

*Is the
Virgin Mary
Dead
or
Alive?*

by Danny Vierra

All emphases in this article are mine.

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Chapter 1

Growing up as a young Catholic boy in a middle-class family, I was sent by my parents to Annunciation School, where I received my grammar school education. While attending the school for eight years, I was required to attend Mass every Sunday at the Cathedral of the Annunciation, where I would eventually serve for a couple of years as an altar boy, assisting the priests. How I remember the beauty of the Cathedral—the 30-foot-high ceilings, the beautiful mosaic windows, the gold articles of furniture, the purple and scarlet colors, and the statues of the Saints, Mother Mary, and Baby Jesus.

It was not long before the Virgin Mary became as important to me as Jesus Himself. I had a fervent and devoted love for her. I prayed thousands of Hail Marys throughout my younger years, sometimes while kneeling in front of one of the statues of the “Mother of God.” Mary was everywhere. I remember the statue of the Madonna (Italian for my lady) in my mother’s garden and the Madonna vase on her dresser. In the vase were palm leaves, holy cards, and rosary beads. Because of my Italian heritage and my membership in the Church of Rome, I soon learned to respect and reverence the Virgin Mary as being holy and sacred. I heard her name mentioned far more times than that of Jesus, and she soon became my most precious “mediator” to the throne of God.

It was not until I graduated from Annunciation School [the “Annunciation,” according to Roman Catholic teachings, is the announcement which the Angel Gabriel made to the Virgin Mary when he told her that she was to be the mother of Jesus Christ, as related in Luke 1:26-38, and celebrated on March 25, as Lady Day] and was accepted into St. Mary’s High School [another school dedicated to the Virgin Mary], where I was to receive the next four years of my education, that I began to question the teachings of Catholicism. The nuns at Annunciation, who were my sole teachers for eight years, had taught me about our first parents, Adam and Eve, who were created by God and lived in the Garden of Eden. But while attending St. Mary’s, where I was to receive my higher education, I suffered a great disappointment that I will never forget. I remember so well the day the priest, who taught my religion class, told me, along with the other students, that the story of Adam and Eve was not to be taken literally. It was merely a story in the Bible—not a fact ! My world was shattered and my confidence in the teachings and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church was marred. I, therefore, began to question the system as a whole. Had I been lied to my first eight years of schooling? and were there other doctrines that I had been taught that were not true?

Twenty years later, I finally decided to search the Scriptures for myself. As I studied the Word of God, I discovered many truths that I had never learned while attending Catholic schools. In fact, I found many of the doctrines of Rome to be contrary to the Bible. One doctrine, for instance, was the doctrine of the immortality of the soul—the doctrine of man’s consciousness in death. What happens to a person when he dies? Does his soul live on forever in the form of a spirit that floats up into Heaven, where he will enjoy eternity, or down into Hell, where he will be tormented forever? How would the priests who “straightened me out” in regards to the Creation story explain these Scriptures: “The soul that sinneth it shall die”

(Ezekiel 18:20) and “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt”? (Dan. 12:2).

Have you noticed the thousands of billboards that have appeared throughout this country in the past few years urging you to call for a message from the Virgin Mary? “Why are two billion Hail Marys said daily? Why did five million people, many non-Christian, visit Lourdes this year to drink the healing waters? Why did more than 10 million trek to Guadalupe to pray to Our Lady? Why have 15,000 priests gone to Medjugorje since 1981? Why is it that more girls have been named for Mary than any other historical figure?...Why the need to talk with her? Why are Mary hymns creeping into Methodist songbooks?” (Life, Dec., 1996, p. 45). Where is the Virgin Mary right now, anyway? Is she in heaven with Jesus, or in New York, or in Florida? Or is she in the grave sleeping until Jesus comes? What about all the reported miracles, visions, appearances, messages, predictions, weeping statues, and bleeding icons? What is it about Mary?

According to those of the “Marian Movement,” over 300 apparitions, significant enough to merit attention (for there have been thousands reported), have occurred since Fatima. “Fatima is the key Marian apparition of the Twentieth Century. In fact, Pope Pius XII noted that the message of Fatima is one of the greatest interventions of God through Mary in world history since the death of the Apostles.” (The Thunder of Justice, p. 132).

The December 30, 1991, issue of Time magazine reported that “the late 20th century has become the age of the Marian pilgrimage ” to many shrines established to commemorate the many sightings of the Virgin Mary in recent years. “These apparitions have brought millions of people to faith in Catholicism’s Mary. The shrine at Lourdes, France, attracts about 5.5 million pilgrims annually; Poland’s Black Madonna draws 5 million; Fatima, Portugal, ‘draws a steady 4.5 million pilgrims a year from an ever-widening array of countries.’ Since John Paul II visited the shrine of Mary at Knock, Ireland, ‘attendance has doubled to 1.5 million people each year. To handle the influx, a new international airport was opened at Knock in 1986.’ A ‘Mary, Queen of the Universe Shrine’ has recently opened in Orlando, Florida. The shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe near Mexico City ‘draws 20 million visitors a year’....‘Mary,’ a goddess suitable for all religions, is already adored by a quarter of earth’s population. ” (A Woman Rides the Beast, pp. 453, 454, 457). Unquestionably, Marian apparitions are attracting a huge following, considerably larger than Disneyland, in Anaheim, California, which reported an incredible fifteen million visitors in 1996.

Years ago, “Saint Louis de Montfort, in the Seventeenth Century, wrote about what it would be like for the church in the latter days, and the role of Mary in that plan. He stated, ‘In the Second Coming of the Lord, Mary will be made known in a special way by the Holy Spirit so that through her, Jesus may be better known and servedMary will shine forth higher than ever in these last days to bring back poor sinners who have strayed from the family of God....Mary will raise up apostles of the latter times to make war against the evil one.’” (The Thunder of Justice, p. 73). Later, “Pope John Paul II wrote in his 1987 encyclical Redemptoris Mater that Marian apparitions signify that the Blessed Virgin’s journey through time and space

is a pilgrimage toward the Second Coming of Jesus and her final victory over Satan. This is her role now as it has been predestined from the beginning.” (Ibid., p. 19).

Certainly from the statements above, one might be led to regard Mary as the most important being there is, greater than Jesus Himself. But if you study the Bible, while praying for guidance from the Holy Spirit to define the Word and make its truths known, I believe you will plainly see that not only are the above statements erroneous and deceptive, but that Mary’s involvement in future events is utterly impossible!

Chapter 2

In the very beginning of earth’s history, Satan, while in the form of a serpent, told the first lie to Eve. He told her that if she disobeyed the command of God not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, she would “not surely die, ” even though God had expressly warned her that “in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die .” (See Genesis 3:4; 2:17). Satan treacherously assured her (another monstrous lie) that upon eating the fruit “your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” (Gen. 3:5). Friends, are we still believing the devil today? The Bible is quite clear that only God “hath immortality .” (I Tim. 6:16). In fact, the Bible, on the other hand, contains a number of Scriptures that prove that mortal man receives not his immortality until the second coming of Christ—at the time of the resurrection. (I Cor. 15:51-55; John 5:28, 29). Now please note these unequivocal and authoritative pronouncements on the condition of man in death from Ecclesiastes 9:5 and 10: “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything....Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

I remember the first time I ever read these Scriptures. I immediately wondered why I had always believed that a dead person could speak to me if he so chose. Was this another error of the Roman Church that had been sold to me by the priests? After all, according to the Bible, are not seances meetings in which the devil tries to send his deadly messages to unwary people through a human medium who is supposed to be able to communicate with the so-called spirits of the dead? The greatest of all seances in the Bible occurred when Saul went to the Witch of Endor, described in the Scriptures as “a woman that hath a familiar spirit”—that is, a woman who received messages from an evil angel who claimed to be the “spirit” of a particular dead person usually known to the seeker—and asked her to bring up Samuel from the dead since “the Lord answered him not , neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets?” (I Sam. 28:6, 7). Since when does a man of God go to the devil for advice when the Lord explicitly said: “Regard not them that have familiar spirits,...to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God?” (Lev. 19:31; see also Isa. 8:19, 20). The Bible plainly states: “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence;” for when a man dies, “His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish .” (Ps. 115:17; 146:4).

So why do most people, both Christians and non-Christians, believe the doctrine of the immortality of the soul? I believe the problem exists because of a misinterpretation of

Scripture. In Genesis 2:7, the Bible says: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul.” The Hebrew word for “soul” used in this text is nephesh. Besides being translated 428 times as “soul” in the Old Testament, nephesh is also translated as the following: life—119 times; person—29 times; and creature—19 times. “There is nothing in the words translated ‘soul’ or in their usage in the Bible that even remotely implies a conscious entity that survives the body after death, or that attributes immortality to it. Nephesh is not part of the person; it is the person!” (Bible Dictionary by Siegfried H. Horn, Ph.D., p. 1061).

I believe the confusion stems from a misinterpretation of verses like the following: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Many people use this verse in an attempt to prove that the “soul” or “spirit” is, therefore, immortal and goes to God at the point of death. But, if you look at Job 27:3, you will find a Scripture that will help you understand that the “spirit” is simply the breath of life by which man lives, and which is only lent him of God, and at death goes back to the Great Author of life—“All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils.” The Hebrew word used here for spirit is ruach, which is defined in Gesenius’ Lexicon as follows: (a) spirit or breath; (b) breath of the nostrils; (c) breath of air. When the spirit, or breath of the nostrils, goes back to God, the body, made originally from the dust of the earth, now begins its process of going back to the earth as it was and ceases to function as normally, and the non-breathing individual no longer exists as a living, conscious, thinking being, but will rest in the grave until he is called forth by the voice of Christ “at the last day.” (John 6:39). “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice , And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation .” (John 5:28, 29). The righteous dead will rise at the second coming of Christ and together with the living saints will meet the Lord in the air (see I Thess. 4:15-18), but the wicked dead will not rise until one thousand years after the resurrection of the righteous. “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” (Rev. 20:5). How can someone “live again” except he has first experienced having died?

By now, friends, you may be asking yourself the question: “How can the Virgin Mary be alive when the Bible so clearly tells us there is no consciousness in death?” To further establish the point, let us look at a few more Scriptures that prove that man is mortal. In the Book of Job, we read: “Man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost [breatheth out; Strong’s Concordance], and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more [the heavens roll back at Christ’s second coming (Rev. 6:14)], they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.” (Job 14:10-12). And if that weren’t clear enough, Job continues: “If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come . Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee.” (Job 14:14, 15). Obviously, Job believed that he would sleep in the grave until Jesus called him out on Resurrection Morning. (See also Job 17:13-16). After all, it was Jesus who spoke of death as a sleep when referring to Lazarus’s state. He never once implied that Lazarus had gone to heaven, but, on the contrary, said, “Our friend Lazarus

sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.” (John 11:11). Then in John 11:23, Jesus tells Martha, “Thy brother shall rise again,” and Martha responds, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus, in calling Lazarus from the tomb, said, “Lazarus, come forth (John 11:43),” not “Lazarus, come up!” or “Lazarus, come down!” I believe that Jesus’ use of the word sleep is a very appropriate synonym when used in place of the word death (the first death), because the word implies a temporary state—a state from which every soul “shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt [the second death (see Rev. 20:12-14)].” (Daniel 12:2).

The great teacher, the apostle Paul, clearly understood that he, too, would sleep in the grave until the second coming of Christ: “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure [death] is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His [Christ’s] appearing.” (II Tim. 4:6-8). Paul knew, as did Martha, that not until the resurrection of the last day, at the second coming of Christ, would he receive the reward of eternal life and be changed from mortality to immortality. Remember, it was Paul who told us in the Sacred Word that mortal man will not put on immortality until the last trumpet blast that calls forth the righteous dead at the coming of Jesus: “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [for some will be living when Christ comes], but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible [the Virgin Mary also], and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. [Please notice when this happens—not at death, but at the second coming of Christ].” (I Cor. 15:51-53). Earlier in the chapter, Paul stated: “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man [Adam] came death, by man [Christ] came also the resurrection of the dead . For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive . But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming .” (I Cor. 15:20-23).

To solidify this position, let us now look at the request of the thief on the cross, who was crucified next to Jesus as recorded in Luke, Chapter 23. The repentant thief, believing Jesus was indeed the Son of God, “said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.” To this request Jesus responded, “Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou [thou shalt] be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:42, 43). Those who believe in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul often refer to these Scriptures to prove that the spirit of the dead goes immediately to Heaven at the time of death. But let us take a closer look at Luke 23. First, we need to understand that the comma placed before the word “today” was supplied by the translators. If you place it after the word “today,” it would then read, “Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43). Second, Jesus did not ascend into Heaven as He died, for in John 20:17, He told Mary in the early morning of His memorable resurrection: “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father .” It should also be noted that this statement was made two days after His death on the cross. Thus, the repentant thief was given, that day [Good Friday—the day of the crucifixion], the assurance of eternal life and

a place in Paradise, but he, as with the rest of the righteous dead, would not receive his reward until Jesus comes the second time. (See Rev. 22:12).

Chapter 3

So why the deception? Because spiritualism lives! As long as there is a devil, there will be spiritualism. And as long as spiritualism lives, the lie—that in death there is continuing life—will be perpetuated! And this bias will often affect the work of otherwise well-meaning translators. Have you not noticed how more and more movies and their plots are being centered around the dead communicating with the living? Satan is working with added enthusiasm in these last days, because he knows that his time is short and that one of his best tools for bringing the world under his deceptive control is spiritualism, based on his great lie that there is in man an immortal spirit that continues on after death and that it is possible for the living to receive vital light and benefit by communicating with the spirits of dead loved ones. These cherished dead can be convincingly impersonated in form, feature, sound of voice, and factual information unknown except by the living participant(s) and the “dead” communicant, as well as by Satan and his fallen angels, who are constantly seeking to cause the multitudes of earth to follow a demonic agenda in direct opposition to Christ’s great gospel commission to prepare the world for His coming and the final end of Satan and his kingdom.

Thus, “the doctrine of man’s consciousness in death, especially the belief that the spirits of the dead return to minister to the living, has prepared the way for modern spiritualism. If the dead are admitted to the presence of God and holy angels, and privileged with knowledge far exceeding what they before possessed, why should they not return to the earth to enlighten and instruct the living? If, as taught by popular theologians, the spirits of the dead are hovering about their friends on earth, why should they not be permitted to communicate with them, to warn them against evil, or to comfort them in sorrow? How can those who believe in man’s consciousness in death reject what comes to them as divine light communicated from glorified spirits? Here is a channel regarded as sacred, through which Satan works for the accomplishment of his purposes. The fallen angels who do his bidding appear as messengers from the spirit world. While professing to bring the living into communication with the dead, the prince of evil exercises his bewitching influence upon their minds.

“He has power to bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The counterfeit is perfect; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with marvelous distinctness. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of heaven; and without suspicion of danger, they give ear ‘to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.’

“When they have been led to believe that the dead actually return to communicate with them, Satan causes those to appear who went into the grave unprepared. They claim to be happy in heaven and even to occupy exalted positions there, and thus the error is widely taught that no difference is made between the righteous and the wicked. The pretended visitants

from the world of spirits sometimes utter cautions and warnings which prove to be correct. Then, as confidence is gained, they present doctrines that directly undermine faith in the Scriptures. With an appearance of deep interest in the well-being of their friends on earth, they insinuate the most dangerous errors. The fact that they state some truths, and are able at times to foretell future events, gives to their statements an appearance of reliability; and their false teachings are accepted by the multitudes as readily, and believed as implicitly, as if they were the most sacred truths of the Bible. The law of God is set aside, the Spirit of grace despised, the blood of the covenant counted an unholy thing. The spirits deny the deity of Christ and place even the Creator on a level with themselves. Thus under a new disguise the great rebel still carries on his warfare against God, begun in heaven and for nearly six thousand years continued upon this earth....Many will be ensnared through the belief that spiritualism is a merely human imposture; when brought face to face with manifestations which they cannot but regard as supernatural, they will be deceived, and will be led to accept them as the great power of God.” (The Great Controversy, pp. 551-553).

Therefore, Satan, in his efforts to deceive the very elect in these last days, will use his demons to impersonate our departed loved ones in the form of familiar spirits : boyfriends and girlfriends, grandfathers and grandmothers, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers. So why not a masterpiece of deception—a demon impersonating the mother of Jesus Christ!!!

Chapter 4

The world is ready and ripe for this almost overpowering deception. In fact, the December, 1996, issue of Life magazine featured, on its front cover, a picture of a statue of Mary and the caption: “Two thousand years after the Nativity, the mother of Jesus is more BELOVED, POWERFUL, and CONTROVERSIAL than ever. The Mystery of MARY.” The ending of this article was especially of interest to me. It stated: “Mary...might lead to an ecumenical reunion of Christian churches . It might lead to a closer understanding of the teenage girl who gave birth in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. We could come to know Mary...

“Can we ask this simple girl to guide what has become not a cult but a huge and passionate congregation, a movement requiring a hero, a worldwide flock that has long demanded more of her? That has demanded, in some instances, that she deliver her message herself? I wonder: If Mary became merely human—if people could truly touch Mary— would Mary be enough?”

Please beware, friends, of the expositors of this type of thinking, who also refer to Mary as “Co-Redeemer, Mediator, and Advocate.” First of all, nowhere in the Bible is there any reference to the Virgin Mary as being man’s “Co-redeemer.” The prophet Isaiah, when writing about Jesus Christ, said the following: “And thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.” (Isaiah 60:16). In the New Testament, the apostles Paul and Peter each made poignant statements when referring to the price that was paid and the blood that was shed for man’s redemption. Paul said: “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are

not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God [not Mary] in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." And Peter tells us what the purchase price was: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (I Cor. 6:19, 20; I Pet. 1:18, 19). There can be, then, only one Redeemer—Jesus Christ, the One Who paid the ransom price of His life's blood, thus giving up an infinite life for a lost human race. Secondly, how can Mary be our "Mediator" when the Bible explicitly warns: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name [than that of Jesus Christ—see verse 10] under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" and "For there is one God, and one mediator [not two] between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"? (Acts 4:12; I Timothy 2:5). Obviously, Jesus is the only Being qualified to be mankind's Mediator. And thirdly, would the mother of Jesus ever claim to be our "Advocate" when I John 2:1 says: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"? If the true Virgin Mary were alive, would she contradict the words of her Son? Yet, the book, *The Thunder of Justice*, which records many of the so-called statements made by the counterfeit Virgin Mary to different people around the world, says that Mary's role is that of "Co-Redeemer, Mediatrix, and Advocate." "While Calvary was first and foremost the scene of Our Lord's Passion and death, it also caused Our Lady to suffer hidden and mystical wounds. No longer does God want the precious wounds of Our Lady to be hidden. Rather, His people are to understand the tremendous purification mankind received and will receive through devotion to Mary's Hidden and Mystical wounds." (*The Thunder of Justice*, p. 29). As if she were crucified for us also! or had an infinite life to give!

Friends, was it Mary's wounds that Isaiah wrote about in his famous Chapter 53? Was she the one "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"? Was she the one "bruised for our iniquities"? or the one brought "as a lamb to the slaughter"? No! No! It was Christ! Isaiah did not mince his words when he wrote: "Surely He hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed....He was oppressed, and He was afflicted....He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." (Is. 53:4-9). It was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who said: "I have trodden the winepress alone [or by Myself]; and of the people there was none with Me [not even Mary]." (Is. 63:3).

Yet, *The Thunder of Justice* further claims that when the so-called Mary appears to people, some of the other blasphemous titles she uses to identify herself are the following: "The Lady of All Nations," "The Guardian of the Faith," "The Immaculate Conception," "The Pure Sinless One," "The Mother of the Church," "Queen of the Holy Rosary," "Our Lady of Guadalupe" (which means, "She Who Crushes the Serpent"), "His Immaculate Spouse [of the Holy Spirit]," "The Second Eve" or "The New Eve," "The Queen of the World," "The Queen of Heaven," and, last but not least, "The Queen of the Coming Age."

Please do not think that I am being disrespectful toward Mary by writing this book, for I hope and pray I will meet her on Resurrection Day, when the saints come forth from the grave.

She was indeed a wonderful Christian lady. That is why God chose her to be the mother of the Messiah. But when Satan uses her image as his means of deceiving souls, as a watchman on the walls of Zion, I must blow the trumpet. Therefore, I must take the time to expose the blasphemy implied by some of these names. First, let me address the title of "The Immaculate Conception" together with "The Pure Sinless One." Did you know that when you mention the name "Immaculate Conception," almost everyone believes the title applies to the virgin birth of Jesus? But that is incorrect. The Immaculate Conception, which is a Roman Catholic doctrine, doesn't apply to Jesus at all. It refers to the birth of the Virgin Mary, who, according to the Roman Catholic Church, was conceived without the stain of original sin (see Webster's Dictionary). This is why she is called "The Pure Sinless One." The Bible, on the contrary, tells us plainly that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" and "there is none righteous, no not one." (Romans 3:23; 3:10). Besides this, it is very clear from the genealogical records in the Bible and from the fact that Mary was a full-blooded Israelite that she was descended from Abraham on both sides of her family. Now notice this statement by the apostle Paul in Hebrews 2:16 concerning the human nature of Jesus: "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." And Abraham dwelt in fallen, human flesh 2000 years after Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden and several centuries after God destroyed the world by a Flood for the great wickedness of man. Yet, the Catholic Church and the Marian Movement would like us to believe that Mary was holy. In fact, the well-known Catholic prayer, "Hail Mary," includes the words: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death," which words the Roman Catholic Church admits in A Catechism of Christian Doctrine, p. 27, were composed by the Church itself under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, not once in Scripture is Mary called "holy Mary," but, on the contrary, the Scriptures authored by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21), when referring to Jesus, call Him "that holy thing" and "Thy holy child Jesus." (Luke 1:35; Acts 4:30). Christ is the only person in the Bible whose human birth is described thus!

Still again, The Thunder of Justice contradicts the Word of God when referring to what has been labeled the "Assumption": "Mary was assumed into heaven...Because of her sinlessness, her body did not have to undergo corruption in the graveThe Church has always held the truth about Mary's Assumption, and in 1950 it was formally declared to be part of the Catholic dogma by Pope Pius XII ." (Ibid., p. 44). This doctrine, therefore, has now received the stamp of papal infallibility. But has it the stamp of Scriptural authority? If we study our Bibles to see whether "those things were so," as did the faithful Bereans as recorded in Acts 17:11, we will, in fact, learn that the only mortals that have been taken into heaven from Adam unto this day are Enoch, Moses, Elijah, and many saints that were resurrected with Christ when He rose from the dead. The Bible says of Enoch: "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5:24); of Elijah, the Word says: "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (II Kings 2:1); of Moses, Jude 9 says: "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses," and Matthew 17:1-3 says that when Jesus was "transfigured....there appeared unto them [Peter, James, and John] Moses and Elias [Elijah] talking with Him." In this awesome scene, Jesus had given to the three disciples that were watching, a glimpse of His glory, and the two mighty men of God that appeared with Him were

perfect representatives of every person who will be saved throughout history. Moses, though having died, was resurrected by Christ, and thus, as it were, was a pledge to all who die in Christ—that they, too, will come forth from the grave at the resurrection of the righteous (John 5:28, 29; I Thess. 4:16), and Elijah was a type of all the saved who will be alive and translated when Christ comes the second time. (I Thess. 4:17). To see that such is a proper interpretation, read Matthew 16:27, 28—17:1-3 and compare with Peter's own evaluation in II Peter 1:16-18.

In addition to the three patriarchs mentioned above, there was a host of saints that came out of their graves at Christ's resurrection. Matthew 27:51-53 states: "The earth did quake...And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Ephesians 4:8 tells us that these people, more trophies, were taken to Heaven at Christ's ascension: "Wherefore he saith, When He ascended up on high, He led Captivity captive (or "a multitude of captives"—margin), and gave gifts unto men." These heroes of faith were raised as a part of the antitypical offering of "firstfruits" from the grave with Jesus and as a pledge of the final great harvest of the rest of the redeemed on Resurrection Day at His Second Coming! On the other hand, it is also interesting to note that in addition to the definition given to the word "Assumption" by the Roman Catholic Church—namely, "the bodily taking up into heaven of the Virgin Mary"—the word's primary definition, according to Webster's College Dictionary, is: "something taken for granted; a supposition; or to assume as true." Today I know more about the "Assumption" than when I was attending Catholic schools, because while there, I assumed it was truth.

Furthermore, I find it strange that the Apostle John, who lived a number of years after all the other disciples had died and who wrote the Gospel of John and the Apocalypse during the mid 90's A.D. (when he was an old man), never once mentioned anything about Mary's having been taken to Heaven, as Rome claims. John, of all the disciples, would have been the final authority on this matter. Please notice why. As Christ's death on the cross drew near, Jesus beheld His mother and His Disciple John standing beside her at the foot of the cross. As He gazed into her grief-stricken face and then upon John, "He saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her...unto his own home ." (John 19:26, 27). Christ had made John His mother's caretaker for as long as she should live! "John understood Christ's words, and accepted the trust. He at once took Mary to his home, and from that hour he cared for her tenderly. O pitiful, loving Saviour; amid all His physical pain and mental anguish, He had a thoughtful care for His mother....and in receiving her as a sacred trust, John was receiving a great blessing. She was a constant reminder of his beloved Master ." (The Desire of Ages, p. 752). And John wrote about this matter in the Gospel of John not long before his own death, at a time when Mary, his senior by 25 to 30 years or more, was undoubtedly dead. Why, then, did not John record anything about her "Assumption" in Sacred Writ? Because it just did not happen! For she, just like the beloved apostle, is peacefully sleeping in the grave until that climactic day when she will once again hear the voice of her Son, calling her from the grave on Resurrection Morn!

But it is true that Mary was “highly favoured” [or graciously accepted—see Bible margin] by God and “blessed...among women” (Luke 1:28), because she had been chosen by God to conceive [miraculously]...in her womb “and bring forth a son,” whose name she should call “Jesus.” (Luke 1:31). But, the very next verse pinpoints the only One in the verse who deserves to be extolled: “He [Jesus] shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” (Luke 1:32, 33). In fact, just a few verses later, after Mary had conceived and had gone to visit her cousin Elizabeth, Mary plainly declares with her own lips: “My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour .” (Luke 1:46, 47). Please notice, that Mary humbly acknowledged that the child within her womb was the Son of God—the long-promised Messiah and Deliverer of mankind, Who had consented to become a member of the human race in order to save it, Whom she was to name Jesus, and Who was, just as He is for every person in the world, her Saviour—for the name Jesus means “Jehovah is salvation, or “Saviour” [Matt. 1:21, margin].

Mary held no illusions that she was the “Mother of God” [words of Catholic origin and part of the “Hail Mary”], for no member of the Godhead had an original mother. “Yahweh” (or “Jehovah”) was the “Self-existent One,” the basic meaning of the term, or the Great “I AM.” Moses, who talked with the “I AM” for a period of forty years, clearly understood this. In Psalm 90, of which he is the author, he wrote, “Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.” And the prophecy in Micah 5:2 that pinpointed Bethlehem of Judea as the birthplace of the promised Messiah describes Him as One “Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting [‘the days of eternity’—margin].” Rather, Mary realized that she was “blessed among women” to be so “highly favoured” as to become the human instrument by which a member of the Godhead could become incarnate as a human being to effect the rescue of a lost human race. She was the mother of the Messiah, the God-man, when He transferred His original existence into a human one. He became the Son of man, but He remained Deity—the Son of God.

Mary always knew and kept her proper place. When Gabriel told her of the miraculous manner in which she would conceive a child through the agency of the Holy Spirit and that “therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God....For with God nothing shall be impossible,” her humble response was, “Behold the handmaid [female slave, Greek] of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.” (Luke 1:35, 37, 38). The word “handmaid” in the Greek is *doule*, which means slave, involuntary or voluntary (as in Mary’s case). The word actually describes real slavery, bondage, or servitude; but even when its usage was meant to be qualified to indicate a perceived relationship to another, as in Mary’s foregoing acknowledgment, it still indicated an attitude of subjection or subserviency by the user. In any event, it is obvious from Mary’s words that she was very humbly compliant with God’s will.

This is also apparent again when she arrives at the home of her cousin Elizabeth, mother-to-be of John the Baptist—Christ’s messenger to announce His arrival and mission—and exchanges initial greetings with her, both being under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. After Elizabeth had acknowledged Mary as “the mother of my Lord” (Luke 1:43), Mary replied, as

already noted above, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.” But note carefully her attitude expressed in her next remarks: “For He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.” (Luke 1:46-48). “Low” in the Greek comes from a word with the connotation of “humiliation” or “abasement,” and is very appropriately used with her choice of “handmaiden,” or submissive “female slave.” She is saying, “Socially, prestige-wise, I am a nobody.” But then she quickly acknowledges the fact that it is the child she bears Who is the Hero and Whose mighty achievements will be so wonderful and so permanent that all future generations, even in eternity, will call her “blessed” for being the willing human agent, in cooperation with God, to make the reality of mankind’s redemption possible. It is hard to imagine a woman who possessed such demonstrated humility now emerging in today’s world as a person assuming such presumptuous titles and boastful achievements as those listed in this chapter, which exalt her to a position of Deity. Interestingly enough, there is not one prayer to Mary in the entire Bible—not one instance of her miraculously helping anyone, nor any promise that she could or would.

Jesus is the Savior of the world, the Lamb that was slain, the Sin-bearer with whose stripes and wounds we are healed, the Resurrection and the Life, our High Priest and Mediator before the Father, the “Seed” of the woman who would crush the “serpent’s” head, the descendant of David who was to become ruler on David’s throne forever and ever. In fact, dear friends, notice this beautiful and unequivocal prophecy of the Messiah’s birth and eventual rulership on the throne of His human ancestor David as given by the “gospel prophet” Isaiah: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.” (Isaiah 9:6, 7). This prophecy, dear friend, includes all of Heaven’s intent!

Chapter 5

The writers of The Thunder of Justice also claim that Mary refers to herself as the one “who crushes the serpent [Satan],” in the end-time, because she is the “woman” of Genesis 3:15. Let us look at this Scripture in detail and see if this is indeed true. In Genesis 3:15 the Bible says: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.” This verse is a prophecy and promise that someday a certain Son, a particular male Child, would be born into the world [a descendant of Eve], to contest the devil, and though terribly bruised in the contest (His death on the cross), He would conquer the devil with a fatal blow to the head at the end of time. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same;

that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” (Hebrews 2:14).

In Galatians 3:16 the Bible further clarifies that “to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Thus it is plain to see that it is not Mary at all, but “her seed,” Jesus Christ, that destroys Satan at last. Let us now, with emphases supplied, reread Genesis 3:15: “I will put enmity [hostility] between thee [Satan] and the woman [Eve], and between thy seed [Satan’s followers] and her seed [her descendants in Christ the Deliverer]; it [Christ—the promised Seed, the Deliverer Himself] shall bruise thy head [the death blow—Christ’s complete victory over Satan and Satan’s permanent, eternal destruction after the thousand years (see Ezekiel 28:18, 19 and Revelation 20:6-9)], and thou [Satan] shall bruise His heel [Christ’s death on the cross—a serious wound, but not permanent, for He rose from the dead, having the keys of the grave and of death (Rev. 1:18), having utterly spoiled Satan’s kingdom and power].”

The book, *The Thunder of Justice*, further claims that “the prophecy of Genesis 3 has been fulfilled with Revelation 12, where Mary is the great sign in Heaven: ‘And a great sign appeared in Heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars.’ Pope Paul VI, in his 1967 encyclical, *Signum Magnum*, identified the Lady of Fatima as the biblical representation of the Woman clothed with the sun.” (*The Thunder of Justice*, p. 88). The book further states that “Mary, the Woman clothed with the sun, appears as a sign and explains the secrets of the Book of Revelation.”

Also, they claim that “on April 12, 1947, at Tre Fontane (Three Fountains), in Rome, Italy, Our Blessed Mother announced, I am the Virgin of Revelation .” (Ibid. p. 89). And if you listen to the words of Father Gobbi, one of the Marian Movement’s priests whom Mary seems to have communicated through more than any other individual, he claims the Virgin Mary told him on April 24, 1980, the following: “I am the Virgin of Revelation. In me, the masterpiece of the Father is realized in such a perfect manner, that He can shed on me the light of His predilection. The Word assumes His human nature in my virginal womb, and thus can come to you by means of my true function as Mother. The Holy Spirit draws me, like a magnet, into the depths of the life of love between the Father and the Son, and I become interiorly transformed and so assimilated to Him as to be His spouse....I will bring you [plural] to the full understanding of Sacred Scriptures.” (Ibid., 90).

Friends, the Bible never told us that Mary would interpret Scripture, but that the Holy Spirit will. “But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God...the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God....Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth: comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” (I Cor. 2: 10, 11b, 13). Again, in John 16:13 and 14, Jesus said to His disciples: “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth...and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine [of the wonderful achievements of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life], and shall shew it unto you.” Thus, it is the Holy Spirit, a member of the Godhead—and not a created being—to whom the interpretation of the Scriptures has been

intrusted to guide those who are the honest seekers after the truth of God's Word. Yet, The Thunder of Justice continues: "Above all, I [Mary] will read to you the pages of its last book [Revelation], which you are living. In it, everything is already predicted, even that which must still come to pass. The battle to which I am calling you is clearly described, and my great victory is foretold." (Ibid.).

Let us now take a close look at Revelation 12 and see if the "woman clothed with the sun" is truly the Virgin Mary. But before we do this, let us establish some facts about the book of Revelation. First of all, the book is not a "mystery," but "the Revelation of Jesus Christ ...unto His servant John." (Rev. 1:1). The Apocalypse, as the book is sometimes referred to, is derived from the Greek word *apocalypsis* which means a "disclosure," an "uncovering," or a "revelation." Therefore, the book of Revelation is not to be a mystery, but, on the other hand, it is to be understood by every truly sincere Bible student. Second, Revelation is a book of prophecy and it predicts things "which must shortly come to pass." (Rev. 1:1). Third, the book is filled with signs and symbols, and this is the method by which God showed the future to John who faithfully "bare record" of the visions "that he saw." (Rev. 1:2). He, for instance, saw a beast with seven heads (Rev. 13:1); a "great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns" (Rev. 12:3); and the "great whore that sitteth upon many waters" (Rev. 17:1).

Every Bible student should know that the Bible interprets itself. Take, for example, Revelation 17:1—"the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." If you look at verse 15 of the same chapter, the Scripture says, "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." It is obvious that the "whore" is not a literal prostitute sitting on the Atlantic Ocean, but a representation of some kind of powerful organization that has many peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues under her jurisdiction. And whatever the program or influence of this entity, it definitely does not operate with the blessing or approval of the Author of Revelation. Interestingly enough, throughout the Scriptures the sacred relationship of God to his obedient followers is compared to that of marriage. Notice how God feels when this relationship has degenerated into infidelity: "They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou [Israel] hast played the harlot with many lovers [following the idolatries and corrupt practices of the heathen nations about them], yet return again to Me, saith the Lord. Lift up thine eyes unto the high places [areas of idol worship and consecrated immorality], and see where thou hast not been lien with [the implication is that there is no such place that had not been defiled]. In the ways [the main ways of travel] hast thou sat for them [as a harlot looking for customers], as the Arabian in the wilderness [the hidden thief in the desert eagerly watching for travelers, or caravans, to prey upon]; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead [an attitude of impudence, brazenness, shamelessness]; thou refusedst to be ashamed...Return, thou backsliding Israel [literally, in the Hebrew, Turn back, O backturning Israel], saith the Lord....for I am married unto you." (Jer. 3:1-3, 12, 14). Therefore, a whore or harlot is used in the Bible as a symbol of a disloyal church that has left the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and is having illicit relations with other men or leaders or gods of this

world. (See Ezekiel 16 and 23 for further confirmation). With this in mind, let us now proceed to study the “woman” of Revelation 12, who is just as much a symbol of a religious organization of influence as is the “whore” of Revelation 17, and see if the “woman” is the Virgin Mary.

Revelation 12:1 begins with John seeing a symbolic mother in the sky, “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” She is pregnant and eager for her baby to arrive (verse 2), and Satan, shaped like a dragon, is present, ready “to devour her child as soon as it is born (verse 4).” Miraculously, the child escapes and is “caught up unto God, and to His throne (verse 5).”

Immediately, there are questions that arise if one tries to interpret these Scriptures literally, and conclude that this woman is the Virgin Mary. Those who believe that such is the case will say, “After all, was not the Virgin Mary the one who gave birth to the Child Jesus, and was not her Son the supreme object of the devil’s malice? Then the “woman” has to be Mary!” In answer to this let us note the following: First, John saw “a great wonder” in the sky, which he recognized at once to be of great import to the world. And although he knew Mary very well, he did not exclaim, “Behold! I see the glorified likeness of my Lord’s mother in the heaven !” Second, have you ever heard of a woman standing on the “moon” or seen one “clothed with the sun”? Third, has anyone ever seen a dragon, let alone, one with “seven heads”? Therefore, these words must have a symbolic application to literal events! And is not this what you would expect to find when “the revelation of Jesus Christ” is one which “He [Christ] sent and signified [made known by signs, or symbols] by His angel unto His servant John”? (Rev. 1:1). And would not this be an excellent way to reveal sensitive information to His faithful followers living under a totalitarian government while at the same time seemingly presenting a jargon of words and images to the idly curious? How wise and considerate of His people is the God of the Holy Scriptures!

Three paragraphs ago, I stated that a woman, when symbolized by a whore or harlot, is an apostate people or church. But, in addition to this, the word has yet another meaning when used symbolically. Just as a whore can symbolize an impure church, a virgin can be used to symbolize a pure church. Take, for instance, the following two Scriptures: “I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman” and “For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (Jeremiah 6:2; II Cor. 11:2). So could the “woman” of Revelation 12 possibly be “the true church” and not the Virgin Mary? Furthermore, her garment is the “sun,” and she stands on the “moon,” and wears a crown of “twelve stars.” What is the significance of “the woman” being “clothed with the sun”? During His ministry, when Jesus was in the temple at Jerusalem and the rising sun came into full view over the Mount of Olives, He pointed to it and announced His mission as the Messiah, saying, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:12). Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, had described the Coming One as “the Sun of righteousness.” (Mal. 4:2). Now in vision on the Isle of Patmos during the last decade of the First Century A.D., John sees “a woman clothed with the sun”—that is, the glorious light of the “Sun of righteousness”! It is clear that this momentous event signifies the birth of the God-man, the Messiah! The momentous news of the ages is that the long-promised Deliverer has arrived!

The pure woman—so long recognized by the now aging John to have represented God’s true followers in the Church in both the Old and New Testament times—is at last now bathed in the bright splendor of His immediate Presence!

Moreover, she stands with “the moon under her feet.” The Mosaic (Old Testament) dispensation had just ended and had been succeeded by the gospel dispensation. As the moon’s lesser light is borrowed from the sun, so the sacrificial system, the Levitical priesthood, feasts, etc. had shone with a more subdued glory borrowed as types and shadows from what now had become Antitype and Substance in the full spiritual glory of the gospel era. The “woman” is wearing “a crown of twelve stars,” representing the twelve apostles. “By the figure of prolepsis [anticipation of the whole completed picture], the church is represented as fully organized with its twelve apostles before the man-child, Christ, appeared upon the scene. This is easily accounted for by the fact that it was to be thus constituted immediately after Christ should commence His ministry; and He is more especially connected with this church than with that of the former dispensation.” (Daniel and the Revelation, p. 545). To John, looking back from the end of the First Century upon a completed Apostolic Era to one described in the vision of Revelation 12 as just entering its first stages at the beginning of the Christian Era, this prolepsis would seem both logical and appropriate. Even so, with us today. After all, the events of Christ’s birth and short life here on earth as portrayed by John’s vision have proved so significant in our world’s developing history that today the entire world designates its counting of years by the initials B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini, 1 A.D.—“in the year of the Lord,” the supposed year of his birth, though actually over four years after His entrance into the world). From all the foregoing information, it then follows that “her child,” Jesus Christ, was born to the true church. He was given to God’s faithful as a whole, including Mary, who was herself a small, but important part, of the “woman” described in John’s vision.

And who was it that inflicted suffering and temptation on the wonderful child Jesus? “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon...stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered.” (Rev. 12:3, 4). In verse 9, we learn that the dragon is “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world” and once sought to destroy the Christ-child. “We’re dealing with symbols! In the vision, the dragon is seen in heaven—yet Jesus, as we all know, was born on earth. So whom on earth does the dragon symbol stand for? Everyone who has heard the Christmas story knows it was King Herod who sent soldiers to Bethlehem to destroy all the baby boys there, hoping to kill Jesus among them. Herod’s soldiers missed the infant Jesus, because in a dream God had warned His parents to escape. King Herod was a puppet of the Romans. Everyone knows too about Pontius Pilate—another Roman administrator—who nailed Jesus to the cross. It was Rome that tried to destroy Jesus. The great red dragon is primarily Satan—and, secondarily, his agent Rome, acting on Satan’s behalf.

“Triumphantly, after Satan and Rome killed our Saviour, Jesus rose from the dead and ‘was caught up unto God, and to His throne’ (verse 5), where He ‘always lives’ as our High Priest ‘to make intercession’ for us (Hebrews 7:25, 26).

“Frustrated in his attempt to kill the Son, the great red dragon now turned his hatred against the son’s mother. But the mother escaped into the ‘Wilderness,’ to a ‘place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.’ (Rev. 12:6).” (God Cares, Vol. 2, pp. 320, 321). As you are about to see, the experience of “the woman” [from the time of Christ’s ascension to His Father’s throne until the “remnant of her seed” appear and finish God’s work on the earth in the closing moments of human probation at the end of the world] is much more suited to the history of the church than it is to the Virgin Mary.

Chapter 6

As a matter of fact, the 1260-day prophecy is mentioned seven times in Daniel and Revelation. There are not, as some have supposed, several 1260-day periods; there is only one. It is mentioned seven times, because it is so very important: in Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 and also in Revelation 12:14, as a time, times (i.e., two times—the lowest plural), and a half time; in Revelation 11:2 and 13:5, as forty-two months; and in Revelation 11:3 and Revelation 12:6, as one thousand two hundred and threescore (sixty) days. In Bible prophecy, there are 360 days to a year, and if you multiply 360 times three and one-half, you will come up with the number—1260. Also, when time is used in Bible prophecy, a day stands for a year. (See Ezekiel 4:6; Num. 14:34). Therefore, the Bible has given us the important key to figuring out the 1260-day prophecy, and that is this—that the 1260 days are actually 1260 literal years.

As Satan used the Roman Empire— particularly King Herod, Pontius Pilate and Nero, as well as many others—to put Christ to death and kill many of God’s people, he, like a chameleon, changed his disguise once again after Western Rome’s fall, but this time, he kept the same Roman roots. The “wilderness” (Rev. 12:6), symbolizing this 1260-year period, is also referred to as the “great tribulation” (Matt 24:21)—a time when millions of God’s true people were martyred for refusing to follow the dictates of the Roman Church . The Bible accurately prophesied that the papal power, as symbolized by the “little horn” in Daniel 7:8, 20, 21 and the “leopard-bodied beast” in Revelation 13:2, would “make war with the saints.” Only one “religious” organization has been responsible for more persecutions and deaths of faithful Bible-believing Christians than any other sect in history—The Holy Roman Catholic Church!

“Step by step, the Roman Empire (the dragon) did indeed give its power, throne, and great authority [Revelation 13:2] to the Catholic Church...A climax came in 538, when the armies of the Empire [the unfallen Eastern division] drove the Arian Ostrogoths out of Rome. By 538, therefore, the 1260 years could begin .” (God Cares, p. 328). “In the sixth century the papacy had become firmly established. Its seat of power was fixed in the imperial city, and the bishop of Rome was declared to be the head over the entire church. Paganism had given place to the papacy. The dragon had given to the beast ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority.’ Revelation 13:2. And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7. Christians were forced to choose either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away

their lives in dungeons or to suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman's ax. Now were fulfilled the words of Jesus: 'Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake.' Luke 21:16, 17. Persecution opened upon the faithful with greater fury than ever before, and the world became a vast battlefield. For hundreds of years the church of Christ found refuge in seclusion and obscurity. Thus says the prophet: 'The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score days.' Revelation 12:6.

"The accession of the Roman Church to power marked the beginning of the Dark Ages. As her power increased, the darkness deepened. Faith was transferred from Christ, the true foundation, to the pope of Rome. Instead of trusting in the Son of God for forgiveness of sins and for eternal salvation, the people looked to the pope, and to the priests and prelates to whom he delegated authority. They were taught that the pope was their earthly mediator and that none could approach God except through him; and, further, that he stood in the place of God to them and was therefore to be implicitly obeyed. A deviation from his requirements was sufficient cause for the severest punishment to be visited upon the bodies and souls of the offenders. Thus the minds of the people were turned away from God to fallible, erring, and cruel men, nay, more, to the prince of darkness himself, who exercised his power through them. Sin was disguised in a garb of sanctity. When the Scriptures are suppressed, and man comes to regard himself as supreme, we need look only for fraud, deception, and debasing iniquity. With the elevation of human laws and traditions was manifest the corruption that ever results from setting aside the law of God.

"Those were days of peril for the church of Christ. The faithful standard-bearers were few indeed. Though the truth was not left without witnesses, yet at times it seemed that error and superstition would wholly prevail, and true religion would be banished from the earth. The gospel was lost sight of, but the forms of religion were multiplied, and the people were burdened with rigorous exactions.

"They were taught not only to look to the pope as their mediator, but to trust to works of their own to atone for sin. Long pilgrimages, acts of penance, the worship of relics, the erection of churches, shrines, and altars, the payment of large sums to the church—these and many similar acts were enjoined to appease the wrath of God or to secure His favor; as if God were like men, to be angered at trifles, or pacified by gifts or acts of penance!

"Notwithstanding that vice prevailed, even among the leaders of the Roman Church, her influence seemed steadily to increase. About the close of the eighth century, papists put forth the claim that in the first ages of the church the bishops of Rome had possessed the same spiritual power which they now assumed. To establish this claim, some means must be employed to give it a show of authority; and this was readily suggested by the father of lies. Ancient writings were forged by monks. Decrees of councils before unheard of were discovered, establishing the universal supremacy of the pope from the earliest times. And a church that had rejected the truth greedily accepted these deceptions.

“The few faithful builders upon the true foundation (I Corinthians 3:10, 11) were perplexed and hindered as the rubbish of false doctrine obstructed the work. Like the builders upon the wall of Jerusalem in Nehemiah’s day, some were ready to say: ‘The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build.’ Nehemiah 4:10. Wearing with the constant struggle against persecution, fraud, iniquity, and every other obstacle that Satan could devise to hinder their progress, some who had been faithful builders became disheartened; and for the sake of peace and security for their property and their lives, they turned away from the true foundation. Others, undaunted by the opposition of their enemies, fearlessly declared: ‘Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible’ (verse 14); and they proceeded with the work, everyone with his sword girded by his side. Ephesians 6:17.

“...The darkness seemed to grow more dense. Image worship became more general. Candles were burned before images, and prayers were offered to them. The most absurd and superstitious customs prevailed. The minds of men were so completely controlled by superstition that reason itself seemed to have lost its sway. While priests and bishops were themselves pleasure-loving, sensual, and corrupt, it could only be expected that the people who looked to them for guidance would be sunken in ignorance and vice.” (The Great Controversy, pp. 54-57).

Friends, I take no pleasure in what I am about to tell you, but I believe you must know the truth. When I was a young Catholic boy attending Annunciation School, not only had I lit candles and said prayers for my dead, departed friends and relatives, while kneeling in front of images of dead “Saints” and the “Virgin Mary” at the Cathedral, but later, as a teenager attending Saint Mary’s High School, I had worked at my father’s liquor store, which was located way across town. I used to see the priests from these schools, dressed in civilian clothes, come into our store and look at the pornographic magazines and novels that were sold there. I used to hide in the back room because I was afraid they would see me. Now I wish I had confronted them for what they were doing!

Then there was the time I was serving Mass as an altar boy with my brother. It was six o’clock Mass, or morning Mass, and the monsignor himself was officiating that morning. When the time came for me to put wine into the chalice for the monsignor, I remember his nudging the small carafe that I was holding each time I poured the wine into his chalice. After his doing this twice, my older and more experienced brother whispered in my ear, “Pour it all in his cup.” Now looking back, I realize the “holy” man was an alcoholic. But there was yet another episode that offended me more than the rest. It was the time I had attended a large Catholic wedding where my Italian cousin was getting married. I remember watching the officiating priest, while at the reception, standing at the bar drinking glass after glass of wine. The guests were patiently waiting for the priest to join the dinner party and bless the food. Finally, someone had the courage to whisper in the priest’s ear that we were waiting for his company and the blessing, and the now drunk, stumbling “Father” yelled out, while staggering in the middle of the hall and impatiently waving the sign of the cross, “What are you waiting for? It’s blessed! Eat !”

Chapter 7

Even though the Roman Church flourished during the 1260-year period, Revelation 13:3 tells us that the beast would indeed suffer a deadly wound, and this prophecy was exactly fulfilled in the year of 1798. “In 1798, 1260 years later [from 538], the pope was taken into captivity and the Catholic Church was dealt a mortal blow. It happened just as Revelation had foretold, with remarkable accuracy....During the French Revolution and under orders from the revolutionary French government, General Alexander Berthier [one of Napoleon’s generals] issued a proclamation in Rome on February 15, 1798, informing Pope Pius VI and the people of Rome that the pope should no longer ‘exercise any function.’ ” (God Cares, p. 328). “Napoleon had dethroned the Pope, because the Pontiffs found themselves alone, the sole fountains of order, peace, law, and safety” in Western Europe. (The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Christ, p. 27). In 1798, Napoleon intended that there would never be another pope. “The Papacy was extinct: not a vestige of its existence remained; and among all the Roman Catholic powers not a finger was stirred in its defense. The Eternal City had no longer prince or Pontiff, its bishop was a dying captive in foreign lands; and the decree was already announced that no successor would be allowed in his place.” (Rome: From the Fall of the Western Empire, p. 440). In other words, a deadly wound was inflicted upon the beast power, just as the Bible prophesied: “And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death.” (Rev. 13:3a). But, that was not the end of the story, for the second part of the Scripture prophesied: “and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast .” (Rev. 13:3b).

But even during the 1260-year papal oppression, when the “woman,” God’s true church, suffered tremendous persecution, God “nourished,” or cared for His children. “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.” (Rev. 12:14-16).

In Revelation 12:14, God preserves the woman from being swept away by providing her with “two wings of a great eagle”—an appropriate symbol of God’s paternal care for His children. When the Israelites escaped from Egyptian slavery, Moses said that God had carried them on “eagles’ wings.” (Exodus 19:4). In Psalm 91:4, we read: “He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust.” And in Deuteronomy 32:9-12: “The Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.” Many Christians suffered under the “flood” of persecution that was cast out of the serpent’s mouth, but the “earth helped the woman,” by providing naturally protected and uninhabited areas for her safety. Many Christians fled to such places as the

mountain valleys of the Alps, to the mountains themselves, and to the sparsely populated British colonies in North America. And, besides, this raises an important question: Why would Mary, during the 1260 years, flee into the wilderness from the papacy, when the Roman Catholic Church is the one who had set her up as one to be worshipped? Why would they want to destroy her—a pillar in their system of worship? How, then, could the Virgin Mary be the “woman,” who had fled for 1260 years into the wilderness for her safety? Furthermore, when did the literal Mary have any experience of being persecuted and driven into the wilderness by the dragon in the period of her life after the ascension of her Son Jesus? The Virgin Mary simply does not fit!

On the other hand, Satan is relentless in his fury to destroy God’s true church, and will not cease his attempt to annihilate every true Christian. Frantic with frustration for failing to destroy the true church during the 1260 years, Satan, in these end times, directs his bitter attacks against the “remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus.” (Revelation 12:17). Friends, Satan will use any means he can to accomplish his goal to deceive the very elect—be it the Roman Empire, the Roman Catholic Church, or even the spiritualistic appearances of the “Virgin Mary .”

“The Catholic Church is avowedly Roman. Its official name today, as it has been throughout most of its long history, is The Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome.” (God Cares, Vol. 2, p. 327). Again, Revelation 13:2 says that “the dragon [in this case, the Roman Empire through whom Satan was working] gave him [the Roman Catholic Church with the pope at the head] his power, and his seat [or throne], and great authority.”

“A throne is a symbol of authority. But because this passage already contains the words ‘power’ and ‘authority,’ we expect ‘throne’ here to convey a more literal meaning. Basically, a throne is a place where an important person sits. Other words for throne are the Greek cathedra, and the Latin sedes, which shows up in the English as see. In the Catholic Church, the building in which a bishop’s throne (or cathedra) is located is called his ‘cathedral.’ The city in which his throne is located is called his ‘see.’ The ultimate see in Catholicism is the Holy See, the city where the Pope’s throne is located. This city is Rome.” (Ibid.). “Specifically, since the Treaty of the Lateran with Italy, the Holy See has been Vatican City, a 108.7-acre tract on Vatican Hill, lying wholly within the city of Rome.” (Ibid., footnote). Furthermore, Revelation 17:9 reveals another identifying feature of the great “whore” of Bible prophecy: “And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.” One Catholic resource acknowledges the following: “It is within the city of Rome, called The City on Seven Hills, that the entire area of Vatican State Proper is now confined.” (The Catholic Encyclopedia, p. 529). It should also be noted that the name Vatican comes from the Latin words Vatis, which means diviner, and can, which means serpent. The name Vatican, therefore, is literally interpreted—The Divining Serpent. In fact, there are serpent door handles on the doors of the new St. Mary’s Cathedral in San Francisco, and a large papal crest in the Vatican museum features a dragon! Serpent crosiers were commonly carried by bishops and high Catholic Church officials during the Middle Ages.

The Book of Isaiah tells us that Satan's ultimate desire and purpose in life is to usurp God's throne: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." (Isaiah 14:12-14). I am so grateful for the next verse that reveals the fate of the devil: "Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell [the grave], to the sides of the pit." (Isaiah 14:15). Do you not think that Satan could be working through the Pope of Rome, who claims to have the power of God on earth? Paul knew that this power would arise, and wrote about it in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come [the second coming of Christ], except there come a falling away first [an apostasy from within God's church—from the Greek word, apostasia, in this case an outgrowth known as the church of Rome], and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" (II Thessalonians 2:3-5). If people would only study their Bibles the way it instructs them to, by taking "precept upon precept; line upon line...here a little and there a little" (Isa. 28:10), in other words, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, they would find the truth through the Holy Spirit's guidance.

According to the prophecy of Revelation 13:3, the deadly blow would not kill, but only wound, the Catholic Church, and surely one has to acknowledge that his "deadly wound" is healing. History tells us that in 1801, Napoleon signed a "concordat," or church-state treaty, with a new Pope. "On the other hand, in 1870 the newly emerging nation of Italy deepened the church's woes for a while by taking away the Papal States, a considerable portion of the Italian peninsula, which the church had owned for centuries....But in 1929 Mussolini signed a concordat granting the pope full authority over the State of Vatican City, 108.7 acres in Rome which includes St. Peter's Cathedral." (God Cares, p. 346). The Vatican had put Mussolini into power, and now Mussolini reciprocated by making the Roman Catholic Church the sole religion in all Italy and giving her 750 million lire in cash and one billion in state bonds.

Ever since 1929 the wound has been healing rapidly. Protestant America, which was built upon the separation of church and state and which had once loudly protested [the word Protestant originated from the people's "protest" against Catholicism] the establishment of the papal power in this country, now welcomes her with open arms. Times have certainly changed, and even America is "wondering" after the beast! In 1951 President Harry Truman asked the Senate to approve his nomination of an ambassador to the State of Vatican City, and America was plunged into a vortex of agony and protest. Truman finally withdrew his request after "hardly a Protestant church in the country failed to express its opposition formally and often acrimoniously." (Church State and Freedom, p. 302). More recently, in 1984, President Ronald Reagan's nomination of William A. Wilson as ambassador to Vatican City was quickly approved by the Senate, 81-13. At this critical time, only a few voices were heard worrying about church and state. The next event was unbelievable because of the swiftness with which

it happened and the players involved. This event was the demise of Communism in Poland through the conspiring efforts of President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II, as featured on the front cover of Time on Feb. 24, 1992. [Friends, is this a fulfillment of the prophecy that the “whore” would commit “fornication” with the “the kings of the earth”? (See Rev. 17:1, 2) The Vatican is a religio-political system whose aim is to control the world!] Then, in a Special Double Issue of Time for December 26, 1994/January 2, 1995, John Paul II was featured once again on its cover as “The Man of the Year.” Unbelievable! How I wondered what the world’s reaction would have been had the number one news weekly printed instead the pope’s true alias as given by the Apostle Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonians—“The Man of Sin.” (II Thess. 2:3). This issue of Time was released only two and a half months after the October 9, 1995, issue of U.S. News which also featured Pope John Paul II on its cover. The caption on their cover read: “Honor thy father. ” Here was another blasphemous statement published by another major U.S. periodical in the United States. Has Protestant America forgotten that the Bible clearly says: “Call no man your [spiritual] father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven .” (Matt. 23:9). Did you know that according to the doctrines of the Catholic Church your spiritual “Father” is the pope of Rome and your spiritual “Mother” is the Virgin Mary? A Catholic Catechism declares: “The Pope is the spiritual Father of all Christians ” and “The Blessed Virgin Mary is our Mother also because, being the brethren of Jesus, we are the children of Mary.” (A Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, pp. 15, 27). I find it quite interesting that the American edition of this book was originally published in 1973 by Marian Publications !

Faithful Protestants, where are the Reformers today? Not only does the Protestant Reformation seem to be a thing of the past, but the churches of the world are uniting on common points of faith , and Mary could be the one to further “heal” the wound of many years. After all, “Pope John Paul II prays every day to the virgin, whom he credits with saving his life.” (Life, Dec., 1996, p. 48). “At a certain moment on May 13, 1981, during an open-air papal audience in St. Peter’s Square, in the presence of some 75,000 people and before the eyes of an estimated 11 million television viewers, Pope John Paul spied a little girl wearing a small picture of Christ’s Mother of Our Lady of Fatima . Just as he bent from his slow moving “popemobile” in a spontaneous gesture to the child, hired assassin Mehmet Ali Agca squeezed off two bullets, aimed precisely where his head had been. As two pilgrims fell wounded to the ground, two more shots rang out, and this time John Paul’s blood stained his white papal cassock.” (The Keys of This Blood, p. 46). “On May 13, 1992 [and again in 1994], John Paul II went to Fatima where he thanked Our Lady of Fatima for sparing his life in the 1981 assassination attempt.” (The Thunder of Justice, p. 151). “Nor is anyone more devoted to Mary. John Paul II, who has ‘dedicated himself and his Pontificate to Our Lady’ bears the M for Mary in his coat of arms; his personal motto, embroidered on the inside of his robes in Latin, is totus tuus sum Maria (Mary, I’m all yours) .” (A Woman Rides the Beast, p. 459).

“Moreover, John Paul is firmly convinced, as are many others, that Mary brought an end to communism throughout Europe. His faith is rooted in the famed prophecies of Mary at Fatima in 1917. According to Sister Lucia, one of the children who claimed to see her, the Virgin predicted the rise of Soviet totalitarianism before it happened. In a subsequent vision,

she directed the Pope and his bishops to consecrate Russia to her Immaculate Heart in order to bring communism to an end.

“According to Lucia, papal attempts to carry out that consecration failed in 1942, '52, and '82. John Paul finally carried out Mary's directive in 1984—and the very next year Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power inaugurated the Soviet collapse. Says Father Robert Fox of the Fatima Family Shrine in Alexandria, S. Dak.: ‘The world will recognize in due time that the defeat of communism came at the intercession of the mother of Jesus.’ ” (Time, Dec., 30, 1991, pp. 64, 65). In fact, the former Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, called Pope John Paul II “the highest authority on earth.” Amazing words, coming from the ex-leader of communist Russia!

John Paul II is currently leading the greatest ecumenical movement in history in order to unite all religions under Rome's leadership. On October 27, 1986, the pope gathered in Assisi, Italy, the leaders of the world's major religions to pray for peace. Included in the group were snake worshippers, Buddhists, Moslems, Hindus, Spiritists, and North American witch doctors. The pope said they were all praying to the same god, and their prayers were “creating a spiritual energy that was bringing about a new climate for peace.” A prophesied World Religion (see Rev 13:3, 4, 12; 17:12-14) is being formed before our eyes, and the Vatican is the headquarters of the new movement. Is this not “spiritual fornication”?

As stated earlier, the Apostle Paul saw “creeping into the church, errors that would prepare the way for the development of the papacy. Little by little, at first in stealth and silence, and then more openly as it increased in strength and gained control of the minds of men, ‘the mystery of iniquity’ carried forward its deceptive and blasphemous work. Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church. The spirit of compromise and conformity was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism. But as persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions. The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ.

“This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of ‘the man of sin’ foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power—a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will.

“...Satan well knew that the Holy Scriptures would enable men to discern his deceptions and withstand his power. It was by the Word that even the Saviour of the world had resisted his attacks. At every assault, Christ presented the shield of eternal truth, saying, ‘It is written.’ To every suggestion of the adversary, He opposed the wisdom and power of the Word. In order

for Satan to maintain his sway over men, and establish the authority of the papal usurper, he must keep them in ignorance of the Scriptures. The Bible would exalt God and place finite men in their true position; therefore its sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed. This logic was adopted by the Roman Church. For hundreds of years the circulation of the Bible was prohibited. The people were forbidden to read it or to have it in their houses, and unprincipled priests and prelates interpreted its teachings to sustain their pretensions. Thus the pope came to be almost universally acknowledged as the vicegerent of God on earth, endowed with authority over church and state....To afford converts from heathenism a substitute for the worship of idols, and thus to promote their nominal acceptance of Christianity, the adoration of images [statues of the Virgin Mary] and relics was gradually introduced into the Christian worship ." (The Great Controversy, pp. 49-52).

Chapter 8

Before I resume my effort to unravel the role that the counterfeit Virgin Mary will play in deceiving the whole world, there are a few other characteristics about the "beast" or "little horn" that I would like to address. The Bible says that he would not only "make war with the saints" and "reign for 1260 years," but that he would also "blaspheme God," "think to change times and laws," and influence "all that dwell upon the earth" to "worship him." (See Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:6-8).

The Bible tells us that the papal power "opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name." (Rev. 13:6). The title of pope is actually derived from the word papa, which means father. In fact, many nations of the world now recognize the pope as the "Holy Father." He is also known as "Pontifex Maximus," which means "the Greatest Bridge-Building," signifying that he claims the position of Christ the true "ladder" (or "bridge") who would span the gulf sin had made between Heaven and earth. (See Gen. 28:12 and John 1:51). He also is known by the name of "Vicarius Filii Dei" (the vicar, or official ruling representative, of the Son of God on earth). Thus, he claims to hold the title, position, and authority of God the Father (il papa), God the Son (Pontifex Maximus), and God the Holy Spirit (Vicarius Filii Dei [These texts show the Holy Spirit is Christ's true vicar on earth: John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 8, 13, 14]) Hence the Pope is crowned with a triple crown [the tiara], as king of heaven, and earth, and the lower regions.

Ecclesiastical literature is replete with exhibits of the arrogant, blasphemous claims of the papacy. Typical examples are the following extracts from a large encyclopedic work written by a Roman Catholic divine of the 18th century, plus other examples of more recent times:

"The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God....

"The Pope is as it were God on earth, sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief of kings, having plenitude of power, to whom has been intrusted by the omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly but also of the heavenly kingdom....

“The Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws....

“The Pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man but of God, and he acts as vicegerent of God upon earth with most ample power of binding and loosing sheep.” (Translated from Lucius Ferraris, “Papa II,” *Prompta Bibliotheca*, Vol. VI, pp. 25-29).

“The Pope is infallible....[He] cannot err when, as Shepherd and Teacher of all Christians, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals, to be held by the whole church.” (A Catechism of Christian Doctrine, p. 16).

“People who see him—and countless millions have—do not forget him. His appearances generate electricity unmatched by anyone else on earth. That explains, for instance, why in rural Kenyan villages thousands of children, plus many cats and roosters and even hotels, are named John Paul. Charisma is the only conceivable reason why a CD featuring him saying the rosary—in Latin—against a backdrop of Bach and Handel is currently ascending the charts in Europe. It accounts for the dazed reaction of a young woman who found herself, along with thousands around her in a sports stadium in Denver, cheering and applauding him: ‘I don’t react that way to rock groups. What is it that he has?’

“...When he talks, it is not only to his flock of over a billion; he expects the world to listen. And the flock and the world listen.

“...John Paul can also impose his will, and there was no more formidable and controversial example of this than the Vatican’s intervention at the U.N.’s International Conference on population and development in Cairo in September. There the Pope’s emissaries defeated a U.S.-backed proposition John Paul feared would encourage abortions worldwide. The consequences may be global and—critics predict—catastrophic, particularly in the teeming Third World, where John Paul is so admired.

“...John Paul’s impact on the world has already been enormous, ranging from the global to the personal. He has covered more than half a million miles of travels....He is an army of one....‘He’ll go down in history as the greatest of modern Popes,’ says the Rev. Billy Graham. ‘He’s been the strong conscience of the whole Christian world.’” (Time, Dec. 26, 1994/Jan. 2, 1995, pp. 53, 54). Didn’t the prophecy of Revelation 13:3 say that “all the world wondered [admired or marveled] after the beast”! And this includes the youth, for the Stockton Record, as well as many other major newspapers, featured the following article from the Associated Press: “1 million youths rally to pope’s call. The huge crowd, gathered for a Mass at Poland’s holiest shrine during the sixth annual Vatican-sponsored World Youth Day, interrupted John Paul for nearly 10 minutes with applause, singing, and chants of ‘Long live the pope!’”

Another interesting note is that John Paul is not the only one interested in World Youth Day. “The ‘Mary of the New Advent’ to whom the pope referred in Denver is particularly associated with World Youth Day, which John Paul II has been promoting for some years. She was displayed at the all-night prayer vigil of pilgrims who walked to Cherry Creek Park (near Denver) to meet the pope, who came in a helicopter. A journalist who was present writes: ‘It

is well past 9 P.M. when the icon, the official one of World Youth Day, is presented. This part of the vigil is referred to as 'Veneration [worship] of the image of the Virgin Mary: Our Lady of the New Advent.'

"...The next day, Sunday, the pope returned in his helicopter. The pilgrims...greeted him again with renewed excitement. There he celebrated Mass and 3000 priests took several hours to minister the wafers to the crowd of 375,000. Addressing Mary in heaven personally at times during his talk, the pope began: 'With my heart full of praise for the Queen of Heaven, the sign of hope and source of comfort on our pilgrimage of faith to the heavenly Jerusalem, I greet all of you who are present at this solemn liturgy....This liturgy presents you, Mary, as the woman clothed with the sun ...O woman clothed with the sun...the youth of the world greet you with so much love....In Mary the final victory of life over death is already a reality.'" (A Woman Rides the Beast, pp. 442, 443). Obviously, the pope of Rome is a major player in selling the counterfeit Mary to the world, youth included.

Daniel the Prophet, in further describing the characteristics of the "little horn," which he saw in vision coming out of Rome, said that "in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." (Dan. 7:8). And Jesus Christ further warned us through His servant John of the following: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six [666]." (Rev. 13:18). You have no idea how amazed I was the day I learned that if you take the pope's title, "Vicarius Filii Dei," which is on his miter, and assign the appropriate value for each Roman numeral (such as V=5, I=1 (6 times), C=100, U=5, L=50, and D=500), the total comes to 666! That means that every pope that has ever lived and every pope that is to come has the number 666—the title of the Antichrist—and the prophecy is then applicable to the present pope!

Not only is the pope of Rome revered as the great moral leader of the world, he is also, according to Roman Catholic belief, a direct successor of St. Peter, whom Rome refers to as the first pope—the rock on whom Jesus Christ built His church. Friends, this is an untrue conclusion, since Peter was never referred to as the "the rock" by Jesus. The Scripture the Catholic Church uses to support its claim that Peter was the "rock" is Matthew 16:18: "And I [Jesus] say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But, if you take this verse, using the original Greek, it actually says: Thou art Peter [Christ called the Apostle by his first name, which in the Greek is Petros—a (piece of) rock, (Strong's Concordance)], and upon this rock [Christ now refers to Himself as the Rock, which in the Greek is an entirely different word with a different gender—namely, Petra, a (mass of) rock, (Strong's Concordance)]. In effect, this is like a mountain compared to a pebble, as Divinity rightfully is when compared to humanity. In fact, just a few verses later, when Christ said "that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day," Peter began "to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Peter was actually saying, "No way, Lord, You will not die." Friends, without the death of Christ as the Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of the world, salvation would be impossible. Peter

didn't understand Christ's true mission at this time and, therefore, responded emotionally. To this response, Christ "said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense to me." (Verses 21-23). Remember that Matthew 16:18 said that the "gates of hell shall not prevail" against the "Rock." Well, Satan had just prevailed against Peter, so he could not be the Rock, but the devil certainly will never prevail against the "Rock of Ages"—Jesus Christ!

The Bible says in I Corinthians 10:4 that "that Rock was Christ." In fact, Peter himself, when referring to Jesus in the Bible, called Him the "chief corner stone ...the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner ." (I Pet. 2:6, 7). "In infinite wisdom, God chose the foundation stone and laid it Himself. He called it 'a sure foundation.' The entire world may lay upon it their burdens and griefs; it can endure them all. With perfect safety they may build upon it. Christ is a 'tried stone.' Those who trust in Him, He never disappoints. He has borne every test. He has endured the pressure of Adam's guilt, and the guilt of his posterity, and has come off more than conqueror of the powers of evil. He has borne the burdens cast upon Him by every repenting sinner. In Christ the guilty heart has found relief. He is the sure foundation. All who make Him their dependence rest in perfect security." (The Desire of Ages, pp. 598, 599). Christ is the true foundation, the "chief corner stone," on which the Christian church is built; and by His dwelling in us through the Holy Spirit, we become living stones in His spiritual temple, for we are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. 2:20-22). But since the Roman Catholic Church uses the argument that Peter was the rock, the first pope, it concludes that its popes, as descendants of Peter, along with its bishops and priests, have the power to forgive sins, which the Bible declares is blasphemy. (See Matt. 9:1-6).

I remember kneeling, many times, in a confessional and telling my sins to a priest who sat behind a dark screen. Little did I know at that time, that the confessional had its origin with the pagan priests of Babylon (to be addressed later). After hearing my confession, the priest would give me a number of prayers to recite for my penance. On one occasion, I was given a whole rosary [a string of beads of pagan origin] to say for my penance, which included fifty three Hail Marys: "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." (Matt. 6:7). Since I was young and ignorant of the Scriptures, I did not know that the Bible gives the following instructions in regard to the confession of sin: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." And "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 2:1, 2; 1:9).

There is yet another identifying feature of the beast that must be addressed—that He would “think to change times and laws.” (Daniel 7:25). I will never forget the day I learned that the Roman Catholic Church and the papal power were foretold in the Bible prophecy. One Saturday morning I had been invited to a local church to hear a young minister who was speaking on the prophecies of the Book of Daniel. That morning he taught on the prophecies of Daniel 7, which reveal the four great world powers that would successively rule the world. These four monolithic empires were Babylon (the lion, verse 4), Medo-Persia (the bear, verse 5), Greece (the leopard, verse 6), and Rome (the fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, verse 7). He then explained that out of the fourth beast, Rome, which is “the fourth kingdom upon earth” (verse 23), would come a “little horn” (verse 8), who “shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and dividing of time” (verse 25).

“Now how did the papal power think to change times and laws,” he asked the class, “and what laws would Satan specifically target in his attack?” “The most likely answer would be the law of God—the Ten Commandments,” he said. The shocker came to me when the young minister began to explain how the Roman Catholic Church did, indeed, just that. “They took out the second commandment, which says: ‘Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth,’” he said. Immediately I thought about the images of Mary, Baby Jesus, and the Saints in the Cathedral of the Annunciation. How I revered the statues, especially the ones of Mary. I remember wondering, as I listened to the minister speak, why there were statues in the Cathedral, anyway, when the second commandment forbade image worship. Either the statues were a violation of God’s law, or the second commandment, as the young minister insisted, had been changed! What about the bleeding icons and the weeping statues? Would God work miracles through graven images which He forbade?

Eager to learn more, I continued to listen closely to what the young man had to say about the “little horn” power of Daniel 7. “Not only did the Pope ‘think’ to change the second commandment,” he continued, “but he moved the rest of the other nine commandments up one number [number three was now number two, and number four was now number three, etc.], and then he divided number ten in half, making two commandments out of the one, so that there would still be ten commandments!” I remember the day I looked in a Catholic Catechism to verify this for myself and gasped. The second commandment was gone, the fourth commandment, which says: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God” was now the third and simply said: “Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath.” Number nine said, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife.” And number ten said, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s goods.” What authority did the Roman Catholic Church have, anyway, to change the law of God, I wondered? The young minister continued with his lecture by challenging my lifelong beliefs even further when he asked the question, “How did the little horn think to change ‘times’?”

Before I answer that question, I first want to tell you a little more about my life as a young Catholic boy. Every Sunday I was required to attend 9:00 A.M. Mass at the Cathedral of the Annunciation. If I missed a Sunday, I was required to bring a note from my parents explaining why I had missed Mass that day, or I would have to stay after school for detention. It was a law!—a “Sunday Law”! In fact, it is a mortal sin to miss Mass on Sunday, according to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, I was quite surprised when the young minister began to question Sunday-keeping. He began by stating that nowhere in the Bible is Sunday regarded as a “holy day.” In fact, *A Doctrinal Catechism*, by Rev. Stephen Keenan, page 174 says:

“Question—Have you any other way of proving that the church [Roman Catholic] has power to institute festivals of precept?

“Answer—Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is not Scriptural authority.”

“The Catholic church, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday.” (*The Catholic Mirror*, official organ of Cardinal Gibbons, Sept. 23, 1893).

Again the question is asked of them in still another catechism:

“Question—Which is the Sabbath day?

“Answer—Saturday is the Sabbath day.

“Question—Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

“Answer—We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea, (A.D. 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.” (*The Convert’s Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, p. 50, Third Edition, 1913, a work which received the “apostolic blessing” of Pius X, Jan. 25, 1910).

After the young minister’s lecture, which both shocked and disturbed me, I ran out of the church and remember looking for one of the Catholic priests that had taught me “the truth.” It so happened that the very next evening I was going to a party to which I had been invited the week before. And whom do you think I ran into there? It was one of the priests from the Cathedral of the Annunciation! Talk about Providence! With a cocktail in one hand and a cigarette in the other, the priest seemed pleased to see me after so many years. My mind was racing, and it wasn’t long before I sprung the unexpected question upon him: “Which is the Sabbath day?” I asked. With an interesting look in his eye, he answered cautiously, “Saturday!” I then probed him further as to how God’s holy day (Isaiah 58:13), the Seventh-day Sabbath, got changed from Saturday to Sunday? With raised eyebrows, and the smell of liquor and tobacco on the “holy” man’s breath, he answered, and I kid you not, “the pope changed the day!” I then asked him if the Catholic Church had indeed killed millions of Christians during the Dark Ages? He reluctantly answered, while looking into his glass, “We would like to forget

that.” And to think that I used to confess my sins to these “reverend men of God,” who buy pornographic literature, smoke cigarettes, and get drunk in public!

Chapter 10

So it was all true. The young minister had spoken the truth that Saturday morning! The “little horn” of Daniel 7 and “the leopard-bodied beast” of Revelation 13 is the Roman papacy, who thought to change “times and laws.” Satan had succeeded through his earthly agent, the pope of Rome, to change the time we are to worship the Creator—from the seventh day to the first day of the week—and, as a consequence, many Christians are keeping, most of them unknowingly, mind you, the “commandments of men.” Did not Christ warn us: “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”? (Matt. 15:9). Friends, Satan in his efforts to usurp the throne of God and sit in the sides of the north (Isa. 14:13, 14) as God Himself, has changed “times” by changing the day the Bible says we are to worship the Creator! By this apparent change, the creature Satan, through his human agents, has claimed the authority of the Creator, and millions and millions of people all over the world are unknowingly paying homage to the “father of lies” by worshipping at his commandment on the first day of the week—the venerable day of the sun—Sunday!

“The detector of error having been removed, Satan worked according to his will. Prophecy had declared that the papacy was to ‘think to change times and laws.’ Daniel 7:25. This work it was not slow to attempt. To afford converts from heathenism a substitute for the worship of idols, and thus to promote their nominal acceptance of Christianity, the adoration of images and relics was gradually introduced into the Christian worship . . . The decree of a general council finally established this system of idolatry. To complete the sacrilegious work, Rome presumed to expunge from the law of God the second commandment, forbidding image worship , and to divide the tenth commandment, in order to preserve the number.

“The spirit of concession to paganism opened the way for a still further disregard of Heaven’s authority. Satan, working through unconsecrated leaders of the church , tampered with the fourth commandment also, and essayed to set aside the ancient Sabbath, the day which God had blessed and sanctified (Genesis 2:2, 3), and in its stead to exalt the festival observed by the heathen as ‘the venerable day of the sun. ’ This change was not at first attempted openly. In the first centuries the true Sabbath had been kept by all Christians. They were jealous for the honor of God, and, believing that His law is immutable, they zealously guarded the sacredness of its precepts. But with great subtlety Satan worked through his agents to bring about his object. That the attention of the people might be called to the Sunday, it was made a festival in honor of the resurrection of Christ . . . Religious services were held upon it; yet it was regarded as a day of recreation, the Sabbath being still sacredly observed.

“To prepare the way for the work which he designed to accomplish, Satan had led the Jews, before the advent of Christ, to load down the Sabbath with the most rigorous exactions, making its observance a burden. Now, taking advantage of the false light in which he had thus caused it to be regarded, he cast contempt upon it as a Jewish institution. While Christians generally

continued to observe the Sunday as a joyous festival, he led them, in order to show their hatred of Judaism, to make the Sabbath a fast, a day of sadness and gloom.

“In the early part of the fourth century the emperor Constantine issued a decree making Sunday a public festival throughout the Roman Empire. The day of the sun was revered by his pagan subjects and was honored by Christians; it was the emperor’s policy to unite the conflicting interests of heathenism and Christianity. He was urged to do this by the bishops of the church, who, inspired by ambition and thirst for power, perceived that if the same day was observed by both Christians and heathen, it would promote the nominal acceptance of Christianity by pagans and thus advance the power and glory of the church. But while many God-fearing Christians were gradually led to regard Sunday as possessing a degree of sacredness, they still held the true Sabbath as the holy of the Lord and observed it in obedience to the fourth commandment.

“The archdeceiver had not completed his work. He was resolved to gather the Christian world under his banner and to exercise his power through his vicegerent, the proud pontiff who claimed to be the representative of Christ. Through half-converted pagans, ambitious prelates, and world-loving churchmen he accomplished his purpose. Vast councils were held from time to time, in which the dignitaries of the church were convened from all the world. In nearly every council the Sabbath which God had instituted was pressed down a little lower, while the Sunday was correspondingly exalted. Thus the pagan festival came finally to be honored as a divine institution, while the Bible Sabbath was pronounced a relic of Judaism, and its observers were declared to be accursed.

“The great apostate had succeeded in exalting himself ‘above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.’ (2 Thessalonians 2:4). He had dared to change the only precept of the divine law that unmistakably points all mankind to the true and living God. In the fourth commandment, God is revealed as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and is thereby distinguished from all false gods . It was as a memorial of the work of creation that the seventh day was sanctified as a rest day for man. It was designed to keep the living God ever before the minds of men as the source of being and the object of reverence and worship. Satan strives to turn men from their allegiance to God, and from rendering obedience to His law; therefore he directs his efforts especially against that commandment which points to God as the Creator .

“Protestants now urge that the resurrection of Christ on Sunday made it the Christian Sabbath. But Scripture evidence is lacking. No such honor was given to the day by Christ or His apostles. The observance of Sunday as a Christian institution had its origin in that ‘mystery of lawlessness’ (2 Thessalonians 2:7, R.V.) which, even in Paul’s day, had begun its work. Where and when did the Lord adopt this child of the papacy? What valid reason can be given for a change which the Scriptures do not sanction?” (The Great Controversy, pp. 51-54).

What does the fourth commandment actually say: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day [Saturday] is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (Exodus 20:8-11).

Does the Catholic Church acknowledge that there is no command in the Bible for the sanctification of Sunday? “You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify.” (Faith of Our Fathers, p. 111).

Does Revelation 12:17 make more sense to you now? “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 14:12 also adds: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus”; and Revelation 22:14 concludes: “Blessed are they that do His commandments [not Satan’s], that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” The Apostle John also penned the following words while under inspiration: “And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (I John 2:3, 4). After all, Christ Himself said: “If you love me, keep My commandments....even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.” (John 14:15; 15:10).

Chapter 11

Friends, from our study thus far, you can plainly see that the “beast,” or “little horn,” is the Roman papacy. So, what is the mark of the beast—or the mark of the Roman papacy? Before I answer that question, let me first show you what the seal of God is. A seal can be an embossed emblem, symbol, letter, etc., which is attached to a legal document. It has to do with legal matters. A seal has three parts: The name of the ruler, the ruler’s title, and the extent of the ruler’s territory. The Bible gives us an important clue as to where God’s seal is located, for it says in Isaiah 8:16: “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.” In fact, the “new covenant” (Heb. 8:8) that God made with His people involves His law. In Hebrews 8:10 we read: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts”: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” In Revelation chapter 7, we read in verses 2 and 3: “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels...Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” Therefore, we can conclude that God’s seal has something to do with His law in our foreheads, or in our minds. Behind the

forehead is the part of the brain called the frontal lobe, where our moral decisions are made. It is also the part of the brain where the conscience is located.

God's law is known as the Ten Commandments —His ten principles of love. They are also referred to as the "royal law" or the "law of liberty," according to the Apostle James, by which all mankind will be judged. (See James 2:8-12; Eccl. 12:13, 14). In fact, the Bible gives the following definition of sin: "Sin is the transgression of the law [the Ten Commandments]." (I John 3:4). Therefore, it is safe to say that God is looking for an obedient people—a people in whose minds are written His moral law, His law of love, and who would rather die than transgress His commandments. It is interesting to note that in the bosom of God's Ten Commandments, which, by the way, are impossible to keep without the aid of the Holy Spirit writing these beautiful principles in one's heart, is the Sabbath—the one commandment that gives the name, the title—or office, and the territory of God Almighty! "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God ...For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." (Ex. 20:8-11). This, friends, is the only place in the Bible where you will find God's seal! The Sabbath contains His name, "the Lord thy God;" His title or office, [the Creator who] "made;" and His territory, "the heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." This is why the Prophet Ezekiel said: "And hallow My sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." (Ezek. 20:20). Thus, the seal of God, which is to be in the heart of man, is in the heart of God's law! Notice also that the command is to keep holy the Sabbath Day. "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." (Lev. 11:44). The day itself is already holy, because God at Creation had done three things to make it that way forever to represent His own holiness: He rested on the Sabbath Day with man; He blessed the day; and He sanctified it (or set it apart for a holy use). Thus, the day is and remains holy forever. "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever." (Eccl. 3:14). But it is impossible to keep the Sabbath holy while breaking any other one of the nine remaining commandments, or principles of holiness. Hence, the keeping of the Sabbath Day holy uniquely embraces all the rest of the Ten Commandments, which are to be sealed in the heart [mind], and is especially suited by its very function to be the "seal of God" under the Holy Spirit, "whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. 4:30).

I remember the first time I read about the Sabbath in the Book of Isaiah. A deep conviction came over me as I learned that the prophet referred to the seventh-day Sabbath as God's "holy day." The prophet wrote while under inspiration: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth." (Isaiah 58:13, 14). In fact, just a few chapters later, Isaiah further tells us that the saved will worship the Lord on the seventh-day Sabbath in the Earth Made New! "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another,

shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.” (Isaiah 66:22, 23). I remember asking myself the question, “Would God give to man instructions to keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 2:1-3) and to His people throughout the Old Testament, and then change the day in the New Testament from Saturday to Sunday, and then back again to His original Sabbath in the Earth Made New? Of course not! The very idea seems preposterous! Christ kept the Sabbath holy in the New Testament, “as was His custom” (Luke 4:16), and even identified Himself as the “Lord of the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27, 28). The Apostle Paul, “as his manner was,” also kept the seventh-day Sabbath. (See Acts 13:14; 16:13; 17:1, 2; 18:4)!!!

“Throughout the New Testament, written years after Christ’s ascension, the Holy Spirit, speaking of the seventh day, calls it ‘the Sabbath’ upwards of fifty times....In the Levitical or sacrificial ordinances of the sanctuary services there were annual sabbaths and feasts, associated with meats and drinks and ceremonial observances. But in appointing these the Lord specifically distinguished between them and the one and only weekly Sabbath, which was from the beginning. ‘These are the feasts of the Lord,’ He said, ‘beside the Sabbaths of the Lord.’ Lev. 23:37, 38.

“The annual festivals and sabbaths, like all the ordinances of the Levitical service, were shadows of things to come, and found their fulfilment in the great sacrifice of Calvary. Col 2:16, 17. But the Sabbath of the Lord was made blessed and holy by God at the creation, before sin had entered the world, before any sacrificial or shadowy service was instituted to point to a coming Redeemer. It is a fundamental and primary institution, a part of the moral order of God’s government for man, the same as the obligations set forth in each of the other commandments....Thus we find the seventh-day Sabbath a plant of the heavenly Father’s planting, rooted deep in all Holy Scripture, and abiding eternally in the world to come.” (Our Day in the Light of Prophecy, pp. 163, 164).

Has it occurred to you that most Christians in the world keep only nine commandments? This could be the reason why God began the fourth commandment with the word, “Remember,” for He must have known we would forget! Besides, would not a change, involving the day God expects us to worship and praise Him, be in the Bible? And why is there not a verse in the Holy Scriptures supporting the observance of Sunday? The Scriptures say: “For I am the Lord, I change not....Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Mal. 3:6, 7). Before we look at some heavier issues involving the “mark of the beast,” please remember that God is seeking to write His law in our hearts, but only with our consent, of course. A Scripture that has become precious to me which verifies this promise is in II Corinthians 3:3: “Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.”

In the book of Revelation, chapter 17, we find yet more clues as to who the “great whore” of Bible prophecy is. But in addition to that, there is in this chapter a great parallel involving the word “mystery” that must be considered, because it will explain the origin of Mariology (the body of belief, doctrine, and opinion concerning the Virgin Mary), and how it crept into the Christian church. The first six verses of the chapter read: “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, 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. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.” (Rev. 17:1-6).

One historian, Alexander Hislop, the author of *The Two Babylons*, spent years researching the connection between ancient Babylon and the papal system of worship. He wrote: “The gigantic system of moral corruption and idolatry described in this passage under the emblem of a woman with a ‘golden cup in her hand’ (Rev. 17:4) ‘making all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication’ (Rev. 17:2; 18:3), is divinely called ‘MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT’ (Rev. 17:5). That Paul’s ‘Mystery of Iniquity,’ as described in II Thess. 2:7, has its counterpart in the Church of Rome, no man of candid mind, who has carefully examined the subject, can easily doubt....Now, as the system here described is equally characterized by the name of ‘Mystery,’ it may be presumed that both passages refer to the same system. But the language applied to the New Testament Babylon, as the reader cannot fail to see, naturally leads us back to the Babylon of the Ancient world. As the Apocalyptic woman has in her hand a cup, wherewith she intoxicates the nations, so was it with the Babylon of old. Of that Babylon, while in all its glory, the Lord thus spake, in denouncing its doom by the prophet Jeremiah: ‘Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.’ (Jer. 51:7). Why this exact similarity of language in regard to the two systems? The natural inference surely is, that the one stands to the other in the relation of type and antitype. Now, as the Babylon of the Apocalypse [Revelation 17:5] is characterized by the name of ‘Mystery,’ so the grand distinguishing feature of the ancient Babylonian system was the Chaldean ‘Mysteries,’ that formed so essential a part of that [ancient, secret religious] system [that included ceremonies and the worship of certain gods and goddesses]. And to these mysteries, the very language of the Hebrew prophet, symbolical though of course it is, distinctly alludes, when he speaks of Babylon as a ‘golden cup.’ To drink of ‘mysterious beverages,’...was indispensable on the part of all who sought initiation in these Mysteries. These ‘mysterious beverages’ were composed of ‘wine, honey, water, and flour.’” (*The Two Babylons*, pp. 4, 5). Just as this “mysterious

beverage” had an intoxicating nature, so it is with the “Mystery of iniquity,” who spiritually is “making all nations drunk with the wine [her intoxicating and mysterious doctrines] of her fornication.”

“The Chaldean Mysteries can be traced up to the days of Semiramis...that beautiful but abandoned queen of Babylon ...the great ‘Mother’ of the gods...the Mother of all impurity,...[the one who] raised the very city where she had reigned...as the grand seat...of idolatry and consecrated prostitution. Thus was this Chaldean queen a fit and remarkable prototype of the “Woman” in the Apocalypse, with the golden cup in her hand, and the name on her forehead, ‘Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.’ The apocalyptic emblem of the Harlot woman with the cup in her hand was even embodied in the symbols of idolatry derived from ancient Babylon, as they were exhibited in Greece...and it is singular that in our own day, and so far as appears for the first time, the Roman Church has actually taken this very symbol as her own chosen emblem. In 1825...Pope Leo XII, struck a medal, bearing on the one side his own image, and on the other, that of the Church of Rome symbolized as a ‘Woman,’ holding in her left hand a cross, and in her right hand a cup, with the legend around her, ‘Sedet super universum,’ ‘The whole world is her seat.’

“...It was a matter, therefore, of necessity, if idolatry were to be brought in, and especially such foul idolatry as the Babylonian system...that it should be done stealthily and in secret....The priests were the only depositories of religious knowledge; they only had the true tradition, by which the writs and symbols of the public religion could be interpreted; and without blind and implicit submission to them, what was necessary for salvation could not be known. Now compare this to the history of the Papacy, and with its spirit and modus operandi throughout, and how exact was the coincidence! Was it in a period of patriarchal light that the corrupt system of the Babylonian ‘Mysteries’ began? It was in a period of still greater light that that unholy and unscriptural system commenced, that has found such rank development in the Church of Rome. It began in the very age of the apostles, when the primitive Church was in its flower, when the glorious fruits of Pentecost were everywhere to be seen, when martyrs were sealing their testimony for the truth with their blood. Even then, when the Gospel shone so brightly, the Spirit of God bore this clear and distinct testimony by Paul: ‘The mystery of iniquity doth already work.’ (II Thess. 2:7). That system of iniquity...in due time would be awfully ‘revealed,’ and would continue until it should be destroyed ‘by the breath of the Lord’s mouth, and consumed by the brightness of his coming.’ (Ibid., v. 8). But at its first introduction into the Church, it came in secretly and by stealth, with ‘all deceivableness of unrighteousness.’ It wrought ‘mysteriously’ under fair but false pretenses, leading men away from the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus. And it did so secretly, for the very same reason that idolatry was secretly introduced in the ancient Mysteries of Babylon; it was not safe, it was not prudent to do otherwise. The zeal of the true Church, though destitute of civil power, would have aroused itself, to put the false system and all its abettors beyond the pale of Christianity, if it had appeared openly and all at once in all its grossness; and this would have arrested its progress. Therefore it was brought in secretly, and by little and little, one corruption being introduced

after another , as apostasy proceeded, and the backsliding Church became prepared to tolerate it, till it has reached the gigantic height we now see...the system of the Papacy.

“....Craftily and gradually did Rome lay the foundation of its system of priestcraft, on which it was afterwards to rear so vast a superstructure. At its commencement, ‘Mystery’ was stamped upon its system....The clerical power of the Roman priesthood culminated in the erection of the confessional . That confessional was itself borrowed from Babylon....The dictate of Scripture in regard to confession is, ‘Confess your faults one to another’ (James 5:16), which implies that the priest should confess to the people, as well as the people to the priest, if either should sin against the other...Rome, leaving the Word of God, has had recourse to the Babylonian system. In that system, secret confession to the priest, according to a prescribed form, was required of all who were admitted to the ‘Mysteries’....Now, this confession is made by every individual, in secrecy and in solitude, to the priest [on pain of perdition] sitting in the name and clothed with the authority of God, invested with the power to examine the conscience, to judge the life, to absolve or condemn according to his mere arbitrary will and pleasure....Without such confession, in the Church of Rome, there can be no admission to the Sacraments, any more than in the days of Paganism there could be admission without confession to the benefit of the MysteriesThis is the grand pivot on which the whole ‘Mystery of Iniquity,’ as embodied in the Papacy, is made to turn; and wherever it is submitted to, admirably does it serve the design of binding men in abject submission to the priesthood.” (The Two Babylons, pp. 5-11). [No wonder the counterfeit Virgin Mary told the visionaries who saw her in Medjugorje the following: “One must invite people to go to Confession each month....Monthly Confession will be a remedy for the Church in the West. One must convey this message to the West!” (The Thunder of Justice, p. 198)].

“In conformity with the principle out of which the confessional grew, the Church, that is, the clergy, claimed to be the sole depositories of the true faith of Christianity. As the Chaldean priests were believed alone to possess the key to the understanding of the Mythology of Babylon, a key handed down to them from primeval antiquity, so the priests of Rome set [themselves] up to be the sole interpreters of Scripture...They, therefore, require implicit faith in their dogmas; all men were bound to believe as the Church believed, while the Church in this way could shape its faith as it pleased....In every respect, then, we see how justly Rome bears on its forehead the name, ‘Mystery, Babylon the Great.’” (The Two Babylons, p. 11).

Chapter 13

It is interesting that the word “Sacrament,” which is a Roman Catholic term for “a visible, tangible sign through which God approaches us, enters into our lives, and draws us to Himself through his grace....comes from a Latin translation of the Greek ‘mysterion’ or ‘mystery.’ ” (Basics of the Faith: A Catholic Catechism, p. 151). Three of the seven sacraments, or “mysteries,” are these: infant baptism, which is non-Biblical; the Eucharist Presence of Christ, which is certainly a mystery unlike any other; and the Holy Orders, the priesthood, in which priests are sworn to celibacy as a discipline of the Roman Catholic Church, even though the

Bible says: “It is not good that the man should be alone” and “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior...Not given to wine.” (Gen. 2:18; I Tim 3:2, 3).

One only needs to look in the newspapers to see the fruit of this “Holy Sacrament,” for they are filled with reports of the lewd and promiscuous practices of celibate priests. Some of the headlines include: “Priests and Pedophilia: A Silence That Needs Breaking”; “Sex abuse cases sap church budget”; “Sex abuse lawsuits”; and “40% of U.S. Roman Catholic Priests Reported To Be Gay.” Not surprising is the fact that homosexual priests are dying from AIDS worldwide. In fact, in the past few years the Roman Catholic Church has spent one billion dollars in out-of-court costs involving the sex affairs of priests. Did not the prophecy of the Apostle Paul hit the mark when he wrote the following: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” (I Tim. 4:1-3). With all the sexual exploits of celibate priests coming out in the open, Paul’s words are very apropos: “Speaking lies in hypocrisy [their messages on moral purity, anti-homosexualism, abortion, and taking an oath of celibacy while practicing sexual perversion are certainly ‘lies in hypocrisy’], having their conscience seared with a hot iron [insensitive, scarred, non-functional]. (Verse 2). May we all pray that they repent of such deeds. Also, to add to the testimony that the prophecy of I Timothy 4 applies to the Roman Catholic Church, I, while growing up in our Catholic home, was not allowed to eat meat on Fridays. My mother would serve me fish. Later the Church changed the rule and made it applicable only to Lent. But it still fulfils the prophecy.

Friends, not only had I, as a young Catholic boy, confessed my sins to the priests (many of whom were committing grievous sins), I also had offered prayers to and lit candles for my departed loved ones, prayed to dead saints and the Virgin Mary while kneeling in front of their images, and said, literally, thousands of Hail Marys. As I look back, I see even more Babylonian practices in which I unknowingly participated. For instance, here are a few: my baptism as an infant (because of my family’s belief in original sin); my participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass, which I attended hundreds of times and which is a celebration of the Eucharist (Holy Communion); and my belief in purgatory, a place where I could still be purified from sin even after death. To redeem my past, I feel I need to expose the origin of these other Roman Catholic practices and their pagan roots, as being further identifying characteristics of “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots” and to help others meet God’s approval in the coming contest.

First, let us look at infant baptism. Nowhere in the Bible will you find one instance of the baptism of an infant. But if one believes the Roman Catholic Doctrine of original sin—which means that every person born into this world inherits Adam’s sin, guilt, and condemnation—then should a person die, whether as an infant or not, before baptism, that person would be lost for eternity. Therefore, Roman Catholicism advocates infant baptism as a means of cleansing, or purifying,

that child from original sin. Today, I realize that I had no choice, as is the case with millions of babies, in deciding whether or not to be a Roman Catholic. I became a member of that denomination before I could even speak or think for myself. Had I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior at just a few months of age? Of course not. But the Catholic Church substitutes the church's faith for that of the child. Furthermore, baptism, which is to be by immersion [the whole body being covered by water (see Matt. 3:16), and never simply by the sprinkling of water on the person's head], is a public declaration of the baptismal candidate's acceptance of Christ both as his personal Savior from sin and for His substitutionary death on that person's behalf. It is a declaration that the "old man (the carnal man)" is being buried in the watery grave, "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin [which an infant knows nothing about]." (Romans 6:6). So with baptism, it is "a seal of the righteousness of the faith" (Rom. 4:11) which the man has before he is baptized; for it is said, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." (Mark 16:16). Where faith exists, if it be genuine, it is the evidence of a new heart, of a regenerated nature. (See Gal. 2:20). All these aforementioned things are impossible for a babe.

Friends, this doctrine and discipline of the Roman papacy, as it is with many of its doctrines, was never derived from the Bible. Therefore "regeneration by baptism" —the belief that your sins, including "original sin," are actually washed away by the water used, and not by your faith in the cleansing blood of Christ that preceded the ceremony —is fundamentally an article of Rome. It is as if baptism, or works, and not faith, justifies or pardons us from sin. In contrast, the Bible says: "Much more then, being now justified by his blood [not baptism, which is the statement a person makes after he has accepted Christ and His atoning sacrifice, and has repented and confessed his sins to His Savior, for it is called 'the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins' (Mark 1:4)], we shall be saved from wrath through Him." (Romans 5:9; see also Romans 3:24, 28; 4:2; 5:1). By Rome, baptism is pronounced as absolutely necessary for salvation, insomuch that infants dying without it (unless, according to Catholic Doctrine, they have received the baptism of blood, or martyrdom, such as in the case of the babies murdered by King Herod) cannot be admitted to glory; and its virtues are so great, that it is declared in all other cases to "regenerate us by a new spiritual birth, making us children of God." It is to be "the first door by which we enter the fold of Jesus Christ; therefore the merits of His death are by baptism applied to our souls....to satisfy Divine justice for all demands against us whether for original or actual sin." (Bishop Hay, *Sincere Christianity*, pp. 363, 358). This is anti-Scriptural! What if the child, John the Baptist, had died in his mother's womb? What would have happened to him? Would he, according to the doctrine of Rome, never be admitted into heaven? Such a belief gives birth to such questions. Friends, as this doctrine never came from the Bible, from what source did it originate?

It came from heathenism—from Babylon! In the Chaldean mysteries, before any instruction could be received, it was required, first of all, that the person to be initiated submit to baptism in token of blind and implicit obedience [such as with a child who has no choice]. Pagans would baptize their children "by sprinkling them with water or by plunging them, as soon as they were born, into lakes or rivers." (*Antiquities*, Vol. 1, p. 335).

Second, I want to address the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Eucharist Presence of Christ, and the wafer used in that ceremony. According to Roman Catholic teaching, each Mass is a true sacrifice, in which the risen Christ becomes bodily present, under the appearance of bread and wine, on the altar as a victim who is offered anew by the church to God the Father as expiation for the sins of the people. The Mass is considered to be a renewal, an unbloody sacrifice (or in an unbloody manner), by the mandate of Christ, of the one universally effective sacrifice freely offered by Christ Himself in His crucifixion, for the redemption of the world. How can an unbloody sacrifice redeem anyone from sin when the Bible explicitly states: “Without shedding of blood [there] is no remission [of sin]” (Heb. 9:22),” and “In whom [Jesus] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7)? Yet according to Catholic doctrine, “The Holy Mass is one and the same Sacrifice with that of the Cross, inasmuch as Christ, who offered Himself to His Heavenly Father, continues to offer Himself in an unbloody manner on the altar, through the ministry of the priests.” (A Catechism of Christian Doctrine, p. 47). The Mass is the means of applying the merits of Calvary which is done over and over again. It is not difficult for one to see that the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church contradict the Scriptures when the Bible says, “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor...that He should offer Himself often....but now once ...to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” (Heb. 9:24-28). “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” (I Pet. 3:18). Besides, what did Jesus mean when He cried out, “It is finished” (John 19:30) just before he died?

The Mass is a celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The priest who performs the Mass, or celebrant, reads or sings in Latin. But the ceremony is translated into various languages, so that all present may understand. The Mass, which includes two basic parts—the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, “re-enacts the greatest event of history and of Christian faith: the paschal mystery—the passion, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ....In the Eucharistic Prayer during which the solemn Consecration of bread and wine takes place....Catholics believe that at this point, by God’s sovereign power and will, the bread and wine truly become the body and blood of Jesus Christ .” “This was no symbolic reception,...but was actually eating the body of Christ and drinking His blood even if this body and blood still appears to our senses as bread and wine....Catholic Christians believe that when they receive the bread and wine of the Eucharist, they are actually partaking of the body and blood of Jesus Christ .” (Basics of the Faith: A Catholic Catechism, pp. 195, 196, 164, 165). Blasphemy! The priest, or the celebrant—the creature—has the audacity to create, as it were the Creator! With all the Masses offered every week throughout the world, are the millions of tiny wafers used simultaneously, the literal body of Christ?

The other day I called a Catholic bookstore to verify what I am telling you, and it so happened that the clerk handed the phone to a priest who was in their store. She felt he could better answer my questions. I asked him if the breaking of the wafer portrayed the breaking of Christ’s body—his sacrifice for us. To this he answered, “Yes.” I then asked him how many

times the Eucharist wafer is lifted above the altar. To this he answered, "Twice." Then he added: "The second time the Host—Christ's body—and the chalice of His blood are raised, the priest says 'through Him, with Him, and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory are yours almighty Father, forever and ever!'" I then asked him if the Eucharist bread actually becomes Christ's body, and the wine his blood? He continued, "The philosophical term used for this is transubstantiation, which means that the substance of the bread and wine becomes the substance of the Godhead, which is Christ." He then said, "The Lutheran will say that it is bread, but to a Catholic, it is Christ!" "The Mass," he emphasized, "is a reenactment of what happened 2,000 years ago, and is for us today." He then asked me if I understood what he had said, to which I answered, "Perfectly!" He responded, "Very good. I have students in my classes who cannot understand what you grasped so quickly."

From historians we learn that no blood was allowed to be offered on the altars of the Assyrian Venus—the great goddess of Babylon. The very shape of the unbloody sacrifice of Rome may also indicate its origin. The Eucharist wafer, which is broken as was the body of Christ, is a small thin round wafer, and it is on its roundness that the Church of Rome lays so much stress. What could have induced the papacy to insist so much on the roundness of its unbloody sacrifice? Clearly not from the Bible, for there is no reference of a round wafer at the Lord's supper, but to the contrary, the Lord took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to His disciples saying, "Take, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me." (1 Cor. 11:24). But if we look at the altars of Egypt, we will find the thin, round cake. The round disk, so frequent in the sacred emblems of Egypt, symbolized the sun, in honor of Osiris, the sun-divinity. "In Egypt, the disk of the Sun was represented in the temples....In the great temple

of Babylon, the golden image of the Sun was exhibited for the worship of the Babylonians. In every respect, then, we see how justly Rome bears on its forehead the name, 'Mystery, Babylon the Great.' It is striking to find that the image of the sun, which apostate Israel worshipped, was also erected above their altars. When the good king Josiah set about the work of reformation, we read that his servants in carrying out the work, proceeded thus: 'And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence, and the images (margin, sun-images) that were on high above them, he cut down.' "

[II Chron. 34:4] (The Two Babylons, pp. 162, 163). The Eucharist is a term of Roman Catholic usage, but we are seeing it employed more and more frequently in some of the Protestant churches today. In fact, when

John Paul II came to America, the Protestants flocked to see him, as well as the Catholics. I heard that Protestant ministers, as well as their members, were seen kissing the pope's ring. Evidently, John Paul's ecumenical efforts to organize all the churches under his leadership is working! The deadly wound has been healing spectacularly. In fact, it may already have healed completely!

Third, though not a sacrament, as a Roman Catholic I had believed in the doctrine of purgatory. Purgatory, according to the Catholic Church, is a place or state following death in which "God purges or purifies any remaining sin or the effects of sin that prevented the person from entering into full communion with God in heaven." (Basics of the Faith: A Catholic

Catechism, p. 306). This doctrine, which has no foundation in the Bible, I had blindly believed in as a security for salvation. I remember purgatory as “that other place,” other than heaven or hell, where I might end up if I were not good enough. There I would be punished by fire until I was purified from all sin, at which point, I would finally be admitted into heaven. “The Catholic tradition concerning purgatory includes the notion of purgation from sin by the fire of God’s love and holiness. Fire implies pain, and thus it should not surprise us if purgatory is painful.” (Ibid., p. 307). This is utterly ridiculous! As if God would literally burn people for a while to purify them! But had I not been taught that prayer, good works, and penance do foster God’s work of purification of ourselves, others living on earth, and those in purgatory? “Prayer and sacrifice for each other that we may be freed from sin are among the primary ways that the saints—members of the body of Christ whether on earth, in heaven, or in purgatory—can aid each other.” (Ibid., pp. 307, 308).

Thank God, that today I believe in righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ, and not in righteousness by works, to merit salvation. Not in penances and the “Sacraments” of Rome, but in the mercy and power of God and His grace! “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” (Titus 3:5, 6). Yet, The Thunder of Justice claims that the visionaries at Medjugorje had reported seeing purgatory, and claim “there are many different levels, some close to Heaven and some close to hell.” They also say: “Mary has recommended praying at least seven each of the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be, plus the Apostles’ Creed, for the souls in purgatory and for their intentions. Souls there are waiting for your prayers and sacrifices, Mary has emphasized.” (The Thunder of Justice, pp. 203, 204). Again, friends, it is plain to see that the one promoting this error is not the Virgin Mary, but a demon in disguise!

Chapter 14

In further comparing the similarities between ancient Babylon and the “Babylon” of the New Testament, Hislop next refers to the objects of worship by both Babylon and Rome. He writes: “In those countries of Europe where the Papal system is most completely developed...all appearances of worshipping the King Eternal and Invisible is almost extinct, while the Mother and Child are the grand objects of worship. Exactly so, in this latter respect, also was it in ancient Babylon. The Babylonians, in their popular religion, supremely worshipped a Goddess Mother and a Son, who was represented in pictures and images as an infant or child in his mother’s arms. From Babylon, this worship of the Mother and the Child spread to the ends of the earth. In Egypt, the Mother and the Child were worshipped under the names Isis and Osiris [called most frequently Horus]...in Pagan Rome, as Fortuna and Jupiter...the boy; in Greece, as Ceres the Great Mother, with the babe at her breast...and even in Thibet [Tibet], China, and Japan, the Jesuit missionaries were astonished to find the counterpart of Madonna and her child as devoutly worshipped as in Papal Rome itself.

“...That son, though represented as a child in his mother’s arms, was a person of great stature and immense bodily powers, as well as most fascinating manners. In Scripture he is referred to (Ezek. 8:14) under the name of Tammuz...‘The Lamented One.’ ” (The Two Babylons, pp. 14, 20, 21). Now let us turn to Ezekiel 8:12-14 and see this information applied to Israel in Scripture: “Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? For they say, The Lord seeth us not...He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord’s house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.” Friends, Ezekiel’s prophetic words have a dual application, and apply not only to what had taken place in God’s sanctuary during ancient times, but also to what will take place in the church at the end of time when “Babylon the Great” will cause “the inhabitants of the earth” to be “made drunk with the wine of her fornication [false doctrines].” (Rev. 17: 5, 2). Since a woman represents a church, then the church here is “the house of Israel,” weeping for the god of Babylon in shameless apostasy; but this sad course is to be repeated again, worldwide, at the end of time. In other words, such blatant idolatry is in the church today in the form of objects of worship—Saints, Baby Jesus, and the Virgin Mary. Had I been praying to Semiramis and Tammuz all those early years of my life? It sickens me today to think that I had been praying to the dead! And what about the reports of the weeping statues of the Virgin Mary? Is Semiramis still “lamenting” for her son Tammuz?

Hislop tells us that “the lamented one,” who was adored as a child, “seems, in point of fact, to have been the husband of Semiramis, whose name Ninus, by which he is commonly known in classical history, literally signified ‘The Son’....Now, this Ninus, or ‘Son,’ borne in the arms of the Babylonian Madonna, is so described as very clearly to identify him with Nimrod....of whom the Scriptural account is, that he first ‘began to be mighty on the earth,’ and that the ‘beginning of his kingdom was Babylon’ [See Genesis 10:8-10; see margin for verse 10 .]” (Ibid., p. 23). As to how Nimrod died, Scripture is silent. Hislop continues: “His wife Semiramis, who from an originally humble position, had been raised to share with him the throne of Babylon. What, in this emergency, shall she do? Shall she quietly forego the pomp and pride to which she has been raised? No. Though the death of her husband has given a rude shock to her power, yet her resolution and unbounded ambition were in no wise checked. On the contrary, her ambition took a still higher flight. In life her husband had been honoured as a hero; in death she will have him worshipped as a god, yea, as the woman’s promised seed, ‘Zero-ashta,’ who was destined to bruise the serpent’s head, and who, in doing so, was to have his own heel bruised.” (Ibid., pp. 58, 59). Utterly amazing! The counterfeit of Genesis 3:15 began in Babylon.

Hislop proceeds to show how this blatant idolatry has spread all over the world. Another feature of these “Mysteries” was magic, which Hislop calls the “twin sister of idolatry .” It was through the magical arts, and their “various tricks” and “strange and amazing objects” that Tammuz, the great god, the central object of their worship, was “revealed to them in the way most fitted to soothe their feelings and engage their blind affections...Tammuz, who had been slain, and for whom such lamentations had been made, was still alive, and encompassed with

divine and heavenly glory....Thus the whole system of the secret Mysteries of Babylon was intended to glorify a dead man; and when once the worship of one dead man was established, the worship of many more was sure to follow .

“...The scheme, thus skillfully formed, took effect. Semiramis gained glory from her dead and deified husband; and in course of time both of them , under the names Rhea and Nin, or ‘Goddess-Mother and Son,’ were worshipped with an enthusiasm that was incredible, and their images were everywhere set up and adored....This son, thus worshipped in his mother’s arms, was looked upon as invested with all the attributes, and called by almost all the names of the promised Messiah. As Christ, in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, was called Adonai, The Lord, so Tammuz was called Adonis. Under the name of Mithras, he was worshipped as the ‘Mediator.’ As Mediator and head of the covenant of grace, he was styled Baal-berith, Lord of the Covenant (Judges 8:33)....Thus daringly and directly was a mere mortal set up in Babylon [as has been the Virgin Mary in spiritual Babylon] in opposition to the ‘Son of the Blessed.’ ” (Ibid., 67-70, 73, 74).

Friends, can you not plainly see how popery is baptized paganism? Hislop continues: “If the child was to be adored, much more the mother. The mother, in point of fact, became the favorite object of worship . To justify this worship, the mother was raised to divinity as well as her son, and she was looked upon as destined to complete that bruising of the serpent’s head....The Roman church maintains that it was not so much the seed of the woman, as the woman herself, that was to bruise the head of the serpent. In defiance of all grammar, she renders the Divine denunciation against the serpent thus: ‘She shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise her heel.’ The same was held by the ancient Babylonians, and symbolically represented in their temples [and in the book The Thunder of Justice].

“...As time wore away, and the facts of Semiramis’s history became obscured, her son’s birth was boldly declared to be miraculous: and therefore she was called ‘Alma Mater’ [explained in Hislop’s footnote, page 76, from its ancient meanings to have the meaning of ‘the Virgin Mother’].” (Ibid., 75, 76).

Chapter 15

In Chapter 11 we learned what the seal of God is—the Sabbath. God’s seal is not a visible sign that can be seen by anyone, but only by the angels of Heaven, for it has to do with the moral character of the person and an evidence of whom he serves. Just as the seal of God is written in the foreheads of His true and faithful people, the name “Mystery, Babylon, the Mother of Harlots” is written upon the forehead of the whore, and fittingly, her followers, who are evidenced by whom they serve and worship and who accordingly will receive the mark of the beast in the forehead or in the hand. I will now quote from The Thunder of Justice, page 329, and show you what they teach is the seal of God: “Then as I listened he shouted, ‘Come here, you scourges of the city, and bring your weapons of destruction....He called the man in white with a scribe’s ink horn in his belt and said, ‘Go all through the city, all through Jerusalem, and mark a cross on the foreheads of all who deplore and disapprove of all the filth

practiced in it.' I heard him say to the others, 'Follow him through the city, and strike. Show neither pity nor mercy; old men, young men, virgins, women, kill and exterminate them all. But do not touch anyone with a cross on his forehead. Begin at my sanctuary.' (Ezekiel 9:1-6)."

Please notice that the writers just quoted Ezekiel 9:1-6. I want you to take your Bible right now and open it to Ezekiel 9 and read verses 1-6. Do you find the word "cross" in any of the verses? The Bible simply mentions to "set a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry for all the abominations" (verse 4) and "slay utterly old and young...but come not near any man who has the mark" (verse 6). Do you see the word "cross" in the verses of whatever version of the Bible you are using? Well, why not? Because it is not there! How could anyone put any faith in the advocates of the Marian Movement, when they blatantly add words to the Bible that are not in the original?

The only explanation I can find for their conclusion is a footnote commenting on verse 4 in the New Catholic Version of the Douay-Confraternity Bible. The footnote for the verses referred to above says: "Mark Thau, thau or tau, is the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet, and signifies a sign, or a mark: which is the reason why some translators render this place set a mark, or mark a mark, without specifying what this mark was. But St. Jerome and other interpreters, conclude it was the form of the letter Thau, which in the ancient Hebrew character, was the form of a cross."

This conclusion is absolutely absurd, for if you research the origin of the word Thau or Tau, and the origin of the cross, you may be astonished at what you will discover! Quoting from Alexander Hislop's book *The Two Babylons* once again, we find: "The same sign of the cross that Rome now worships was used in the Babylonian Mysteries, was applied by Paganism to the same magic purposes, was honoured with the same honours. That which is now called the Christian cross was originally no Christian emblem at all, but was the mystic Tau of the Chaldeans and Egyptians—the true original form of the letter T—the initial of the name of Tammuz—which, in Hebrew, radically the same as ancient Chaldee, is found on coins. That mystic Tau was marked in baptism on the foreheads of those initiated in the Mysteries [Interestingly, Catholic priests make the sign of the cross on the foreheads of infants at baptism], and was used in every variety of way as a most sacred symbol. To identify Tammuz with the sun it was joined sometimes with a circle of the sun; sometimes it was inserted in the circle. Whether the Maltese cross, which the Romish bishops append to their names as a symbol of their episcopal dignity, is the letter T, may be doubtful; but there seems no reason to doubt that the Maltese cross is an express symbol of the sun; for Layard [author of *Ninevah and Babylon*] found it as a sacred symbol in Ninevah in such a connection as led him to identify it with the sun. The mystic Tau, as a symbol of great divinity, was called 'the sign of life;' it was used as an amulet over the heart; it was marked on the official garments of the priests of Rome; it was borne by the kings in their hand, as a token of their dignity or divinely-conferred authority. The Vestal virgins of Pagan Rome wore it suspended from their necklaces, as the nuns do now. The Egyptians did the same, and many of the barbarous nations with whom they had intercourse, as the Egyptian monuments bear witness....It was worshipped in Mexico for ages before the Roman Catholic missionaries set foot there, large stone crosses being erected, probably to the 'god of rain.' The cross, thus widely worshipped, or regarded as a sacred emblem, was the equivocal symbol of Bacchus, the Babylonian Messiah, for he was represented

with a head-band covered with crosses. This symbol of the Babylonian god is revered at this day in all the wide wastes of Tartary, where Buddhism prevails....“The cross,’ says Colonel Wilford, in Asiatic Researches,....‘is exactly the cross of the Manicheans, with leaves and flowers (and fruit also, as I am told), is called the divine tree, the tree of the gods, the tree of life and knowledge, and productive of whatever is good and desirable, and is placed in the terrestrial paradise.’” (The Two Babylons, pp. 197-199). Is there any question as to whether God would place the “T” for Tammuz as a mark or sign on the foreheads of his true and faithful people? “It was an essential principle of the Babylonian system, that the Sun or Baal [the god of nature] was the only god. When, therefore, Tammuz was worshipped as God incarnated, that implied also that he was an incarnation of the Sun.” (Ibid., p. 96).

Do you remember the words of Elijah when he faced Ahab and the four hundred “prophets of Baal” during the great contest on Mount Carmel: “And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? [Elijah was a reformation prophet, a voice of one crying in the wilderness to rebuke sin and press back the tide of evil, and who sought to arouse Israel to repentance and to forgo their worship of idols and return unto the law of the Lord]. And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord [by violating the first and second commandments], and have followed Baalim....And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.” (I Kings 18:17, 18, 21). The story continues with Elijah slaying all the false prophets of Baal, because they refused to repent of their idolatrous practices and continued to worship the god of the sun—the object of creation, rather than the Creator Himself. The cross, or the “T,” is a sign or mark of the god of nature, Tammuz, or Baal, and therefore, of Satan—the false god who had the true God, Jesus Christ, hung on that pagan cross, or “T,” until he died! How many Christians, by their idolatrous practices of worshipping idols, whether in the form of images or statues, or of the “living dead,” such as in the form of the Virgin Mary or the Saints, are but halting between two opinions?—for they say they love the Lord with all their hearts, yet they worship these very idols which He has expressly forbidden in forceful and explicit terms!

Another modern, pagan practice adopted from the Mysteries is the Zodiac, which the Greeks derived from the Chaldees. And is this abominable sign displayed anywhere in the Catholic system? The solar wheel, or the wheel of the sun (for the system is built around astrology—the study of the sun, moon, planets, and stars to foretell the future—and dates back to the Chaldees and the Babylonians, whose very names came to mean astrologer) can be found not only on Buddhist temples and temples in India, but also on the altars and ceilings in the cathedrals of the Roman Catholic Church—at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France, and the monastery of St. Ignatius Loyola in Spain. But, “unquestionably, the largest occult solar wheel on earth is located in the court of St. Peter at the Vatican in Rome. From the air, you can see the wheel within a wheel, with eight spokes, a common symbol of cosmic energy in paganism. Protruding from its center is an obelisk, the ancient symbol of Osiris, the solar phallic god of Egypt.” [Information obtained from the book, The (New, Illustrated) Great Controversy]. It should be noted also, that since astrology and the signs of the Zodiac deal with foretelling your future and whether

you will have a “lucky” or “unlucky day” by “observing times,” they are, therefore, classified with those that are witches and have a familiar spirit and are, likewise, an abomination to God. (See Deut. 18:10-12; Lev. 19:26).

Friends, getting back to the seal of God, we obviously can see that it is not a tattoo of the pagan cross which will be engraved on the foreheads of the saints, but the law of God, His very own character, that will rightfully be written in their minds or foreheads. Specifically, it is the Sabbath, the fourth commandment, that is the sign or seal of God [see Eze. 20:12 and compare Romans 4:11 to confirm that “seal” and “sign” are used interchangeably in the Scriptures], because the Sabbath distinguishes them as His true people who worship “Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” (Rev. 14:7). It is the one commandment that distinguishes God as the Creator, the only Being in all the universe who deserves to be worshipped, and His true people who keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy! Why are billions of people following the traditions of Rome, rather than a “Thus saith the Lord,” anyway? In the book of Deuteronomy we read the following: “That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all...His commandments....And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes .” (Deut. 6:2, 6-8).

One point of interest that I must make is that The Thunder of Justice claims that Christ gave the following message to Julka, Zagreb, in the former Yugoslavia: “This will be the Little Flock [those who make it through the ‘Great Tribulation’ of the last days] and I shall hover over it. In those days there will be one Shepherd and one Faith, that of the Roman Catholic Church, which I established when I walked visibly on the earth. After the distresses, which I am now permitting to come upon My obstinate people on the earth, there will arise a fair and pure race and the earth will abound with My gifts. My sons and My daughters will keep My Commandments, thus everything will live and grow with My Blessing for thirty years. Later on My people will again tend to evil and to sin. I shall send my messengers, Elijah and Enoch, from heaven to instruct the people in the true faith.” (The Thunder of Justice, p. 354).

Friends, do you see anything wrong in the paragraph above? First—Did Christ establish the Roman Catholic Church while on earth, or was it the result of apostasy as foretold by the apostle Paul? Second—The commandments here referred to are not the Ten Commandments as given by God, but the commandments of Rome, with the change of the Sabbath, the fourth commandment, to Sunday, as the third commandment. Third—Where in the Bible do we read about a thirty-year period at the end of time? Fourth—This false christ said he will send his messengers, Elijah and Enoch, who, by the way, were two seventh-day Sabbath-keepers, to instruct the people in the Roman Catholic doctrines! Elijah and Enoch, both noted foes of apostasy, would never support the false doctrines of Rome! And, besides, would they not first need to be enlightened in regard to the Sunday-sabbath—“the venerable day of the sun”—set up by the papacy as the new day they would worship God? Elijah would be facing the prophets of Baal all over again! How absurd!! But not so, if these “messengers” are, in reality, demons! Never forget what I am about to tell you: Satan will always mingle error with truth, because it is like disguising poison with

healthy food. The poison then becomes more dangerous than ever before, because the person takes it unawares!

It should be noted, that those destroyed who have not the “mark,” or seal of God (see Ezek. 9:4), are those that have been practicing the abominable idolatries recorded in the preceding chapter, Ezekiel 8. In Ezekiel 8, the prophet records some of the most atrocious practices of the “elders of Judah”—the priests that have offended the true God. Ezekiel sees in the entry, at the gate of the altar (in other words, in the church—a place dedicated to the worship of the true God), images of false gods, and one in particular that arouses His wrath—“the image of jealousy.” (Verse 3). This image, in particular, provokes His high displeasure or “jealousy” because the Babylonian Madonna—the queen of heaven—reveals “the heinous character of that idolatry, to say that the child she holds forth to adoration is called by the name of Jesus.” (The Two Babylons, p. 88). And why is this so? Because the false “Madonna,” in the name of Jesus, God’s Son, is leading multitudes to perdition, when God, at such infinite sacrifice, has ordained that these same misled victims should be won instead to life everlasting through the priceless gift of man’s true Redeemer. What is happening is both sacrilegious and blasphemous! But one only has to notice that it is the idolaters themselves that are the victims of Ezekiel 9—including those of the Marian Movement who have perpetuated this lie that the seal of God is a cross on the forehead! Never forget, dear reader, that it is God’s own image, which man lost in Eden (see Gen 1:26), that He wants to restore in us (see II Peter 1:3, 4) through the agency of the Holy Spirit (see II Cor. 3:18).

Chapter 16

In The Thunder of Justice, these idolaters boldly state that the world is “witnessing the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven and true beacon for all Christians.” (The Thunder of Justice, p. 5). But Mary is dead—dead and in the grave! And the people that claim to have seen the Virgin Mary are actually being duped by an evil spirit. And the statues of Mary are nothing more than mere clumps of cement shaped like the Babylonian Madonna from whom she originated. Strong words, but are they true? Take another look at the picture on the cover of this book, if you doubt my word! No wonder the language used in the Second Commandment prohibiting image worship, which was written with God’s own finger, by the way (see Ex. 31:18), was so strong! No wonder the Pope of Rome, steeped in paganism, removed the Second Commandment from the Ten, for it pronounces judgment from a jealous God not only upon all violators, but also upon their children and their children’s children! “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments.” (Ex. 20:4-6). Oh, dear reader, nowhere in the law of God do we find stronger words than these!—“them that hate me”! God is truly offended and rightly called “a jealous God,” Who will also visit the iniquity of their predecessors upon the descendants of these idolaters who continue the pagan practices of their parents, unless they repent! God, in

mercy, may overlook their ignorance and do everything He can to win their hearts; but as they continue to transgress His laws after receiving light on the matter, just how long will God hold back His hand? That no one knows! Hosea 4:6 says: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."

I find it immensely interesting that the prophet Jeremiah also had something to say about Israel's worship of images of false gods, and was quite specific in his address. While dwelling in Egypt as forlorn exiles, instead of being witnesses for God against the heathenism around them, the Israelites were as much devoted to this form of idolatry as the Egyptians themselves. Jeremiah was sent of God to denounce wrath against his own people, if they continued to worship the "queen of heaven," but his warnings were in vain. "Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee . But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil." (Jer. 44:15-17).

Alexander Hislop, the author of *The Two Babylons*, remarks: "The worship of the goddess-mother with the child in her arms continued to be observed in Egypt till Christianity entered. If the Gospel had come in power among the mass of people, the worship of this goddess-queen would have been overthrown. With the generality it came only in name. Instead, therefore, of the Babylonian goddess being cast out, in too many cases her name only was changed . She was called the Virgin Mary, and, with her child, was worshipped with the same idolatrous feeling by professing Christians, as formerly by open and avowed PagansIt just amounts to this, that if Christ be admitted to be truly and properly God, and worthy of Divine honours, His mother, from whom He derived merely His humanity , must be admitted to be the same, must be raised far above the level of all creatures, and be worshipped as a partaker of the Godhead . The divinity of Christ is made to stand or fall with the divinity of His mother. Such is Popery....This, however, is just the exact reproduction of the doctrine of ancient Babylon in regard to the great goddess-mother. The Madonna of Rome, then, is just the Madonna of Babylon. The 'Queen of Heaven' in the one system is the same as the 'Queen of Heaven' in the other....The Roman and Babylonian Madonnas are the same ." (*The Two Babylons*, pp. 82, 83, 85). No wonder Alexander Hislop named his book *The Two Babylons* , for the New Testament Babylon is nothing more than a modernized Old Testament Babylon! In many cases, only the names have been changed! For example, the statues of the gods from the Pantheon are now found in the Vatican Museum, with the exception of the great statue of Jupiter, which has been modified, retitled, and seated on a throne in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome as St. Peter. Thousands of pilgrims kiss the foot of Jupiter, while thinking it is the statue of Peter.

Hislop brings out yet another remarkable characteristic between the Madonna of Babylon and the Madonna of Rome, and that is the nimbus or peculiar circle of light (the halo) that frequently encompasses their heads, as well as the heads of the Saints and Christ. Where could such a device have originated? Where in the whole compass of Scripture, do we ever read that Christ's head was surrounded with a disk, or circle of light? What you will never find in the Word of God is found in the artistic representations of the great gods and goddesses of Babylon. The disk or halo, and particularly the circle, "were the well-known symbols of the Sun-divinity, and figured largely in the symbolism of the East. With the circle or the disk the head of the Sun-divinity was encompassed. The same was the case in Pagan Rome. Apollo, as the child of the Sun, was often thus represented. The goddesses that claimed kindred with the Sun were equally entitled to be adorned with the nimbus or luminous circle,....in the very same way as the head of The Roman Madonna is at this day surrounded." (Ibid., p. 87).

Friends, let me now quote the last verses of Ezekiel eight: "Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north [remember, Satan, according to Isaiah 14, wanted to set himself up 'in the sides of the north'—where God's throne is in Heaven]; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these [greater than 'the image of jealousy']. And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces to the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the eastTherefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them." (Ezek. 8:14-16, 18).

Dear reader, there are two points that can immediately be drawn from these verses, in addition to the many points we have already discussed. First, "Women," and not one woman, "sat weeping for Tammuz"—the god of Babylon. Do you remember the words on the forehead of the whore of Revelation 17— "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth"? Notice that the "Mother" has "Harlots," or harlot daughters. Apparently, there are a number of other apostate churches that are following the ways or dogmas of their mother, Rome. Who are these daughters? And second, the "greater abominations" involve sun-worship! Somehow, Babylonian-style sun worship has been set up in the church. Does this have anything to do with the churches in the United States of America? How are they worshipping the sun? Does it have anything to do with Sunday—a day that is worshipped throughout America and the world, but is contrary to the day that the Lord instructed that we worship Him? All these questions will be answered in the next chapter on the "mark of the beast." _____

Chapter 17

Revelation 13 begins with a description of a beast rising out of the sea. The first thing we notice about this beast is that it is a composite beast: it "was like unto a leopard, and his feet

were as the feet of a

bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.” It is referred to as the leopard-bodied beast, which we have already seen to be the Roman Papacy. The four beasts used to make up the composite beast are the same four beasts, —which symbolized Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome —that Daniel saw in vision in Daniel 7. As a matter of record, papal Rome inherited from each of these pagan empires some of their basic identifying characteristics that we still see being practiced in this contemporary false system of religion—the Roman Catholic Church. From Babylon, the papacy inherited a pagan priesthood; from Medo-Persia, sun worship; from Greece, human philosophies; and from the dragon, Pagan Rome, its power, seat and great authority [Pagan Rome even gave the high priest’s title—“Pontifex Maximus,” usurped by the Caesars—to the papacy, as well as Latin, formerly the language of pagan Rome and even till this day the official language of the papal seat of power]. It is, then, accurately and appropriately, depicted as “a beast rising out of the sea [or populated areas (See Rev. 17:15)]” that has borrowed parts, or characteristics, of other beasts or kingdoms. (See Daniel 7:23). Since it is the first of two beasts to appear in this chapter, the Roman papacy is referred to as the first beast of Revelation, chapter 13.

But, “says the prophet: ‘I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb.’ Verse 11. Both the appearance of this beast and the manner of its rise indicate that the nation which it represents is unlike those presented under the preceding symbols. The great kingdoms that have ruled the world were presented to the prophet Daniel as beasts of prey, rising when ‘the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.’ Daniel 7:2. In Revelation 17 an angel explained that waters represent ‘peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.’ Revelation 17:15. Winds are a symbol of strife. The four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea represent the terrible scenes of conquest and revolution by which kingdoms have attained to power.

“But the beast with lamblike horns was seen ‘coming up out of the earth.’ Instead of overthrowing other powers to establish itself, the nation thus represented must arise in territory previously unoccupied and grow up gradually and peacefully. It could not, then, arise among the crowded and struggling nationalities of the Old World—that turbulent sea of ‘peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.’ It must be sought in the Western Continent.

“What nation of the New World was in 1798 [the end of the 1260-year prophecy] rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America. Again and again the thought, almost the exact words, of the sacred writer has been unconsciously employed by the orator and the historian in describing the rise and growth of this nation. The beast was seen ‘coming up out of the earth;’ and, according to the translators, the word here rendered ‘coming up’ literally signifies ‘to grow or spring up as a plant.’ And, as we have seen, the nation must arise in territory previously unoccupied. A prominent writer, describing the rise of the United States, speaks of ‘the mystery of her coming forth from

vacancy,' and says: 'Like a silent seed we grew into empire.'—G. A. Townsend, *The New World Compared With the Old*, page 462. A European journal in 1850 spoke of the United States as a wonderful empire, which was 'emerging,' and 'amid the silence of the earth daily adding to its power and pride.'—*The Dublin Nation*....

“‘And he had two horns like a lamb.’ The lamblike horns indicate youth, innocence, and gentleness, fitly representing the character of the United States when presented to the prophets as ‘coming up’ in 1798. Among the Christian exiles who first fled to America and sought an asylum from royal oppression and priestly intolerance were many who determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty. Their views found place in the Declaration of Independence, which sets forth the great truth that ‘all men are created equal’ and endowed with the inalienable right to ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.’ And the Constitution guarantees to the people the right of self-government, providing that representatives elected by the popular vote shall enact and administer the laws. Freedom of religious faith was also granted, every man being permitted to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Republicanism and Protestantism [the two horns of the lamb] became the fundamental principles of the nation. These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity. The oppressed and downtrodden throughout Christendom have turned to this land with interest and hope. Millions have sought its shores, and the United States has risen to a place among the most powerful nations of the earth.

“‘But the beast with lamblike horns ‘spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed;...saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.’ Revelation 13:11-14.

“The lamblike horns and dragon voice of the symbol point to a striking contradiction between the professions and the practice of the nation thus represented. The ‘speaking’ of the nation is the action of its legislative and judicial authorities. By such action it will give the lie to those liberal and peaceful principles which it has put forth as the foundation of its policy. The prediction that it will speak ‘as a dragon’ and exercise ‘all the power of the first beast’ plainly foretells a development of the spirit of intolerance and persecution that was manifested by the nations represented by the dragon and the leopardlike beast. And the statement that the beast with two horns ‘causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast’ indicates that the authority of this nation is to be exercised in enforcing some observance which shall be an act of homage to the papacy.

“Such action would be directly contrary to the principles of this government, to the genius of its free institutions, to the direct and solemn avowals of the Declaration of Independence, and to the Constitution. The founders of the nation wisely sought to guard against the employment of secular power on the part of the church, with its inevitable result—intolerance and persecution. The Constitution provides that ‘Congress shall make no law respecting an

establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' and that 'no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office of public trust under the United States.' Only in flagrant violation of these safeguards to the nation's liberty, can any religious observance be enforced by civil authority. But the inconsistency of such action is no greater than is represented in the symbol. It is the beast with lamblike horns—in profession pure, gentle, and harmless—that speaks as a dragon.

“Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast.’ Here is clearly presented a form of government in which the legislative power rests with the people, a most striking evidence that the United States is the nation denoted in the prophecy.

“But what is the ‘image to the beast’? and how is it to be formed? The image is made by the two-horned beast, and is an image to the beast. It is also called an image of the beast. Then to learn what the image is like and how it is to be formed we must study the characteristics of the beast itself—the papacy.

“When the early church became corrupted by departing from the simplicity of the gospel and accepting heathen rites and customs, she lost the Spirit and power of God; and in order to control the consciences of the people, she sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the state and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of ‘heresy.’ In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends.

“Whenever the church has obtained secular power, she has employed it to punish dissent from her doctrines. Protestant churches that have followed in the steps of Rome by forming alliance with worldly powers have manifested a similar desire to restrict liberty of conscience. An example of this is given in the long-continued persecution of dissenters by the Church of England. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, thousands of nonconformist ministers were forced to flee from their churches, and many, both of pastors and people, were subjected to fine, imprisonment, torture, and martyrdom.

“It was apostasy that led the early church to seek the aid of the civil government, and this prepared the way for the development of the papacy—the beast. Said Paul: ‘There’ shall ‘come a falling away,...and that man of sin be revealed.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:3. So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image to the beast.

“The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord there will exist a state of religious declension similar to that in the first centuries. ‘In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.’ 2 Timothy 3:1-5. ‘Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to

seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils . . . 1 Timothy 4:1. Satan will work 'with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.' And all that 'received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,' will be left to accept 'strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.' 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. When this state of ungodliness shall be reached, the same results will follow as in the first centuries.

"The wide diversity of belief in the Protestant churches is regarded by many as decisive proof that no effort to secure a forced uniformity can ever be made. But there has been for years, in churches of the Protestant faith, a strong and growing sentiment in favor of a union based upon common points of doctrine . . . To secure such a union, the discussion of subjects upon which all were not agreed—however important they might be from a Bible standpoint—must necessarily be waived . . .

"Charles Beecher, in a sermon in the year 1846, declared that the ministry of 'the evangelical Protestant denominations' is 'not only formed all the way up under a tremendous pressure of merely human fear, but they live, and move, and breathe in a state of things radically corrupt, and appealing every hour to every baser element of their nature to hush up the truth, and bow the knee to the power of apostasy. Was not this the way things went with Rome? Are we not living her life over again? And what do we see just ahead? Another general council! A world's convention [New World Order]! Evangelical alliance, and universal creed [One World Religion]!'—Sermon on 'The Bible a Sufficient Creed,' delivered at Fort Wayne, Indiana, Feb. 22, 1846. When this shall be gained, then, in the effort to secure complete uniformity, it will be only a step to the resort to force.

"When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common [remember Life maga-zine stated that Mary could be the one to unify the churches of America, and her crowning appearance may pull it off], shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result.

"The beast with two horns 'causeth [commands] all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.' Revelation 13:16, 17. The third angel's warning is: 'If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.' 'The beast' mentioned in this message, whose worship is enforced by the two-horned beast, is the first, or leopardlike beast of Revelation 13—the papacy. The 'image to the beast' represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas. The 'mark of the beast' still remains to be defined.

“After the warning against the worship of the beast and his image the prophecy declares: ‘Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ Since those who keep God’s commandments are thus placed in contrast with those that worship the beast and his image and receive his mark, it follows that the keeping of God’s law, on the one hand, and its violation, on the other, will make the distinction between the worshipers of God and the worshipers of the beast.

“The special characteristic of the beast, and therefore of his image, is the breaking of God’s commandments. Says Daniel, of the little horn, the papacy: ‘He shall think to change times and the law.’ Daniel 7:25, R.V. And Paul styled the same power the ‘man of sin,’ who was to exalt himself above God. One prophecy is a complement of the other. Only by changing God’s law could the papacy exalt itself above God; whoever should understandingly keep the law as thus changed would be giving supreme honor to that power by which the change was made. Such an act of obedience to papal laws would be a mark of allegiance to the pope in the place of God.

“The papacy has attempted to change the law of God. The second commandment, forbidding image worship, has been dropped from the law, and the fourth commandment has been so changed as to authorize the observance of the first instead of the seventh day as the Sabbath. But papists urge, as a reason for omitting the second commandment, that it is unnecessary, being included in the first, and that they are giving the law exactly as God designed it to be understood. This cannot be the change foretold by the prophet. An intentional, deliberate change is presented: ‘He shall think to change the times and the law.’ The change in the fourth commandment exactly fulfills the prophecy. For this the only authority claimed is that of the church. Here the papal power openly sets itself above God. [Remember, according to ‘Papa II,’ ‘The Pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man but of God.’ Pure Blasphemy!]

“While the worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the fourth commandment,—since this is the sign of His creative power and the witness to His claim upon man’s reverence and homage,—the worshipers of the beast will be distinguished by their efforts to tear down the Creator’s memorial, to exalt the institution of Rome. It was in behalf of the Sunday that popery first asserted its arrogant claims; and its first resort to the power of the state was to compel the observance of Sunday as ‘the Lord’s day.’ But the Bible points to the seventh day, and not to the first, as the Lord’s day. Said Christ: ‘The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.’ The fourth commandment declares: ‘The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.’ And by the prophet Isaiah the Lord designates it: ‘My holy day.’ Mark 2:28; Isaiah 58.13.

“The claim so often put forth that Christ changed the Sabbath is disproved by His own words. In His Sermon on the Mount He said: ‘Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he

shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.' Matthew 5:17-19.

"....Roman Catholics acknowledge that the change of the Sabbath was made by their church, and declare that Protestants by observing the Sunday are recognizing her power. In the Catholic Catechism of Christian Religion, in answer to a question as to the day to be observed in obedience to the fourth commandment, this statement is made: 'During the old law, Saturday was the day sanctified; but the church, instructed by Jesus Christ, and directed by the Spirit of God, has substituted Sunday for Saturday; so now we sanctify the first, not the seventh day. Sunday means, and now is, the day of the Lord.'

"As the sign of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite 'the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of;...because by keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the church's power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin.'—Henry Tuberville, *An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine*, page 58. What then is the change of the Sabbath, but the sign, or mark, of the authority of the Roman Church—the mark of the beast? [One Catholic authority put it this way: 'Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act....And the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious things.' (Letter, written on November 11, 1895, by chancellor to Cardinal Gibbons in reply to the inquiry on whether or not the Catholic Church claims to have changed the Sabbath)].

"The Roman Church has not relinquished her claim to supremacy; and when the world and the Protestant churches accept a sabbath of her creating, while they reject the Bible Sabbath, they virtually admit this assumption. They may claim the authority of tradition and of the Fathers for the change; but in so doing they ignore the very principle which separates them from Rome—that 'the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants.' The papist can see that they are deceiving themselves, willingly closing their eyes to the facts in the case. As the movement for Sunday enforcement [a National Sunday Law to be set up first in the U.S.A.] gains favor, he rejoices, feeling assured that it will eventually bring the whole Protestant world under the banner of Rome.

"Romanists declare that 'the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Catholic] Church.'—Mgr. Segur, *Plain Talk About the Protestantism of Today*, page 213. The enforcement of Sundaykeeping on the part of Protestant churches is an enforcement of the worship of the papacy—of the beast. Those who, understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, choose to observe the false instead of the true Sabbath are thereby paying homage to that power by which alone it is commanded. But in the very act of enforcing a religious duty by secular power, the churches would themselves form an image to the beast; hence the enforcement of Sundaykeeping in the United States would be an enforcement of the worship of the beast and his image.

"But Christians of past generations observed the Sunday, supposing that in so doing they were keeping the Bible Sabbath; and there are now true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath

of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their integrity before Him. But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honor popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshiping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome—‘the mark of the beast.’ And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive ‘the mark of the beast.’

“The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel’s message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God’s judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them. Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to ‘every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.’ The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world.

“In the issue of the contest all Christendom will be divided into two great classes—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Although church and state will unite their power to compel ‘all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond’ (Revelation 13:16), to receive ‘the mark of the beast,’ yet the people of God will not receive it. The prophet of Patmos beholds ‘them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God’ and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Revelation 15:2, 3.” (The Great Controversy, pp. 439-450).

Beware, dear friends, the prophecies you have just read will shortly come to pass, for the beast is making her move. On July 7, 1998, the Vatican released Pope John Paul II’s 104-page Apostolic Letter entitled *Dies Domini*—On Keeping the Lord’s Day Holy. The letter is a blatant attack on the Fourth Commandment, the Seventh-day Sabbath, and the Creator Himself! Point 67 of *Dies Domini* actually states: “Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy...Sunday must be sanctified.” On the same day, The Denver Post quoted Rome as saying: “A violator should be punished as a heretic.” Indeed, the end times are upon us!

Chapter 18

Friends, the final events will be rapid ones because God “will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness.” (Rom. 9:28). Satan, therefore, knowing his time is running out, is working diligently to deceive the world through his lying sophistries, in which the Marian Movement is a key pawn. This player continues its assaults against the truths of the Bible by making the claim that Mary is the “Second or New Eve,” because as our so-called “Co-Redeemer, Mediatrix, and Advocate,” she plays a major role in our salvation. In fact, in the August 25, 1997, issue of Newsweek, which portrayed the Virgin Mary on its cover, it stated in their feature article entitled “Hail Mary,” that “a growing movement in the Roman Catholic Church wants the pope to proclaim a new, controversial dogma: that Mary is Co-Redeemer. Will he do it...in time for the millenium?” “In the last four years, the pope has received 4,340,429 signatures from 157 countries—an average of 100,000 a month—supporting the proposed doctrine,” added Newsweek.

Friends, does the Bible tell us in John 3:16, that: “God so loved the world, that he gave the Virgin Mary, that whosoever believeth in her should not perish, but have everlasting life”? Of course it doesn't! It was Christ who bore the sins of the whole world. He is called the second Adam, because He took upon Himself human nature and passed over the ground where the first Adam fell. “For verily he took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham...like unto His brethren...a merciful and faithful high priest...to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” (Heb. 2:16, 17). Yet, the authors of The Thunder of Justice have the audacity to argue that since Christ was conceived in Mary by the Holy Ghost [see Matt. 1:18, 20], Mary, therefore, is the Holy Spirit's wife or spouse—she is the bride of the Holy Spirit, and together they will give the call: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come, And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17). But that is not what the verse implies at all! The “bride” in this verse refers to the holy city, the New Jerusalem. The Bible clearly states: “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” “And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues...saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.” (Rev. 21:2, 9, 10). Friends, it is not the Virgin Mary, but the still small voice of the Holy Spirit and the wooing appeal of the Holy City, the bride, that are calling every human being, every sinner, to heed the invitation to come Home to her—the “house” of “many mansions,” prepared for those who choose to be among God's Redeemed. We should all “desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city [the New Jerusalem].” (Hebrews 11:16).

My home is not this earth, and I hope it is not yours either. My home is the New Jerusalem which will come down out of Heaven to this earth after the thousand-year period of Satan's imprisonment on a desolate planet and forever plant itself on the soil of the Earth Made New (Rev. 21:1, 2)! So was John the Revelator wrong when he wrote the words above—words that never once identify the Virgin Mary as the “bride” referred to in the Book of Revelation? Had he received a false vision from God in regard to these last-day events? Or are the appearances, apparitions, bleeding icons, and the words of this purported Mary themselves that which is wrong, indeed? Once again, the counterfeit Mary's words contradict the Holy Scriptures!!!

The counterfeit Mary, last but not least, identifies herself as the “Queen of the Coming Age.” Where in the Bible are we told that a “Queen” will rule the Earth Made New? The Bible, to the contrary, tells us that the “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:16) will reign in the Earth Made New, and that “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal,” proceeded “out of the throne of God and of the Lamb .” (Rev. 22:1).

The time is short, oh, so short! On Saturday, December 21, 1996, one of the stories in The Denver Post read: “Virgin Mary sightings rise as millennium nears . Hundreds flock to Virgin apparition on office tower.” The story reported that an estimated 250,000 people have come to the Seminole Finance Corporation building in Clearwater, Florida, to see the reflection on its windows that looks like the Virgin Mary. “In these times of sin and confusion, in these days of the approaching millennium, believers say the Mother of God is visiting Earth with increased regularity ,” the Post reported. “Seeing is believing,” they said. But is it? Can we trust our senses in this day and age? Should we? What does the Bible say? “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isa. 8:20).

Chapter 19

Friends, I believe the demon-originated, counterfeit Virgin Mary will soon make her bodily appearance to the world, and by this masterpiece of Satan’s, thousands, yea, millions of innocent people will be deceived! And perhaps, the Virgin herself, a very familiar spirit, will present her son, the counterfeit Jesus, to the world, who, in reality, is Satan himself. If so, this will be the crowning act of Satan’s deceptions! But even before this, we may see demons in the form of the apostles, such as Peter and Paul, contradict what they wrote at the dictation of the Holy Spirit when on earth. Here is one such prediction: “After three days of darkness, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, having come down from Heaven, shall preach in the whole world and designate a new Pope. A great light will flash from their bodies and will settle upon the cardinal who is to become Pope. Christianity, then, will spread throughout the world. He is the Holy Pontiff, chosen by God to withstand the storm. At the end, he will have the gift of miracles, and his name shall be praised over the whole earth. Whole nations will come back to the Church and the face of the earth will be renewed.” (The Thunder of Justice, p. 353). It is perilous to conclude that “seeing is believing.” Satan is counting on this human fallacy in order to delude earth’s inhabitants.

Dear friends, I can not say that Satan, through his hellish arts, will, or will not, enact the above scene in exactly the way it has been described, but this I do know—that the Scriptures warn us that “such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ . And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light _____. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” (II Cor. 11:13-15)

“Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and

subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world's Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures.

“As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ . The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: ‘Christ has come! Christ has come!’ The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying: This is ‘the great power of God.’ Acts 8:10.

“But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. His blessing is pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God's unmingled wrath shall be poured out.

“And, furthermore, Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ's advent. The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming. ‘There shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.... Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.’ Matthew 24:24-27, 31; 25:31; Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known—witnessed by the whole world.

“Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive . By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only?” (The Great Controversy, pp. 624, 625).

Oh, friends, I know that it is not a question of whether these supernatural deceptions will happen or not, but of when they will happen! By their own admission, the authors of *The Thunder of Justice* believe that since Mary, in giving birth to Jesus, brought Him into the world for His first coming, she will be the one who will usher in His second coming to the world. After all, the book continues: “As John the Baptist prepared the way for the first coming of Jesus, Mary prepares the way for His Second Coming. Mary proclaims that a new world and era is upon us, and the triumph of Her Immaculate Heart and the Second Pentecost (the outpouring of the Holy Spirit) will usher in the Reign of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Blessed Mother spoke through Father Gobbi on October 13, 1990, about the glorious reign of Jesus and His Second Coming: ‘The glorious reign of Christ, which will be established in your midst with the Second Coming of Jesus in the world is close at hand...This is His glorious return, to establish His reign in your midst and to bring all humanity, redeemed by His most precious blood, back to the state of His new terrestrial paradise. That which is being prepared is so great that its equal has never existed since the creation of the world.’” (*The Thunder of Justice*, p.12).

The authors conclude, according to their expectations and predictions, that Mary will not only make more grand appearances very soon (perhaps in full bodily form this time for millions to see), but many supernatural things will also take place in the near future—like a permanent pagan red cross for all the world to see in the sky (with its “T” for Tammuz). Also, “she has promised to leave a visible sign for all humanity at the site of the apparitions of Medjugorje [‘the new Fatima’ (Newsweek, August 25, 1997, p. 52)].” (*The Thunder of Justice*, p. 207). Others say that Mary will leave a prominent sign for the world to see by the year 2000. I guess we will just have to wait and see. And will the counterfeit “Mother of God,” together with the ecumenical efforts of the pope, be the one to tip the scales of public opinion in favor of uniting the churches of the world and of bringing the harlot “daughters” back to their mother? Not only is this possible, friends, but Mary, since she “never saw corruption, but was assumed into heaven” according to the Catholic belief, or, as most Christians and non-Christians believe, is a “living spirit” after death, could be the one who will unite the churches of the land in a common goal under spiritualism in its modern form—the New Age movement! A three-fold union consisting of Catholicism, apostate Protestantism, and spiritualism will thus be formed by the beliefs they hold in common—Sunday sacredness [or the worship of the Babylonian sun-god, which New Agers call their “father”] and the doctrine of the immortality of the soul [which the New Agers simply call “reincarnation”]. God has prophesied that this three-fold union will be formed, and He revealed it to John in the following symbolic language: “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon [pagan spiritualism], and out of the mouth of the beast [Roman Catholicism], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [apostate Protestantism]. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.” (Rev. 16:13-15). The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which is the basic reason behind image worship and the adoration of the Virgin Mary, in whatever form one accepts it, sets the

stage for the worship of demons! If you believe that a spirit from the dead can communicate with the living, you are a sitting-duck, just waiting for the over-powering delusion of the New (Age) Eve—the Queen of the Coming (New) Age .

And could the Virgin Mary be the one to sway the Moslems to join with the other religions on common points of faith? Interestingly enough, Fatima, the famed city in Portugal where the Virgin Mary has appeared many times, was named after Muhammad's daughter, Fatimah. Furthermore, one of the books of the Koran is entitled Maryam or Marium (the Virgin Mary). She is respected by Moslems all over the world as the "the pious woman of the Word," who, some Moslems have told me, is already in Heaven!

Chapter 20

Before I conclude this book, I would like to say that I love Catholics. In fact, most of my family are Roman Catholic. My message is not, therefore, an attack on Catholic people, but an unmasking of the Roman Catholic system as antichrist. There are many people connected with this religious denomination that are indeed true Christians. It is not my intention, in any way, to judge the hearts of these individuals, but to expose the system in which they worship, especially at a time in which it seeks to impose its Babylonian system worldwide in a New World Order. At such a time as this, the following Scripture applies: "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." (Rev. 18:5).

Many times my own parents have asked me the question: "Why must you write about another person's beliefs; why knock their church?" Believe me, friends, I take no pleasure in exposing the sins of Babylon, but consider it a mandate from God, since Antichrist has attempted to usurp His throne and authority, and the multitudes that follow it will be lost as a result. Others will say, "This is not love, and you profess to be a Christian!" Always remember the following: "True love seeks first the honor of God and the salvation of souls. Those who have this love will not evade the truth to save themselves from the unpleasant results of plain speaking. When souls are in peril, God's ministers will not consider self, but will speak the word given to speak, refusing to excuse or palliate evil." (Prophets and Kings, pp. 141, 142). On the battlefield of Good vs. Evil, Right vs. Wrong, and Truth vs. Error, with eternal destiny at stake, does anyone dare to claim immunity from critical examination of false beliefs simply because they are part of a religion? After all, this is at the very heart of what "the great controversy between Christ and Satan" is all about!

Friends, the war between Christ and Satan is ages old. Revelation 12:7 says: "There was war in heaven: Michael [Christ—see Jude 9, I Thess. 4:16, and John 5:26-29] and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels." Thus, the great controversy between good and evil, which had its beginning in Heaven when Satan was the beautiful cherub, Lucifer, has continued on this earth since the time of Adam and Eve. Satan will use any medium necessary, not excluding religious or political organizations, or even a false apparition of the Virgin Mary in his efforts to destroy God's people. Just as the master deceiver used the serpent, he has used Pharaoh of Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Herod of Rome,

certain kings of Israel, and the Scribes and the Pharisees. And today he is using the Roman papacy to further accomplish his purposes, which will reach their climax in the near future. Since Roman Catholicism has intoxicated nearly every religious organization with her false doctrines, as well as the kings and the inhabitants of the earth, Satan is ready to strike at any moment, and for the last time.

According to Bible prophecies and the marshaling of events all about us that are obviously related to the fulfillment of those prophecies, we are now standing but a short distance from the full-blown fulfillment of the “mark of the beast” vs. “the seal of God” issue portrayed so graphically in Revelation 13 and 14. The New World Order and its One World Religion (which will demand the worship of Sunday by every human being on this planet) is ready to be implemented. And is God ready for the crisis? Absolutely! And His answer is contained in Revelation 14:6-12—the Three Angels’ Messages! “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven [the urgency with which this vital message must be given], having the everlasting gospel [the one and only gospel of the Holy Scriptures] to preach [the message must be heard] unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice [it is a life-or-death message], fear God [get your lives in harmony with His commandments], and give glory to Him [reflect His character or law in your life]; for the hour of His judgment is [not ‘will’] come [the hour of final accountability is here]; and worship Him [not the beast (Rome) or its image (apostate Protestantism) when Sunday observance is enforced by law] that made [for He is the Creator] heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water [the words contained in the fourth commandment—the Sabbath; in other words, “Observe My holy day”]. And there followed another angel [the message is important enough to command special attention], saying, Babylon [Protestant Churches have begun to reject the 1st Angel’s message for Babylonish traditions], is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations [the whole world] drink of the wine [they have swallowed, among others, her false doctrines of Sunday sacredness and the immortality of the soul] of the wrath of her fornication [spiritual adultery]. And the third angel followed them [backing up the first two angels’ messages with the most terrible warning in the Bible], saying with a loud voice [the message is most urgent], If any man worship the beast or his image, and receive his mark [Sunday—a commandment of man] in his forehead [he believes it], or in his hand [he meekly goes along with it], The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone [Eternal Fire will consume the wicked and is eternal in its effects (see Malachi 4:1, 3; Jude 7)] in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: [In the Greek, *aion*, an indefinite period of time. It could be anything from a moment to an extensive period of time, depending on the ingredients of what is being discussed. The wicked are punished according to their works. Obviously, their lengths of punishment will vary. Satan will suffer longest. But, all the wicked will be entirely consumed. (See Rev. 20:12-14; II Thess. 1:8, 9; and again Mal. 4:1, 3)]... who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God [not

Rome], and the faith of Jesus [for it is only by faith in Christ and through His grace that we can obey His commandments].”

The most solemn message in the whole of Scripture is the Three Angels' Messages, for it is the last warning to the world before probation closes once and for all! It really is not that difficult to understand the prophecies of Revelation when you learn what the signs and symbols mean. I remember the first time I read the Three Angels' Messages after receiving wisdom and understanding from God. Not only did I fall in love with them, I wanted to share them with the whole world; and I pray you will, too, for it is a message of salvation! Share this book with whomever you can. Send it to your friends and family, maybe to a whole city! But whatever you do, do something now! And God will reward you greatly. The promise is “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.” (Rev 1:3). May the grace of Almighty God be with you, brothers and sisters, and, remember, you have nothing to fear, for the Lord of hosts and His truth will triumph in the end.

“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven [a fourth angel joins with the Three Angels of Rev. 14:6-12 and gives added power to the message], having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. [Is God wrong here to speak so negatively of a worldwide 'religious' combine which rejects Heaven's final warning of mercy—the Three Angels' Messages? Which enforces life-threatening penalties against those who faithfully bear God's last warning appeals under the mighty power of the Holy Spirit? and which willingly submits itself to 'the power of darkness' in the form of spiritualism? Because its work bears the label 'religion,' does it legally merit immunity from exposure of its falsity by the truth of God's Word? Or are the laws now being stealthily set in place forbidding 'attacks' on other religious beliefs actually self-serving devices of the 'father of lies' to prevent the disclosure of his artful deceptions and deadly masquerades to lead multitudes to perdition?] And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. [Is it not heartwarming that God's last endeavor in the 'great controversy' between Christ and Satan before probation ends once and forever for fallen mankind is to rescue His true followers from doomed Babylon before the Seven Last Plagues begin! God truly cares for His Own. Not a single honest soul will be lost! Praise God! From first to last, the 'great controversy' is primarily a spiritual battle!] For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen [for all the world was her seat, but soon the wicked of this world will turn on her because they have been the victims of her deceptions], and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.”
(Revelation 18:1-8)!