aggressive, and his armies spread Islam by means of the conquering sword. They defeated Syria, Jerusalem, Egypt, Persia, and Mesopotamia.

Othman was the third caliph and Ali was the fourth. During their reigns, Islam continued to spread until it took parts of India, all of North Africa, and a part of Europe. It might have conquered Europe except for Charles Martel's victory over the Islamic armies at the Battle of Tours in A.D. 732.

Though the Islamic nations are no longer directed by the caliphate, Islam as a religion continues to be a powerful binding force among Arabs. It is enjoying a new surge of power due to the increasing Arab oil revenues. A great deal of this money is being poured into Islamic missions with special emphasis on the African continent.

The Koran is the authoritative scripture of Islam. About four-fifths the length of the New Testament, it is divided into 114 surahs (chapters). Parts were written by Mohammed, and the rest, based on his oral teaching, was written from memory by his disciples after Mohammed's death. Over the years a number of additional sayings of Mohammed and his early disciples were compiled. These comprise the *Hadith* (traditions), the sayings of which are called *sunna* (custom). The Hadith supplements the Koran much as the Talmud supplements the Law in Judaism. The basic beliefs and practices of Islam are usually summarized by the *five doctrines* and the *five pillars*.

The five doctrines of Islam are:

1. Allah is the one true God. Muslims believe that since God is one, the nominal Christian doctrine of the Trinity is polytheistic. (It is!) Allah is omnipotent, omniscient, and so transcendent that he is practically unknowable.
2. Allah has sent many prophets (some place the number at over 100,000) to guide men. The Koran mentions 28 of these, most of who are found in the Old and New Testaments. Jesus is said to be a sinless prophet, but Mohammed is the last and greatest of the prophets.
3. Of the four inspired books, the Koran is the most important. The other three are the Tauret of Moses (the Pentateuch), the Zabur of David (Psalms), and the Injil of Jesus (Evangel). Because Islam recognizes these three, Jews and Christians are regarded as "people of the book." Nevertheless, Muslims believe that the earlier revelations are in corrupted form and the Koran supersedes them. The Koran is held to be as eternal as Allah. It was simply dictated to Mohammed by Gabriel over a period of years.
4. There are many intermediary beings (angels). There are also fallen angels (djinn or demons) and a ruler of the djinn known as Iblis or Shaitan (Satan).
5. There will be a day of judgment, a resurrection, and a heaven and hell. Each man's deeds will be weighed on a pair of balances to determine his destiny. Heaven is a place of sensuous delight and gratification.

Along with these doctrines there is a commonly held **sixth doctrine** of *Kismet* (fate). Those who hold to this view of foreordination often think of reality in a fatalistic way.

The five pillars of Islam relate to the main religious practices of the Muslims. **The five pillars are:**

1. Recitation of Islam's creed (the *Shahadah*) or word (*Kalima*): "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." This creed must be said aloud, publicly, and with conviction in order for one to be a believer. It is repeated several times a day.
2. The practice of prayer (*sala*) five times a day (upon rising, at noon, in mid-afternoon, after sunset, and before retiring). The worshiper must recite the prescribed prayers (the first surah and other selections from the Koran) in Arabic while facing the Kaaba in Mecca. The Hadith (book of tradition) has turned these prayers into a mechanical procedure of standing, kneeling, hands and face on the ground, and so forth. The call to prayer is sounded by *muezzin* (a Muslim crier) from a tower called a *minaret*, which is part of the *mosque* (the place of worship).

3. The practice of almsgiving (*zakaat*). This was once a voluntary practice, but it has become a tax usually based on one-fortieth of one's income and holdings. In Moslem countries there is always a vagrant class which is supported by the giving of alms.
4. The month of fasting (the month of Ramadan). During this month (which occurs at different times of the year since the Muslims use a lunar calendar), Muslims are not allowed to eat or drink anything during the daylight hours. Many of them rise before dawn to eat breakfast, and as soon as it gets dark they eat another meal.
5. The pilgrimage to Mecca (the *Haji*). Muslims are required to make this pilgrimage at least once in their lifetimes if at all possible. This trip, which helps them attain salvation, is usually expensive and dangerous to the health if one is not strong. A complex and arduous set of ceremonies must be performed, many of which center around the Kaaba shrine.

In addition to these five pillars, a **sixth pillar is added—the Holy War or *Jihad***. This is a religious war in which force is used to overcome infidels and spread Islam. The use of force is sanctioned in the Koran (Surah 2:163-164, 9:5, 9:29). Soldiers who die in such a war are assured of entrance into heaven.

Other practices in addition to these pillars are circumcision, the veiling of women with a *purdah*, polygamy (a man is limited to four wives at a time), and abstention from alcohol, gambling, and certain foods especially pork. There are also a number of festivals and feasts, depending on the sect or branch of Islam to which one belongs.

In Islam everything has been codified into rigid practices. This has led to much externalism. Religion becomes a matter of custom, national heritage, and ritual rather than a relationship with God.

The two major sects of Islam are divided over the question of who was the rightful successor to Mohammed. The Sunnites, by far the majority of Muslims, assert that the four caliphs (Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman, and Ali) were the rightful successors. The Shiites are opposed to this view, believing that only those in the family of Mohammed should be recognized. They begin the line of succession with Ali, Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law (he married Fatima, Mohammed's daughter). These successors are known as the Imams, and Shiites claim that they were sinless men who performed miracles, died as martyrs, and are on an equal plane with Mohammed. The Shiites are divided over whether there were 7 or 12 Imams. Those who believe there were 12 say that the 12th Imam disappeared about A.D. 882 and that he will appear again as the Madhi ("the guided one") or Messiah and set up his kingdom on the earth. Some sub-sects (such as the Ismailis) believe that there is always an Imam on the earth.

There are many other small sects of Islam, one of the most important being the Ahmadiya, founded in the 19th century by a man who claimed to be the Madhi Imam. This sect is very active in Europe and America in its attempts to win converts.

In addition to the sects there are also different orders to which a Muslim can belong, regardless of his sect. The most important order is that of the Sufis. The Sufis are the mystics of Islam who engage in esoteric practices and beliefs. Many Sufis emphasize the immanence of Allah to such an extent that they are actually pantheists. They have organized several fraternal orders for the practice of their secret rites. The best known of these fraternities is the Dervish fraternity (sometimes called the "whirling dervishes" because of their exercises and dances which lead to trancelike states). The Wahhabi order, by contrast, is a fanatically orthodox movement in Islam which emphasizes the transcendence of Allah.

Biblical Evaluation

1. Islam combines elements of the Old Testament, Christianity, and the native Arabian religions. Mohammed, writing in the Koran, refers to the Old and New Testaments as truth, but his doctrines often contradict their teachings. Whenever there is a conflict between the Koran and the Bible, Muslims say that the Bible is not accurate at that point because it has changed by men. They claim the Koran is uncreated and eternal. But this creates a problem because it implies that the Koran has an independent existence apart from Allah.
2. Though Islam's doctrine of God is monotheistic, it is deficient in many ways. Allah is so transcendent that he is practically unknowable (the Sufis, however, would say otherwise). He is all-powerful, but little is said about the attributes of holiness and love. The Muslims have a distorted view of the Trinity and often think it consists of God, Mary, and Jesus. They reject any notion of "persons" in God.
3. Unlike the God of the Bible, Allah has done nothing for man that cost him anything. Islam makes no real provision for sin. One's salvation is never certain since it is based on a works system and on complete surrender to the will of Allah. This religion rejects the biblical teaching of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, though it concedes that he was a sinless prophet. Mohammed did not rise from the dead, and there is no basis for a resurrection in Islam.
4. Islam has an elaborate system of angels and demons that lends itself to a practical polytheism among the masses, who tend to treat these beings as deities.
5. Islam is pervaded by a great sense of fatalism in spite of efforts to overcome it.
6. Mohammed's revelations were accompanied by violent fits and foaming at the mouth. From a New Testament perspective, they appear to have been demonic in origin.

Things to Keep in Mind

1. Christians must focus on the problem of sin, contrasting what the God of the Bible has done about it with what Allah has *not* done.
2. Islam is marked by sectarian differences and differing concepts of God. Questions must be asked to determine what particular views a Muslim holds.
3. Islam is a rapidly spreading religion for several reasons. It is the state religion of Moslem countries and this gives it a strong cultural and political base. It has the appeal of a universal message because of its simple creed and tenets. Anyone can enter the *Ummah*, the community of faithful Muslims. There are no racial barriers. Thus it spreads quickly among the black communities of Africa, and more recently, of America. Its five doctrines and five pillars can be easily communicated. In the West it is making appeals to the universal brotherhood of man, world peace, temperance, and the uplifting of women.
4. Islam is externalistic. A Muslim has no vital personal relationship with God. Prayers and worship lack spontaneity or individuality because everything is codified.
5. Mohammed's life contrasts greatly with the life of Christ. Mohammed spent his last 10 years in almost constant warfare. He treated the Jews in Medina cruelly. He violated the law of the desert by plundering caravans to Mecca even during the months of pilgrimages. Because of his many wives, which exceeded the accepted limit of four, his household was filled with conflict and strife.
6. In Moslem countries women have few rights. A man can easily secure a divorce, but a woman cannot. Though Islam condemns such things as stealing, lying, gambling, and drinking, these things have reached epidemic proportions in Moslem countries.