

Highlights
in
Church
History

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S. C. McClain

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by S. C. McClain

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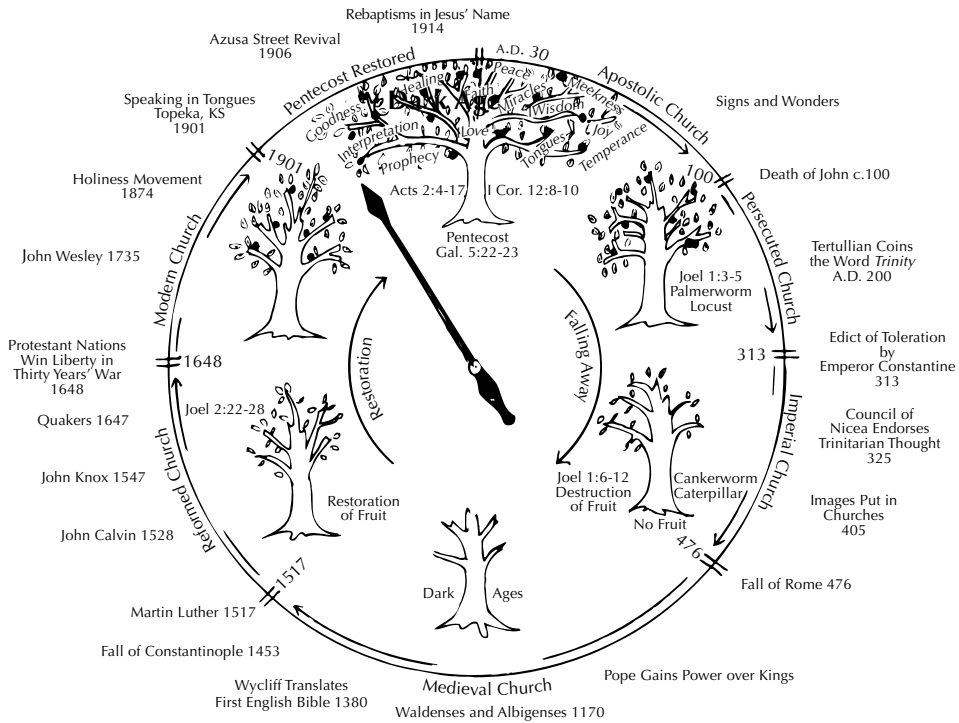
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FOREWORD

All too often we are prone to postpone our praise and appreciation of a man until he passes from the scene of action. The author of this book, S. C. McClain, is still active and effectual as a faithful servant of God in the ministry of the Pentecostal church and has given the large portion of his life for others. Being one of the early pioneers of our Pentecostal message to our generation, he has enjoyed a wide and fruitful ministry, and truly he has become an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, having personally established many fine churches throughout the land.

All who know Brother McClain recognize in him a man full of the Holy Ghost, one who is always anxious to serve others with an unselfishness that has marked him as a man humble in the sight of God. The Lord is his constant companion, as he spends much of his time in prayer. Faith and enthusiasm are basic and integral parts of him, and he is never satisfied unless he is encouraging some young person to step out into the ministry of the Lord he loves so dearly.

For three and one-half years it was my privilege to have this man of God serve under me as a teacher of church history and doctrine in the Pentecostal Bible Institute. Though he was many years my senior in both age and experience, at no time did he seem to resent this

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fact and was always careful not to usurp authority. With tact and patience he was always near when needed, and his counsel and advice were always welcome and helpful. He endeared himself to the students. When discouraged, burdened or distressed, the students often made their way to the home of Brother and Sister McClain, who were always ready to pray with them. When they left that home their step seemed a little lighter; they had received the spiritual help they needed.

Due to failing health and the heavy responsibility of this type of work, Brother McClain was compelled to leave the school and return to one of the churches he founded. Our loss was their gain. Truly it is wonderful to see how God is blessing this dear man of God. Our only regret is that he could not have remained with the school.

C. D. Soper, President
Pentecostal Bible Institute
Tupelo, Mississippi, 1948

PREFACE

For several years the author has preached and lectured on the fall and restoration of the apostolic church from both a prophetic and historical standpoint. Being an instructor in the study of church history in the Pentecostal Bible Institute, he has realized the need of presenting a brief account of some of the most interesting facts in the Scriptures and in church history concerning the church in its journey from the time of the apostles to the present time. He herewith presents a student's handbook with the hope of stirring up an interest in research to gain valuable information from other writers. He has given several references that should be a starter to a very interesting study in the Bible and church history.

S. C. McClain
April 1948

Editor's Note: In the third edition (2000), we have edited punctuation, diction, and style to conform to current Word Aflame Press house rules; clarified ambiguous statements; corrected historical errors; and supplied missing Scripture references. Moreover, we have sought to make clear that although the professing church underwent a great falling away and then a restoration of biblical truths, the apostolic

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message and experience, which characterizes the true church, has always been available and has always been God's plan since the Day of Pentecost. (See the author's explanation in chapters 4, 6, and 8.) In discussing church history, the book often uses the word "church" to refer to the visible church structure of the day, not necessarily the true apostolic church of New Testament teaching.

CHAPTER ONE

A GENERAL VIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY

In this brief study of church history, let us begin with the Day of Pentecost, when 120 of the most faithful followers of our Lord had assembled and tarried ten days, waiting for the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost. (See Acts 1:5. See Leviticus 23 to determine the number of days these disciples waited for this Spirit baptism.) Then let us note what mighty power was manifested from the first outpouring of the Holy Ghost, throughout the time of the apostles, until signs of a falling away were seen and the professing church as a whole drifted away from God into one of the darkest periods ever known.

But thanks be to our Christ, who promised to be with His people even to the end, this darkness could not continue when the light of a new day broke in and reformers began to preach Bible truths that had almost been lost in the age of darkness. The apostolic message began its return little by little as people began to enter the light of

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truth. Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, John Wesley, and many others boldly preached a reformation, starting a process that brought the professing church on its way back to Pentecost, the goal it has now begun to reach in these last days.

Let us observe that all the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit were in the church at first. With the three and one-half years of His ministry, the Lord had prepared disciples who could and would yield to the leadership of the Spirit, and He began His church in the fullness and strength of the Holy Spirit. All manner of signs, wonders, and miracles were done by the apostles and others in the church; and as long as they loved one another and kept in fellowship by the Spirit, these mighty works followed them.

With the beginning of a falling away in the church, however, great discussions and arguments arose and false doctrines were introduced. It is commendable that the original church had few doctrines other than definite proofs that Jesus is the Lord and Messiah; that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day for our salvation; that He ascended to heaven and poured out the Holy Ghost; that Jesus is to return for His people; that they must repent and be baptized in Jesus' name; and that the promise of the Holy Spirit baptism is for every believer (Acts 2:22-39).

The greater part of their ministry was like that of the Lord Jesus, filled with power to heal and to do signs and wonders, which made their ministry more convincing than hairsplitting preaching. The first council of the church settled the question of whether the Gentile believ-

ers were to keep the law and be circumcised (Acts 15). Although there were discussions, the Holy Ghost kept all in one accord and guided the decision. How much difference there was as the professing church fell farther from God and lost the power of the Holy Ghost! The path of history is red with the blood of those condemned by leaders of the apostate church.

Persecution by the unbelieving heathen made the early church grow all the more, but a compromise was effected by Constantine, and he, by what seems to have been a false profession of Christ, became effectively the leader and head of the church. With the emperor ruling over the church, persecution ceased and the doors of the fast-backsliding church were thrown open to the world. Constantine had made it unlawful for anyone to hold a political office unless he was a church member; therefore, everybody wanted to enter the church. With the world and its politics in the professing church, it sank into the darkest depths of the Dark Ages.

About A.D. 150, some teachers introduced the concept of plural persons in the Godhead, and around A.D. 200 Tertullian coined the word *trinity*. From that time forward, there was much disputing over this new doctrine. Thus Constantine called the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 to decide what doctrinal formula his new state church would use. Being ignorant of spiritual leadings, knowing but little of Bible truth, and having been brought up under heathen worship, Constantine decided to support the teaching of a trinity. Many gospel truths were thus all but lost in the Dark Ages. Those who dared to

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teach anything different from the adopted creed of the Roman Catholic Church were branded as heretics and were punished accordingly.

It took courage for the Reformers to stand up against the powers of so strong an organization as the Roman Catholic Church, which controlled all political powers; but God had people who were ready to preach truth as they saw it in His Word. Step by step the professing church waded through the blood of martyrs, until now the power of God's Word and the Holy Spirit has increased so much that many people are receiving once again the doctrines of the New Testament as well as signs and wonders. The heart cry of believers is, "Back to Pentecost!" The goal will be fully reached as the time draws nearer for our Lord to return to earth again.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHART EXPLAINED

The reader will please note the chart on page 7 as he reads this explanation.

The inner circle has trees representing the stages of the professing church as the prophet Joel seems to describe them (Joel 1:3-5). It pictures the withering away of the professing church from a tree with all eighteen fruits and gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:8-10; Galatians 5:22-23) to nothing but a dead, dry stump. There the destroyer is compared to four kinds of insects that destroy both the fruit and the foliage and even gnaw the bark off the tree. Then the prophet changed the picture to a nation we believe to be none other than Rome with her political power brought into the church, which, he declared, laid waste God's vine and barked His fig tree (Joel 1:6-12). The chart illustrates this by having the church tree gradually decline from a fruitful tree to a fruitless, lifeless stump at the bottom of the inner circle.

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The prophet did not stop here but in the next chapter pictured a time of restoration (Joel 2:21-28). The Lord promised to restore all that was lost in the falling away. Consequently we should expect to see all the gifts and fruits that were manifested in the days of the apostles. The hand on the dial of the chart begins at Pentecost and follows clockwise (see arrows) from the time of the apostles through the Dark Ages through the Reformation, with the old fruit tree bearing fruit again, and now points to fruit on the church tree, for now we see abundant fruit as on the Day of Pentecost in the beginning.

The outer circle represents the history of the professing church over the same periods of time from Pentecost (A.D. 30), through the powerful ministry of the early saints, down through the falling away into the medieval church age of nearly one thousand years, beginning with the Dark Ages. It points out some of the prominent events and places them on the circle with proper reference as to time. After the Dark Ages and Middle Ages, reformers broke away from the chains of Roman Catholic superstitions and darkness and preached truths of God's Word. As they received more light from God's Word, many reformers stepped out to proclaim truths of that light. Thus the hand on the chart went around the cycle of history from Pentecost in the time of the apostles, back to the great restoration of the Pentecostal message and experience, the day in which we now live.

Many historians have divided the history of Christianity into six periods, shown on the chart, as follows:

1. *The Apostolic Church*, A.D. 30 (Pentecost) to 100 (approximate date of the apostle John's death). In this period, the church enjoyed the presence of apostolic power under the wise leadership of the apostles until they all suffered martyrdom but John, who was the last and the only one of them who died a natural death.

2. *The Persecuted Church*, A.D. 100 to 313, when Constantine became emperor of Rome and issued his edict that the church should no longer be persecuted. Up to the end of this period all political authority was under idol-worshiping rulers who delighted in the most cruel persecution of God's people.

3. *The Imperial Church*, A.D. 313 to 476, so called because the emperor of Rome, beginning with Constantine, ruled the church. This period closed with the fall of the Western Roman Empire, ending its political power over the church.

4. *The Medieval Church*, A.D. 476 to 1517. This is a dark age of nearly one thousand years when the pope of Rome exercised great power. When Rome fell, the pope, having much influence by that time, sought to control both church and state. Power once wielded by emperors then fell to the popes, and they began to bring kings and emperors under subjection to them. With great political power at their command and without a genuine knowledge of God, some of the popes stooped to very low crimes and morals. The decline of morals and doctrine led to an awakening among honest, sincere leaders, who began the Reformation.

5. *The Reformed Church*, A.D. 1517 to 1648. At this

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time, Martin Luther and other reformers boldly denounced the Roman Catholic Church for its false doctrines and sins, and they began leading people to the study of the Bible and greater holiness of life. This period closed with thirty years of war when various European nations opposed Roman Catholic authority and fought successfully to throw off that yoke.

6. *The Modern Church*, A.D. 1648 to 1901. By the beginning of this period, several nations of Europe had thrown off Roman power and had begun to establish their own methods of worship. Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden adopted the Lutheran Church as their state church. England established the Church of England, while Scotland established the Presbyterian Church, which was greatly influenced by John Calvin's reformation in Switzerland. By the efforts of many new leaders with truths from God's Word, many other church movements came into being.

To these historical periods, we add a seventh:

7. *Pentecost Restored*, 1901 until Jesus comes. In 1901, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a new epoch came. The Pentecostal movement, with many branches and millions of members, came into being as all the fruits and gifts of the Spirit were restored to widespread acceptance and use. Thus we see the hand on the chart pointing to Pentecost restored.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

Since the prophets have foretold nearly all great events pertaining to the people of God, it seems reasonable to search in prophecy for a picture of the early Pentecostal church, the great falling away, and the restoration of Pentecostal truth. History bears record that from a glorious, Spirit-filled church evolved one enshrouded in darkness without spiritual life. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that Christ would not return to earth until there came a falling away first, and this had to come before the man of sin could be revealed. (See II Thessalonians 2:1-12.) This is merely a brief statement by the apostle, but Joel the prophet painted a perfect word picture of both the falling away and the restoration.

Before we begin our study of the great falling away from the apostolic church, as the decline toward the Dark Ages began, let us picture the true church of God in its beginning (A.D. 30). It began on the Day of Pentecost and

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possessed all the fruits and gifts that God had planned for His church. Since the people of God are symbolized as a tree planted by a river of water (Psalm 1:3) and as trees, the planting of the Lord (Isaiah 61:3), we shall picture this glorious Pentecostal church, with the apostles as its leaders, as a large fruit tree with nine gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:7-11) and with nine fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Thus we picture the church as a fruit tree bearing love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, along with the word of wisdom, word of knowledge, gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, faith, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. It was a wonderful fruit tree, bearing abundant fruit to God and attracting the attention of the whole world wherever the gospel was preached.

We read the history of the early Pentecostal church in the Acts of the Apostles, which tells how the apostles acted. In fact, it pictures the church in action. It would seem to our natural way of thinking that this wonderful church, with all its nine fruits and nine gifts and with its great signs and wonders, would have continued in all its greatness. But God knows the weakness of humanity and has let the human race know that unless they abide in Him, they can do nothing, as the branch of a vine helplessly draws all substance of life from the vine.

The first church had all the fruits and gifts and was ruled by love. The fruits of joy, peace, and longsuffering predominated, while the saints rejoiced with joy unspeakable.

“And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (Mark 16:20). Peter and John, on entering the Temple for morning prayer, had faith to tell the lame man who had asked alms that, although they did not have silver and gold, they could offer him something that silver and gold could not buy. They really had something to offer and prayed a prayer in Jesus’ name that brought him perfect healing. The man who had been lame began to leap and jump (Acts 3).

The life of Christ and the works of the apostles in the Book of Acts are a continued story of healings and miracles. Thus Christ began His church in the way that He desired it to continue and in a way that is possible for it to operate, if everyone connected with it obeys Him and keeps filled with the power of the Holy Ghost. He said, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Acts 1:8). But even in the apostles’ time, Paul wrote of “grievous wolves” and “false brethren,” and John told of the existing spirit of anti-christ. (See Acts 20:29; II Corinthians 11:26; Galatians 2:4; I John 4:3.)

With the thought of the church being a beautiful, fruit-bearing tree and the members in His church being like trees planted by rivers of living waters (Psalm 1:1; Isaiah 61:3), we shall now show how the prophet Joel saw the destruction of this beautiful fruit tree and drew a vivid picture of the results.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FALLING AWAY

It is not ours to question why God allowed the vast majority of His church to fall away from Him and to drift into what is called the Dark Ages. In fact, God's true church consists of His true believers, and through all ages and at all times, even when the apostate church was thrown into profound sin and darkness, some have been true to the Word of God and loved and served Him under severe trials and persecutions, being called heretics by the backslidden church. But in history the organization that had influence and ecclesiastical power was called the church, and all others were usually mentioned as heretics.

Thus the Roman Catholic Church, which developed after Constantine set himself up as ruler over the church, was called the church by historians, despite her backslidings, until the Reformation. Notwithstanding this fact, God preserved and kept alive a root and branch of His true church, and the gates of hell did not prevail against

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it. While we shall trace the fall of the apostate church, we hope to make mention of this apparently insignificant company, which was persecuted and condemned as heretics.

THE TWO DESTROYING AGENCIES

Joel the prophet foresaw the falling away of the church and described it as something that was to come in a future time. (See Joel 1:3-5.) “Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation” (verse 3).

FIRST, THE DESTROYING INSECTS

“That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten” (Joel 1:4).

What a pity! The beautiful church fruit tree of Pentecost in the line of never-failing prophecy to be brought to near destruction! With all its fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, and so on—there would be nothing left but a dry, fruitless stump with neither leaves nor bark left.

As this falling away was discussed in my church history class, the question was asked, “Which fruit do you think the worm attacked first and caused to fall from the tree?” The answer quickly came from one student, “I think love was the first to fall.” This is quite correct. This

is the fruit that John often exhorted the church to produce, saying, “Beloved, let us love one another” (I John 4:7). Then, too, Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

Not only were there fruits of the Spirit on the church fruit tree, but also by the same Spirit there were the gifts of the Spirit—nine of them, including healing, tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles, and so on. Without fruits of the Spirit there could be no gifts of the Spirit.

It appears that the four destroying insects set in to devour the whole tree, fruits and gifts, leaves and bark. What the palmerworm left the locust ate. It seems that the locust gnaws the bark as well as destroying the leaves, and the caterpillar eats the leaves also, but the cankerworm doubtless destroys the fruit. At any rate, whatever method they use in destroying, the tree with its fruit is brought to destruction.

As the professing church became more formal and let down the standard of doctrines and holy living, fruit disappeared from the church tree. Let us look at Joel 1:12. It tells us that the vine is dried up, as well as the fig tree and all the fruit trees, “because *joy is withered* away from the sons of men.” Any time the church loses its joy and rejoicing, its fruits will begin to disappear. Suppose we say that the old worm bored a hole in the fruit of *love* and it fell off. Then of course joy, peace, and longsuffering fell off also. Where there is no love, there is no joy or peace; church members become intolerant, and all but themselves seem to be wrong.

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False doctrines began to be introduced after the death of the apostles, when Gentiles, who once were influenced in heathen worship, began to become leaders in the Christian church. Naturally some of them brought ideas and opinions of religion that were quite foreign to true Christian doctrine and practice. Paul mentioned one such instance in I Corinthians 11:17-22, where these believers in Christ were celebrating what was supposed to be the Lord's Supper, but they had the spirit of an idol feast. Every person who could do so brought a big basket of food, so that the rich had much while the poor were put to shame. So it happened in some of their other doctrines, for instance the doctrine of a trinity, which we will deal with later. The outcome was that love and fellowship ceased; and there arose debates and divisions, which many times resulted, in later years, in the shedding of blood. The church began its fall in the second century, as we will see from a study of the historical records.

"They have no wine" (John 2:3). This was a serious predicament for the newly wedded couple at the feast of Cana, but how much worse for this new church movement! Within three hundred years the "new wine" that had made the apostles and saints on the Day of Pentecost act like drunken men was all but cut off. The prophet cried out, "Howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth" (Joel 1:5). The early saints really became so filled with the Spirit that they acted like drunken people. Isaiah prophesied of the age of the Holy Spirit, "Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they

stagger, but not with strong drink” (Isaiah 29:9). But alas, all fruit is gone, and nothing is left but an old, dry stump, or only a dead, dry form of religion, without love or any fruits or gifts of the Spirit.

SECOND, THE DESTROYING NATION

In the previous chapter we saw the fall of the church as insects destroying a fruitful tree, but then the prophet changed the scene and pictured the church as a beautiful vine and a lovely fig tree full of fruit in the Lord’s vineyard. At this point, a nation with all the appearance of a ravenous beast, brought total destruction upon both the vine and the fig tree. Let us note the words of the prophet Joel: “For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion. He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white” (Joel 1:6-7).

Here the prophet presented a picture very different from that of the insects. This description all but names the Roman Catholic Church, which united with the political powers of Rome and forced the true church into the Dark Ages. When Constantine in A.D. 313 made a pretense of becoming a Christian in order to get all Christians to help him fight the heathen, idol-worshipping Maxentius as they contested in battle for position as emperor of the Roman Empire, the visible church made what proved to be a great mistake. It was none other than

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opening the door of the church and inviting the world to come in, but what a temptation it was when Constantine claimed that he had seen in the sky a large, flaming cross bearing this motto: "By this sign thou shalt conquer." Furthermore, he promised the Christians that if he won and became the next emperor, all persecutions of Christians would cease, and the cross would be adopted as the standard of his army instead of the Roman eagle.

It was a great gain to Constantine to win the Christians to his side, and to them it seemed to be a great victory for themselves. They had been persecuted by the idolatrous emperors of Rome and had suffered martyrdom in every form of cruel torture possible. The persecution, instead of stamping out the church, had caused it to grow all the more, so that half the Roman Empire in some measure accepted the Christian religion. These Christians added to Constantine's army gave him the victory over his heathen opponents, and his edict that Christians should no longer be persecuted was received with great gladness. This was a step in the wrong direction for the already-declining church, as Constantine united church and state and converted what was left of the fruitless church into a state church, with himself as head of the institution. Eventually, preachers were paid from state funds, and no one could hold a political office unless he was a member of the church. Instead of people full of the Holy Ghost holding offices in the church, the professing church became filled with political rulers. It was no longer a persecuted church in a dark and sinful world, but a dark and sinful world came into the visible

church; and it sank to the bottom of political corruption, thus descending into the Dark Ages. The prophet pictured the church as the fig tree that had been barked and its branches left bare. (Note Joel 1:7 and also the bottom of the chart.)

CHAPTER FIVE

OTHER CAUSES OF THE FALLING AWAY

The Bible mentions that false teachers arose in the church even while the apostles were living; but in the second century, after the apostolic influence passed, many ideas and teachings were introduced through Greek philosophers and other Gentile converts, who brought their heathen philosophies with them into their Christian profession.

THE TEACHING OF A TRINITY

Because Tertullian coined the word *trinity* about A.D. 200 (Rowe's *History of the Christian People*, p. 94), some have asserted that he began the teaching of the trinitarian doctrine, but the teaching in some form began earlier, in the second century. Justin Martyr is said to be the first to mention the trine (threefold) baptismal formula, and this occurred in the middle of the second century

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(*Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 392). Neander's *History of the Christian Religion and Church* states, "The formula of baptism, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which is cited as the traditional one by Justin Martyr, is perhaps not the oldest; but the older is perhaps the shorter formula which refers to Christ."

Williston Walker, in *A History of the Christian Church* (pp. 57-58), dated the idea that the Holy Spirit is differentiated as a distinct person from Christ but is classed like Him with God, from a time in the second century. He stated further, "This appears in the Trinitarian baptismal formula, which was displacing the older baptism in the name of Christ." It is interesting to note that the word *trinity* is not in the Bible and was not in history until it was invented at the beginning of the third century.

Montanus may have been an early advocate of dividing the Godhead into three persons (about A.D. 156). Montanus was the devout leader of a reform movement that was in some ways similar to the present-day Holiness movement. He claimed that the coming of Christ to earth was near and that the dispensation (age) of the Spirit (distinct from Father and Son) was at hand. Rowe's *History of the Christian People*, page 74, states:

Montanus declared that it was the Holy Spirit which revealed to him his message, and explained that the dispensation of the Spirit promised by Christ was thus begun. It was in this second century that the belief in the Spirit as differentiated from Christ (as a separate person) became the general belief of

Christians, and the doctrine of a Trinity became prominent.

The following pages of Rowe's *History* state that writers denounced this teaching as a work of demons; but when the great and influential lawyer, orator, and writer, Tertullian of Carthage, promoted the teaching, this doctrine began to spread. The same history, page 94, states that by the end of the second century, Tertullian "brought the word 'Trinity' into theological use, and made the personality of the Holy Spirit distinct" (that is, a distinct person in the Godhead). We quote further: "As a theologian he anticipated the later definitions of the Trinity, and really formulated the content of that doctrine." The historian explained that Tertullian's purpose introducing this new doctrine was to make the doctrine of God more easily understood by the Latin-speaking people.

A historian has also explained that, since idol worshippers believed in many gods and practiced dipping three times in water for cleansing, some evangelists found their message was more readily accepted and understood when brought to them in terms similar to those of their own religion. I have not found any record where Montanus ever practiced trine immersion; but Tertullian, after adopting trinitarian doctrine, advocated that baptism should be done by dipping the candidate three times, once for each person in the Godhead. Thus trine baptism continued until the Roman Catholic Church adopted the method of dipping once but using the formula of "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* refers to trine

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immersion and in the next paragraph says, speaking of trine immersion, “These are clearly aetiological [assigning an origin] and invented to explain an existing custom, which the church had adopted from its pagan medium. For pagan lustrations [purifications] were normally threefold.” (See 11th ed., vol. 3, p. 366, under the caption of “Baptism.”) It refers also to many writers who mention the pagans’ threefold lustrations and of a minister who adopted the formula “thrice purely” because people, in expiating their sins, plunged themselves in three times.

We can clearly see how the human reasoning of Gentile evangelists who practiced these customs in their idol worship brought this doctrine into their Christian faith and practice, and how the Roman Catholic Church, influenced by heathen politicians, adopted the trinitarian formula in preference to the New Testament practice of “in the name of Jesus Christ.” The same *Encyclopaedia Britannica* refers to several early writers who doubted that Matthew 28:19 records the exact words of Jesus, and it mentions more than a score of citations where early writers quoted Matthew 28:19 as reading “in my name” instead of “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (See vol. 3, p. 369.) (For further information concerning the beginning of baptism into the trinity, see *Encyclopedia Biblica*, vol. 1, and *Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 392.)

We could give many more quotations on this important study, but time and space forbid us here. We have given these to show some of the things that crept into the

church and undermined its foundation of true doctrines, helping to bring the church into the Dark Ages.

Let us remember that in the midst of false doctrines, God has always had faithful witnesses hidden away somewhere who stood for truth and the power of the gospel of Christ, even as it was in the days of Elijah. Mention is made throughout history of some who baptized in the name of Christ as late as the eighth century, although they were branded as heretics and died for the truth they boldly upheld.

Often in history the trinitarian doctrine is mentioned in connection with the name of Tertullian. He was a stern man with a hard and overbearing spirit, forcing his doctrine on others and condemning as unchristian all who differed with him. Rowe's *History of the Christian People*, page 98, states that he was influenced by the ideas current in his time. He had been reared in the Western Roman Empire where worshipers practiced threefold dipping for purification (threefold lustrations). Let us quote again from Rowe's *History of the Christian People*, page 118, concerning the spread of trinitarian teaching:

For the West the issue had virtually been settled by the discussion of the Trinity by Tertullian. In the East the fourth century brought the debate to a focus in the specific issue between Arianism, a legitimate fruit of Monarchianism (the name introduced by Tertullian in A.D. 200 and applied to all who opposed his teaching of a Trinity), and Athanasianism, a thoroughgoing form of Catholic theology."

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Athanasius was a strong advocate of the trinitarian doctrine, and the Council of Nicea in 325 supported his views in opposition to Arianism. The Council at Constantinople in 381 ratified the action of the Council of Nicea and fully adopted trinitarianism. “From that time the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity held an undisputed position in Christendom.” (Rowe, p. 212.)

All the arguing, fighting, and division over the false doctrine of a trinity and changing the baptismal formula brought the professing church deeper into darkness and farther from God.

CHAPTER SIX

THE COUNCIL OF NICEA

Constantine faced a very difficult problem when he became emperor of Rome in A.D. 313, for he made himself the head of the church, and thus the problems of the church became his responsibilities. As a whole the Western Roman Empire, with some exceptions, had accepted Tertullian and his new theory of the trinity in the previous century, but in the East people adhered more closely to the older formula of baptism in the name of Jesus, or Jesus the Christ. For example, the Armenians specified that baptism “into the death of Christ” alone was essential (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 3, p. 366). Not until the latter part of the fourth century were the Eastern churches brought into closer harmony with the Roman idea of the Godhead and trinitarian formula. As late as 867, however, Pope Nicholas still recognized baptism in the name of Christ as valid.

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The contentions were great, and the church leaders became more intolerant, as persecutions from idol worshipers ceased after Constantine issued his edict that the church should no longer be persecuted. Constantine's political leaders became church leaders who had no sympathy with those who differed with them in doctrine; therefore, the very foundations of the Roman Empire seemed to be weakened by the division in the church.

Hurlbut's *Story of the Christian Church*, page 86, states, "The first controversy arose over the Doctrine of the Trinity, especially the relation of the Father and the Son." Constantine, accordingly, called for a special council at Nicea, A.D. 325, to formulate rules for his new church order and to decide on the formula the church would use. We quote from Munsen's *Antichrist in History*, page 7:

After Constantine had issued his decree from Milan (A.D. 313), making the Christian religion the standard religion of the Roman Empire, he called the first Aecumenical, or General Council of the Church, at Nicea, a town in Asia Minor (A.D. 325). The Council was called for the purpose of harmonizing the different sects that existed among the Christians and to make rules and regulations for the government of the churches throughout the Empire, and to decide the formula and practice of the Christian faith adopted by Constantine, which is named the Nicene Creed.

The two most prominent representatives at this Council were Arius, a presbyter from Alexandria, and

Athanasius, a deacon, also from Alexandria, each representing a different view of Christianity. The arguments at this Council must have been very heated at times, because as H. G. Wells tells us, Arius and Athanasius engaged in a fist fight before the Emperor. However, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as taught by Athanasius was adopted; Arianism was denounced.

The organization soon to be called the Roman Catholic Church was thus set in order with a decision by its new head, Constantine, the Roman emperor, that only the doctrine of the trinity should be taught. All who disagreed with this policy were branded as heretics, and many of their leaders were banished, suffering cruel punishments.

We thus see how the visible church fell from its first love and purity, deeper into darkness and away from the true light of God's Word and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

We invite the reader to compare this first council acknowledged by the Roman Catholic Church with the first council of the apostolic church (Acts 15), which made a tremendous decision at Jerusalem. In the latter, the discussion grew intense, but brotherly love was preserved. God had His way, and the apostles and elders were in one accord; the Holy Ghost guided the decision. In the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325), less than three hundred years later, another mighty and important decision was made; but it was made without God, without love,

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and without unity of spirit. How unfortunate it was that this meeting was disgraced by a fistfight, and that the decision was made by an ungodly emperor who had made only a profession of Christianity, and that for political gain, without having been baptized. We are made to wonder why people would hold to a doctrine that came from such a source.

[Editor's clarification: The Council of Nicea adopted a creed which proclaimed the deity of both the Father and the Son, implying that they are two persons. Then, the Council of Constantinople in 381 affirmed that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three persons. The modern Nicene Creed is based on the decisions of these councils but emerged in its present form around 500.]

The Nicene Creed teaches the doctrine of three distinct persons in the Godhead as promoted by the eloquent Athanasius at the time of the Nicene Council and as set forth by Tertullian over one hundred years before Nicea.

Argument and debate always kill the spirit of love and fellowship, and yet such have existed in some measure over the doctrine of the trinity since the latter part of the second century. As the professing church went deeper into darkness, the dissension resulted in hatred and bloodshed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESULTS OF THE FALLING AWAY

The story of the Christian church from the Council of Nicea through the imperial church period to the fall of Rome in A.D. 476 reminds one of the repeated stumbling and falling of a person groping in darkness and shows its lack of spirituality. In this respect it was unlike the church of the apostolic period, which was full of manifestations of power and mighty works. The church developed powerful leaders, not like Peter and Paul, who in the power of the Holy Ghost commanded the lame to walk and healed the sick, but who predominated in power and authority over the church and brought their subjects into obedience by fear instead of love and brotherly fellowship.

This domineering spirit existed, however, when John wrote the Book of Revelation. In the message to the church at Pergamos he wrote, "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I

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hate” (Revelation 2:15). We here quote Dr. Scofield’s explanatory note:

From *nikao*, “to conquer,” and *laos*, “the people,” or “laity.” There is no ancient authority for a sect of the Nicolaitans. If the word is symbolic it refers to the earliest form of the notion of a priestly order, or “clergy,” which later divided an equal brotherhood (Matthew 23:8) into “priests” and “laity.”

Again we quote from Hurlbut’s *Story of the Christian Church*, page 79:

The services of worship increased in splendor, but were less spiritual and hearty than those of former times. The forms and ceremonies of paganism gradually crept into the worship. Some of the old heathen feasts became church festivals with change of name and worship. About A.D. 405 images of saints and martyrs began to appear in the churches, at first as memorials, then in succession revered, adored, and worshipped. The adoration of the Virgin Mary was substituted for the worship of Venus and Diana; the Lord’s Supper became a sacrifice in place of a memorial; and the elder evolved from a preacher into a priest.

THE MIDDLE AGES

The fall of Rome in A.D. 476 marks the end of the imperial church period and begins the medieval church

period—the Middle Ages—a period of nearly one thousand years, the first half of which is often called the Dark Ages. Toward the end of the imperial period the bishop at Rome had begun to gain more influence and was being thought of as the “papa” of the church. When the political and civil authorities of Rome lost their power, this “papa” took control of affairs and directed both church and state, instead of the emperor doing so. He became “pope” (a name derived from “papa”) and gradually gained power over the kings in Europe.

This event began the darkest of dark ages for the church. It became unlawful for common people and lay members to read the Bible. Ignorance of God and His Word gripped all of Christendom. No longer did the visible church tree bear love, joy, peace, and the other fruits of the Spirit. Neither were any of the gifts of the Spirit manifested in the church. It became a common thing for good and pious people who differed in opinion from the backslidden church to be burned alive or tortured in some other cruel manner.

The pope himself imposed severe punishments upon his subjects. Pope Gregory VII, in order to make Henry IV, emperor of Germany, know that the pope of Rome had authority over kings, compelled the emperor to stand with bare feet and bare head three days before the gate of his castle at Canossa before admitting him to make his submission and receive absolution. (See Hurlbut’s *Story of the Christian Church*, p. 111.)

Instead of this church being the chaste virgin adorned in purity and meekness and looking for the com-

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ing of the heavenly Bridegroom, we find her pictured in Revelation 17 as the mother of harlots, a backslidden woman, and in verse 18, "that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

In spite of all the sins and the lack of love manifested in the leaders, there were some very sincere and pious people; but many of them, groping in the darkness of that age, did things that we, now that our path is illumined with a light as of a new day, think of as being foolish. For example, Anthony separated himself from the outside world by living many years in a cave. Others followed in his footsteps, and from this way of life sprang the idea of monasteries and convents connected with the Roman Catholic Church today. Anthony was honored, long after his death, by being recognized as St. Anthony, to whom many Catholics now pray instead of praying to Christ.

One of the superstitions of the day was the idea conceived by certain religious people of living above the world by dwelling high in the air on the tops of tall pillars. The first one to carry out this idea was a Syrian monk, Simon, who left the monastery in A.D. 423 and built several pillars, each in succession higher than the former, the last being sixty feet high and four feet broad. He lived upon this pillar for thirty-seven years. Many others followed his example, and some resorted to tall pillarlike rocks in the mountains and lived upon their narrow peaks, thinking that such deprivation and handicap would make them more pleasing to God. *The Pathfinder* for March 29, 1941, gave a sketch of one of these pillarlike rocks and stated, "The ancient monks of Meteora sought

these pillar-like retreats in order to get away from the clamor of worldly affairs.” (See also Hurlbut’s *Story of the Christian Church*, p. 89.)

We thank God that such darkness has been dispelled by the dawn of a new day, since a great awakening has come and the sunlight of God’s love has begun to shine. Many have walked in the light as it has come to them.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PREPARATION FOR THE REFORMATION

We have followed the study of the visible church as a tree full of fruit in the beauty of health through the falling away to the Dark Ages, where it is pictured as a dead, dry stump. Job, a great believer in the resurrection, said, “For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again. . . . Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant” (Job 14:7-9).

God has symbolized His visitations to this earth by the expressions “former rain” and “latter rain” (Joel 2:23). The former or early rain came in the days of the apostles, and there have been a few showers all along since that time. We must not forget that God has had true witnesses, faithful to Him throughout the church periods. Even in the Dark Ages, there were some possessed of the spark of spiritual life.

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At the close of the Middle Ages, it was time for showers of the latter rain, which according to God's promise would come. The prophet Joel in the first chapter of his writings gave us the dark picture of the church's falling away, but in chapter 2 he gave, as did Job, a marvelous promise of hope: "Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice; for the LORD will do great things. . . . For the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain. . . . And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm. . . . And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God. . . . And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:21-28).

The Lord visited His people again with showers of the latter rain. The dryness of the Dark Ages was over, for the latter rain fell on some, and they began to seek for truth in God's Word.

The pope had overstepped when he compelled Henry IV of Germany to stand bareheaded and barefooted in the snow for three days, for this emperor later waged war against him and drove him into exile. Many people began to feel a special boldness to take a stand for what they

believed to be right. God was moving, the dry church tree was feeling the effect of showers of the heavenly rain, and life was returning. The tree became ready to shoot forth tender buds and to blossom for fruit once more.

In the eleventh century a religious group known as the Albigenses sprang up in southern France; they advocated a chaste, spiritual life and boldly preached their doctrine in opposition to that prescribed by the Roman Church. It is reported that some of these people were heard speaking in an unknown tongue. Although they generally were of the less-educated class who spoke "Low French," some were heard to speak fluently in "High French" when worshiping in the Spirit.

In A.D. 1170 the pope sent his militia with orders to utterly slay the Albigenses, old and young. The orders were carried out so completely that in surrounding the entire community the soldiers killed many Catholics also. This was the end of this movement, but there were signs of spiritual renewal.

The Waldenses, another group in France, tried to base all doctrine on the Bible and believed in living a spiritual life. It is reported that many of them spoke in tongues. They were branded as heretics by the Roman Church, and in the same year in which the Albigenses were put to death, the decree came from the pope that they too should be destroyed. A great number of them, however, fled to the Piedmont Valley, a secluded place in the mountains of northern Italy. Although the Catholics sent another expedition to stamp them out, they survived through several centuries. In the 1400s, they made con-

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nections with a similar group in Moravia and Bohemia that came into existence under the preaching of John Huss.

Many descendants of this group eventually became part of a movement known as the Moravians. They emphasized biblical doctrine and spiritual life and became part of the Protestant Reformation. In the early 1700s, many of them received the Spirit baptism and spoke in tongues. It was a Moravian leader, Peter Bohler, who led John Wesley to a new dimension of spiritual life when they met on May 24, 1738, after Wesley had spent seven years in an almost fruitless ministry. (See the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 28, p. 528, and see Hurlbut's *Story of the Christian Church*.)

The church tree had begun to put forth signs of fruit. Love, joy, peace, and the power of the Holy Spirit were manifested in more and more believers.

THE FIRST ENGLISH BIBLE, 1380

John Wyclif began a movement in England for freedom from the Roman power and for a reformation of the church. He wrote against the unscriptural practices of the Roman Church and against the errors of the pope. In 1380 he translated the New Testament into the English language so that the common people could read the Word of God; by the aid of friends the Old Testament was finished in 1384.

Since the beginning of the Dark Ages it had been the policy of the Catholic Church to keep people in ignorance

of the truths of the Bible. Now that John Wyclif had enlightened the readers with his literature, he was called into court more than once. On one occasion he was sentenced to be burned to death, but the pope's death before the orders were carried out saved his life. Forty-four years after Wyclif had died a natural death from the effect of two paralytic strokes, the pope gave a command that his body be dug up and burned. (See the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 28, p. 870.)

John Huss (1369-1415) was another reformer. He had read Wyclif's writings and preached his doctrines, and he especially proclaimed freedom from papal authority. He was burned to death by order of Catholic officials in 1415.

Thus we see the light of a new day dispelling the darkness that had hovered over the entire religious world for nearly one thousand years.

The end of the Middle Ages is usually connected with the fall of Constantinople in 1453. This city is situated on the geographical dividing line between the Eastern and Western Roman Empires and also between the eastern and western churches. The eastern church is known as the Eastern Orthodox, and the western is known as the Roman Catholic; they separated in 1054. The eastern church was made up of a nonprogressive, peace-loving people; but in the West, the pope made every effort to seize all power, both political and ecclesiastical. Both the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics had drifted far from God's plan of salvation when the Muslims rose to power and took control of state after state until they had

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subjugated the whole Eastern Roman Empire. Finally the Turks became leaders in this fierce, war-loving religious movement and took Constantinople, once the capital of the powerful Roman Empire.

At this time there came a great awakening among many people, and everywhere they were reading and studying for themselves. They began to see the folly of some of the claims and practices of the Roman Church. The ground was made fertile for the church tree, and with a few more showers of the “latter rain” from heaven it would soon again be bringing forth fruits as it had in the beginning and become as vigorous as it had been at Pentecost.

CHAPTER NINE

THE REFORMATION

The restoration of the professing church made slow progress, but it gradually increased from the first rays of light shining out through the darkness. In this brief account, we are following the upward trend of the visible church on its way back to Pentecost, where the church tree again produces all the nine gifts and the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:7-12; Galatians 5:22-23).

Although many brave people stood firmly for truth during the latter years of the medieval period and several of them gave their lives for it, the Reformation began on October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed ninety-five theses to the cathedral door in Wittenberg, Germany. These were declarations showing the errors of the Roman Catholic Church and of the pope, especially showing the error and sin of the sale of indulgences.

The reigning pope, Leo X, was building St. Peter's

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Basilica in Rome and needed large sums of money for its completion. He therefore sent John Tetzel, his agent, throughout Germany to sell certificates signed by the pope himself that purported to grant pardon for all manner of sins without repentance to all holders of these certificates. The coverage of these certificates was so broad that anyone could buy one for friends living or dead with a promise that “as soon as your coin clinks in the chest, the souls of your friends will rise out of purgatory to heaven.” This ungodly move to raise funds stirred Martin Luther to preach against Tetzel and the action of the pope.

So persistent was Luther in his ninety-five declarations and his preaching against these sinful practices and system of the pope and the Roman Catholic Church that Luther was sent a papal document (papal bull) which condemned him and excommunicated him from the church. But Luther was determined; he not only continued to write books and many tracts that were distributed throughout Germany and other countries, but he also called for a large assembly and publicly burned the papal bull on December 10, 1520, speaking of it as “the execrable bull of Antichrist.” (See Hurlbut’s *Story of the Christian Church*, p. 153.)

In 1521 the Diet, or supreme council of the German rulers, convened at Worms, summoned Luther to trial, and promised him a safe conduct to and from this council if he would come of his own accord. He was condemned by the council, but the emperor’s promise of a return trip home provided an opportunity for friends

dressed in garbs concealing their identity to kidnap him and hide him away in a safe place. Here he spent a year and translated the New Testament into the German language. The news went to the pope and his officers, however, that Luther had been kidnapped by his enemies and killed. Luther continued writing books and tracts until everywhere throughout Germany preachers and people began rising up against the sins and unscriptural practices of the Roman Catholic Church.

This began the great Reformation, which was not so much a revival of personal experiences between the individual and God as it was the denouncing of the ungodly and unscriptural system practiced in the Dark Ages and the establishing of a more godly and righteous system that led to freedom from the Roman yoke and laid the foundation for a renewal. Thus the Reformation prepared the way in later years for a great revival period, when the church tree began to put on fruit.

Notable reformers of religion at this time were Martin Luther of Germany; Ulrich Zwingli of Switzerland, who was slain in 1531; John Calvin, who carried on the reform in Switzerland; William Tyndale, who translated the English New Testament and was martyred in 1536; John Knox of Scotland, the founder of the Presbyterian Church; and others. The visible church tree put on a new growth of tender twigs and leaves and blossomed, getting ready to bring forth fruits that had for many centuries been lost except in the lives of a few along the way who had been branded as heretics and suffered accordingly.

It is wonderful how firmly these reformers stood and

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fearlessly proclaimed truths of God's Word. They waged spiritual battles against the mighty ecclesiastical and political powers of the Roman Catholic Church and Holy Roman Empire. It had been only one hundred years since John Huss had been burned at the stake by the Roman Church when Luther took such a bold stand against it in his trial at Worms, but it took just such people to prepare the soil for the great harvest that soon followed.

CHAPTER TEN

A PERIOD OF GREAT REVIVALS

We come now to some of the most interesting points of church history. Up to this time it seems that each new organization had branched off from another one because of different views of doctrine. But a great spiritual awakening came, and new movements sprang up with new experiences from God similar to those of apostolic times.

Of all the movements arising from the Reformation, the one which swung the farthest away from prelacy and church rule was the Quakers, who took for themselves the name Friends. George Fox, their leader, received a wonderful experience of the Holy Spirit about 1647. His teachings led to a great revival movement in which many people received the Holy Spirit as witnessed by speaking in other tongues. These Quakers often made the assertion that those who did not know quaking and trembling were strangers to the experience of Moses, David, and other

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saints. (See the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 11, p. 223 and vol. 27, p. 10.) However, they seem to have put but little emphasis on the unusual experience of speaking in tongues.

William Penn was a Quaker. His father, Admiral Penn, who stood high in the king's court in England, became so ashamed of his son and his religion that he sent him to Paris, hoping that his association in society and the pride of France would change his religion. Instead, his father died and William fell heir to a vast estate, including a great debt the king owed to his father. In settling with William, the king gave him a vast tract of land in America, and Penn made it a refuge for the hated and persecuted Quakers. This land became what is now the state of Pennsylvania.

Some Quakers drifted away from the experience of shaking under the power of the Spirit. They would often sit still, waiting for the Spirit to move before even speaking or singing, and they were sometimes referred to as "still Quakers." Because the Quakers had such a wonderful spiritual experience, they took everything spiritually and refused any literal ordinance in their society, such as water baptism and the Lord's Supper.

A small group that was greatly influenced by the Quakers was the Shakers. They worshiped with singing, clapping of hands, and springing up and down. Their leader, Ann Lee, was said to have received the Spirit baptism with speaking in tongues. (See the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 24, p. 771.) The Shakers had some peculiar ideas and doctrines. Besides other unscript-

tural teachings, they decided that, because they were not of the world, they should live in separate colonies. Because they practiced celibacy and had no system of evangelism, they dwindled to only a few and then died out. Had the Quakers and Shakers closely followed God's Word there might have been a full renewing of Pentecost in their day.

Another great church movement began from the work of a sincere college student, John Wesley (1703-1791), who had a hunger for a deeper life in God and began having prayer meetings with some of his classmates, in which they discussed methods for holier living. He met much opposition but was determined to carry on the good work. Not expecting at first to organize a separate church, he went about organizing societies that taught methods of living holy for God.

After seven years with but little spiritual fruit from his labor, he met a company of Moravians who had experienced the effect of a great revival movement and had a real experience with God. They chanced to meet on a boat on the Atlantic Ocean while there raged a storm that caused Wesley much fear, and he nervously engaged in sincere prayer. When he saw these Moravian believers sitting quietly singing songs of praises, he asked, "Are you Christians? Why are you not praying?" They quietly and confidently affirmed that they had prayed already, their God rode the storms, and they had no need of worry.

This unusual assurance interested Wesley, and he spent the following summer with the Moravians. Peter

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Bohler, a Moravian leader, convinced Wesley of his need of a deeper personal experience with God, and Wesley told of a great change that came into his life after he and Bohler prayed. (See "Wesley," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and see also Hurlbut's *Story of the Christian Church*, pp. 177, 183.)

John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield afterwards held some of the greatest revivals known in that day. Not being able to secure large enough buildings, they often met in fields with thousands in their audiences. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed., vol. 27, p. 10), speaking in tongues, or glossolalia, occurred among the early Quakers, the converts of Wesley and Whitefield, the persecuted Protestants of the Cevennes (in France), and the Irvingites. It states that these "abnormal trance utterances recur in Christian revivals in every age." However, throughout the period of the apostate church until the Reformation, people who received such experiences were generally branded as heretics.

In addition to the revivals of Wesley and Whitefield, many other church movements enjoyed great revivals. The noted evangelist Charles G. Finney led half a million souls to a confession of faith in Christ. He was praying out in the woods when God so enveloped him in the Spirit that he was lost to self. It is said that Finney at times would become so enraptured while preaching that he would begin making strange utterances and would apologize, saying that he sometimes spoke that way when he became enthusiastic. He was so filled with God that just his presence sometimes brought deep conviction upon

sinners. Many other great revivals in those days show that the church tree had begun to put on spiritual fruits, making ready for a restoration of the gifts and callings of God, which would in turn prepare a people as a waiting bride for the soon coming of the heavenly Bridegroom. In these great revivals the fruits of the Spirit were manifested, and some signs of the gifts of the Spirit were recognized. It would be a detriment to the cause of the gospel for anyone to manifest the gifts, if it were possible, without manifesting the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

There was a very peculiar manifestation in France about 1728 when the Jansenists (a Catholic reform and revival group) were being severely persecuted. It seems as if persecution drives sincere people closer to God and into deeper experiences with Him. A historian stated, "Persecution usually begets hysteria in its victims; and the more extravagant members of the party were far advanced on the road which leads to apocalyptic prophecy and speaking with tongues." Among these Jansenists was a young deacon named Francois de Paris, who was said to have had the gift of healing. Even after his death, people came to the cemetery of St. Medard, where Francois was buried, to seek their healing. As a result, the government closed the cemetery in 1732, which gave rise to the famous epigram:

De par le roi, defense a Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu.

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It may be translated literally as follows: "The edict of the king forbids God to perform miracles in this place." For a number of years the Jansenists continued to receive healings and to prophesy. In later years, however, some Jansenists disowned those who seemed more fanatical in their practice of spiritual manifestations, and they were also severely repressed by the police. (See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 15, p. 154.)

The late 1800s saw the founding of the Salvation Army, which at first preached and taught a holy life set apart for Christ. It is a movement in which millions from all walks of life have in some measure professed Christ, but especially the man and woman on the street who seldom attend church.

[The Salvation Army arose out of the Holiness movement, which in turn arose out of the teachings of John Wesley and the early Methodists.] Several branches of the Holiness movement sprang up in America and other countries. It resulted in a great revival in Wales as well as many other places. This movement placed great emphasis on a life sanctified unto Christ and divine healing for the body in answer to prayer.

All these revivals have paved the way for another great forward move. During this stage of revival, the visible church tree was putting on more of the fruits and gifts that had been lost in the deplorable falling away from the fourth century through the Middle Ages. The time had come for the great latter-day outpouring of the Holy Ghost. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18).

We do not agree with all the various doctrines taught by the movements and individuals mentioned herein, but it has been our aim to show some ways in which God has manifested His Spirit and power all along the trail through the falling away, the Dark Ages, the Reformation, the period of great revivals, and back to the great restoration of experiences, fruits, and gifts similar to those of the early Pentecostal church according to the Acts of the Apostles. At intervals throughout the nearly two thousand years of church history there have been sprinkles and light showers of the heavenly rain of God's Spirit upon whosoever dared to believe Him and to suffer the persecution that always has followed such blessings. God promised to send not only the "former rain," which fell at Pentecost at the beginning of the church age, but also the "latter rain" in the last days. (See Hosea 6:3; James 5:7-8; Acts 2:17, 38-39.)

Our next chapter will show that God in these last days has poured out His Holy Spirit and that the fruits and gifts are now being manifested in the church. Although all these are in the church in a measure, we believe God has greater and more wonderful manifestations of them for His people as the time draws near for Jesus to return to earth again.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE LATTER RAIN

“**A**nd it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit” (Joel 2:28-29).

We have followed the cycle of church history beginning on the Day of Pentecost, when we saw the church with the apostles, in whom were manifested all the gifts and fruits of the Spirit (according to the Book of Acts), as a tree full of fruit. We have seen another picture, presented in Joel 1:3-5, of insects in the tree destroying its fruit and foliage. These insects represent the false doctrines and man-made ideas that were introduced during the second and third centuries and supplanted the fruits of the Spirit, leaving the church tree in an unhealthy condition and with ebbing spirituality. The picture grows

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darker as the prophet portrayed a strong nation with great teeth as of a lion destroying God's vine and fruit tree (Joel 1:6-12). This process is also pictured as fruit trees withering away without water and as fields made bare.

We have followed the restoration of truth in trails of blood from martyrs who dared to stand for the truth as they preached the Word. "Truth, though crushed to earth, shall rise again." Then Joel 2:21-28 presents the picture of showers of the latter rain causing the tree to bud, blossom, and put forth fruit again.

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain" (Joel 2:23).

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" (Hosea 6:3).

We have followed this historical cycle through the Reformation into a period of great revivals, when showers of latter rain caused the fruit tree to produce many of the fruits and gifts of the Spirit in preparation for the great outpouring of the latter rain that would restore the original power and produce all the fruits and gifts of the Spirit.

RESULTS OF THE LATTER RAIN

The long, dry period of the Middle Ages was not broken by a heavy outpouring of the latter-rain revival power.

The great light of the Pentecostal baptism in a general way, as it was enjoyed by saints in the first century, seemed to be too much for people who were in the gross darkness of the Dark Ages. The Waldenses, John Wyclif, and John Huss had a portion of this glorious light. The Lord sent just a few drops as the clouds began to gather for greater showers. Martin Luther came near being burned at the stake one hundred years after the martyrdom of Huss, only because he preached the simple truth that people are saved by faith instead of works and because he denounced the sins of church leaders. From raindrops the blessings of the Lord increased into showers of rain, preparing the way for the outpouring of the latter rain that God had promised. (See Acts 2:17; James 5:7.)

PENTECOST RESTORED

In my study of church history, I wondered why there was no mention of so great a movement as the twentieth-century Pentecostal movement, in which millions of people have been filled with the Holy Spirit and have spoken in tongues as did the apostles and the 120 at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-17). I noticed that historians followed the cycle of church history from Pentecost through the Dark Ages and the Reformation into the great revivals, out of which sprang a great number of our present-day church organizations, but they stopped about the year 1900. This Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Ghost as a new revival movement began at this time. Here is an explanation from the foreword of

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the *Manual* of the United Pentecostal Church International:

During the last twenty-one days of the nineteenth century a band of earnest, hungry-hearted ministers and Christian workers in Bethel Bible College, Topeka, Kansas, called a fast, praying earnestly for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which, to their joyful surprise, came upon them in the early hours of the morning, on January 1, 1901. The people were heard speaking in other languages as the Holy Spirit gave utterance, just as it had happened on the Day of Pentecost in the year A.D. 30. A great revival immediately broke forth, which soon reached to the state of Texas, and thence west to Los Angeles, where in the year 1906 it centered in an old building on Azusa Street. Ministers and evangelists gathered in Los Angeles from every section of the United States and Canada, and missionaries returned from the foreign fields to learn more about this new experience. Many who came were soon filled with the Holy Ghost. From here it spread throughout the whole earth, penetrating even into the heathen darkness of India, Africa, China, and the isles of the seas, thus fulfilling the great commission of our Lord: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

This was the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Christianity. Many new organizations, standing for different phases of gospel truth, had sprung up from the

great revivals in the previous historical period, but these as a whole were fast drifting into the Laodicean church experience of a lukewarm worship, with little or none of the Spirit of the Lord in them.

It was time for the bride of Christ to make herself ready (Revelation 19:7-9). We today realize that Jesus, the heavenly Bridegroom, is soon to come, and it is time to prepare for the great event.

GOD'S SIGN IN NAHUM

Nahum 2:3-5 speaks of the day of the Lord's preparation. Here the prophet foretold of horrible bloodshed and the raging of "chariots" like flaming torches in the day of the Lord's preparation. He said they would rage in the streets and "jostle one against another in the broad ways."

In 1900, Henry Ford demonstrated his first automobile on the streets of Detroit. Not long afterward, God began in a general way to pour out His Holy Spirit with the initial sign of speaking in other tongues in the same manner as on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 30.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE PENTECOSTAL POWER

In the great revival outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Azusa Street in Los Angeles in 1906, which continued for many months with morning, afternoon, and evening services, there were many mighty signs and wonders and miraculous healings.

From this great revival, ministers and saints returned to their homes, telling the glad news of God's great visitation. The fire spread, causing whole congregations to seek God and to be filled with the Holy Ghost witnessed by speaking in other tongues; also wonderful healings of all kinds of diseases were experienced. Many people from these revivals went out as evangelists with the same results that were seen in the mighty outpouring of the Holy Ghost in Acts 2:4-17.

In 1909 Howard A. Goss and his wife went to Malvern, Arkansas, with a gospel tent. About three hundred received the marvelous filling of the Holy Spirit in a

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very short time, several of whom became ministers. The revival continued while many of these went out into other fields of labor with great success in winning souls for Christ and with the same power manifested in the baptism of the Holy Ghost witnessed by tongues and healings.

From this revival at Malvern, Arkansas, a company of Spirit-filled saints came to a school building where I had previously taught, and they began preaching the old-time gospel plan of salvation. Having a contract to teach the next term of school and being a leader in the community, I went over to investigate what was going on at the schoolhouse, for various tales were being told about the meeting. In this revival anyone who knew the power of God would soon have been convinced of his need of the Holy Ghost baptism and a closer walk with God. The night of my third visit to this revival, I made my way to the altar of prayer, and after promising God I would make every wrong right, I received this most wonderful experience, the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

It would be hard to describe this experience perfectly, but imagine yourself drawing closer and closer to the Lord until you realize you are in His very presence, then believing with all your heart that He will baptize you, and then suddenly feeling as if a barrel of glory charged with powerful electricity is being poured over you, filling and electrifying your whole physical being and so enrapturing your soul in God's glory that you have to let go and let God have His way. On that occasion, all this glorious power captured the little unruly member, the tongue, and giving vent to a great urge to praise God, I began to speak

languages I had never heard before.

This was the beginning of another great revival in which many were filled with the Holy Ghost. Everywhere people were praying and seeking God for a closer walk in the Spirit—in their homes, in the fields, in the groves, in barns—everywhere someone was praying through and being baptized with the Holy Spirit. There were many wonderful healings. My mother had had a cancerous sore on her body for a long time, and at a prayer meeting when some of these new converts prayed for her, she was completely healed.

Everywhere evangelistic parties were going out without money and with no church board backing them, holding revivals in hamlets and cities and having large attendance in their meetings and many filled with the Holy Ghost. These meetings often started from a marvelous and miraculous healing when some of these gospel workers would call at the house of someone sick, and in answer to prayer the patient would be made every whit whole.

In many places God had already prepared the way, and some who had earnestly prayed through had already received the Holy Ghost baptism and hardly knew what they had. They recognized that when they became blessed in prayer they would express themselves in strange utterances. A. E. Humbard, when a young man, received the baptism of the Holy Ghost a long time before he heard of such an experience. Lewis Jones of Albuquerque, New Mexico, received the Holy Ghost and spoke in other tongues more than twenty years before a Pentecostal preacher arrived to conduct a revival meeting.

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Just as when a rain cloud is gathering and drops here and there precede the outpouring, so it was before the outpouring of the latter rain. For ten years before the revival that began in 1901, here and there all over the country and even in foreign fields, we have records of one or more receiving the Holy Ghost baptism and speaking in other tongues. By the year 1914 the revival flames of this latter-day outpouring of the Holy Ghost had spread to nearly every part of the United States, Canada, England, many countries in Europe, and all over the world.

C. J. Beetge of Pretoria, South Africa, who visited the United States and paid a visit to the Pentecostal Bible Institute in October 1947, told of the marvelous revival that occurred as early as 1910-14 in South Africa when John G. Lake came to them as a missionary from America. I heard Brother Lake tell his own story of his work in Africa; many were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues, and demons were cast out. He told of a great healing campaign begun by a native African chief among his own people after the chief had received the Holy Ghost and the gift of healing.

It would require volumes to relate all the great results of this last-day outpouring of the Holy Ghost in this time of the latter rain, but in this booklet we only wish to show that God has again brought to us in some measure the experiences that the apostles enjoyed. However, we all confess our belief that God has greater things for us yet.

About 1912 God began using some in special faith and gifts to perform miracles in Jesus' name. I saw great healings in the meetings of Mrs. Woodworth-Etter in

1913. We have an account of a woman who died en route to Mrs. Etter's meeting and when prayed for in the name of Jesus Christ was commanded to rise. Soon her life returned and she was walking about praising God. Brother Beetge of South Africa told a like story of the dead being raised as he and other saints prayed the prayer of faith. We know of other similar miracles of the dead being raised, broken bones healed instantly, and high fevers cooled while hands were laid on those who were sick and the prayer of faith was prayed. Leaving these facts with the readers, we proceed to another great forward move of God in restoring what was all but lost during the great falling away and the Dark Ages.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Just as a fruit tree begins to put forth buds, leaves, and blossoms after the cold, wintry days when the warm spring rain and sunshine come, and in the summer months is loaded with delicious fruit, so has the visible church slowly, gradually, but surely come back to the fullness of Pentecost.

In 1915 the late E. N. Bell wrote an outstanding article, "Who is Jesus Christ?," beginning it with these words: "The lost Christ being rediscovered as the Jehovah of the Old Testament and the true God of the New. A realization of Christ as the mighty God being received." What words are more fitting for beginning a chapter on this very important epoch in history, the restoration of a great truth that was mostly lost in the beginning of the falling away of the church?

After the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the twentieth century, the spread and growth

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of this great evangelistic movement was so rapid that there was no thought at first of forming an organization, but the only aim was evangelism. Doctrinal views had but little weight as all loved and had fellowship with every Spirit-filled child of God. At first this new movement baptized its converts in the name of Jesus Christ, for they had started to carry out the commission of Christ as the apostles in the Book of Acts set the example. Soon ministers of various denominations were filled with the Holy Ghost, and they naturally practiced the rite of baptism according to the traditions taught in their former organizations. Some continued trine immersion, which had its origin when the early church in the second century adopted practices from the pagan religion, as we have already explained in this booklet. Others used the trine formula with singular immersion as adopted by the early Roman Catholic Church. Tradition is hard to break away from, and without the power of the Holy Spirit revealing the truth of God's Word, our natural tendency is to follow the beliefs we have previously accepted.

God's time had come for the great restoration of the original apostolic formula of baptism in the name of Christ Jesus as taught by our Lord and practiced by the apostles. Hundreds of articles and tracts have been written on this great subject since this truth was rediscovered in 1914. Before our Lord's return it was necessary for the church to receive a complete, scriptural revelation of Him and the power of His name. On this subject we shall quote an excerpt from the *Manual* of the United Pentecostal Church, as follows:

With the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Word of the Lord became a new book. Truths which had been hidden for many years were made clear. In the year 1914 came the revelation on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The pivotal doctrines of the absolute deity of Jesus Christ and baptism in His name became tenets of faith. God marvelously confirmed our message as the gospel was preached in its fullness. The power which was hidden in the name of Jesus began to be revealed. Literally thousands were baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, and multitudes received the baptism of the Holy Spirit while in the water. Great numbers were healed of incurable diseases; demons were cast out as in the days of the apostles. In many cities where this message had gone, the report of the Samaritan revival was duplicated.

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).

Every revealed truth has met with opposition. Martin Luther and all other reformers were opposed when they dared to preach the small amount of truth that God revealed to them in their day. We must continue to expect those who do not seek to know God’s will and truth to withstand us. Jesus said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his

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father, and the daughter against her mother” (Matthew 10:34-35).

It was unfortunate for this great Pentecostal movement for some to carelessly raise a voice against a truth without first seeking to know God’s will with a careful study of His Word, for the truth is revealed in His Word. Our God has always sought out a people for His name, and everywhere faithful Christians began to see deeper and greater truths in God’s Word. Many who had never heard a message on this subject were convinced of its truth, it being revealed to them in the Word by the Holy Spirit.

Some of the brethren in South Africa tell how God led them into this great truth. Because the first missionary to those parts, John C. Lake, baptized by trine immersion, they, along with all the other Pentecostal believers, had been dipped three times, once in the name of the Father, again in the name of the Son, and a third time in the name of the Holy Ghost; but the Word of God convicted them of being wrong. They felt they must know the truth; accordingly, they set their hearts to seek God at a very early hour daily to know the will of God in this matter. After much study of the Word and many hours of prayer, it was revealed to them that there is but one God, who was manifested to humanity in His Son and is now made known to humanity through and by His own Holy Spirit; and that the Son was made the only open door, there being no other name given whereby people can be saved. This made it clear why the apostles baptized in no other name than that of the Lord Jesus Christ. They met fierce opposition but

stood true to the revelation. Upon hearing that the great United Pentecostal Church in the United States of America believes and practices the same formula that God had revealed to them, Brother C. J. Beetge spent four months in 1947 in America preaching and studying that which God has done in the United Pentecostal Church.

God has also revealed Himself to the brethren in Mexico, and a very large Oneness movement is growing rapidly in that country. At a conference held in October 1947 at Dallas, Texas, this fine movement in South Africa and the Mexican organization came into fellowship with the United Pentecostal Church.

God has moved wonderfully to stir up faith for healings. Here and there God has anointed evangelists in a special way to pray for the sick, and some marvelous healings have been wrought. The deaf and mute have become able to hear and speak, and many types of incurable diseases have been healed in meetings attended by thousands of people.

We know that Jesus is coming soon and is giving the masses of people a final chance to accept His name and be saved. We are nearing the fullness of Pentecost restored. Through the ministry of the apostles thousands were saved and many miracles were performed. In meetings in our modern-day revivals, hundreds are saved, and many miracles and great healings are manifested.

It is evident that God will use any humble soul with faith in Him to bring His blessings to the needy people of this sin-cursed world. We no longer need to cry, "Back to Pentecost," but let us humbly yield to the great will and

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power of God that Pentecost may once again be manifested in us as in the early church. God's clock will soon strike the hour and our Lord will appear. As the war clouds gather for the awful Battle of Armageddon in Palestine and the antichrist forces mobilize their strength, we look for God to manifest Himself in the power of His mighty name in healings, miracles, and greater revivals. "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10).

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