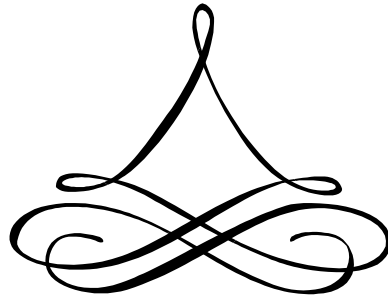


Anointing - or Apostasy?



The Latter Rain Legacy

BY

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INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPTER 1	5
CLOUDS WITHOUT WATER.....	5
CHAPTER 2	14
A NEW THING	14
CHAPTER 3	22
SONSHIP AND REBELLION	22
CHAPTER 4	31
THE THING THAT WOULDN'T DIE.....	31
CHAPTER 5	42
BLASTING THE BLESSED HOPE.....	42
CHAPTER 6	55
DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR	55
CHAPTER 7	68
THE NEW BREED	68
CHAPTER 8	83
MIRACLES, SIGNS, AND BLUNDERS	83
CHAPTER 9	99
THE WAY OF CAIN.....	99
CHAPTER 10	114
A NEW PARADIGM.....	114
CHAPTER 11	129
COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE.....	129

Dedicated to the memory of Larry Thomas – a true “Watchman”

INTRODUCTION

“Be glad then, you children of Zion, And rejoice in the LORD your God; For He has given you the former rain faithfully, And He will cause the rain to come down for you; The former rain, And the latter rain in the first month.” (Joel 2:23 NKJV)

*“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless **the falling away comes first**, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition...” (2 Th 2:3 NKJV)*

In 1948 a movement was born that has become the foundation of the great apostasy that the Apostle Paul warned us would come prior to the return of our Lord. Known as the New Order of the Latter Rain or just the Latter Rain Movement its influence has steadily grown within the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches since 1948. Today, through the influence of various “revivals” its leaven is spreading even further into the Evangelical world.

An apostasy or “*falling away*” is essentially a rebellion of God’s people against His Word. It would be within the Latter Rain “revival” which broke out in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, in 1948 that the last great rebellion against the word of God would be birthed. It is my belief that this movement has ushered in the very apostasy that the Apostle Paul warned would come.

Rebelling against the New Testament picture of the Church in the last days as a despised remnant of the faithful holding on until the rapture, they began to develop a heretical doctrine of a triumphant Church – conquering the world and bringing in the kingdom of Christ. The first time the Church adopted such a theology it resulted in the development of Roman Catholicism and ushered in the Dark Ages. This time the result will be much the same but of a much shorter duration. It will produce the one-world ecumenical church, “*The Great Harlot*” that will triumph for a short time under Anti-Christ - “*Drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus.*”

It came to be taught that the “Latter Rain” revival of 1948 was to be the first in a series of “restorational moves of God” that would restore to the Church all of the truths that Satan had “robbed” her of. The five-fold ministries of apostles and prophets would also be restored to the church. These restored “apostles” and “prophets” would lead the Church into “present truth” and the “last great moves of God.” Eventually when the Church was mature enough the “rapture” would occur. But the rapture of the Latter Rain would be a much different rapture than the Church had ever taught before. It would be a “spiritual” coming of Christ into His Church, His “corporate body.” A “corporate anointing.” **The saints would be “glorified”, even “deified” - right here on this earth.** This overcoming army of saints believes it will go forth conquering and triumphing over all of it’s enemies in the Great Tribulation. When they are done Christ will be “released from the heavens”, to come and take control of the kingdom they have established.

This doctrine is known as the “Manifest Sons of God” or “Sonship” and has spread throughout the Evangelical Church through the Charismatic and Kingdom/Dominion Movements. The Latter Rain “revivals” that are occurring in Toronto, Pensecola, and various other places are popularizing and spreading this heresy at an alarming rate. It is known popularly today as “**Joel’s Army**”. Thousands of Christians are coming into a strong delusion because they did not receive the love of the truth. While they may have received the truth, they did not have a love for it and have therefore fallen away from it. They are trading their blessed hope for an earthly delusion.

What follows is a short history of the Latter Rain Movement and its roots. I will attempt to chronicle how this movement started, how it struggled after it was condemned by the Assemblies of God for its unbalanced and heretical doctrines, and how it has triumphed today after re-emerging openly in the mid 1980s.

The Latter Rain got its name because it was believed that God had poured out the “*former rain*” of the Holy Spirit on His Church to get it started on the Day of Pentecost. The “*latter rain*” it was believed, was being poured out on the Church in the 1948 “revival” to prepare her for the last “great harvest” at the end of the age. Today it is being proclaimed by the Latter Rain “apostles” and “prophets” that we are soon going to enter into this harvest. They claim that a worldwide revival is soon going to occur that will sweep millions, perhaps billions into the Church. Unfortunately, neither the New Testament nor the Old teaches such a thing.

I will try to present the teachings and aims of the Latter Rain proponents as much as I possibly can in their own words. I think that to let them speak for themselves is the best way to present this material. Even so, I realize that many will accuse me of being unfair and “quoting them out of context.” I also realize that many will accuse me of having a “lack of love” and a “religious spirit.” I originally had no intention of ever writing such a book but I have been studying the movement for many years and recently felt compelled by the Lord to do so. It is my hope that it will reach some and bring them back to the Biblical hope – the “*blessed hope*” of the rapture - to “*meet the Lord in the air*”.

*“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you **in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?**” (1 Th 2:19 NKJV)*

CHAPTER 1

LOUDS WITHOUT WATER

*“These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are **clouds without water**, carried about by the winds...” (Jude 1:12 NKJV)*

There were several important influences that contributed to the birth of the Latter Rain movement in the late 1940’s. The first was a general state of dissatisfaction with the level of spirituality within the Pentecostal denominations. Many in the rank and file, and some within the leadership, felt that the Pentecostal Church was going the way of all previous denominations. That is, that they had become too preoccupied with governmental and procedural functions to experience the original powerful presence of the Holy Ghost in their midst. The Glory was departing! According to Bill Hamon:

During the late 1930’s and early 1940’s many of the Pentecostal Organizations were conducting conferences with endless discussions over controversial doctrines. Second and third generation Pentecostals arose who did not know the former glory. Much of the original supernatural manifestation had disappeared from the average congregation. A Church with the supernatural gifts in operation and with manifestations of supernatural worship was the exception rather than the rule. Many old timers in the Church were testifying about the good old days. The newer ministers and younger generation saints became hungry for a new visitation from God. Joel 2:15-17, Hosea 6:3, and Hosea 10:1 became the sermon topics for many Pentecostals, that is, “Call for a fast, let the ministers weep between the porch and the altar, saying, Spare thy people... break up your fallow ground... ask for rain in the time of the latter rain... then you shall know if you follow on to know the Lord... He shall come to us as the rain – as the latter rain upon the earth.”¹

And Richard Riss writes:

Since the mid – 1930’s there had been a deep spiritual hunger among Pentecostals. According to Carl Brumback, “The depth of worship and the operation of the gifts of the Spirit so much in evidence in earlier decades were not so prominent in the thirties and forties.”²

Out of this spiritual hunger for a new move of God, and the influence of two men in particular, Franklin Hall and William Branham, the Latter Rain movement would be birthed. The first man to heavily influence the Latter Rain movement and the peculiar doctrines that it developed would be Franklin Hall, and his book *Atomic Power With God Through Fasting And Prayer*.

FRANKLIN HALL

In 1946, a man by the name of Franklin Hall would establish in San Diego California a major *Fasting And Prayer Daily Revival Center*.³ The central purpose of this “revival center” was the teaching of fasting as the means of bringing about the revival and “restoration” that the Church so desperately needed.⁴ Hall seems to have been the prototype Charismatic, that is to say, that wild claims and exaggerations soon began to issue forth from the center. For example, in Hall’s newsletter it is alleged:

Once or twice the fire department was briefed by folk seeing the holy smoke and fire through the windows upstairs. They came running up the steps with the hoses to put out the fire. Some of the firemen, seeing that it was not a natural fire, sat down in the large revival center hall and worshipped the Lord, getting saved.⁵

Hall claimed that one woman, “sister Mary Sommerville”, fasted without food for eighty-three days! She was “so strong in the Lord in this notable fast”, it was claimed, that “she ran and danced all over the place, being **drunk** on both the inner and outer filling of the precious Holy Spirit.” (Emphasis mine.)⁶ That’s more than twice as long as our Lord fasted when He was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted by Satan. Along with these types of claims were the usual claims of hundreds being saved, with many being healed of various diseases.

It was during this time that Hall wrote the book that was to make him famous – *Atomic Power With God Through Fasting And Prayer*. This book would have a major impact on Pentecostals who were seeking God for a new visitation. As the title suggests, the book promised explosive spiritual power for those who would faithfully seek God for it in fastings and prayer. According to Hall’s newsletter:

Rev. Walter Frederick, former Assembly Superintendent in Canada, sent brother Hall’s literature to every Pentecostal preacher in Canada. A few of the other (not too well known then) ministers [sic] who had major fasting experiences by our writings in the 1946, 1947 to 1950 fasting era and who also became famous are: Wm. Freeman, Gordon Lindsay, A. A. Allen, O. L. Jagers, Gayle Jackson, Oral Roberts, David Nunn, Wm. Branham, W. V. Grant, Wm. Hagen, Dale Henson, Tommy Hicks.”⁷

In Hall’s book he claims that, “without fasting, prayer becomes ineffectual.”⁸ Hall claimed that even the prayers of pagans will be answered by God, so long as they are accompanied by fasting:

Many, if not all, of the American Indian tribes sought revelation of The Great Spirit through prayer and fasting. When they had famines, food shortages, lack of rain, etc., The Great Spirit was sought through prayer and fasting, and their prayers were answered.⁹

Tricia Tillin, of Banner Ministries, writes of Hall’s book, *Atomic Power With God Through Fasting And Prayer*:

I have a copy of this book and reading it makes one wonder about the scriptural knowledge of Christians of that day. It is full of the most strange and heretical statements and reads more like an occult tract than a Christian book. Hall believed that by fasting for long periods, Christians received a powerful anointing that led them to sinless perfection and immortality by stages of spiritual transformation. Some more of his teachings were:

- That perfected believers would experience power over the forces of gravity.
- That they could teleport to wherever they wished.
- Their clothes would not wear out, they would have no body odor, never need to wash.
- They would never be sick.
- That an immortal substance from Christ would come upon their bodies, a golden substance visible to all, that would glorify them and people would see and feel the fire of the Holy Spirit.
- That all must pray with open eyes.
- That BODY-FELT salvation – the fire of God, the glory, had to be applied to the body for thirty days and would purge out all sickness, tiredness, and weakness of the flesh.
- The doctrine of the corporate manchild was also in the first edition of the book.¹⁰

Hall’s teachings show heavy evidence of some type of occult influence. Jewel van der Merwe writes:

A later book, *The Return To Immortality*, suggests that Christians can become immortal through experiences with UFO's, something he refers to as UHO's (unusual heavenly objects), and the IHO's (immortal heavenly objects), gravitational and levitation control is possible, thus leading to immortality. Hall also instituted "open-eyed" prayer. He said that "immortality blessings" come in more successfully because closed eyes destroy faith.¹¹

Roger Oakland writes:

Throughout Hall's teaching, he presented a number of ideas showing his belief that the Zodiac, a study based on astrology, was a valid way of interpreting God's revelation to man. In his book, he stated: "In the Zodiacal sign "Scorpio", which is the eighth sign of the Zodiac, we have a picture of the scorpion with its stinger lifted ready to strike. This is the sign of death, and is supposed to govern the sex area. Just before the sign of the heavens there is the sign of the judge. Jesus, who is the giver of life, proceeds toward death and pulls the STING OUT OF DEATH. O Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Another main point of Hall's teaching was in his immortalization theory that stated: "The sleeping, unfoundationally built Church" must be awakened to a "real cause and calling that when God's word is completely acted upon and complied with, will result in bringing about the real gushers and torrents of the long, past due, rain of righteousness. A rain of Immortality upon the earth that so many prophets have written about and portrayed in their prophecies."¹²

Hall's teaching that Christians can attain immortality in this life would heavily influence the Latter Rain movement, resulting in the formation of a heretical doctrine known as the "Manifest Sons of God". One has to agree with Tricia Tillin, that it is very disturbing that "born-again", "Spirit-baptized" Pentecostal Christians of Hall's era could not discern the occult and unbiblical nature of the teachings of Franklin Hall. However, the influence of Franklin Hall and his teachings upon the Latter Rain "revival" that occurred at North Battleford, Saskatchewan, was unmistakable. Ern Hawtin, one of the principal leaders of the "revival", wrote:

The truth of fasting was one great contributing factor to the revival. One year before this we had read Franklin Hall's book "Atomic Power With God Through Fasting and Prayer." We immediately began to practice fasting. Previously we had not understood the possibility of long fasts. This revival would never have been possible the restoration of this great truth through our good brother Hall.¹³

WILLIAM M. BRANHAM

The man with probably the most influence upon the Latter Rain movement was William M. Branham. Born in a mountain cabin in Berksville Kentucky in 1909, William Marion Branham was the first of nine boys and one girl. His childhood was spent in extreme poverty.¹⁴ According to Kurt Koch, Branham's parents believed in fortune-telling and he was burdened through occultism at an early age.¹⁵ Supernatural occurrences and visitations marked the life of William M. Branham. Al Dager writes:

The following account may be legend or fact, but it was a part of Branham's testimony from the start. On the day of his birth, after being washed, he was placed in his mother's arms by the midwife who then went to the window to open the shutter. (There was no glass in the Branham house in those days.) As dawn broke sending a few rays of light into the room, there was seen a small circular halo about a foot in diameter, above the bed where little William lay in his mother's arms. Thousands of people have supposedly seen this halo,

which is ostensibly revealed in a photograph taken in Houston, Texas, during a January 1950, healing campaign.¹⁶

It seems that from early childhood a familiar spirit was trying to make itself known to William Branham. Bill Randles writes:

Branham who was the first of ten children, reports of his early life that, “there was a peculiar feeling, like someone standing near me, trying to say something to me, and especially when I was alone.” In fact, when he was seven years old, he had a strange visitation. “I was on my way one afternoon to carry water to the house from the barn, which was about a city block away. About halfway between the house and the barn stood an old poplar tree. I had just gotten home from school and the other boys were going out to a pond to fish. I was crying to go, but dad said that I had to pack water. I stopped under the tree to rest when all of a sudden I heard a sound as of the wind blowing in the leaves. I knew it wasn’t blowing any other place. It seemed to be a very still afternoon. I stepped back from the tree and noticed that in a certain place, about the size of a barrel, the wind seemed to be blowing through the tree leaves. Then came a voice saying, ‘Never drink, smoke, or defile your body in any way, for I have a work for you to do when you get older.’” Now this visitation made Branham afraid. It would be some time before was converted.¹⁷

“The Voice”, as Branham came to call this visitor, accompanied him throughout his lifetime, and eventually appeared to him as an “angel” who would direct him into his healing ministry and be with him throughout the rest of his life. Bill Randles writes:

It wasn’t until his early twenties, after he was healed of a life threatening condition, that Branham gave his life to God. He became a Baptist preacher, held a tent meeting in Jeffersonville, Indiana, and started a Church. (the Branham Tabernacle) One day he wandered into a tent meeting of Pentecostals. They asked him to preach, and recognized the call of God on his life. That tent meeting had a profound impact on Branham. Later, he said that they had something that he lacked! After excitedly telling his wife, her family and his friends of the experience, people talked him out of mingling with “those folks”, so he backed away. In 1937, while he was both pastoring and working as a game warden, the Ohio river flooded, killing his wife and young baby. Branham believed that it was a judgement from God for his refusal to join the Pentecostals.¹⁸

Shortly after this, Branham joined the heretical Pentecostal sect, *The United Pentecostal Churches*. These are the “Jesus only” people, who deny the Biblical doctrine of the trinity, labeling it a “doctrine of the Devil”. Branham was converted to their anti-trinitarian heresy, and began to require that all believers that had been baptized according to a trinitarian formula be rebaptized in the name of Jesus only. He would later deny that he was a believer in the “oneness” doctrine, but Branham would teach his own form of it, “that defined God as one person Who manifested Himself as three different “attributes”: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, rather than three persons comprising one Godhead.”¹⁹

One day, as Branham was preparing to baptize some people in the Ohio river “the voice” spoke to Branham once again. In Branham’s own words:

I was baptizing down on the river, my first converts, at the Ohio river...and just then a whirl come from the heavens above, and here come that light shining down...and it hung right out over where I was at, a voice spoke from there, and said, “As John the Baptist was sent for the forerunner of the first coming of Christ, you’ve got a message that will bring forth the forerunning of the second coming of Christ.” And it liked to a-scared me to death. And I went back, and all the people there...they asked me, said, “What did that light mean?”

20

Branham was bothered very much by the voice, and prayed that God would deliver him from these visitations. Branham said:

And then all along down through life I'd see that, see that moving, see that visions, how those things would happen. Then a little later on, It kept bothering me so much, and everybody telling me it was wrong...no matter how much I would keep praying for that not to come, it come anyhow...I was a game warden in the state of Indiana...I said, "Honey, I can't go on like this, I'm a prisoner." I said, "All the time, when this thing keeps happening, and things like that, and these visions a-coming, and so forth like that, or whatever it is." I said, "Them trances like", I said, "I don't know what it is. And honey, I- I-I-I don't want to fool with it, they tell me it's the Devil. And I love the Lord Jesus."²¹

Obviously, Branham was tightly held in the grip of some form of occult bondage. On May 7, 1946, while Branham was still employed as a game warden, His "angel" appeared to him for the first time, and called him into the healing ministry. Branham describes this experience as follows:

I had come home for lunch, and was going around the house taking off my gun, when a dear friend of mine approached me and asked me to go to Madison with him that afternoon. I told him it was impossible as I had to patrol, and while walking around the house under a maple tree, it seems that the whole top of the tree let loose...something came down through that tree like a great rushing wind...my wife came from the house frightened, and asked me what was wrong. I sat down and told her that after all these twenty odd years of being conscious of this strange feeling, the time had come when I had to find out what it was all about. The crisis had come! I told her and my child good-bye, and warned her if I did not come back in a few days, perhaps I might never return!... then along in the night, at about the eleventh hours, I had quit praying and was sitting up when I noticed a light flickering in the room. Thinking someone was coming with a flashlight, I looked out of the window, but there was no one, and when I looked back, the light was spreading out on the floor, becoming wider. Now I know this seems very strange to you, as it did to me also. As the light was spreading...I became excited and started from the chair, but as I looked up, there hung that great star. However, it did not have five points like a star, but looked more like a ball of fire or light shining down upon the floor. Just then I heard someone walking across the floor, which startled me again, as I knew of no one who would be coming there besides myself. Now, coming through the light, I saw the feet of a man coming toward me, as naturally as you would walk to me. He appeared to be a man who, in human weight, would weigh about two hundred pounds, clothed in a white robe, he had a smooth face, no beard, dark hair down to his shoulders, rather dark-complexioned, with a very pleasant countenance, and coming closer, his eyes caught with mine. Seeing how fearful I was, he began to speak, "Fear not, I am sent from the presence of almighty God to tell you that your peculiar life and your misunderstood ways have been to indicate that God has sent you to take a divine gift of healing to the peoples of the world. IF YOU WILL BE SINCERE, AND CAN GET THE PEOPLE TO BELIEVE YOU, NOTHING SHALL STAND BEFORE YOUR PRAYER, NOT EVEN CANCER"...he told me many things which I do not have space to record here. He told me how I would be able to detect diseases by vibrations on my hand. He went away, but I have seen him several times since then. He has appeared to me perhaps once or twice within the space of six months and has spoken with me. A few times he has appeared visibly in the presence of others. I do not know who he is. I only know that he is the messenger of God to me."²²

It was shortly after this visitation, that Branham's ministry as a healing evangelist began, and he soon became something of a sensation. Branham's ministry became the catalyst for the other healing evangelists who arose during this time, such as Oral Roberts and T. L. Osborn. Bill Randles writes:

Branham's ministry was nothing short of amazing. I have seen video tapes of Branham. One was a particular Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship meeting in the mid 1950's. Branham and the crowd were obviously waiting for the sign gift ministry to begin. "You know what I'm waiting for, the angel of the Lord, I can't start without him." Gradually, he would say something like, "Now he's here", and the sign gift ministry would start. He would calmly call individuals out of the crowd, tell them the secrets of their heart, the diseases of their body, what the doctor said, what they said to their wife the previous night, and then calmly pronounced them healed. Often they were! In fact, Branham was once asked if his wonders were done by the Holy Spirit, to which he replied, "No, my angel does it." People who knew Branham are all agreed on at least two points. One, his genuine character of humility and compassion. Branham lacked hype or any showmanship at all. The other thing all agreed upon was his absolute accuracy, in words of knowledge and wisdom. The late Ern Baxter (commonly known as one of the Fort Lauderdale Five shepherding leaders of the 1970's) was a teacher travelling with Branham for some years. Baxter has made the comment that he never heard Branham give an inaccurate word of knowledge to any person. And Branham ministered to tens of thousands, perhaps 100's of thousands!...I could go on and on about Branham, for truly his life and ministry were astounding. Calmly and deliberately, he would affect incredible healings and deliverances. Over and over again he would tell people their name, address, conversation, troubles, diseases, sometimes sins, friends, etc., by the spirit, with complete accuracy! There were also incredibly dramatic showdowns with crazed lunatics, who would be allowed to get to Branham, spewing out blasphemies and threatenings and yet unable to actually do anything except either shirk or repent, all in front of huge audiences. Pentecostals have never seen anything like it before or since! To this day, the Pentecostal media hold him up in a reverent light.²³

Truly there was some great spiritual power operating through Branham. But was it the power of God, or the power of his spirit-guide, his "angel." According to Branham himself, it was his "angel" who did it, not God. Without the presence of his "angel" at his side, Branham seemed to be powerless, unable to do much of anything. According to Alfred Pohl and David W. Cloud:

One evening, just before a meeting, Branham told his interpreter, "Don't stand to the right of me because my angel stands there." Branham described the angel as a well-built man, with dark hair and folded arms. The angel stood next to Branham, and whatever the angel said, Branham had to obey. Branham said the angel was with him day and night, and without him Branham had no authority in his preaching...Kurt Koch confirms "The fact that Branham's angel was a spiritistic rather than a divine angel." He relates a story about a woman whose brother in law, in spite of being a minister, was involved in occultism, spiritistic meetings and magic. When Branham first was introduced to him, Branham spontaneously said, "You look exactly like the angel which appears to me every day." The weird, spiritistic minister frightened Christians who knew him...We believe Branham was influenced by demonic spirits. The bondage in which he lived was an occultic bondage. His powers were those of a soothsayer. His healing powers were occultic. The voices which tormented him, the vibrations and swellings in his hand, the lights, the fiery balls which supposedly danced about the room during some of his healing crusades, the complete exhaustion he experienced after his meetings – all of this is evidence of occultic powers. And this is what men of God tried to warn him of. In fact, when Branham met fortunetellers, they even told him he was influenced by supernatural powers: "What made me more scared than ever, every time I met a fortuneteller, they would recognize that something had happened, and that would just...it nearly killed me. For instance, one day my cousins and I was going down through a carnival ground, and we was just boys, walking along. So there was a little old fortuneteller sitting out there in one of those tents...she said, "Say you, come here a minute!" And the three of us boys turned around. And she said, "You with the striped sweater." (that was me)...and I walked up, I said, "Yes, Ma'am, what could I do for you?" And she said, "Say, did you know there's a light that follows you? You were born under a

certain sign.” I said, “What do you mean?” She said, “Well, you were born under a certain sign. There’s a light that follows you. You were born for a divine call.” Branham tells of other instances in which soothsayers told him similar things. He said, “Every time I get around one of them, that’s the way it would be. Then the preachers saying, “That’s the Devil! That’s the Devil!” This is a sad story. It’s too bad Branham did not listen to the wise voices which were warning him that the visitations were demonic. It is too bad that Branham did not listen to the Bible. As it turns out, he did not listen to wisdom. Instead, he allowed the demonic powers to control his life, and he, in turn, led multitudes of others into all sorts of error and confusion.²⁴

And what of William M. Branham’s teaching? What kind of error and confusion was he sowing into the body of Christ? We’ve already seen that Branham rejected the doctrine of the trinity. But this was just one of the milder of his bizarre and heretical teachings. Some of the other teachings of William M. Branham include:

- ❖ Branham’s belief that the word of God was given in three forms: the Zodiac, the Egyptian pyramids, and the written scriptures. The Zodiac theory, as we have seen, was also espoused by Franklin Hall.
- ❖ The “serpent seed” doctrine, which was based on his interpretation of Genesis 3:13, in which Eve says to God, “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” Branham claimed that the word translated “beguiled” meant “seduced sexually”. He claimed that Satan seduced Eve sexually, and Cain was the result! Since that time, according to Branham, evil has been passed from generation to generation through women. Apparently, Branham had some kind of problem with women. In one of his sermons, he stated:

But I remember when my father’s still up there running, I had to be out there with water and stuff, see young ladies that wasn’t over seventeen, eighteen years, up there with a man my age now, drunk. And they’d have to sober them up and give them black coffee, to get them home to cook their husband’s supper. Oh, something like that, I said, I...this was my remark [sic] then, “THEY’RE NOT WORTH A GOOD CLEAN BULLET TO KILL THEM WITH IT.” That’s right, and I just hated women. That’s right, and I just have to watch every move now, to keep from still thinking the same thing.²⁵

- ❖ Branham also claimed that the angels of the seven Churches (Revelation 2 and 3) were actually men who God sent at various times to the Church throughout history, to provide Her with revelation from God to lead her into the future. Branham taught that he himself was the angel of the seventh, the Laodicean, Church age. He even had this claim stated on his tombstone.

One has to echo the sentiments of Tricia Tillin in regard to Franklin Hall here again, in regard to this man Branham and his bizarre doctrines! You have to wonder how Spirit filled people could fail to discern the occult nature of this man’s life and ministry. Tragically, one can only come to the conclusion that the average Christian in Branham’s day was as Biblically illiterate as he or she is today. How else can you explain it? Except perhaps that the hunger for spiritual gifts and experiences, for signs and wonders, causes far too many of God’s people to throw caution and discernment to the wind, and “go with the flow”. As they say today, “Just let go, and let God”. Remember, our Lord said, “*An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign*”. But the same willingness to accept any teaching no matter how unbiblical or bizarre as long as there are “signs and wonders following” that grips the Church today, seems to have first gotten hold of the Church in the late 1940’s. Today the situation is out of control. Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians seem no longer to care what the source of the power is, just so long as some form of supernatural power is being manifested. Rodney Howard-Browne, the self styled “Holy Ghost Bartender”, states:

...When revival comes you will see manifestations of these three things in meetings: (1) The Holy Spirit, (2) The flesh, and (3) The Devil. But I’d rather be in a Church where the Devil and the flesh are manifesting, than in a Church where nothing is happening because

people are too afraid to manifest anything...don't worry about it. And if a devil manifests, don't worry about that, either. Rejoice, because at least something is happening!²⁶

Don't worry if it's the Devil, as long as something is happening! How foolish and undiscerning can God's people get? This attitude is spiritually reckless at best, and tantamount to spiritual suicide at worst. Yet it seems to be the majority opinion among Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians today. Larry Thomas, a fellow Pentecostal, pointed out:

When Jimmy Swaggart took his crusade to South America in 198_, was it 1986, Kevin? Late '86 or early '87, huge stadium in Argentina, 80,000 people filled the stadium every night, and during the worship service, during the preaching, there were literally hundreds of people in this congregation who would begin to laugh hysterically and throw themselves down on the ground. They would howl like dogs, they would bark like dogs, they would roar like lions, they would make all kinds of wild sounds, and when these strange things began to happen, the ushers went and physically restrained them, took them outside the coliseum to a tent outside, and they cast the devil out of them. But now, when you do that, it's evidence that the Holy Ghost is doing something in your life.²⁷

I find it very interesting and enlightening, that John Arnott, Pastor of the Toronto Airport Vineyard, received his "anointing" for revival in 1993 in Argentina.²⁸

The so-called "revivals" occurring today in places such as Toronto and Pensacola are nothing more than a continuation of the "revival" that broke out at North Battleford, Saskatchewan, in 1948 which came to be known as "The Latter Rain" or "The New Order of the Latter Rain." Many of the same unscriptural and bizarre doctrines and experiences that came out of the Latter Rain movement are resurfacing in the "revivals" of today. William M. Branham and Franklin Hall were the main source of inspiration for this "new thing" that came forth out of North Battleford and spread rapidly throughout the Pentecostal world. These two men were the clouds that precipitated the "Latter Rain" and I think it can be fairly stated that these two occult-influenced individuals are a fulfillment of Jude's prophecy. They were truly "*clouds without water.*"

Although Branham's popularity waned somewhat in the later 1950's and 1960's because of his commitment to his bizarre doctrines, he continued to be held up and is still held up today as a great man of God by many of the leaders in the Pentecostal/Charismatic world. Paul Cain, the "Kansas City Prophet" who ministered with Branham has called him the "Greatest prophet who ever lived."²⁹ Of William M. Branham, and his legacy, Bill Randles writes:

What is the significance of this man for today? William Branham is important to us because he represents a crossroads which the Pentecostal Church stood at in the late 1940's and which the larger Church is coming to today. Other prophets are performing incredible signs and wonders. People are getting "touched" and in many cases "good things" are happening. Prophecies are being given that appear accurate and many are being healed of their "inner hurts" and "wounded souls". The question is, do their teachings matter? Should we judge on the basis of doctrine? Or manifestations? We are right back at Deuteronomy 13:1-5 again, what are we going to do? After all, How do you judge signs and wonders? Kurt Koch, a German author and expert on the occult wrote about Branham's methodology in his Occult A-B-C, while discussing English Spiritist, Harry Edwards, "Edwards has made the spiritist character of his activity clear by saying, 'When my angels are not present I cannot heal.' Here an interesting parallel to the healing work of William Branham may be seen...another evidence is the fact that neither Edwards nor Branham were able to perform cures when faced with born again Christians who had committed themselves to the protection of Christ...when he (Branham) spoke...there were several believers among the audience – including myself (Koch) – who prayed along these lines: 'Lord if this man's powers are from you then bless and use him, but if the healing gifts are not from you then hinder him.' The

result? On both occasions Branham said from the platform, “There are disturbing powers here, I can do nothing.”” (Occult A-B-C, Kregel Publications, Kurt Koch, p. 235) It is my conviction that the Pentecostal movement stood at a crossroads in regard to Branham – would we judge the heresy in loyalty to the truth of the gospel? Or, would we look at it in a pragmatic way and say, “Look at the crowds! He brings people to God! How could this be of Satan? Would Satan heal? We’ve been begging God for signs and wonders, and they’re here! His critics are nothing, they don’t “produce the goods”, they’re probably not even Spirit-filled, no anointing, just criticism.” As they say in Toronto, “Some people have more faith in Satan’s ability to deceive than in God’s ability to bless.” Though there were no doubt many voices raised against Branham’s heresies, by and large, Branham enjoyed great acceptance by the truly influential leaders of Pentecostalism. (To this day, as you know, he is regarded by many as a prophet and pioneer of the signs and wonders movement.) It is true that at the time of his death, his popularity was waning and his teaching became more obvious, but to the Manifested Sons of God Movement, as well as much of Christian media, and even the current “miracle ministries” and Charismatic leaders, there is a profound respect for him and in many cases a desire to emulate him.”³⁰

On December 18, 1965, William Marion Branham was on his way to Arizona when his car was hit head on by a drunk driver. After laying in a coma for six days, William Marion Branham died, Christmas Eve, 1965. Faithful followers believed that he would rise from the dead, so they delayed his burial for several days. They are waiting still!

CHAPTER 2

A NEW THING

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. (Matthew 12:38,39 NKJV)

I don't believe that it's just a coincidence that the movement that was to become the vehicle for "the Apostasy" of the last days was birthed in the same year that Israel became, as the prophets and our Lord had foretold, a nation once more. This movement (what the Assemblies of God came to refer to as "The New Order Of The Latter Rain") was birthed in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, at the *Sharon Orphanage and Schools* - a work that had been established by the Reverend Herrick Holt of the *North Battleford Church of the Foursquare Gospel*.

Reverend Holt was joined in the work there in the fall of 1947 by George Hawtin, a pastor in the *Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. (P.A.O.C.) Hawtin had begun the *Bethel Bible Institute* in 1935 in Star City, Saskatchewan with just eight students. In 1937, the Institute picked up and moved to Saskatoon. According to Richard M. Riss:

Dormitories were rented, although in 1939 a campus in Avenue A North in Saskatoon was purchased. The property, including additional buildings purchased in 1942, became the property of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada in 1945, in order that the school might have full recognition as a Pentecostal Assemblies Bible school...the board of management of the school consisted of George Hawtin (the Principal of the school), P. G. Hunt, and the District Executive of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. 31

It seems, however, that there was a certain amount of tension between Hawtin and the P.A.O.C. over the administration of the Institute. Reportedly, some of the doctrines that were being taught were questionable, and there were doubts as to the commitment of Hawtin and Hunt to the scholastic excellence of the school. Richard Riss writes:

In 1947, because some of the officials of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada felt that they could not get co-operation from George Hawtin, his resignation was requested. P.G. Hunt resigned in sympathy. ³²

According to Larry Thomas:

The Saskatoon District's stand against the Institutes' faculty was endorsed at a summer conference in 1947 and the malcontents left the Institute and moved to North Battleford, Saskatchewan... ³³

In North Battleford, Hawtin and Hunt joined Herrick Holt in the work at *Sharon Orphanage and Schools*. Seventy students left *Bethel Bible Institute* to follow their principal to North Battleford. It wasn't long after Hawtin and Hunt had joined Holt that things began to stir.

According to Richard Riss:

There were significant developments at North Battleford. Milford Kirkpatrick, George Hawtin's brother-in-law, and Ern Hawtin, George Hawtin's brother, soon joined the ministry at

Sharon. According to Cornelius J. Jaenen, the Orphanage had become secondary to Holt, and he embarked on a campaign preaching the so-called “New Thing” at the time he had been joined by Hawtin and Hunt. The “New Thing” preached by Holt was, according to Jaenen, a reference to Isaiah 43:18,19: “Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” Holt had been preaching that God was going to be doing a new thing, in accordance with the scripture above. Accordingly, revelation was yet to come. Jaenen has tracked the idea of the “New Thing” to the Los Angeles “World Wide Camp Meeting” in 1913. A group headed by George B. Studd, pastor of the Belvedere Tabernacle in Los Angeles for eight years, claimed to have received revelation of the new thing...during the eight years of his pastorate, George B. Studd spent his large fortune in the support of foreign missions and continued his “uneasy search for the definition of the ‘New Thing.’”³⁴

When we start looking for God to do some “New Thing”, some “thing” not revealed to us in the scriptures, we are setting ourselves up for a strong delusion and giving place to the Devil! The scriptures are clear - God has in these last days spoken to us through his son Jesus Christ. Since the canon of scripture was completed with the inspired writings of the Apostles of our Lord, there has not been, and will not be, any “new” revelation by God. The Bible makes this perfectly clear, with warnings in the beginning, middle, and end of the scriptures - warnings against taking away from or adding to the revelation of God to man contained in the Bible:

“Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.” (Deut. 12:32 NKJV)

“Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him; do not add to His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar.” (Proverbs 30:5-6 NKJV)

“For I testify to everyone who heard the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” (Rev. 22:18-19 NKJV)

To these I could certainly add Isaiah’s admonition, *“To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word it is because there is no light in them.”* And many others. The point is that if God gives any revelation to men today that revelation will line up perfectly with the revelation He has already given *“once for all”* in His word. If it doesn’t then it is not from God. This hunger for a “new thing” or “new revelation” reminds one of the pagan philosophers that Paul encountered on Mars Hill, and the early Gnostic heretics:

“For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.” (Acts 17:21 NKJV)

R. C. Sproul writes:

The Gnostics were so called because of their view of revelation. The word *gnosis* is the Greek word for knowledge. In many cases the Gnostic heretics did not make a frontal assault against the apostles or against the apostolic teaching of scripture. In fact, many of them insisted that they were genuine, Bible believing Christians. It wasn’t that they rejected the Bible; they just claimed an *additional* source of knowledge or insight that was superior to or at least beyond the knowledge of Scripture. The “gnostikoi” were “those in the know.” Their knowledge was not derived from intellectual comprehension of Scripture or by empirical research, but was mystical, direct, and immediate. God “revealed” private, intuitive insights to them that carried nothing less than divine authority.³⁵

God is not giving any “new revelation” to men today. And neither is He doing any “new thing” on the Earth. Any “thing”, any experience or knowledge that God has for his people will be found in the scriptures. Any experience or knowledge that is not found among it’s pages is not for God’s people. Yes, there are spiritual gifts, valid spiritual gifts - revelation gifts, like the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and prophecy that I believe are just as valid for the Church today as they were for the Church of the Apostles. I have seen these gifts in operation in the Church, and have experienced some of them myself and they are a beautiful thing both to behold and experience. Very edifying. However, when the revelations that come through these gifts go beyond or contradict, or add to or take away from the revelation of God contained in the Scriptures then they are nothing but counterfeits. Experiences such as “slain in the spirit”, “holy laughter”, “drunkness in the spirit” and most of the others that are coming with the so-called “revivals” at Toronto, Pensacola and other places simply cannot be found anywhere in scripture. The leadership of these “revivals” know this full well - and have stopped for the most part trying to defend them scripturally. Tricia Tillin writes:

John Wimber came from Quakerism. Is this why he has traces of the belief in the supremacy of the inner revelation over and above the written word? In his book *Power Evangelism* Wimber explains: “God uses our experiences to show us more fully what he teaches us in scripture, many times toppling or altering elements of our theology and world view.” From *Testing the Fruit of the Vineyard*, by John Goodwin (former pastor of the Calvary Chapel, San Jose [1990]) who traveled extensively with John Wimber: “It is a common statement of Wimber’s that ‘God is greater than his Word’. This means two things. First, that there is an essential truth in extra-biblical sources, and secondly that the phenomena experienced by attendees of Vineyard seminars and church services do not need to be validated by scripture. They could, according to Wimber, contradict God’s word and still be ‘from the Lord.’”³⁶

Bob Hunter quotes Jack Deere, (Toronto Airport Vineyard, November 20, 1994) as saying:

...Why does God do or permit stuff like this and other things we’ve seen this week? Why does he do that? I Corinthians 1:26. “For you see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. Because God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.” Just try explaining some of this. I used to try to do that out of the Bible. I used to try to say, “well, people fell down in the presence of Jesus, and Daniel vibrated and got sick after his visions in Daniel 7 and 8, and there’s John falling down in the Revelation.” It’s not the same thing as we see tonight. You can’t explain this out of the Bible...³⁷

And if you can’t explain this out of the Bible than it’s not God -period. The brethren at North Battleford placed themselves in a very precarious and vulnerable position spiritually. Couple this with the air of expectancy which permeated the gatherings and it’s easy to see how ripe for deception they really were at this time. Reg Layzell of Glad Tidings Temple in Vancouver, British Columbia, wrote of this period:

In the hearts of all those hungry for God was a cry for a fresh visitation. Those in the ministry as well as those in the pew felt a deep and longing hunger for more from heaven. There was an acknowledgement from many in the ministry and also from those in official positions to this effect...In a discussion with a district superintendent, this statement was made by the official in mind: “Our people need a fresh visitation from God and without it we will go the way of all flesh.” Before God visited us there was general dearth in the land and it was recognized.³⁸

There was definitely an air of expectancy at North Battleford as the group waited for God to reveal the “new thing” to them. This expectancy was intensified after several of the group participated in one of William Branham’s healing campaigns in Vancouver, British Columbia. Upon returning one of the group penned this editorial for their newsletter *The Sharon Star*:

...All great outpourings of the past have had their outstanding truths. Luther's truth was justification by faith. Wesley's was sanctification, the Baptists taught the premillennial [sic] coming of Christ. The Missionary Alliance taught divine healing. The Pentecostal outpouring has restored the Baptism of the Holy Ghost to its rightful place. But the next great outpouring is going to be marked by all these other truths plus such a demonstration of the nine gifts of the spirit as the world, NOT EVEN THE APOSTOLIC WORLD, has ever witnessed before. This revival will be short and will be the last before the rapture of the Church. ³⁹ (Emphasis mine.)

Here we see once again - an expectation for something to occur, some "new thing", some experience outside of the experience of the Apostles of our Lord. According to Richard Riss:

One of the methods Branham used was to cast out a demon, and a miraculous healing would take place. This connection between the casting out of demons and healing was a fairly new concept to the people at that time. Cornelius J. Jaenen suggests that the use of laying on of hands by Branham in his healing campaigns influenced the Sharon group from North Battleford to do the same in their subsequent ministry. Jaenen wrote: "Reverend William Branham's healing campaigns differed from the common Pentecostal type of healing service considerably. The alleged healings were not invoked by the prayer of the pastor and the congregation but by the laying on of hands." This method of healing by the imposition of hands called forth severe criticism by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada...The laying on of hands was later to become an important point of controversy between the established Pentecostal denominations and the participants in the 1948 revival. ⁴⁰

Another great influence at this time upon the brethren at North Battleford was the teaching of Franklin Hall on the power of prayer and fasting. Again, Richard Riss writes:

The influence of Franklin Hall upon the North Battleford brethren was unmistakable. Ern Hawtin wrote as follows: "The truth of fasting was one great contributing factor to the revival. One year before this we had read Franklin Hall's book, entitled *Atomic Power with God Through Fasting and Prayer*. We immediately began to practice fasting. Previously we had not understood the possibility of long fasts. The revival would never have been possible without the restoration of this great truth through our good brother Hall...some fasted for three days; some for seven days; some fasted for ten days; some two weeks; some for three weeks, some fasted for thirty days; and one man fasted for forty days." Milford Kirkpatrick reported that "...some fasted three weeks and one brother fasted forty-two days." ⁴¹

Before I go any farther with this I'd like to answer an objection that's probably forming in many minds right now. I know because it formed in mine in the past. It goes like this: "Brother, these people were hungry for a visitation from God - they fasted for days, weeks! They prayed and sought God earnestly for a visitation from His Holy Spirit - how could they possibly be deceived or receive another spirit? Didn't Jesus say that if we earnestly sought God for the Holy Spirit He would send Him?"

"If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"
(Luke 11:11-13 NKJV)

On the surface this seems to be a valid objection. Jesus clearly promises here that if we seek Him earnestly for the Holy Spirit we will receive the Holy Spirit, not a counterfeit, not another spirit - a serpent or a scorpion. So how could these people at North Battleford have received a visitation by seducing spirits?

The answer is that they could not - *if* they were truly seeking God for a valid, Biblical move of His Holy Spirit. But when you are looking for a "new thing", a revelation or an experience that's outside of the Word of God and the experience of the Apostles then you're no longer asking for bread. You're outside the area in which God's Spirit moves and into the area where other spirits move - the occult! You're essentially

asking God for a scorpion. And if you continue to seek after a scorpion long enough eventually God is going to allow one to come along - and possibly to sting you.

Remember, Jesus said that it's "*an evil and adulterous generation that seeks after a sign*". And that very thing, "seeking after a sign", seems to be the emphasis in much of the Pentecostal movement since 1948 and the "revival" at North Battleford. The brethren at Sharon Schools got so caught up in their quest for the "New Thing" that they forgot their studies entirely.

Day after day, week after week, classes were suspended, and studies ceased as a great burden of prayer and supplication swept in upon us. In our hearts we knew God was about to do a new thing in the church, but just what it was we could not tell. A few prophecies of encouragement were given urging us to seek the face of the Lord. Sometimes we tried to study but could not go on, the desire to pray was so great. The classes, nevertheless, were dry and the praying often difficult and hard.⁴²

Finally in February of 1948, the big breakthrough came:

On February 11, 1948, a prophecy was given by one of the young women in the Bible school, saying that "We were on the verge of a great revival, and all we had to do was open the door, and we could enter in." After she gave the prophecy, George Hawtin rose to his feet and prayed beseeching God and telling him that he had informed us that we were on the very verge of a great revival and all we had to do was enter the door - but I George Hawtin said, "Father, we do not know where the door is neither do we know how to enter it." He continued asking the Lord to show them what he would have them do.⁴³

The following day the "revival" began. In the words of George Hawtin's brother Ern:

Three buildings on the airport at North Battleford, Saskatchewan, composed Sharon Orphanage and Schools at its beginning in 1947...after about three months, the revival suddenly began in our largest classroom where the entire student body was gathered for devotional exercises...I shall never forget the morning that God moved into our midst in this strange new manner. *Some students were under the power of God on the floor*, others were kneeling in adoration and worship before the Lord. The anointing deepened until the awe of God was upon everyone. The Lord spoke to the one of the brethren. "Go and lay hands upon a certain student and pray for him." While he was in doubt and contemplation one of the sisters [Mrs. Knutson] who had been under the power of God went to the brother saying the same words, and naming the identical student he was to pray for. He went in obedience *and revelation was given concerning the student's life and future ministry*. After this a long prophecy was given [by Ern Hawtin] with minute details concerning the great thing God was about to do. *The pattern for revival* and many details concerning it were given. To this day [August 1, 1949] I can remember the gist of the prophecy, and I will try to repeat some things here as they were spoken... "These are the last days my people, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, and I shall move in the midst of mine own. The gifts of the Spirit will be restored to my church. If you shall obey me, I shall immediately restore them. But O, my people! I would have you to be reverent before me as never before. Take the shoes off thy feet, for the ground on which thou standest is holy. If thou dost not reverence the Lord in His house, the Lord shall require it at thy hands. Do not speak lightly of the things I'm about to do for the Lord will not hold thee guiltless. *Do not gossip about these things. Do not write letters to thy nearest friends of the new way in which the Lord moveth. For they will not understand. If thou disobey the Lord in these things take heed lest thy days be numbered in sorrow and thou goest early to the grave.* Thou hast obeyed me and I shall restore my gifts to you, I shall indicate from time to time those who are to receive of my Spirit. They shall be received by prophecy and the laying on of hands of the presbytery." Immediately following the prophecy a sister who was under the power of God gave by revelation, the names of five students who were ready to receive. Hands were laid upon them by the presbytery. This procedure was very faltering and imperfect that morning, but after two days of searching the Word of God to see if we were on scriptural grounds, great unity prevailed and the Lord came forth in greater glory day by

day. Soon a visible manifestation of gifts was received when candidates were prayed over, and many as a result began to be healed, as gifts of healing were received. Day after day the glory of God came among us. Great repentance, humbling, fasting and prayer prevailed in everyone.⁴⁴ (Emphasis mine)

Richard Riss writes:

Because the North Battleford brethren were successful in imparting spiritual gifts by the laying on of their hands, people came from everywhere that they, also, might partake of the spiritual gifts that they had long been praying would be given them... the use of the term “the presbytery” in the context of the prophecy quoted above deserves special attention. In I Timothy 4:14 it says, “Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through the prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.” The presbytery in this case consisted of the elders of a particular local church. Yet in the case of the North Battleford brethren, it seems that as they ministered in other places beyond the context of their own locality, they began to refer to themselves as a presbytery rather than the elders at the particular location at which they were visiting...⁴⁵

The similarities between this “revival” and the one that broke out in Toronto in 1994 are striking. Both “revivals” began in buildings adjacent to an airport. Both began with people “falling out under the power of God”. In both instances there is an unbiblical emphasis on some “new thing”, “new revelation” or experience about to break forth. In both instances people would have to travel to the revival center to receive the blessings by point of personal contact (laying on of hands) or the revival leaders would have to travel forth to “impart” the blessing, again, through the laying on of hands. The thing that most disturbs me here in this prophecy that came forth the day the revival began is “God’s” insistence on secrecy. Don’t tell your friends they won’t understand! To me this identifies the spirit behind this prophecy as a seducing spirit because Jesus and his apostles never did anything in secret. They always taught and ministered openly. Yes, there were times when Jesus taught his disciples privately but when He did it was always understood that they were to teach openly what he had first taught them privately. Jesus himself proclaimed:

“Jesus answered him, ‘I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.’” (John 18:20,21 NKJV)

There was no “secret doctrine”. Nothing was to be held back:

“Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.” (Matthew 10:26,27 NKJV)

Paul wrote:

“O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.” (2 Cor 6:11 NKJV)

This tendency to teach secretly, to teach secret doctrine that is only receivable by the spiritual elite, is a trademark of the Gnostic heretics of the first and second centuries not of the Lord and His apostles. Peter warned of false prophets who will arise teaching secret doctrines:

*“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will **secretly** bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.” (2 Pet 2:1 NKJV)*

What really marks this “revival” at North Battleford as a counterfeit revival is the profusion of unbalanced and heretical doctrine that came out of it and the refusal of the leadership to repent of it when confronted. There came forth a teaching that God was going to restore the offices of apostle and prophet to

the church. I wouldn't argue against the gift of prophecy in the church today as I believe that the spiritual gifts are for us today. That is, as long as they are exercised in accordance with scripture. I think it's imperative that we understand exactly what type of ministry a present-day apostle could have. I would have to say that on the surface I agree that we have present-day apostles in the church. The word apostle means, "one sent forth". I think certainly that modern day missionaries are fulfilling the role of present day apostles as they go forth into the world, fulfilling the great commission, and establishing Churches. However, I do not believe that present-day apostles (or prophets, for that matter) are receiving any "new revelation" for the Church from God. With the closing of the Book of Revelation, finishing the canon of scripture, the Church is receiving no new revelation from God - from modern day apostles or prophets, or anyone else. To believe this is to set oneself up for deception and delusion. This seems to be exactly what happened with the "New Order of the Latter Rain".

Concerning the ministries of apostles and prophets, George Hawtin wrote as follows: "we have laid our hands upon certain men who have been given these ministries by God and who have had the same confirmed by prophecy and the laying on of our hands...we have laid hands upon these men and recognized their apostolic ministry."⁴⁶

However, some of the men who had been "recognized" as apostles by the brethren at North Battleford eventually had second thoughts and backed away from them. According to Richard Riss:

Even individuals who are originally endorsed as apostles and prophets by the Sharon Group eventually became disillusioned and disassociated themselves from Sharon. Among them was Reg Layzell, who said: "At the first camp meeting you were made a member of the body of Christ by the Spirit of God. And even if you said you were not in the body you still were. No man could put you in or take you out. Now the error: they claim you are only put in by them and can be put out by them."⁴⁷

Part of the "new revelation" was that these present-day apostles and prophets were going to lead the Church to triumph over all her enemies. The Church was to become a mighty, conquering army through their ministry:

The spirit fell simultaneously upon the whole school, and all began to prophesy together. This great demonstration was accompanied by a vision of the manifestation of the sons of God in the last days of this dispensation. This mighty army was seen conquering all before it. Sickness and disease were vanishing, and all evil spirits were seen scattered before the triumphant power of God's people.⁴⁸

One woman even claimed that God had called her to build an armory to equip the Lord's army:

Mrs. Beall had been pastor of Bethesda Missionary Temple in Detroit, Michigan, for some time when in 1942, the Lord told her to build an "armory", a big one! The church she was then pastoring held about two or three hundred people and the armory that God had told her to build would seat three thousand people. According to Mark Goodwin, "When sister Beall asked the Lord why the building was supposed to be called an armory, He said, 'it's a place where soldiers would receive their equipment.'"⁴⁹

What the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada most objected to however, was what it felt was the unbalanced and unscriptural emphasis being placed by the Latter Rain movement on the ministry of "the laying on of hands of the presbytery". Although this had been practiced somewhat by the Assemblies of God Churches it became almost the primary focus of the Latter Rain movement. According to Richard Riss:

...Charles W. H. Scott, district superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Michigan, spoke at the annual Michigan Ministers' Institute in the Dearborn Gospel Tabernacle...Scott outlined the history and the errors of the new teaching. He emphasized in particular the misplaced emphasis on the gift of prophecy, **the impartation of gifts of the Spirit by the laying on of hands of self-styled**

apostles and prophets, and the fact that the revival was not, after all, new at all, but rather the reappearance of enthusiastic mysticism common in Church history.⁵⁰ (Emphasis mine.)

The most damaging heresy to be spawned by the Latter Rain movement, however, was to be the doctrine of the “Manifest Sons of God”. Known today in various forms and under various names, such as “The Corporate Body of Christ” – or just the “Corporate Body”, “Joel’s Army”, “The Manchild Company”, “The Overcomers”, “The Melchisedek Priesthood”, “The Feast of Tabernacles”, “The Elijah Company”, and many others too numerous to mention, this heresy has resurfaced as the foundation of the Apostasy that is sweeping the Church in these last days.

CHAPTER 3

SONSHIP AND REBELLION

“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.” - Lucifer (Isaiah 14:14 NKJV)

Of all of the “new revelation” that came out of The Latter Rain movement, by far the most harmful and far-reaching has been the teaching of the “Manifest Sons of God”. This doctrine denies the orthodox teaching of the resurrection and rapture of the saints in the physical presence of Christ in the air. It is replaced instead with an “anointing” and immortalization that occurs right here on this earth, producing a super race of Christians, who will be lead by a group of super apostles and prophets. This superchurch, “the corporate body of Christ” on earth will triumph over all of her enemies in the Great Tribulation. She will establish and usher in the Kingdom of Christ, who will then be “released” from the heavens to establish control over it.

This idea, that the saints could attain immortality on this earth, seems to have first been put forth in the heretical teachings of Franklin Hall. To reiterate:

...when God’s Word is completely acted upon and complied with, will result in bringing about “The sleeping, unfoundationally built Church [must be awakened to] a real cause and calling that when the real gushers and torrents of the long, past-due, rain of righteousness, ***a rain of immortality upon the earth*** that so many prophets have written about and portrayed in their prophecies.”⁵¹ (Emphasis mine.)

As we’ve already seen, Franklin Hall and his writings had a major impact on the Latter Rain “revival”. It wasn’t long before Hall’s teaching of an earthly “immortality” or rapture for the saints began to show up in Latter Rain circles. This is the doctrine that seems to have been embraced as the “new thing” that God was going to do in the last days. As to what was happening at North Battleford at the time, a pastor named Cecil Cousen, who participated in the Latter Rain revival said:

I think the Hawtin brothers very quickly got into very strange doctrines...⁵²

According to Richard Riss, James Watt became disturbed by some of the teachings that were coming out of North Battleford, especially what he termed “an extreme position on the Manifest Sons of God”.

When he observed that teaching, revelation, and practice was starting to clearly depart from the standards of the Word of God, he challenged the leaders. When the leaders continued to promote an extreme position on the manifestations of the sons of God, and continued to accept revelation and prophecy without balancing it with the written word, this writer withdrew...⁵³

Although Watt fails to explain exactly what he meant by an “extreme position on the manifestations of the sons of God”, it wouldn’t be long before this doctrine came out into the open. In the April 1949 issue of the *Sharon Star*, the origin of this doctrine is revealed:

...suddenly, without warning, a mighty wind swept through the building. Brother Crane was standing teaching the class and was almost swept off his feet. The spirit fell simultaneously upon the whole school and all began to prophesy together. This great demonstration was accompanied by a vision of the manifestation of the sons of God in the last days of this dispensation. This mighty army was seen conquering all before it. Sickness

and disease were vanishing, and all evil spirits were seen scattered before the triumphant power of God's people.⁵⁴

This is the first mention I have found of the teaching that the church would become a mighty, conquering army at the end of the age. That this notion came through a false prophecy there can be no doubt. The Word of God is clear - the church at the end of this present dispensation will be a persecuted remnant. Jesus said "...and unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elects' sake those days will be shortened." And what of the elect, during those days of great tribulation? They will be all but wiped-out by the Anti-Christ and the Great Harlot (the false church).

*"Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. **It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.** And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation." (Rev 13:6,7 NKJV)*

The chief agent of the beast, the Anti-Christ, in his war against the tribulation saints will be the false church (the Great Harlot described in Revelation chapters 17 and 18).

*"I saw the woman, **drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.** And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement." (Rev 17:6 NKJV)*

The result of this worldwide persecution of the tribulation saints will be an innumerable company of martyrs for Jesus.

*"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb! All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen. Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from? And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "**These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**" (Rev 7:9-14 NKJV)*

Clearly, scripture teaches that the end of this dispensation will be a time of great suffering for the saints of God at the hands of the Anti-Christ and his agents. Nowhere in scripture is the idea put forth that the Church will become a mighty army, conquering all before it. This prophecy doesn't stand up when measured against the Word of God. It's clearly false, and should have been judged and rejected by the brethren at Sharon. According to Cornelius Jaenen:

Spiritualistic trends were evident in the doctrine of the "manifestation of the sons of God." The doctrine originated from the predictive prophesying of Rev. E. Crane of the Northwest Bible Institute in Edmonton. He believed that he had seen a vision of the victorious saints as a mighty army...his entire class was affected by his belief and soon there grew the doctrine that the "elect" would receive "redemptive bodies" here and now and that any person who died had not been able to "appropriate the redemption body" and was therefore not one of the "overcomers". In the final analysis, to be an "overcomer" meant affiliation with the Sharon group. Affiliation alone was believed to give hope of "manifestation".⁵⁵

Obviously, concern was growing over the cultish nature of the revival at North Battleford. In spite of the growing concerns being voiced over the unscriptural doctrines that were coming out of North Battleford, the brethren there refused to receive correction, and continued to develop their Manifest Sons of God

theology. George Hawtin, the leading figure in the *Sharon Schools and Orphanages*, and the revival that began there, would later write:

As I look sadly in retrospect now, I can see with clearness that the great and blessed move of God was not two years old before the sectarian spirit began to show its ugly head...it is true that we vociferously denied that we had become a sect...there was to be no fellowship with anybody who was not within the confines of our ever-narrowing circle. We were the true Church. We were the elect. We stood on the foundation and all other men stood on sinking sand. No man must cast out a devil unless he followed us. No teaching was worth the time it took to tell unless it originated with us. We were the most spiritual people in the world. We were going to reign in the Kingdom and even now we were beginning to reign. We had the gifts of the spirit, and we were going to “call the shots” in the Tribulation...but we did not know that like Ephesus we had lost our first love, and must repent and do the first works over again...I shall never cease to thank God that I was vomited out of the belly of this whale also. For we never know the depths to which we have sunk until we are able to view Babel at a distance. Then and then alone our heart gives thanks to God for deliverance from another of the harlot daughters of Babylon.⁵⁶

It was in this atmosphere of spiritual elitism that Latter Rain/Manifest Sons of God theology was birthed. I believe that this Latter Rain theology became the origin and foundation of the great apostasy that Paul warned would come upon the church prior to the rapture and subsequent revelation of the Anti-Christ.

*“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless **the falling away comes first**, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition...The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all **power, signs, and lying wonders**, and with all **unrighteous deception** among those who perish, because they did not receive **the love of the truth**, that they might be saved. And for this reason **God will send them strong delusion**, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Th 2:3;9-12 NKJV)*

In the fall of 1949, George H. Warnock joined the staff at North Battleford “assisting in the office work and helping in the Bible school and in the local church.”⁵⁷ Warnock had worked for a time as Ern Baxter’s personal secretary. He wrote several articles that appeared in the *Sharon Star* and apparently it was during this time that he wrote what was to become the most influential book to come out of the Latter Rain/Manifest Sons of God movement: *The Feast of Tabernacles*. Published in 1951, it put forward a teaching, first suggested by Jim Watt in July 1948 at the Sharon camp meeting, that the third of Israel’s three great feasts - the Feast of Tabernacles - was yet to be fulfilled in the Church.⁵⁸ According to Warnock:

Let us recall how the three events comprising the Feast of Passover all blended harmoniously together to form that first great feast of the Church. There were the Passover, the Unleavened Bread, and the Sheaf of Firstfruits: distinct events, yet blending together to form one feast - beautiful type of the death and resurrection of Christ and the new life his death made possible. So now in the last feast, the events are of a threefold nature: the blowing of the trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the feast of ingathering. And again these three events blend together to form one great feast, the last great revival of the Church Age. Let us not imagine that this great revival of gifts and ministries of the Spirit is by any means the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles. But it is the promise and the earnest of this fulfillment, the beginning of the end. For this move of the Spirit must rise and rise and rise (through much sifting and testing and trial), even unto the fullness of the Feast of Tabernacles itself.⁵⁹

In this book, Warnock puts into writing the Manifest Sons of God doctrine that had been formulated at North Battleford. He writes:

There is no question as to the fact that one day “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout” and the saints shall be caught away to be with him forever...*we are sure of this, however, that the Church is being robbed of her glory and not knowing that there is rapture for her even now, while waiting for rapture, and there is resurrection here and now while we wait for resurrection.* There is no doubt whatever that God holds many secrets for future revelation concerning the order of events and the nature of the resurrection. But in this we are confident: *before this cherished rapture or resurrection takes place, there is to arise a group of overcomers who shall appropriate even here and now their heritage of resurrection life in Jesus Christ.* God has placed his only begotten at his own right hand in the heavenlies until all his enemies have been placed under his feet (Psalm 110:1, I Cor. 15:25-26). There he shall remain in obedience to the Word of the Father, *until there ariseth a people who shall go in and possess their heritage in the Spirit, and conquer over all opposing forces of World, Flesh, and Devil.* We are not inferring that the saints will go about in glorified bodies. But we are speaking of the saints reaching and appropriating even here and now in their earthly temples the very life of Christ, of entering into their heritage in the Spirit, of participating in the Melchizedek priesthood and kingdom, and of living the very spotless, immaculate life of the Son of God Himself in virtue of His abiding presence within.⁶⁰ (Emphasis mine.)

Warnock claims that he is not “inferring that the saints will go about in glorified bodies”. Yet later he writes:

A historical resurrection? Of course, they would believe in that. Christ, the Messiah? Why of course, they would believe that. But this kind of faith is not sufficient to bring one into the fullness of sonship, *and to a real genuine appropriation of divine life here and now.*⁶¹

When someone tells me that I can “appropriate” the “divine life here and now”- I can only take that to mean that I am either going take on a glorified, spiritual, perfected and eternal state, such as our Lord did at his resurrection, or I’m actually going to become divine! At least that’s the way many of the “Word of Faith” teachers seem to have understood statements such as this. Apparently they are “naming and claiming” a “genuine appropriation of divine life here and now”:

Kenneth Hagin asserts that “...the believer is called Christ...that’s who we are, we are Christ!...” Kenneth Copland declares that “God’s reason for creating Adam was his desire to reproduce Himself...he was not a little like God, he was not almost like God. He was not subordinate even.” Televangelist John Avazani claims that the Spirit of God “declared in the earth today what the eternal purpose has been through the age...that He is duplicating Himself in the earth.” Morris Cerullo bellows: “Did you know that from the beginning of time the whole purpose of God was to reproduce himself...Who are you? Come on, who are you? Come on, say it: sons of God! Come on, say it! And what does work inside us, brother, is that manifestation of the expression of all that God is and all that God has. And when we stand up here, brother, you are not looking at Morris Cerullo; you are looking at God. You’re looking at Jesus...” When Kenneth Copland proclaims “you don’t have a God in you, you are one”, and Benny Hinn pronounces “I am a little messiah walking on earth”, we can only conclude that they are teaching rank heresy.⁶²

Although not all Manifest Sons of God proponents go so far as to teach that the “Manifest Sons” are actually going to become God, many in fact do. This heresy that teaches that when we are glorified we will not only become immortal, we will become God, is known as “Apotheosis”:

Another crucial point of orthodoxy has to do with the (sic) uniqueness of Christ’s incarnation (conception and birth). Christ alone is the God-man...Christ shares His humanity

with us, but not His deity. He does not impart deity to His people. The Spirit dwells in us and works in us, but that indwelling does not make us gods-incarnate... Known historically as the heresy of *Apotheosis* (“becoming God”), many modern Gnostics appear to think they have found something everybody else has failed to notice. Evidently, they either do not know or do not care that these flashes of insight have been articulated by heretics from time to time for two thousand years.⁶³

In his tape series entitled *Believing in Yourself* Casey Treat, pastor of Christian Faith Center in Seattle, Washington says:

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost had a conference and they said, “Let us make man an exact duplicate of us.” Oh, I don’t know about you but that does turn my crank! An exact duplicate of God! Say it out loud – “I’m an exact duplicate of God.” [The audience repeats it a bit tentatively and uncertainly.] Come on, say it! [He leads them in unison.] “I’m an exact duplicate of God.” Say it again, “I’m an exact duplicate of God!” [The congregation is getting into it, louder and bolder, with more enthusiasm each time.] Say it like you mean it! [He’s yelling now.] “I’m an exact duplicate of God!” Yell it out loud! Shout it! [They follow as he leads.] “I’m an exact duplicate of God!” “I’m an exact duplicate of God!” [Repeatedly]... When God looks in the mirror, He sees me! When I look in the mirror, I see God! Oh, hallelujah!... You know, sometimes people say to me, when they’re mad and want to put me down... “you just think you’re a little god!” Thank you! Hallelujah! You got that right! “Who d’you think you are, Jesus?” Yep! Are you listening to me? Are you kids running around here acting like gods? Why not? God told me to!... Since I’m an exact duplicate of God, I’m going to act like God!⁶⁴

There is no doubt that the entire “Word of Faith” movement has been heavily influenced by Latter Rain/Manifest Sons of God theology. Although there is some variation found in the teachings of those who teach Manifest Sons of God theology, all share one thing in common - the central teaching of Warnock’s that the resurrection would be experienced right here on earth by the Church, the “corporate body of Christ”, before the physical return of Christ to this earth. Most, like Warnock, actually teach that Christ cannot return to this earth until the “manifestation of the sons of God” takes place; enabling the Church to conquer this world and bring in the kingdom itself. Warnock writes:

By faith all things are and shall be possible. The very dispensations themselves are but weak barriers and obstacles if men of faith are enabled by the spirit to reach out and leap beyond them. Enoch did it. So did Elijah. And so shall the sons of God. ***The word of faith shall grip their hearts, and they shall reach out and appropriate the resurrection and the life even now in this life. If they do not, Christ never will return to earth. For God has said, “Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool (Psalm 110:1). And the last enemy is death!”***⁶⁵ (Emphasis mine.)

The foundational scripture for this teaching of a spiritual rapture and resurrection that takes place on earth among the saints prior to the physical return of Christ to this earth is found in Romans chapter eight:

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” (Rom 8:18-22 KJV)

All this passage really tells us for sure is that when Christ and His saints come into His millennial kingdom much of the curse that God placed on the creation, as a result of the fall, will be lifted:

“No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them. It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” Says the LORD.” (Isa 65:20-25 NKJV)

In spite of the unscriptural nature of the Manifest Sons of God doctrine, it spread rapidly throughout the Latter Rain Movement. It wouldn't be long before the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada would denounce the “revival” that began at North Battleford, and was rapidly spreading into Pentecostal churches throughout Canada and the United States. It appears that the leadership of the Sharon group at North Battleford had been at odds with leadership within the denomination for some time. Larry Thomas writes:

The Latter Rain was an organizational schism before it was a spiritual cause, according to Thomas Holdcroft, former president of Western Canadian Bible College. It was sired by contention, birthed in rebellion, and nurtured by controversial doctrines. Some faculty members at the institute [*Bethel Bible Institute*], which was sponsored by the Saskatchewan District of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), were in conflict with district leadership on several points. “It could probably be said that the basic issue in much of this early conflict,” Holdcroft wrote in 1980, “was the unrestrained zeal of institute personnel pitted against the necessary conservatism and restraints of responsible denominational administrators.” A slightly different scenario is seen today! The unrestrained zeal of irresponsible denominational leaders and “superchurch” pastors is pitted against a somewhat intimidated—even muzzled—conservative wing of the Assemblies of God and other Pentecostal denominations. There were concerns about the lackadaisical approach to scholastic excellence at the school and its preoccupation with, and commitment to, controversial doctrine. One example of such doctrine was the view that demon possession could explain many problems within the lives of Christian believers. Much of today's phenomenon came in on the coattails of similarly unbiblical teachings on spiritual warfare. The Saskatchewan District's stand against the institutes faculty was endorsed at a summer conference in 1947 and the malcontents left the institute and moved to North Battleford, Saskatchewan, where they established the Sharon Children's Home and Schools. Many of the institutes' students left Saskatchewan and followed their professors to the new work. The spiritual move that initiated the spread of the Latter Rain Movement began in February, 1948. During a four day series of chapel services, leaders began calling out members of the congregation and imparting spiritual gifts to them by the laying on of hands accompanied by a suitable prophecy. This procedure eventually took precedence over all else being attempted at the Sharon ministries—including efforts to maintain an educational institution, the campus at North Battleford became a permanent camp meeting center (much like Pensacola is becoming a training center for ministers and the unofficial headquarters of the Holy Spirit).⁶⁶

It wasn't long before the leadership of the Assemblies of God felt compelled to speak out against the “revival” and the doctrines and practices emerging from it.

On February 24, 1949 the Assemblies of God issued a *Quarterly Letter*, in which, “a brief, quite general, statement entitled *Bestowing Gifts* was supplied by the General Superintendent of the Assemblies in the U.S.A., Ernest S. Williams, obviously to point up acceptable teaching on the subject without overtly referring to the ‘Latter Rain’ problem.”⁶⁷

What was the reaction to these attempts to apply correction to this new movement within their ranks by the leadership of the Assemblies of God? Rebellion! Larry Thomas writes:

Several Canadian churches and a few in the United States became battlegrounds between the Latter Rain and the established Pentecostal movements, although the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada lost only about a dozen churches to the new move, many local congregations were seriously weakened by losses of members to Latter Rain churches. Many Assembly of God churches in the United States today are experiencing similar losses because of these recycled Latter Rain practices. The divisive Latter Rain group made no bones about their designs on existing congregations in the P.A.O.C. In fact, the movement published a pamphlet entitled "How to Take a PAOC Church."⁶⁸

As the leadership in the Pentecostal Assemblies slowly began to discover the doctrinal aberrations coming out of the Latter Rain movement, more and more concern over it was publicly voiced. Earnest S. Williams wrote in an April, 1949 article in the *Pentecostal Evangel* entitled *Spiritual Gifts*:

The question now arises, do we have present day apostles? If the person means by the term only "a messenger", or "one sent", all those called as evangelists or missionaries are apostles. I believe the Biblical apostle was something much more than that. The apostles were the foundation stones of the Christian Church...concerning the nine gifts spoken of in I Corinthians 12, if you will carefully read the account I think you will discern that they each come from God's sovereign bestowment; I do not find any record where they are to be bestowed by means of an intermediate channel...⁶⁹

A little later Williams would write in another article entitled, *More About Gifts*:

...The decay of our bodies and the inroad of disease resulting from the same, are not demonism. Think of going to a weakened, afflicted person, charging that the reason that the person is sick is because [he is] possessed of some demon, then trying to name the demon, and cast it out. This could lead to accusing poor sick people of being possessed of all sorts of demons. Think of the mental reaction on the part of the sufferer!⁷⁰

As the criticism from the denominational leadership continued to intensify, so did the rebellion against it. Latter Rain churches began to withdraw from the Assembly of God denomination rather than submit to the correction of the elders. On August 24, 1949, Bethesda Missionary Temple in Detroit, Michigan, resigned from the Assembly of God denomination:

Mark Goodwin, in an unpublished senior thesis, "Latter Rain" (Lima, N.Y.: Elim Bible Institute, 1976), p.31, wrote of the resignation of Bethesda Missionary Temple as follows: In the midst of all this, though, a strange thing happened. The Assemblies of God, of which sister Beale (sic) was a member, took a stand against the Latter Rain. The Assemblies of God denomination that had so wonderously began (sic) with a blessed outpouring of the latter rain now took an open stand against the very thing that had brought them out of the mainline denominations into the freedom of worshipping God the way they felt God wanted them to. We may ask WHY? The answer is very simple. It is because men do not want the Holy Spirit to run the body of Christ. From the Spirit empowered organism that met on Azusa Street they had become a man empowered organization that met in council rooms in Springfield, Missouri. It was from one of these council rooms that a group of men took a stand against the revival in Detroit. Sister Beale (sic) then had no choice but to withdraw her name from the Assemblies and join the other come-outers who "went without the camp bearing His reproach." (Heb.13:13)⁷¹

Finally, at the General Council meeting in Seattle, Washington, in 1949, the Assemblies of God passed a resolution officially disapproving of the practices of *The New Order of the Latter Rain*, resolution #7, which read:

WHEREAS, we are grateful for the visitation of God in the past and the evidences of His blessing upon us today, and

WHEREAS, we recognize a hunger on the part of God's people for a spiritual refreshing and manifestation of His Holy Spirit, be it therefore,

RESOLVED, that we disapprove of those extreme teachings and practices, which, being unfounded scripturally, serve only to break fellowship of like precious faith and tend to confusion and division among the members of the body of Christ, and be it hereby known that this 23rd General Council disapproves of the so-called "New Order of the Latter Rain", to wit:

1. The overemphasis relative to imparting, identifying, bestowing, or confirming of gifts by the laying on of hands and prophecy.
2. The erroneous teaching that the Church is built on the foundation of present-day apostles and prophets.
3. The extreme teaching as advocated by the "New Order" regarding the confession of sin to man and deliverance as practiced, which claims prerogatives to human agency which belong only to Christ.
4. The erroneous teaching concerning the impartation of the gifts of languages as special equipment for missionary service.
5. The extreme and unscriptural practice of imparting or imposing personal leadings by the means of gifts of utterance.
6. Such other wrestings and distortions on scripture interpretations which are in opposition to teachings and practices generally accepted among us.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we recommend following those things which make for peace among us, and those doctrines and practices whereby we may edify one another, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit until we all come into the unity of faith. ⁷²

After brief debate, this resolution was passed by an "overwhelming majority." ⁷³

With this resolution those who had embraced the unscriptural doctrines of the "New Order of the Latter Rain" realized that they were going to have to separate themselves from the Assemblies, and go independent. Churches began to split up and take sides over this issue. Richard Riss writes:

The perspective of an unnamed young minister loyal to the Assemblies of God denomination was described in his letter to the General Council of the denomination, part of which was published in the March, 1950, *Quarterly Letter*. His former pastor had withdrawn from the organization to participate in the Latter Rain. The young minister wrote as follows: "I have just received a shocking report that has left me confused and confounded. It is the report that my pastor, and the church where I came into the Assemblies of God, has withdrawn from the General Council...I do not understand all the details, but it has left me confused...back of a lot of these split-offs...is a spirit of egotism. The egotists may represent different causes, yet they all run in the same mold, eat the same kind of food at the same table, and travel the same path, of their kind of independence...they think they have the privilege of interpreting and modifying or adding anything and everything according to their own opinion of what is best for the Church, due to the professed 'new light' that God has especially shown them. And many times, if the church of the Assemblies of God does not dance to their fiddling, they not only stop fiddling but seek other company and seek to carry out the smoldering secret plans of their egotistical minds and hearts. To this day they go 'independent', build up something in their own name, and while doing it, scandalize, ridicule, and bite the hand that fed and clothed them for years...When a person gets bigger than such a wonderful organization as the Assemblies of God, which has been so mightily blessed of

God, that person is entirely too big to deserve its respect, much less appreciation and that is true, regardless of what he may have been in or to the General Council.” Of course, Assemblies of God pastors who were adherents to the Latter Rain were often under considerable pressure to withdraw from the organization, and some were dropped, perhaps because they had allowed their membership to lapse without renewal...there was tremendous pressure exerted upon denominational pastors to steer clear of the Latter Rain, and those who became involved were looked upon with considerable suspicion. Many people found it necessary to make disclaimers and to publicly announce that they were not in any way associated with the Latter Rain. Pastors who had withdrawn from the Assemblies of God for other reasons found it necessary to publicize their reasons for withdrawing in order to save embarrassment.⁷⁴

Clearly, as Larry Thomas commented, the Latter Rain was “sired by contention, birthed in rebellion, and nurtured by controversial doctrines”. Many people have mistakenly believed that the Latter Rain movement quickly faded away and died after its official censure and rejection by the Assemblies of God. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Latter Rain movement simply went “underground” for a time and thrived as the “Charismatic Renewal”, and is re-emerging openly today through the “revivals” at Toronto/Pensecola and through the Prophetic and Apostolic Movements. To quote Larry Thomas again:

The heyday of the Latter Rain Movement had passed by the mid-1950’s, but the movement was, and is, far from dead. It has changed direction a little, changed the names of some of its teachings and policies and become a little more elitist, but it never passed away. Latter Rain theology is still very much alive and is being championed by Toronto/Pensecola leaders like Howard-Browne, Arnott, Wimber, Kilpatrick, Hill, Cain, and Brown.⁷⁵

CHAPTER 4

THE THING THAT WOULDN'T DIE

*“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will **secretly** bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.” (2 Pet 2:1 NKJV)*

That the Latter Rain Movement and its heretical teachings did not die out after its official censure and rejection by the Pentecostal Assemblies is now a well known fact. The Latter Rain proponents separated themselves from their former denominational associations and basically went underground for a time. The general feeling among Latter Rain proponents was that they were facing persecution from “religious Babylon” and being forced “outside the camp”. A Latter Rain pastor named William Cathcart wrote:

I began to see that it is one thing for Protestants to speak concerning the Roman Catholic persecutions of Protestants in centuries past and their inquisitions all over Europe, but it is another thing to admit that there is a Protestant inquisition in this century proceeding from Protestant leadership within the churches, whatever their name, and whether it is recognized as an inquisition or not...Although this inquisition can not break the law to do their persecuting and so we have no dungeon, rack, cross, flaming fires; yet, they persecute the mind and the freedom to “hear” from God individually and stop progress in the high calling to the ministry. This persecution is equivalent to making martyrs, for many have suffered under councils and boards, and the result has been that their office from Christ has been lost to the Church...Let us note and remember that opposition to anointed preaching is not opposition to doctrine, practices, manifestations, interpretations as it seems to many, but is opposition to the release of the glory of Christ to us and in us by the Spirit which leads from glory to glory...He is being received according to the letter of God’s Word and as the historical Christ by the aggregate of the church members which we hear so much about, but He is being rejected as He appears in the higher dimension of His Spirit form or image.⁷⁶

This tendency among Pentecostals to reject all denominations, including their own, as religious “Babylon” had been growing for some time prior to the outbreak of the Latter Rain in 1948. It would finally begin to find its fullest expression during the “revival”, as the Latter Rain proponents discovered that instead of embracing them with open arms the majority of their brethren were rejecting the “revival” and pointing out the unscriptural nature of it. George Warnock, in his *Feast of Tabernacles*, wrote:

And try as she will, this modern-day church system, this Babylon of religious pomp and splendor, will produce nothing but Ichabods. “Where is the glory?” Where is that real, vital presence of the Holy Spirit in the congregation of the saints to work the very works of God Himself, and produce the fruit of the Spirit? Yes, the dying priesthood will bring forth its manchild, but Ichabod is the name. God has already prepared another manchild, and Samuel is the name. He was “asked for.” The cries and prayers of God’s people for years have prevailed upon the God of Heaven, and in answer to their prayers and travail, “A son, a male” is to be born, for that is the literal translation of “manchild” (Rev. 12:5). Ichabod is in line for the priesthood, that is true, but God has ordained another priesthood for glory.⁷⁷

The Latter Rain adherents were to move on to “sonship” and glory, while Ichabod, denominational Babylon, was to be abandoned by God. The reality was somewhat different. The majority of Pentecostals stood with their leadership against the Latter Rain Movement, thus the movement was forced to back off,

and stop publicly proclaiming some of its more controversial and heretical doctrines. In the words of Bill Hamon:

Restoration of the fourth doctrine of Christ, “the laying on of hands”, produced another major movement. This movement started in the late 1940’s and *infiltrated into every Pentecostal group in the 1950’s*. During this time, it was known as the “Latter Rain” and “revival” movement. By the early 1960’s, very few Christians were knowledgeable of the movement except the Pentecostal churches affected by it. However, in the mid-1960’s, the Holy Spirit had spread the “truths” and “spiritual experiences” of the restorational doctrine into every church group within Christendom. The move of the Holy Spirit which took the four restorational doctrines of Hebrews 6:1,2 and made them known to all Christian denominations and independent church groups became known as the “**Charismatic Movement**.”⁷⁸ (Emphasis mine.)

The Latter Rain Movement simply backed off for awhile, then went underground, and worked stealthily and secretly from within the Pentecostal churches to spread its leaven. The main vehicle for the spreading of Latter Rain doctrine and practice into the Pentecostal denominations during the 1950’s would be the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship International:

The Latter Rain teachers, healers, and evangelists were forced out of their many former associations into what they felt was a “wilderness church” experience, where they regrouped, and strengthened their own ministries. Then in the late 60’s and 70’s they began the self-conscious re-infiltration of other denominations under the “Charismatic” label. An important bridge-builder during this stage was the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship International...⁷⁹

In spite of William Branham’s refusal to repent of his bizarre and heretical teachings, he was still a welcomed speaker at Full Gospel Businessmen’s meetings, and Demos Shakarian, the founder of the FGBMFI wrote:

Rev. Branham often made the statement that the only fellowship to which he belonged was FGBMFI. Often, when called upon to speak at various conventions and chapter meetings, he has traveled long distances to keep these engagements. His spirit of service was an inspiration.⁸⁰

The fact that the Latter Rain Movement continued to flourish during this time and gained many converts is an open secret among many Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians today. Richard M. Riss writes:

Although they have varying spheres of influence and widely divergent views on many questions, including eschatology, the various ministries spawned by the Latter Rain have many common characteristics...It would be impossible to gauge the extent of their influence, although it would seem that a widespread underground movement developed within the Charismatic renewal, composed of individuals committed to various “end-time truths” that had arisen during the Latter Rain revival.⁸¹

The Charismatic Movement would become, as Rev. B.H. Clendenen has pointed out, the “Trojan Horse” that would lead to the downfall of true Pentecost:

In 1956, the world saw the first meeting of the Charismatic Movement. That was the day the horse came to our gate...When we allowed that horse on the inside, there came with it many phony ideas and manifestations. We had reached the place we did not know what we were hearing. This false thing knocked down the walls of separation and doctrinal purity. Roman Catholics said the rosary in tongues, and Pentecostal believers thought it was real. A

friend of mine was speaking at a Full Gospel Businessmen's meeting in Denver. This was soon after the Charismatic renewal began. He was the morning speaker, and a Mormon was the night speaker. At the breakfast meeting, sitting by the Mormon, my friend said to him, "I am very anxious to hear you tonight. I've never heard the testimony of a Mormon who had been born-again." The Mormon said to him, "I don't have that yet." "What do you mean, you don't have that yet?" my friend asked. "I mean, I've not been born-again, but I talk in tongues." The horse is on the inside... Pentecost must not be watered down. The only way the world could get in, and did get in, was through imitation. We fought the system of Babel until the sword cleaved to our hand. We preached against a handshake religion. We stood against all that was not Bible. That horse came to our gate – a Pentecostal antichrist, and he fooled us. We had fought long and hard. We were tired. There he stood with his prayer language, "Look," he said, "I can do what you do." It totally disarmed us, and we opened the gate. There was nothing demanded; he came in as he was. We thought he had joined us, but he led us to the slaughter. Fifty years of battlefield experience traded off, for a worldly crowd with a taught tongue, a worldly dance, and a false Christ. The cost of this deception cannot be calculated. The same sins that are in the world are now in the church. The nation sinks in a moral crisis, healing has been reduced to a confession. Salvation is merely going to church, and the baptism in the Holy Ghost is a taught tongue. We didn't change the horse, he changed us. And we called it "revival".⁸²

The Charismatic Movement traces its beginning to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon an Episcopalian priest and many of those in his congregation in 1960. When Father Dennis Bennet, of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, published his personal testimony of being baptized in the Holy Spirit it wasn't long before he was forced to resign by the denomination. Soon other leaders in the historic Protestant denominations were experiencing the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. People who had never shown any evidence of the new birth suddenly began speaking in tongues! In the late 1960's Roman Catholics started receiving the baptism and the Catholic Charismatic Movement was born. One has to wonder how people who are trusting in the salvation-by-works gospel of the Roman Catholic Church, people who are practicing idolatry every time they partake of the "Mass", people who believe they were "born-again" when they were "baptized" into the church as an infant, were baptized by the Spirit of Truth!

I'm sorry. I just don't buy it. Any of it. Unsaved Protestants and Catholics getting baptized in the Holy Ghost, speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance? My Bible says that one must be saved in order to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. A believer. A born-again believer. I don't have a problem with the baptism or the tongues and I experienced it myself, *after* I was saved. I do have a problem, however, when thousands of people who have shown no trace of true repentance and no inclination to put away their idols speak in tongues and claim to be baptized in the Spirit.

A leading Catholic Charismatic wrote:

Baptism in the Holy Spirit leads to a greater love of Mary, a greater veneration of the Pope, a greater submission to the Catholic Church, a more frequent attendance at mass, and a greater authority in witnessing to these matters.⁸³

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth who leads us into "all truth", not errors such as these. I don't believe it. I've been called judgmental, unloving, and a Pharisee for saying so, but I just do not buy it. Not now – not ever.

The Charismatic Movement has become the vehicle that the enemy is using to reunite the Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church, forming the "Great Harlot" of the last days. Right from the beginning of the Latter Rain Movement to the present day there has been an emphasis upon an unscriptural unity for the church. A unity based not on the truth, but on the common experience being shared by those in the revival. A unity based on "signs and wonders." Richard Riss writes:

The July, 1948 camp meeting was a time in which, according to Reg Layzell, “in the Spirit and by the Spirit, God taught us many things – some of which we did not know and had not heard before”. Reg Layzell said that, “The great message that stirred all of our souls was first the message of the body of Christ coming together...we could see, by faith, the prayer of Jesus in John 17:21 being fulfilled. At last the world would see unity so it could believe.” Thus, George Warnock wrote in the preface to the original edition of the *Feast of Tabernacles*... “In the spring of 1948 God came forth in answer to the prayer and fasting of His children, poured out the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and revealed the fact that now at this time He would bring the body together, and make His Church one glorious Church without spot or wrinkle.”⁸⁴

This emphasis upon unity in the church quickly grew into a unity at any cost mentality that is perfectly willing to trample on truth just so long as “unity” is maintained. This mentality has made it extremely easy for the re-introduction of Latter Rain theology into mainstream Christianity. One of the big proponents of this unscriptural unity is Paul Crouch, who has declared:

I’m eradicating the word Protestant even out of my vocabulary...I’m not protesting anything...It’s time for Catholics and non-Catholics to come together as one in the Spirit and one in the Lord.⁸⁵

Paul Crouch has also apparently swallowed the Manifest Sons of God heresy - hook, line, and sinker:

Do you know what else has settled in tonight? This hue and cry and controversy that has been spawned by the Devil to try to bring dissension within the body of Christ that we are gods. I am a little god. I have His name. I am one with Him. I’m in covenant relation. I am a little god. Critics be gone!⁸⁶

Clearly, when you stand for nothing - you’ll fall for anything. The biggest sin you can commit in the Church today is to insist on an adherence to scriptural truth. Truth divides, love unifies! I’m afraid that the “love” being promoted in the name of unity today is not love at all. God’s agape love “rejoices in the truth”. The love that is being proclaimed today is not love at all – it is simply tolerance mistaken for love. It is a counterfeit love, a perfect complement to the counterfeit Spirit that is taking control of the Church today. It is leading to an unscriptural unity – a unity that will finally be realized when the Anti-Christ and his false prophet rise up with “*all power and signs, and lying wonders*”. A “unity through signs and wonders” will then be fully realized! In *Beyond Seduction, a Return to Biblical Christianity*, Dave Hunt writes:

There is a tendency in the Church today to emphasize unity and love at the expense of the truth and to speak disparagingly of those who place great emphasis on doctrine and contending for the faith. Those who put “unity” ahead of truth and fail to rebuke today’s false values and superficiality among Christians (and especially the many Charismatics who reject the call to repent of false teachings as “negative” and insist that we are now in the greatest revival in history) would do well to take seriously the prophecy spoken during the famous Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles in 1906: “In the last days three things will happen in the great Pentecostal Movement: 1) There will be an overemphasis on power, rather than on righteousness. 2) There will be an overemphasis on praise, to a God they no longer pray to. 3) There will be an overemphasis on the gifts of the Spirit – rather than on the Lordship of Christ.” Keith Green warned about “A man-made unity [which] is not what God desires” because it is not based on holiness and obedience to God’s Word. While we ought not to split hairs in disputing trivial questions, we must also recognize that our Lord demands *obedience*. We dare not take lightly the call to obey His commandments – and we can hardly obey His Word if we are loose concerning doctrine. It is folly to imagine that we can love our Lord and worship Him without knowing and obeying His Word. Jesus solemnly said: “If a man love

me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.” (John 14:23,24) ⁸⁷

The Apostle John declared: “*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*” But Robert Schuller declares:

It’s time for Protestants to go to the shepherd [the pope] and say, “What do we have to do to come home?” ⁸⁸

Clearly, this ecumenical mania is going to increase in intensity in days to come, until it is finally realized under Anti-Christ. Those of us who oppose it will be marked for destruction. Kansas City prophet Rick Joyner proclaims:

The Biblical admonition to “forsake not the assembling” was not just referring to meetings, but the joining together of the different parts of the body. The Lord sees only one Church. The Lord’s people are going to be freed from the Spirit of division which emphasizes differences instead of our common purpose. ***A severe judgement is coming upon all who separate instead of join***, who are in fact building for themselves instead of for Him. This includes individuals, local churches, as well as denominations and the different streams flowing within the Church...Presently the different streams are in the Lord’s purpose, but ultimately all of them will flow together into one river. At that time this river will swell to become an irresistible force before which no other religion, philosophy, or doctrine can stand. ⁸⁹ (Emphasis mine.)

This unbiblical emphasis upon unity, however, is not the only Latter Rain distinctive to resurface as “present truth” in the Charismatic Renewal. There is also an unbalanced and unbiblical approach to the demonic and spiritual warfare. Bill Hamon writes:

One of the first controversies to develop within the Charismatic Movement was that of the relationship of demons to Christians. The issue was whether a born-again, Holy Ghost-baptized Christian could have demon activity within his or her life to the extent that the demons needed to be cast out. The controversy developed between those who taught that every negative thought, action, and physical affliction was a demon which had to be exorcised before the Christian could change or be healed; and those who maintained that because a person had at one time had all his past sins covered by the blood, a devil could not cross the blood line. In the second case, the Christian would be immune from all demonic activity within his or her own life or body. By the mid-1970’s most Charismatics had developed a balanced doctrine and practice concerning demonology. ⁹⁰

As we have already seen, this idea of casting demons out of Christians seems to have originated with William Branham:

One of the methods that Branham used was to cast out a demon, and a miraculous healing would take place. This connection between the casting out of demons and healing was a fairly new concept to the people at that time. ⁹¹

Frank and Ida Mae Hammond, two Charismatic deliverance ministers, wrote in 1973, in their book, *Pigs in the Parlor*:

How can a demon spirit indwell the same body at the same time as the Holy Spirit does? It seems logical to assume that this cannot be possible, but all logic is not truth, and some logic is based on a false premise. We have taken the position in this writing that ***Christians can be and are indwelt by demons***... “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

(Phil. 2:12b,13) Of the believer it is said that God is at work “in you” but the salvation spoken of is not completed. It needs to be “worked out”. The word for “salvation” in this passage is *soteria*. Thayers’ Lexicon gives as the primary meaning of this word, “deliverance from the molestation of enemies.” The picture becomes clear. Jesus has delivered our SPIRIT from the power of Satan; now He says to us, “work out your deliverance from the molestation of enemies until you have freed both SOUL and BODY.”⁹² (Emphasis mine.)

This seems like a novel interpretation to say the least. In all fairness, I think that Bill Hamon’s statement was correct, and that by the mid-1970’s *most* Charismatics had developed a more balanced scriptural doctrine and practice in this area. Most - but not all. I have a good friend who attended a Charismatic church in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. They got into “deliverance” for a while and some deliverance ministers were invited to their church to speak. They brought galvanized buckets with them the reason for which became quickly apparent after the message. After the preaching different members of the congregation had various demons cast out: demons of tobacco, lust, control, strife, rebellion, ...demons, demons, demons. Supposedly as people were “delivered” of their demons many would vomit. Hence – the buckets! Frank and Ida Mae Hammond had written:

Does everyone need deliverance? Personally, I have not found any exceptions. While we have walked in ignorance and darkness the enemy has successfully made inroads into each of us.⁹³

And:

God is raising up a mighty army today that is going forth with spiritual weapons. The results are impressive! Through the ministry of deliverance thousands of God’s people are being set free from the torments of demon spirits.⁹⁴

It’s obvious from a study of the New Testament that Christians can be and often are *oppressed* by demonic spirits. There are many ways that Satan can attack us from without, but it is equally clear from the New Testament that demon spirits cannot *possess* us - they *cannot* indwell us and *they cannot force us to do anything against our wills!* From without - or within. They can influence, tempt, and harass us but never control us. Scripture tells us clearly that we have been “...sealed by the Holy Spirit” and we are promised, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you”. Larry Thomas writes:

I want to quote professor Milley again at this point, concerning the unscriptural nature of the teaching that Christians can be demon-possessed. Noting that “there is no Bible reference to Christians being demon-possessed,” he writes: “The new term today is “demonized” as opposed to the old distinction between “oppressed and possessed.” Some writers want to see the words “possessed” and “oppression” dropped from discussion so that any trouble or conflict with the devil is interpreted as partial demonization. The far end of the scale would be total possession. In this way they have set up a paradigm to account for people who claim to be Christian but, simultaneously manifest demonic influence, or control. However, no case of “demonization” or demon-possession recorded in scripture involves a definite follower of Christ. In the cases of such healings recorded, not one person is said to have been, before the healing, a believer.⁹⁵

In 1998, Charismatic leader and “deliverance expert” Derek Prince wrote:

There are two different sets of circumstances that may confront a Christian with the need to deal with demons: 1. Demons were already in him when he became a Christian. 2. *Demons entered him after he became a Christian.*⁹⁶ (Emphasis mine.)

There is another area in regard to spiritual warfare in which the Charismatic Renewal has been influenced by the Latter Rain Movement, and that is in the area of what are referred to as “territorial spirits”.

This is an outgrowth of the Joel's Army, Manifest Sons of God heresy. There will be more on this aspect in a later chapter.

Another Latter Rain distinctive that quickly resurfaced in the Charismatic Movement was the emphasis on the practice of "the laying on of hands of the presbytery". As you recall, this was the first cause of so much concern among the Pentecostal leadership in regard to the Latter Rain "revival". Bill Hamon writes:

The issue was whether Holy Ghost - filled ministers had the right and power to impart and activate spiritual gifts within the believer; whether personal prophecy by prophets and other ministers could be used to reveal the calling and ministries of other members in the body of Christ. This pendulum of truth had its far swings to the right and left before becoming balanced in the middle. Some Latter Rain ministers delegated prophecy to certain appointed apostles and prophets, while others allowed anyone, at any time, to prophesy to anyone else.⁹⁷

While I believe in the scriptural practice of the laying on of hands and its importance for the Church, I think that the New Testament is clear that we must exercise caution in regard to this ministry. I believe this is a valid and vital ministry for the Church - but not the way it is being practiced today in many churches. It is one of the foundational doctrines of the faith mentioned in Hebrews chapter 6 and is therefore very important to the proper functioning of the Christian Church. But only when practiced scripturally and cautiously! The Apostle Paul warns:

"Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other peoples' sins; keep yourself pure." (I Timothy 5:22 NKJV)

The laying on of hands can scripturally be applied to an individual to minister healing (James 5:14), and to impart the baptism in the Holy Spirit or spiritual gifts (I Timothy 4:14), just so long as we realize that it is the Holy Spirit who actually does the imparting. *"But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills."* (I Cor. 12:11 NKJV) Now this ministry, when practiced scripturally, is a beautiful thing and very edifying to the Church. We must not forget, however, Paul's warning against *"laying hands on anyone hastily"*.

Why? Because just as spiritual blessings can be imparted through this ministry, the opposite can also happen. Just as there is a scriptural ministry of the laying on of hands, there is also a counterfeit. There are seducing spirits masquerading as the Holy Spirit. They can also be "imparted" through the laying on of hands. Therefore there is a great danger in letting just anyone lay his or her hands on you - or yours on them. I recently ran across the following testimony:

...One evening as we were praying she turned to me and said with assurance, "You want to be a prophet!" I thought to myself, of course I do, anything to show that I was accepted by God...So, she laid her hands on my shoulder and prayed for me to receive the gift of prophecy. I echoed to the Lord my willingness to receive. That's when things really began. Transference of spirits. All those incredible things I saw in her came to me. I didn't feel a thing at first, but they were there. Except the spirits that came were not from God at all. They were from Satan, spirits sent to counterfeit the true gifts of the Holy Spirit and deceive the Church. And I was totally unaware of it...Things started to change after that. I started to hear voices, thoughts in my mind, other than my "Jesus". There was a mocking voice, a sexually perverted voice, another threatened me and imitated voices of people I knew. I thought I was being attacked by Satan and his army because the "Lord" had so gifted me for a special mission...I cried out to Jesus, Help me!, Help me!, Help me! What is going on? I need help, Jesus! And for the very first time, the real Lord, the real Jesus spoke to me, and said, "I only offer you truth." Not comprehending His meaning I repeated the words. "You only offer me truth? Truth? What is the truth, Jesus? What is the truth?" Then the answer

came. A wordless understanding gripped my inner being and finally I knew what the truth was. The spirit I had been listening to for the past nine months was not Jesus, was not my Lord at all, but in fact, a demon...Praise God, Jesus quickly overturned Satan's deception with the simplicity of truth...Demons know scripture and how to use it for their purpose. Many unguarded believers are manipulated and demonized in this way. They are gently guided to lead others astray with awesome spiritual feelings and manifestations, believing that scripture is being fulfilled before their eyes. My heart cries to the shepherds that you might earnestly protect your flocks from these dangers and seek the counsel of those who can help. I have seen the genuine gifts in operation, but I have seen and heard a great deal more that are questionable. The balance to maintain as a faithful steward is found in the call to be sober and vigilant. His gifts of the Spirit are real and will humbly yield to the light of thorough examination.⁹⁸

This young woman opened herself up to demonic oppression (not possession) because she unwisely allowed someone to lay hands upon her – someone who was herself under demonic oppression. We should always be extremely careful in this area of the laying on of hands. If we are not we could easily find ourselves facing the same kind of demonic oppression that this woman faced. I'm personally more than a little suspicious of an "anointing" that has to be passed around through the laying on of hands. The Holy Spirit "*distributes individually as He wills.*" He doesn't necessarily need us, or the ministry of the laying on of hands to impart spiritual gifts to His people.

Another Latter Rain practice that has developed within the Charismatic Movement is the use of the ministry of laying on of hands to impart spiritual guidance and direction to an individual. Again, concerning the day the revival began, Ern Hawtin had written:

The anointing deepened and the awe of God was upon everyone. The Lord spoke to one of the brethren, "Go lay hands on a certain student and pray for him."...He went in obedience and a revelation was given concerning the student's life and future ministry.⁹⁹

The practice of prophesying over individuals has become a common practice among Charismatics. Bill Hamon writes:

It has always been a practice of the Church throughout its history to lay hands upon the head of the person being ordained or set aside for a special work, but the doctrine had been reduced to an empty ritual during the Dark Ages...In the 1948 restoration of the laying on of hands doctrine, many of the scriptures in the Old and New Testament were illuminated to the ministers. The Holy Spirit revealed the reality and power invested in this doctrine...Not only could healing, deliverance, and the Holy Ghost be imparted, but, by prophecy with the laying on of hands, gifts of the Holy Spirit could be given and a person's calling and ministry could be revealed.¹⁰⁰

While I wouldn't argue that God never uses the laying on of hands to reveal a "person's calling and ministry" - this statement needs to be qualified. I believe the Holy Spirit uses this ministry, not to reveal the calling to the individual, but simply to confirm the call that has been already revealed to him by God. As Bill Rudge points out:

The account of the prophecy by Agabus, that Paul would be bound in Jerusalem, is often inaccurately used to validate guidance through personal prophecy. Looking at this account in scriptural context reveals a different conclusion. First, we discover that before Agabus prophesied, Paul already knew from the Holy Spirit that bonds and afflictions awaited him. Acts 20:22,23 says: "And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me." (Acts 20:22-23 NKJV) Acts 21:4 repeats this: "And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not

to go up to Jerusalem." (Acts 21:4 NKJV) Then in Acts 21:10-14 Agabus confirms: "And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus". So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." (Acts 21:10-14 NKJV) The prophet Agabus merely told Paul what was going to happen. It was Paul's responsibility to determine what he would do. We need to keep that scriptural balance in mind.¹⁰¹

Unfortunately this practice has become so misused and abused by so many in the church today that it has become a form of "Christianized fortune-telling." To quote Bill Rudge again:

I have researched many psychics and fortune-tellers, and there seems to be no apparent difference between their method of prediction and degree of accuracy and that of many so-called prophets of God today. The only difference, seemingly, is that the supposed prophet often uses "thus saith the Lord"...One pastor, also known as an apostle, announced at his church that a woman prophetess was coming the next week, so he invited everyone to be sure to come back to get their personal prophecy. They might as well pay ten dollars and go to the local psychic or fortune-teller...Biblical prophets did not prophesy at will, but when the Word of the Lord came to them. Jeremiah 42:7 states, "Now it came about at the end of the ten days that the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah." New Testament prophecy also was not determined by the whims of the person operating the gift, but as the Spirit gave utterance...I saw the following ad in a Christian magazine: "For your personal prophecy send your name, address, and love offering." This resembles fortune-telling far more than any form of prophecy in the Bible...Although most deny it, the sad reality is that many put the personal prophecies they receive above God's Word. They are encouraged to get a cassette copy of their personal prophecies and write them out and meditate on them and read or listen to them many times...Concerning true prophecy in the Church, scripture states "If an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you." (I Cor. 14:24,25) I challenge you! Do not accept as genuine a prophecy or revelation from anyone, unless it is in exact accord with God's Word, is 100% accurate, confirms what His Spirit has already spoken to your heart, truly exalts the Jesus Christ of the Bible, and draws you closer to Him.¹⁰²

Another Latter Rain distinctive that has emerged and grown in the Charismatic Movement is the "Restoration" doctrine. According to the restorationists Satan had stolen various truths from the Church over time. Truths such as justification by faith, sanctification, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing, tongues and spiritual gifts, the five-fold ministry (apostles and prophets), glorification (manifest sons of God), and so forth. This resulted in the "Babylonian captivity of the Church" during the Dark Ages. Restorationism teaches that starting with Luther and the truth of justification by faith, God began to restore these "stolen" truths to the church, and is still doing so today. Just prior to the outbreak of the 1948 "revival", several of the brethren visited a Branham healing campaign and upon their return one of them wrote this in the *Sharon Star*:

...All great outpourings of the past have had their outstanding truths. Luther's truth was justification by faith. Wesley's was sanctification. The Baptists taught the premillennial (sic) coming of Christ. The Missionary Alliance taught divine healing. The Pentecostal outpouring has restored the baptism of the Holy Spirit to its rightful place. But the next outpouring is going to be marked by all these other truths plus such a demonstration of the

nine gifts of the Spirit, such as the world, not even the apostolic world, has ever witnessed before. This revival will be short, and will be the last before the Rapture of the Church.¹⁰³

“Prophet” Bill Hamon is probably the greatest proponent of “Restorationism” today. Anyone wishing to understand this doctrine, and where it’s leading should definitely read his book, *The Eternal Church*. In the forward to the book, Harold Bredesen sums up “restoration” theology this way:

The Medieval Church called itself, “The one Holy Apostolic Church”, but the foundations its apostles had built lay buried under the forms and traditions of successive hierarchies. Then the great excavator began His work. His human instrument was Martin Luther. He uncovered “justification by faith”. “Heresy!” cried his enemies. “Burn him at the stake!” “Plain Bible truth”, retorted his followers, “The cornerstone of 1st century Christianity.” When next God used Anabaptists to bring to light New Testament baptism, Catholics and Protestants alike joined in shouting, “Heresy! Don’t immerse them, drown them!” And so it was, and so it is, the heretics of yesterday are the established churches of today, hounding heretics that will be the established churches of tomorrow. But God will not stop until He has brought to light every truth, principle, and practice He has from the first intended for His people.¹⁰⁴

Restorationism is the underlying foundation of the “Joel’s Army” (Manifest Sons of God) doctrine that is coming forth from the Toronto/Pensecola style “revivals” and the “prophetic” and “apostolic” movements of today. What’s wrong with this teaching? On the surface, it doesn’t appear to be that far off base, but that’s if, and only if, you ignore the fact that there was and always has been a witnessing New Testament Church - proclaiming all the council of God. Even during the Dark Ages! What’s wrong with this teaching? Pastor Bill Randles answers that question in his book, *Weighed and Found Wanting*:

How could the Church lose justification? Justification by faith is the whole basis for the Church. The Church has always had it as well as sanctification, healing, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There has always been the true Church which has been equipped by Jesus Himself, the shepherd and bishop of our souls. What Luther, Wesley, and the others did is what all true Christians have done down through time. They took what God gave them and introduced others to it. But, they couldn’t have “restored” it to the Church, the Church has always been complete in Christ! If you buy the restoration concept, it inevitably sets you up for the evolutionary church concept, a deluding, intoxicating idea that makes the current expression of the Church feel that she is the ultimate center of God’s purpose, over and above all previous expressions of the Church. Let’s not flatter ourselves...If you hear a statement like, “In the book of Acts, we have the Church in infancy,” you are hearing a form of evolution...The evolution concept of the Church fosters pride and arrogance. Both Rick Joyner and Mike Bickle have said, in effect, that the apostles of the book of Acts will want to wait in line to interview the super-apostles of our day.¹⁰⁵

Bill Hamon, in *The Eternal Church*, writes:

We have a great cloud of witnesses, including the patriarchal forefathers, prophets, early church apostles, and church history leaders, who have paid a price to bring us this far. They have fulfilled the will of God for their generation, but God has left something special for this generation that “they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:40). They are waiting on us to put the final touches to God’s plan so that they, along with us, can enter into our eternal performance with Christ...¹⁰⁶

In another book, *Apostles, Prophets, and the Coming Moves of God*, Hamon Writes:

God is preparing His Church to become an invincible, unstoppable, unconquerable, overcoming army of the Lord that subdues everything under our feet. There will be a

sovereign restorational move of God to activate all that is needed for His army to be and do what He has eternally purposed. The generals who will lead this army will be those who have progressively been prepared by incorporating every restorational truth into their life and ministry.¹⁰⁷

What is this “sovereign restorational move” that will “activate all that is needed for His army to be and do what He has eternally proposed?” The manifestation of the sons of God:

The earth and all of creation are waiting for the manifestation of God’s last-day apostles and prophets and fully restored church. “For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19 NKJV). When the Church is fully restored, then the saints will receive their final redemption, the immortalization of their mortal bodies. When this happens then the natural creation of plants and animals will be delivered from their bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.¹⁰⁸

Restorationism is Manifest Sons of God to its very core. Obviously the worst of the Latter Rain heresies, the Manifest Sons of God, not only survived after its official rejection and censure by the Assemblies of God, it thrived. Like all the other doctrines of the Latter Rain, it would re-emerge during the Charismatic Renewal. It would take a little longer for this particular doctrine to be re-accepted into the mainstream because of its bizarre and heretical nature. Throughout the late 1950’s, the 1960’s, and the 1970’s it would remain on the fringe of the Charismatic Movement. The majority of Charismatics would continue to hold to the orthodox Biblical teaching concerning the rapture and resurrection of the saints. However, the Manifest Sons of God doctrine would continue to gain more adherents throughout this period of time. Richard Riss writes:

Various beliefs and practices found their way into the Charismatic renewal...In addition, elements of various eschatological views of the Latter Rain Movement were adopted by many Charismatics throughout the world...It would seem impossible to gauge the extent of their influence, although it would seem that a widespread underground movement developed within the Charismatic renewal, composed of individuals committed to various “end-time truths” that had arisen during the Latter Rain revival.¹⁰⁹

The Manifest Sons of God heresy would re-emerge openly during the 1980’s and 90’s as the “Kingdom Now” or “Dominion Theology” movement. Throughout the 1990’s this heresy would continue to spread within the Charismatic Movement until it is now becoming the dominant point of view among Charismatic Christians. It is rare today, and getting rarer all the time, to find a Charismatic Christian who has not been won over to the Manifest Sons of God theology, or in some way influenced by it. Many of the Pentecostal, and even Baptist denominations are falling to this heresy as it comes forth out of Toronto and Pensacola and the other so-called “revivals” of today.

CHAPTER 5

BLASTING THE BLESSED HOPE

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John 3:2,3 KJV)

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” (1 Th 2:19 KJV)

“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” Roughly two thousand years ago the most tragic event since the fall of man occurred just outside of the Holy City of Jerusalem. Jesus Christ the promised Messiah of Israel was crucified by His own people just as their prophets had foretold. How could this have happened?

Israel was given two completely different pictures of the Messiah in the scriptures. One picture was contained in a body of prophecy that presented the Messiah as the “Suffering Servant” of Israel. This Messiah would suffer for the sins of God’s people, bringing reconciliation and forgiveness with God. Representative of this body of prophecy is the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah:

“He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa 53:3-6 NKJV)

And Psalm 22:

“I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.” (Psalm 22:14-18 NKJV)

As has been pointed out before by many - herein is contained a perfect description of the agonizing death of crucifixion hundreds of years before the Romans had even instituted it!

The other picture of the Messiah that was clearly represented by a large body of prophecy in the Old Testament was Messiah as “The Conquering King”, ruling over the kingdoms of the world from Jerusalem. Representative of this body of prophecy would be Zechariah 14:16-18:

“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.” (Zech. 14:16-18 NKJV)

And Isaiah 11:1-10 :

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.” (Isa 11:1-10 NKJV)

These two different pictures of Messiah represented a real problem for the Jews. How could these two widely divergent pictures be reconciled in one Messiah? How could Messiah be both the suffering servant and the reigning king of glory at the same time? They simply could not envision two comings of their Messiah. First, as the suffering servant to atone for their sins and then again as the triumphant king returned to establish His glorious kingdom in Zion.

Of course, when the Messiah finally appeared no one took notice. By this time because of the Roman oppression they were under, the only picture of the Messiah they could see was the picture of the triumphant king. Soon he would come and throw out the Romans, establish his kingdom, and exalt Israel to her rightful place over the nations!

So when Messiah appeared, not as a triumphant king, but as a babe in a manger, no one took notice except Herod, and that only because of his paranoia. Of the whole nation of Israel only two people, Simeon and Anna, recognized this babe in the temple as the Lord's Messiah. The overwhelming majority of the Jewish people missed him when he came because they were looking for a triumphant, glorious king. Thirty three years later they would reject him and crucify him for the same reason. In some of the saddest words recorded in scripture, Jesus prophesied to them, *“I have come in my father's name, and you did not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.”* (John 5:43 NKJV) Jesus was prophesying of the Anti-Christ, the false Messiah whom the Jews and the rest of the world will embrace for a time in the last days.

I find it ironic that in these last days the Church, like Israel of old, is confronted by two entirely different pictures of our coming King. One body of prophecy contained in the New Testament portrays our Lord returning *“as a thief in the night”* to steal away His bride the Church, and take her back with Him to His Father's house. Dave Hunt writes:

Christ warns us to “watch” for an entirely different reason. He will come at a time when mankind, confident and complacent - and a sleeping Church (Mathew 25:5)- will least expect him. “At such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh” (Mathew 24:44). There will have been no signs...God's judgement will be the last thing the world of that day will be expecting. There will be no advanced warning. It will be like the calm before a hurricane - but in this case there will be no sense of a storm impending. Jesus warned that he would come when conditions would be like those just prior to the flood: “They did eat, they drank, they married wives...until the day that Noah entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:27). His coming will occur at a time of business as usual, of pleasure, of optimism for the future. Just as it was immediately before the flood, they last thing the world will expect is judgement from God. Surely Christ is not describing Armageddon! Normal business conditions, complacency and surprise could only apply to a previous coming...¹¹⁰

“Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” (Luke 12:35-40 NKJV)

Over and against this picture of Christ’s return, we have another totally different picture presented to us in the New Testament. In this picture everyone on Earth will witness his return:

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Mat 24:29-31 NKJV)

“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.” (Rev 1:7 NKJV)

In this picture everyone on earth will see Him as He returns with His elect to destroy the Anti-Christ and his kingdom, then set up His own kingdom of righteousness - The Millennium. How do we reconcile these two entirely different pictures of our Lord’s Second Coming? The only answer that makes sense and reconciles the scriptures is that He is coming twice - the first time **for** His Saints, and the second time **with** His saints. Dave Hunt writes:

How can Christ come immediately following unmistakable signs that are intended warn of His coming - and at the same time come as a thief in the night when few if any of His followers would expect Him? How can He come “when they say peace and safety” (I Thessalonians 5:3) and at the same time come in the midst of Armageddon, the most destructive war the world has ever known? How can the saints be caught up *from earth to heaven* to dwell with Christ eternally and at the same time come with Him *from heaven* to execute judgement upon the Earth? How can two scenarios that are so contrary to one another be true? There is only one possible answer to that question. Obviously, these diametrically contradictory descriptions of His coming cannot refer to the same event.¹¹¹

Just as Israel was confronted with two entirely different pictures of the coming Messiah, so are we. First, our Lord will return for us at a time, a day, and an hour that we do not know. We will know, however, that His coming is close, “*even at the doors*”, by the signs of the times:

“So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:31-36 NKJV)

We are to be faithfully watching and waiting for our heavenly bridegroom to return for His bride (the Church) and take us back to His Father’s house (John 14:1-2) where we will remain in our bridal chamber while “*the indignation*”, the “*time of Jacob’s trouble*” - the “*great tribulation*”, takes place:

“Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.” (Isa 26:19-21 NKJV)

At the end of this seven-year period of judgement, we will sit down with our Lord and celebrate the “*marriage supper of the lamb*” (Revelation 19:7-9). Christ will gather together his “*elect*”- the Old Testament saints, the New Testament saints, and the Tribulation saints – we will celebrate the wedding together and then we shall return with Him as the “*armies of heaven*” to set up His kingdom on earth (Revelation 19:11-20:4).

Thus we have Christ first coming **for** His saints before the tribulation, an event that Christians have come to know as the “Rapture”, then Christ returning **with** his saints after the tribulation to establish His kingdom on Earth (the Second Coming).

The rapture is referred to as the “*blessed hope*” (Titus 2:11-13). Rather than suffer persecution under the Anti-Christ, we have been promised that we will be removed from this earth before the Anti-Christ is revealed. Paul, in relation to the rapture stated:

“For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ...” (1 Th 5:9 NKJV)

The word rapture, as so many critics like to point out, is not in the Bible. Neither is the word trinity! We get the word rapture from the Latin translation of the Greek word “*harpadso*” (Latin “*rapio*”). In Paul’s description of the event:

*“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.” (1 Th 4:16-18 NKJV)*

The word “*harpadso*” means literally “to snatch up”. Paul reveals that we who are alive and remain at the resurrection will be “snatched up” to be with Christ “in the clouds”. In I Corinthians chapter 15 Paul reveals that through this “rapture” that we living saints will bypass death – and put on our “immortal” spiritual bodies – bodies just like Jesus has!:

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (1 Cor 15:50-55 NKJV)

The blessed hope of an imminent (any moment) rapture has a purifying effect on the body of Christ:

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” (1 John 3:2,3 NKJV)

Among Christians there has always been some disagreement as to when exactly this rapture will take place – before, in the middle of, or at the very end of – the Great Tribulation. While I feel very strongly that scripture is clear and teaches a pre-tribulation rapture of the Church, I also realize that those who teach a mid-trib or post-trib rapture also for the most part base their belief upon the scriptures. What we all agree to and hold in common is the plain teaching of scripture that when this event occurs, we will be immortalized and we will all be caught up in the air to meet the Lord in the clouds. ***Swept up into the physical presence of our Lord.*** As we have seen, the Manifest Sons of God heresy denies the teaching of scripture by proclaiming an “immortalization” that will occur ***right here on this earth***, and many proponents are teaching not just an earthly immortalization but an earthly ***deification*** as well!

Part of the scriptural teaching concerning the rapture is the picture of the New Testament Church in the last days as a remnant, besieged from within through an apostasy (a rebellion against the Word of God), and besieged from without by a world growing increasingly more hostile and evil, as the day of Christ’s return draws nearer. Paul wrote:

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron...” (1 Tim 4:1,2 NKJV)

And:

*“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come **unless the falling away comes first**, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,...” (2 Th 2:3 NKJV)*

Jesus pictured the Church as a lukewarm, sleeping remnant in which many would be taken by surprise by the rapture!

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’; and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked...” (Rev 3:15-17 NKJV)

And:

“And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.” (Mat 25:8-13 NKJV)

Just as we have two different pictures of the coming of our Lord, so we also have two different pictures of the Church during these two events. At the rapture the Church is pictured as a remnant, a pure but beleaguered remnant of people escaping the coming wrath of God upon an unsuspecting world. But at the Second Coming, we see the Church as a conquering army. Returning with Christ, to rule and reign over the nations with Him. Just as the Jews could only see Messiah as a conquering king when He came the first time and so missed Him, the Church today has become blinded to the picture of the escaping, beleaguered remnant. Today’s Church prefers to see herself as a great, conquering army. They have rejected or re-interpreted the scriptures that picture her as a despised remnant – they have rebelled (apostatized) against it – and can only see the picture of the conquering army. Just exactly like Israel of old, they are in danger, great danger, of missing the Lord when He comes like a thief in the night to those who are watching. Labeling the blessed hope as a defeatist, escapist mentality that is holding back the church they have rejected it for an unscriptural triumphalism. In *The Feast of Tabernacles*, George Warnock writes:

Shall the gates of hell continue to prevail against the Church of Jesus Christ? Shall the great husbandman admit defeat, and thrust in the sickle before the grain is ripe and fully formed in the ear? Shall He prove the impatience of His Spirit by cutting down the grain before it receives the early and latter rain? Shall He impart gifts of the Spirit to His people and set the ministers of Christ in the Church for the perfecting of the Saints, and then rapture them all before they attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ?...No! A thousand times, No! God's sons shall yet be manifested in this great hour of the Church's sorrow and travail; and shall display before this wicked and perverse generation the unveiled glory of God in a manner not hitherto revealed or even imagined. The prayers of sorrow and bitterness and travail throughout this long wilderness journey of the Church from Pentecost until now – have all been bottled up in heavenly vials, and soon they shall be poured upon the world in great heaven shaking events. Dethroning the powers of darkness and Satan, and establishing the overcomer in authority on Zion's mountain. ¹¹²

This refusal to see the Church as pictured in the New Testament as a despised remnant is characteristic of Latter Rain/Manifest Sons of God theology. Milford Kirkpatrick wrote, of the 1948 revival:

The general consensus of opinion from those who were over us in the Lord was that we were not to expect revival because we were living in the closing days of time and things were going to grow worse, and we were to hold on to the bitter end. We often heard quoted, "except those days be shortened there should be no flesh saved" (Matthew 24:22). This only brought more depression in our spirits so we were at the point of despair...One particular day a brother stood to his feet and began to prophesy...God spoke to us about restoration days and that He would pour out His Spirit on all flesh. This thrilled our hearts, having lived in an atmosphere of defeatism...What joy swept through the camp. ¹¹³

As previously pointed out the Manifest Sons of God heresy was not accepted by the majority of Charismatics. Most held to the orthodox teaching of the rapture, but in the mid-80's this began to change as the Manifest Sons of God doctrine re-emerged in the form of the "Kingdom Now" or "Kingdom/Dominion" Movement. According to Richard Riss:

...Elements of various eschatological views of the Latter Rain Movement were adopted by many Charismatics throughout the world. These views became prominent in the ministries of Bill Britton in Springfield, Missouri...J. Preston Eby in El Paso, Texas...John Robert Stevens in Los Angeles, California...By 1976 some of these ministries were quite extensive. Bill Britton, who had been a participant in the Latter Rain, describing his ministry in the summer of 1976 as follows: "Phil and I have just returned from a very fruitful trip to the East Coast, visiting twenty-five cities where we preached forty-seven times in forty-one days, while driving 5,500 miles. We ministered to churches in Ill., Ky., Ohio, Pa., Md., Va., Del., N.Y., Mich., Ind., and Ontario, Canada...It was wonderful to see in different parts of the U.S.A. and Canada, the same Holy Spirit, and the same truth being revealed. And it was thrilling to me to see the many pastors who are 'sold out' to the kingdom of God and to the truths relating to His many-membered Son, that glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, His perfected body, he that overcometh"...It would seem that a widespread underground movement developed within the Charismatic renewal, composed of individuals committed to various "end-time truths" that had arisen during the Latter Rain revival. ¹¹⁴

Bill Britton became one of the leading Manifest Sons of God proponents during this period. His teaching is fairly representative of the Manifest Sons of God doctrine as it developed since the Latter Rain revival and Warnock's declaration of it in his *Feast of Tabernacles*. In *A Closer Look at the Rapture* Britton writes:

You can quit hoping for a "rapture" to carry you out of this world and solve all your problems, start putting your hope where it belongs...In the coming of the Lord "to bring to

full salvation those who are eagerly, constantly, and patiently waiting for and expecting Him.”¹¹⁵ ...Preachers are still fervently preaching, and people are still desperately and hopelessly clinging to the theory of a “rapture” that will carry us all off this earth that we might escape the Day of the Lord.¹¹⁶ ...Preachers let us stop telling people that they can just sit down in their rocking chairs and wait for a “rapture” to carry them off to a far-away land of fantasy where they will get their pie-in-the-sky while two billions of people suffer under the heel of the Devil and Anti-Christ. Let’s tell them the truth that they have been saved and called for the purpose of putting all the forces of Anti-Christ and all the hordes of hell under their feet and delivering the masses of earth from the power of Satan and the fear of death! This is our inheritance, and this is our destiny!¹¹⁷

In *Light Out of the Shadows*, Britton writes:

There are several false doctrines which keep men from believing the truth of what God is doing. One of these and one of the most widely accepted though doctrinally weak and scripturally unfounded, is the traditional doctrine of the so-called “rapture.” It teaches that God is going to spend 2,000 years building an army and girding them with a spiritual armor (helmet, shield, sword, etc.), and then jerk them suddenly from the field of battle just as the real war of the ages begins. It implies that God’s poor little weak Church is just not able to overcome the Anti-Christ, so they must be taken off to get a glorified body and escape the battle.¹¹⁸

J. Preston Eby echoes these sentiments:

Our Lord’s coming “for” His Church is nothing more than an invention of ignorant minds, hatched up by men who are reading into their Bibles many fantastic tales which they use to uphold their delusions. The sleeping Church, of course, can think of little else except a physical ride into the clouds, being whisked away into an ethereal state and experience of their own invention, where they intend to sit around dressed in white nightgowns or something similar...The truth of the “blessed hope” is not the rapture; it is the APPEARING of the Lord, the “blessed hope” is not deliverance from the tribulation, it is HIS GLORIOUS APPEARING in His people. We are not looking for a rapture to take people out of this old world, but we are looking for HIM TO APPEAR out of the innermost being of His sons to transform His elect so that they will be able to change the very courses of this world.¹¹⁹

Another Manifest Sons of God proponent, E. E. Brooks writes:

Christians will be TRANSLATED or CHANGED, but we will NEVER LEAVE THE EARTH in a secret rapture. God’s plan is fulfilled on earth... Yes, Christians will be changed, translated and meet Jesus but not to be removed from EARTH. Yes, Christians will be caught up to a spiritual realm, but not to leave the EARTH and go to outer space.¹²⁰

The same man writes in another place:

Jesus has the divine nature of God. In Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead ...bodily. We have no trouble accepting that all the fullness of God dwelt in the body of Jesus. Those who partake of the divine nature will have all the fullness of God dwelling in their bodies too!... You are Elohim! Genesis 1:26 says that God (Elohim) made you in His image and likeness, therefore you are Elohim too. This is the B-I-B-L-E. Check it out for yourself.¹²¹

And:

Once fully clothed with the divine nature, we will be the manifested sons of God. Every thought will be divine. God's thoughts will become our thoughts. We will know the will of the Father, for it will become our nature. Those of us who are fully mature will experience a change, casting off the confines of human mortality to enter the frontier of divine immortality.¹²²

"*You shall be as gods.*" Apotheosis again. Some of the most absurd charges have been put forth to discredit the rapture doctrine by Latter Rain/Manifest Sons of God proponents and others who oppose the pre-tribulation rapture teaching. Grant Jeffrey writes:

Many contemporary writers claim that the pre-tribulation rapture theory first originated around AD 1820. They ascribe the theory's initial creation to either Emmanuel Lacunza (Ben Ezra, 1812), Edward Irving (1816) or Margaret MacDonald (1830) and finally to John Darby (1820)...Reverend John Bray, in *The Origin of the Pre-tribulation Rapture Teaching* (1980) declared: "People who are teaching the pre-tribulation rapture teaching today are teaching something that never was taught until 1812...Not one of those early church fathers taught a pre-tribulation rapture...I make the offer of five hundred dollars to anybody who will find a statement, or sermon, article in commentary, or anything prior to 1812 that taught a two-phase coming of Christ separated by a stated period of time, such as the pre-tribulation rapturists teach."¹²³

J. Preston Eby, Bill Britton and other Manifest Sons of God proponents repeat this charge as proof that the pre-tribulation doctrine, the blessed hope, is all a sham. Eby writes:

It began as a Roman Catholic invention! The Jesuit priest Ribera's writings influenced Irving. Irving influenced Darby, Darby influenced Scofield, Scofield and Darby influenced D.L. Moody, and Moody influenced the early *Pentecostal Movement*.¹²⁴

But is this the truth? Were Irving, Darby, Scofield, and Moody, not to mention the early Pentecostals, just all pawns in some great Jesuit conspiracy? Is it true, as Bray and others assert, that this teaching wasn't taught prior to 1812 – or held by anyone in the early church? Again, Grant Jeffrey writes:

A number of these authors will have to drastically revise the next addition of their books based on two remarkable textual discoveries that conclusively prove that a number of Christian teachers, centuries before John Darby rediscovered the Biblical teaching, clearly taught that the rapture would occur before the tribulation period...The early Christian writer and poet, Ephraem the Syrian (who lived from AD 306 to 373) was a major theologian of the early Byzantine Church. The following section includes key passages from Ephraem's important text [On the Last Times, the Antichrist, and the End of the World], written about AD 373, and translated by Professor Cameron Rhodes, of Tyndale Theological Seminary, at my request... "*We ought to understand thoroughly therefore my brothers what is imminent, or overhanging...Believe you me, dearest brothers, because the coming of the Lord is nigh, believe you me, because the end of the world is at hand, believe me, because it is the very last time...because all the saints and all the elect of the Lord are gathered together before the tribulation which is about to come and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins* (italics added). And so brothers, most dear to me, it is the eleventh hour..."¹²⁵

Clearly, Ephraem taught an imminent pre-tribulation rapture, in which the saints would be removed from this earth prior to the great tribulation. Grant Jeffrey continues:

Dr. John Gill, a famous eighteenth century Baptist theologian, published his commentary on the New Testament in 1748. He's considered a serious Calvinist scholar who wrote many volumes on theology. In his commentary on I Thessalonians 4:15-17, Dr. Gill

points out that Paul is teaching a doctrine that is “something new and extraordinary”. Gill calls the imminent translation of the saints “the rapture” and calls for watchfulness because “it will be sudden, and unknown before-hand, and when least thought of and expected.” This is a clear, detailed 1748 teaching on the imminent pre-tribulation rapture (eighty years prior to John Darby, in 1820).¹²⁶

For a more thorough examination of the refutation of this rapture conspiracy theory I would suggest Tim LaHay’s excellent book *No Fear of the Storm*, recently re-released under the title *Rapture Under Attack*.

Proponents of Manifest Sons of God theology don’t necessarily deny that there will be a rapture. They just redefine the rapture as a glorification and an apotheosis that will occur right here on this earth. In order to fit this into the scriptures, they have to twist them, proclaiming that when Jesus says “*one shall be taken and the other left*” that those taken physically out of this world will be the wicked. Those left behind are the Manifest Sons of God/Joel’s Army saints who will conquer the world and bring in the kingdom.

“Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.” (Mat 24:40-42 NKJV)

E.E. Brooks writes:

Two in a field, the righteous and the wicked, one will be removed or taken from the Earth. Let’s examine some scriptures to find out who REALLY is TAKEN from the EARTH and who REMAINS on EARTH...GATHER FIRST the TARES...the WICKED are the ones TAKEN! Tares are taken first, Mathew 13:29-30: “but he said, nay; lest while ye gather up the tares (**WICKED**) ye **ROOT** up also the **WHEAT (RIGHTEOUS)** with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, GATHER YE TOGETHER FIRST THE TARES (wicked!), and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the WHEAT INTO MY BARN (on earth) (KJV).”¹²⁷

What is Jesus teaching here? Will the tares be removed from the earth? Jesus himself gave us the interpretation of this parable. He said, “*The field is the world.*” He said the tares would be gathered together [united - the ecumenical movement] and left in the field [*“the field is the world”*] to be burned [suffer God’s wrath along with the rest of the unbelieving world]. It was the wheat [the true church] that Jesus said would be **removed** from the field and gathered into his barn [gathered unto Him]. “*But to you who fear my name, the son of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings; and you shall go out, and grow like stall-fed calves.*” [in the Lord’s barn] First the rapture, then the second coming - “*You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day that I do this [the day of the Lord] says the Lord of Hosts.*” (*Malachi 4:2-3*)

Bill Britton wrote:

“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.” Look at this scripture closely. Jesus is saying the last days will bear a marked similarity to the days in which Noah lived. All most folks think about is that back then they were eating and drinking and getting married. Well, that was going on long before Noah’s day, and has been going on ever since. Some think that as it was in Noah’s day, some were taken and some were left, and then they want to be taken. You’d better hope not, for it was not righteous Noah and his sons that were taken. They were left behind to inherit the new earth. It was the wicked who were “taken

away”. Most of our book-fed theologians who have no divine revelation on the Word are teaching the people to pray that they will be “taken when Jesus comes”.¹²⁸

Again, is this really what Jesus is trying to teach us here - that the wicked are removed? On the contrary, it was the righteous who escaped the flood [God’s wrath], being raised above it in the ark [raised in Christ – a type of the rapture] while the wicked remained behind to suffer God’s wrath. Noah and his family is a beautiful type of the true Church. Rising up to Christ in heaven, and safely sheltered in him, not to set foot on the earth again until the flood [God’s wrath] is finished.

Throughout the late fifties, sixties, and seventies, Britton and other Latter Rain/Manifest Sons of God teachers continued to try to bring the Manifest Sons of God heresy back into the mainstream of the Church, with little success. The majority of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians remained committed to the scriptural doctrine of the rapture of the saints. Britton lamented bitterly:

Anyone moving in sonship at this time will tell you that the greatest opposition to this message is not coming from the old-line traditional churches. Many of the denominational people are hearing the message of sonship for the first time and receiving it gladly, for they have not been warned against it, nor their minds poisoned. But in any church that is moving in a higher realm of the Spirit toward sonship, you will find the Pentecostal people staying away by the multitudes. For they have been so indoctrinated with the warnings of “false doctrines”, or “deep end”, “off brand”, “free love”, “evil spirits”, etc., until they are scared to death to come and see whether it could really be God.¹²⁹

All this was to change in the 1980’s however, as the Manifest Sons of God doctrine would be brought back into the mainstream of the Charismatic Movement through the efforts of the restorationists, led by Bill Hamon, and the Kingdom/Dominion Movement led by “Bishop” Earl Paulk. Through them and their efforts, the Manifest Sons of God error would re-emerge and become the majority view, I believe, among Charismatic Christians as we approach the year 2000.

Bill Hamon, self-proclaimed “prophet/apostle to the church”, wrote in his 1981 book *The Eternal Church*:

When Jesus comes to translate His Church, it will not be God’s heavenly helicopter coming to air-lift the saints all out before they backslide or before the Devil has overrun their camp. When Jesus comes it will not be because the battle is too great for the army of the Lord. Neither will it be to jerk the Church out before the Antichrist system detours it; nor a retreat or an emergency rapture to preserve the Church from extinction...¹³⁰ Those who preach the maturity of the Church and restoration of all scriptural truths believe the purpose of the rapture-translation is strictly for the *immortalization of the saints*. The purpose for the immortalization of the physical bodies of the saints is to enable them to participate with Christ in the next phase for the Church. The next phase for the Church is the mobilization of the saints into an invincible army, which shall follow its King of Kings as He goes forth conquering, and to conquer. Immortalization of their bodies puts them in that glorified state where they can be with Him and function on His level as co-reigners and executioners of His will upon planet Earth throughout the universe.¹³¹

These ideas would give impetus to the Kingdom Now or Kingdom/Dominion Movement that would arise in the Charismatic Church in the 1980’s. Like the Restoration Movement, it too is simply a continuation of the Latter Rain/Manifest Sons of God heresies spawned in the 1948 “revival”. Al Dager defines Kingdom Theology thus:

Within the Kingdom theology camp are several movements whose teachings are remarkably similar overall, yet divergent on some points. These movements – though to a greater or lesser degree disavowing association with one another - are sufficiently

homogenous in their eschatological and theological viewpoints to place them all under a common banner: What I refer to as “Kingdom Theology”. These movements are built upon the same foundation: The neo-Pentecostalism of the mid-twentieth century. They draw from one another the support needed to develop their strategy for gaining pre-eminence among Christians. All zealously propagate their “new revelations” which allegedly are to prepare the Church for the next move of God, bringing us closer to the Kingdom Age (the rule of God on Earth)...Critical to hard-core Kingdom Theology is the denial of “the rapture”...Consequently, since there will be no bodily catching away – “or rapture” – of the Church (some say not until the Church has taken dominion in the face of adversity). There will be no restoration of the nation of Israel. The proponents of Kingdom Theology are correct when they say that the Church is spiritual Israel, but they fail to acknowledge that God has promised to restore national Israel and deal with her during the coming seventieth week of Daniel. All prophecies regarding future Israel – both in the Old and New Testaments – are made to apply to the Church. The restoration of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-11 is said to be the restoration of the Church out of Babylon (denominationalism) into perfect unity. All believers will possess the same mind, same thoughts, and same goals delineated by the apostles and prophets of the Kingdom Age through new revelations.¹³²

One thing they all share alike is their hatred of the blessed hope! “Revival” leader Gerald Coates proclaims:

The rapture idea is ridiculous...One has to conclude that the secret rapture theory may be evangelical, but it is nonetheless unbiblical. It is a grotesque idea – the rapture may be a most agreeable doctrine for cowards, but it is nothing better than wishful thinking and must be relegated to the area of myth and fantasy.¹³³

Don Paulk, brother of Earl Paulk, who was for many years at the forefront of the Kingdom Theology Movement, proclaims:

God’s timepiece is not an identifiable ethnic group. God’s timepiece is His Church, spiritual Israel!...But don’t expect the “rapture” to rescue you...If you want to bring Christ back to Earth, you can do it...WE CAN DO IT!...We hold the key to His return.¹³⁴

And so it goes, on and on! Wherever one turns these days in the Charismatic Movement the blessed hope of the rapture is being disparaged and traded for an earthly pipe dream of establishing the Kingdom on our own without our King! The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, warns about those who would turn our attentions to the things of this earth:

“Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...” (Phil 3:17-20 NKJV)

The Church at the end of the 20th century has become like Esau, trading its’ spiritual birthright for a bowl of pottage. It is proclaiming that God is preparing His Church to conquer this world, through the present Latter Rain revivals at Toronto, Pensacola and elsewhere. Charismatic “prophetess” Fushia Pickett writes in her book, *The Next Move of God* (1994):

People raised their eyebrows in disbelief when I first began to preach what I had seen in that vision. Thirty years ago the Church was not focused on revival. Much of the Church was caught in the passive, faithless attitude of “hanging on a little longer”. Her theology did not accept the fact of a great harvest of souls. Many were simply waiting to be raptured. Even Her hymns reflected Her pessimistic philosophy. A line of a favorite hymn sung in those

years says; “I’m going through whatever others do...I’ll make my way with the Lord’s despised few”. Many Christians believed Jesus would steal them away from this world one night as from a fire escape. Then, they believed, the world would be sorry they didn’t know who the Church was! They thought the media would send reporters throughout the world to discover the facts about the disappearance of the church...The more the Holy Spirit taught me from His Book, the more I recognized the fallacy of the churches escapist mentality. The Church *is* going to meet Him, but before we do, the world *is* going to know we have been here! We will not have to sneak out onto a smoldering fire escape some night, dressed in smoke-filled, soot-covered tatters to be rescued from the darkness of this world system. God is returning for a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle. (Eph.5:27) The reality of a glorious Church should convince those who question that revival will be a precursor to His coming. Only revival can establish that glorious Church.¹³⁵

“Prophet” Rick Joyner writes:

This is not the time to run – it’s the time for the Church to draw Her spiritual sword and attack the strategies and strongholds of the enemy. The doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture has been effective in developing a retreat mentality in the Church, but it will not ultimately succeed. Already this yoke is being cast off by a majority in the advancing Church.¹³⁶

This is no idle statement. Manifest Sons of God theology, once condemned and rejected by Spirit-filled Christians, is now, some 50 years later, becoming the majority point of view. Tricia Tillin, in *The New Thing*, quotes “Revival” leader Richard Riss:

Richard Riss – author of a book on Latter Rain and avid Toronto supporter – answering questions on the Vineyard New Wine bulletin board, says this: “For those who are prepared for His coming, it will be a time of unmitigated joy. He has given us a foretaste of this heavenly bliss in those moments when He has visited us with His presence during times of ‘revival’ or spiritual awakening. If you have ever experienced the presence of God, or an infilling of His Holy Spirit, then you have been given a hint, or intimation, of the ecstasy awaiting those who eagerly await His appearing...To be caught up in the clouds of glory to meet the Lord in this atmosphere of spiritual authority **does not necessarily entail a literal bodily removal from the earth...**often the rapture is thought to involve a bodily removal of the saints. However, the Bible refers to a removal, not of the saints from among the wicked, **but of the wicked from among the saints** at the time of Christ’s coming...”¹³⁷

Clearly, the Manifest Sons of God proponents have triumphed in bringing their heretical doctrines back to the forefront in the neo-Pentecostal churches today. Mike Bickle, the pastor of Kansas City Fellowship (now the *Metro Christian Fellowship*) describes in his book *Growing in the Prophetic* a revelation that God supposedly gave him in 1982:

The awe of God flooded my soul as I experienced a little bit of the terror of the Lord. I literally trembled and wept as God Himself was communicated to me in a way I’ve never known before or since. The Lord simply said, “I will change the understanding and expression of Christianity in one generation”.¹³⁸

That’s exactly what’s happening today. Christians are altering their understanding of what the mission and purpose of the New Testament Church is and are being robbed of their blessed hope by today’s modern Latter Rain apostles and prophets. Thousands of Pentecostals and Charismatics are letting go of their blessed hope of meeting Christ in the air in exchange for a delusion - an earthly kingdom of their own making - which may very well turn out to be Anti-Christ’s kingdom. Everywhere one turns today we’re being told the blessed hope is a false hope. In a videotaped message entitled *The Coming Glory* John Bevere proclaims:

Listen...the greatest...eh...eh...I get so frustrated when people start talking about, “well we’re going to be raptured” and, they kind of have the attitude of “I can’t wait to get out of this mess.” Look, do you think God’s brought us through all this wilderness just to get us out? Do you think He’s put us through all this training just so He could fly us away? There’s been a reason. A reason. And we’re on the brink of it. I believe we’re on, we’re on the brink of it.¹³⁹

I could cite many more examples of Charismatic (and Pentecostal) leaders who have forsaken the blessed hope for this earthly delusion. Robbed of their hope of an imminent return of our Lord, many Christians have grown lukewarm toward Christ and worldly-minded in their attitudes and desires, just as He prophesied. As Dave Hunt points out:

Whether or not we truly long for Christ’s return and are ready for Him to come at any moment will obviously affect how we live. To awaken each morning with the joyful anticipation that this could be the day that Christ will catch away his own from earth to heaven transforms our daily lives as nothing else could...Contrary to what the critics say, the hope of Christ’s imminent return doesn’t lead to spiritual lethargy or an escapist mentality which shuns responsibility and trial. Rather, it causes us to witness more earnestly and to live holier lives, knowing that very little time for doing so may remain.¹⁴⁰

Thank God for the blessed hope of the rapture. Thank God for the promise of our Lord:

“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.” (Rev 3:10-11 NKJV)

“... Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8 NKJV)

It’s up to us. *“Even so, come Lord Jesus”.*

CHAPTER 6

DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR

“...knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’” (2 Pet 3:3,4 NKJV)

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” (2 Tim 4:3,4 NKJV)

As we have seen, the Manifest Sons of God proponents are teaching that the rapture and resurrection of the saints will not take place in the clouds as we rise up to meet the Lord in the air. Instead, according to them, we will be transformed and glorified right here on this earth. Many teach that we will not only be glorified but deified as well. What is the purpose for this earthly glorification and deification of the saints?

According to their teaching the Church is going to conquer the world and is going to establish the kingdom of God on this earth. And when the Church is finished she is going to offer it to Christ, who is currently “held in the heavens” until the Church can accomplish this feat.

The Bible clearly pictures the Church in the last days as a shrinking despised remnant of people, holding on until Jesus comes. Certainly there is nowhere in the New Testament a picture of this conquering triumphant Church except in the book of Revelation where we see her pictured as such when she returns with Christ – at the end of the Great Tribulation – to rule and reign with Him during His millennial kingdom.

Rejecting the scriptural picture of the last-days Church in the New Testament as too “defeatist” and “escapist” they have set about to establish a militant Church that will bring in the Kingdom by force and triumph over all of her enemies during the Great Tribulation.

“You will not be hanging on – timidly waiting for Jesus to appear and evacuate you from this earth before the Anti-Christ can get you. The Lord will come again spiritually and you will be glorified - even deified, right here on this earth! You will receive “the anointing”. The wicked – the tares who have been resisting the anointing will be removed by the Lord. Unhindered, you will go forth as the “Corporate body of Christ”, conquering, and to conquer! You will subdue the kingdoms of this world, and put all of your enemies under your feet. You will be led by a group of super apostles and prophets who will in turn be led by Christ, the “*rider on the white horse*”. Through an abundance of miracles and signs and wonders this unified corporate body of Christ will convince the world of the reality of the gospel. Millions, perhaps billions, will be swept into the kingdom in a world-wide revival. Yes – there is tribulation ahead; great tribulation, but we will be calling the shots and actually executing the judgements and wrath of God upon this unbelieving world...” and so this fable goes.

This idea came about during the Latter Rain revival in 1948 as the result of a “vision”:

The spirit fell simultaneously upon the whole school and all began to prophesy together. This great demonstration was accompanied by a vision of the manifest sons of God in the last days of this dispensation. This mighty army was seen conquering all before it. Sickness and disease were vanishing, and all evil spirits were scattered before the triumphant power of God’s people.¹⁴¹

I can think of two reasons this “vision” should have been rejected on scriptural grounds. First, the Bible tells us that one of the signs of our Lord’s return will be the increase of diseases and plagues throughout the earth. This is one of the birth pangs that Jesus said would herald His return. Like labor pains these signs will increase in both frequency and intensity until the rapture.

“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.” (Mat 24:7 NKJV)

Not to mention the terrible spread of Aids, we have seen the emergence of communicable diseases in these last days that were recently proclaimed all but eradicated. Tuberculosis, malaria, cholera, and various other diseases that were thought to be under control have come back with a vengeance and are resistant to the drugs that are used to control them. Outbreaks of new viruses are occurring all the time, such as the Hanta virus and the terrible Ebola virus.

Secondly, this “vision” is contradictory to the picture of Satan and his army at the end of the age as presented in the New Testament. We are clearly warned in the New Testament that as the end of this age approaches Satan will be allowed by God to exercise more power to perform lying signs and wonders.

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders...” (2 Th 2:9 NKJV)

Jesus warned us that the number one sign that would herald the end of the age would be deception. *“Take heed that no one deceive you.”* Deception that will increase with intensity, characterized by signs and wonders. The Apostle Paul prophesied:

“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” (2 Tim 3:13 NKJV)

Paul likened these men Jannes and Jambres, the court magicians of Pharaoh, who withstood Moses and the Word of God through their counterfeit miracles.

“Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith...” (2 Tim 3:8 NKJV)

These imposters, with their counterfeit satanic miracles, signs, and wonders will deceive “*even the elect*” Jesus said, “*if possible*”. Only the elect, the true Church, the bride of Christ, will be able to withstand the deception because they will remain true to Christ and His Word. What is it that will enable them to discern the true from the counterfeit? Simply their love for the truth - for Jesus and His Word.

So these two contradictions to the Biblical picture of the last days should have clearly marked this vision as a false vision, inspired by the flesh, or by a seducing spirit. It should have been judged and rejected, but as we have already seen, these people were in rebellion to the Biblical scenario of the last-days Church. This picture of a remnant just does not appeal to the flesh. It seemed a “depressing” and “defeatist” scenario to the brethren at North Battleford so they accepted the false “vision” with open arms and began to expand on it. A pastor by the name of Thomas Wyatt in Portland, Oregon, claimed to have had a similar vision years earlier:

In the vision he was shown the pattern for the last great revival of the Church age. He saw how this revival would have a small beginning and within a matter of months it would encircle the entire earth. He saw men coming in from all walks of life and going forth as a mighty army...¹⁴²

An elitist mentality quickly developed as the self-proclaimed Latter Rain apostles and prophets began to see themselves as the vanguard of this mighty conquering army of Christ – the Manifest Sons of God. George Warnock wrote in his *Feast of Tabernacles*:

No man could lay their finger on Christ until His hour had come; and then He gave Himself willingly that He might finish the work which God had given Him to do. So shall it be with His many brethren. They shall be completely triumphant over all the powers of darkness that are arrayed against them – and shall in no wise partake of the world’s coming tribulation, except to fulfill the works of God on behalf of the Church... We are confident, therefore, that if Christ must minister faithfully for many years amidst the scoffing and ridicule of men, suffer the anguish of Gethsemane, die on a Roman cross, and rise again from the dead, in order to fulfill the **old covenant**; then it is positively essential that the body of Christ rise from the dust and desolation of Her captivity, become identified with the death of Christ the Head, and **rise again** with Him to manifest His glory and His power, - in order to fulfill the **new covenant**. Men will argue, what about the falling away? What about the apostasy? Is this not to be the condition of the Church in the last days? Of course there is to be apostasy, as the Apostle prophesied, and it has certainly come to pass. But we are speaking of the true Church, the Body of Christ, the Sons of God, the Overcomer, the Bride – the people of whom it was said: “To the intent that **now** unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10).”¹⁴³

The elite – the manifest sons are going to become the “Corporate Body of Christ on earth”, exercising all the power and authority of Jesus Christ. Bill Hamon writes:

The Church has always been an “army”, but has gone through stages of “active” and “inactive” cold wars and hot wars. The Church was reactivated into a militant army and has been engaged in a hot war since the beginning of the “*period of great restoration*”... Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in my Holy mountain [Church], let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the *day of the Lord* [when He comes to be glorified in His saints] cometh, for it is nigh at hand. [It will be a day of darkness and gloominess for the world but the dawning of a new day for the Church.]... As the morning spread upon the mountains: [The Church-army becomes His firebrands.] A fire devoureth before them... And nothing shall escape them... Like the noise of a flame of fire that **devoureth** the stubble, as a strong people set **in battle array**... They shall run like mighty men; They shall march every on his ways, [know their membership ministry in the body of Christ] and they shall not break their ranks [faithful, submissive, and consistent to their calling]; neither shall one thrust another [unity and love]; they shall walk everyone in his path [faithful to his position and performance]: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded [death to self, fullness of life and one with the Word-sword]. They shall run to and fro... The earth shall quake before them, and the heavens shall tremble... And the **Lord** shall utter His voice before **His army**; for *His camp* is very great: for He is strong that *executeth* His Word. (Joel 2: 1-2) [This is the prophet Joel’s description of the Church-army of the Lord.]”¹⁴⁴ (Words in brackets are Hamon’s.)

Since the name “Joel’s Army” has stuck among Charismatics, I will from this point forward refer to this “end-time army” of Manifested Sons of God as Joel’s Army. Does this prophecy really refer to the church? I think not! A close examination of this prophecy reveals that it is a description of the same army that is prophesied to come in Revelation 9:1-12:

- ❖ “*The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle.*” (Rev 9:7 NKJV)
- ❖ “*Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like swift steeds, so they run.*” (Joel 2:4 NKJV)
- ❖ “*And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.*” (Rev 9:5 NKJV)

- “Before them the people writhe in pain; All faces are drained of color.” (Joel 2:6 NKJV)*
- ❖ *“And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.” (Rev 9:2 NKJV)*
“A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains.” (Joel 2:2 NKJV)
 - ❖ *“They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth.” (Rev 9:8 NKJV)*
“For a nation has come up against My land, Strong, and without number; His teeth are the teeth of a lion, And he has the fangs of a fierce lion.” (Joel 1:6 NKJV)
 - ❖ *“And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle.” (Rev 9:9 NKJV)*
“With a noise like chariots Over mountaintops they leap, Like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, Like a strong people set in battle array.” (Joel 2:5 NKJV)

Obviously, these two armies are one-and-the-same. There are a number of things in Joel's prophecy that make it clear that it is not an army of literal horsemen that is being described. Horses do not climb walls, nor climb up on rooftops, nor enter into windows like thieves. Joel is describing the same army of demons that John describes in Revelation chapter nine. Joel's army is an army of demons!

Then why would, or how could, the Latter Rain proponents see the Church in it? Simply because there is no picture of a mighty conquering Church in the New Testament such as they describe - at least, not until after the Second Coming of our Lord. Thus they are forced to resort to misappropriating and misapplying many of the Old Testament prophecies to create one.

The Latter Rain proponents have had to resort to what is called “Replacement Theology” in order to paint their triumphant picture of the last-days church. Replacement Theology teaches that the church has become spiritual Israel, replacing national Israel in God's plan. Therefore, all of the prophecies that pertain to national Israel in the Old Testament now apply to the Church. These prophecies are “allegorized” or “spiritualized” so that the literal meaning is no longer their primary meaning. They now apply to the Church – and therefore and thereby an army of demons becomes the triumphant Church of the last days!

We are seeing this over and over. Prophecies that apply to national Israel and national Israel **only** are being allegorized and applied to the Church. Ezekiel's vision of the river flowing from under the threshold of the Millennial temple eastward into the Dead Sea is interpreted to represent the current revivals at Toronto and Pensacola. Marc Dupont, an associate pastor at the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship writes:

*In general, like the River of Life described in Ezekiel 47, the current move of the Holy Spirit (what some call the “Toronto Blessing”) is the revival of life at the ankle level – bringing spiritual refreshment.*¹⁴⁵

The national restoration of Israel in Ezekiel (Chapters 36-39) becomes the last day's revival of the Church resulting in the manifestation of the sons of God – Joel's army. “Revival” leader Jack Deere proclaims:

*You see, everybody – every scholar I know, every commentator I know, knows that these passages in Ezekiel 37, 38, and 39 are all talking about the last days ministry. They all know that it's the last days move of the Holy Spirit and how is it going to be? What's going to happen to this lifeless Church? How is it going to start? Well God could just speak a word from heaven. He could just cause a revival to start among us. He could just put the conviction of sin in our heart supernaturally by His Spirit, but that's not how He's going to do it. He's going to raise up the prophetic. What brings the bones to life here? It is the prophetic word inspired by God. Prophecy Son of man, and then it happens. At each stage of the way prophecy and then life comes. And then what's the result of that prophetic? A VAST ARMY.*¹⁴⁶

Clearly these prophecies pertain to national Israel and not the Church. I say clearly because we have seen many of them, such as Ezekiel 36-37 come to pass since 1948, when Israel was “reborn” as a nation. Re-gathered and re-born, just as Ezekiel foretold. This prophecy is still being fulfilled right before our very eyes, as the nation of Israel grows stronger in these last days. The fulfillment will be completed at the Second Coming, when the nation of Israel is spiritually re-born as their true Messiah returns to them:

“For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.” (Ezek 36:24-28 NKJV)

These prophecies clearly apply to national Israel only, yet in order to produce the desired triumphant picture from scripture of “Joel’s Army” they must be misappropriated and “spiritualized” to fit the heretical teaching of those who apply these prophecies to the Church. Charismatic “prophetess” Fuchsia Pickett writes:

We declare with the Psalmist: “Thou wilt arise and have compassion on Zion: For it is time to be gracious to her, for the appointed time has come.” (Ps. 102:13 NAS) Zion in scripture represents the Church, the people of God, through whom God desires to manifest His presence. It is God’s appointed time to favor His people...the army of God – His Church – is going to march through this nation and bind the powers of darkness, praising the name of our Lord as He releases the Spirit of liberty upon our nation. ¹⁴⁷

Prophecy after prophecy from the Old Testament that pertain to national Israel is appropriated in this way and applied to the Church, but as Dave Hunt points out:

Of course, those who identify the Church with Israel are only interested in claiming her blessings, while leaving Israel with the curses God pronounced on her. Such an approach encounters two major problems: 1) Most of the blessings God gave to Israel, by their very nature, could never apply to the Church; and 2) The curses and the blessings go together, so that the Church cannot claim the one without accepting the other also. Israel’s greatest blessings, in fact, come in the restoration of that which she lost because of the curses of God that resulted from her disobedience. That fact alone makes it clear that Israel and the Church are two distinct entities. ¹⁴⁸

Throughout the history of the Church, many have abandoned the literal method of interpreting the scriptures, the method used by our Lord and His Apostles, for what is called the “allegorical” or “spiritualizing” method of interpretation. Basically, this method denies that the primary meaning of the Biblical text is the literal one and teaches that the true meaning is a deeper, “spiritual one” that is hidden beneath the literal rendering of the text. In other words “It doesn’t mean what it says, it means what I say it says!”

Bernard Ramm, in his book *Protestant Bible Interpretation*, writes:

...To state that the principal meaning of the Bible is a second-sense meaning, and that the principal method of interpretation is “spiritualizing”, is to open the door to almost uncontrolled speculation and imagination. For this reason we have insisted that the control in interpretation is the literal method. ¹⁴⁹

“Uncontrolled speculation and imagination” is certainly an apt way to describe how Latter Rain proponents are re-interpreting the scriptures today to present a picture of a triumphant conquering Church. I recently ran into this testimony on the Internet:

*In 1990 I began to hear the term “prophetic interpretation” in our church which simply meant our pastor (now elevated to an apostle) could make the text mean whatever “the Spirit” was revealing. **In Latter Rain circles truth is changing and evolving.** Scriptures do not have one meaning; the meaning evolves, as does the Church. What Latter Rain people look for in the Bible is the “present day truth” which is arrived at by the Holy Spirit as revealed through His current crop of apostles and prophets. In 1990 a shift occurred in the Spirit and the Apostolic Movement began to be birthed. My wife and I have met no less than six apostles (most of whom used to be pastors, then prophets, and now apostles). Over the last fifteen years we have **spiritually surfed** various moves of the Spirit and they can all be reduced to being nothing more than Latter Rain adherents, only the error has progressed even more radically since 1947.¹⁵⁰*

Yes, “present day truth” is all the rage in Charismatic circles today, and woe be unto the “old generation saints” who stubbornly hold to the old Biblical truths. We are going to die in the wilderness! Marc DuPont proclaims:

But by the late nineties, I believe things are just really going to really, dramatically be breaking out more than we can understand, but also judgement is very, very much going to increase to the point where I believe that many leaders who are fighting what the Spirit of God is doing and saying [present day truth], God is going to take them out of the ministry. I believe some of them, I know this isn't a new revelation, other people have said this, but I do believe that it's true, that God is actually going to be taking some leaders home to heaven, rather than to continue to allow them to mislead God's people.¹⁵¹

Those of us who hold to the old “truths”, and adhere to the “old paths” are going to be judged by God. But those who embrace “present-day truth” are going to move on to “Sonship” and glory! Bill Hamon declares:

*The front-line, present-truth division of the Church has crossed the Jordan River and entered their Canaan by making the transition into offensive warfare... **God is preparing His Church** to become an invincible, unstoppable, unconquerable army of the Lord that subdues everything under Christ's feet. There will be a sovereign restorational move of God to activate all that is needed for His army to be and do what He has eternally purposed. The generals who will lead this army will be those who have progressively been prepared by incorporating every restorational truth into their life and ministry.¹⁵²*

This “sovereign, restorational move of God” will be the “manifestation of the sons of God” as we have seen. The saints will be transformed and glorified/deified by this earthly rapture. They will be transformed into a great spiritual army – Joel's army, and nothing will be able to stand in their way – or resist their power and “anointing”.

Uncontrolled speculations and imaginations are coming forth from the modern day Latter Rain leaders that boggle the mind. Bob Jones, Kansas City “prophet”, proclaims that this army of the Lord will exhibit more supernatural power than the Apostles of our Lord!

They will move into things of the supernatural that no one has ever moved in before. Every miracle, sign, and wonder that has ever been in the Bible – they'll move in it consistently. They'll move in the power that Christ did. Every sign and wonder that's ever been will be many times in the last days. They themselves will be the generation that's raised up to put death itself underneath their feet and glorify Christ in every way... And the Church that is raising up in the government will be the head and the covering for them, so that the glorious Church might be revealed in the last days because the Lord Jesus is worthy to be lifted up by a Church that has reached the full maturity of the god-man.¹⁵³

In following with this same idea Jack Deere states:

...This army is totally unique, this army, there's never been one like it and there will never be one like it in ages to come...It's so mighty that there's never been anything like it before. Not even Moses, not even David, not even Paul. What's going to happen now will transcend what Paul did, what David did...What Moses did, even though Moses parted the Red Sea...There'll be a numerous company...Revelation hints at this when it talks about the 144,000 that will follow the Lamb wherever He goes and no one, no, no one can harm that 144,000. See that's a multiple of 12. What's 12? Twelve is the number of Apostles, 12 is Apostolic government... Well here Joel is talking about it in different words, a powerful, a mighty army with many Pauls, many Moses, many Davids.¹⁵⁴

What humility! Here again we see another prophecy clearly pertaining to national Israel applied to the Church (Revelation 7:4). The descriptions that one runs across of this “army” just get grander and grander all the time. Yet, while these modern-day apostles and prophets describe the Church in the last days as endowed with supernatural power, the likes of which the world has never before seen, our Lord describes His overcoming Church of the last days in this way:

“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.” (Rev 3:8 NKJV)

A “little strength”, the Lord says. A little strength that is shown in their adherence to His Word and their refusal to deny His name. Somehow when I read this description of the overcoming, faithful bride of Christ I don't see the same picture that Jack Deere and others are presenting. Rick Joyner in his “vision” entitled *The Harvest*, writes:

The Lord has prepared a ministry for this last day which will be the marvel of men and angels. These will not be self-seeking or self-promoting... These will not even seek rank or position in the Church at this time, but will quietly, sometimes incognito, direct the end-time strategy of the Church. Their authority will be in their wisdom. Like Stephan, who was just a deacon but whose wisdom and power lit a fire that set a new course for Christianity, this new breed, without fame or position, will direct some of the greatest events in history. Though men will never know many of them, the entire host of heaven and hell has known them from the beginning. Not since Jesus has the enemy feared anyone like he does these selfless messengers of power.¹⁵⁵... The magnitude of this harvest will ultimately astonish even the most optimistic believers. Congregations of less than a hundred will be adding a thousand believers a week for periods of time, meetings which begin spontaneously will stir entire cities, continuing until they fill the largest stadiums night after night. Previously popular sports events will be abandoned in many towns for lack of interest. Whole towns, with populations of thousands, will swarm upon neighboring towns to evangelize them... News teams will follow apostles like national leaders, recording great miracles which will be shown with unabashed enthusiasm... Large cities will experience periods of “zero crime” as their populations come under conviction of the Holy Spirit, and the light of the Church drives darkness from entire regions. Pornography, prostitution, illegal drugs, abortion, and drunkenness will cease to exist in many areas without the passage of a single law. Large factories and businesses will shut down for days at a time so their employees can attend special meetings. Whole nations will give themselves to periods of prayer and fasting... The Lord will continually be on the mind of the people... Cities will sponsor bonfires for burning pornography, witchcraft and astrological paraphernalia and illegal drugs. Warlocks, witches, mediums and even Mafia chieftains will be bowing the knee to Jesus and entering into salvation with great joy. Street gangs will be sending Bibles and gifts to one another and prisons will become churches which will give the body of Christ some of its greatest teachers. Miracles which exceed even some of the most spectacular Biblical marvels will cause whole

nations to acknowledge Jesus...The visible glory of the Lord will appear upon some for periods of time and this glory will heal everyone it touches. The pillar of fire that led Israel will not even compare to the intense presence of the Lord in these days. The appearances of angels will be so common that it will cease to be related as specific events. The Lord Himself will appear to councils of apostles and elders to give them directives...Believers will be in awe continually, wondering each day what great new things they will see.¹⁵⁶

Sounds great, doesn't it? Too bad it totally contradicts the scriptures. Is this kind of earth changing, earth sweeping revival what Jesus meant when He said, "It will be as the days of Noah"? Let's look at the description of those days in the Old Testament:

"Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the LORD said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.' There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.' But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." (Gen 6:1-8 NKJV)

Does this square with Mr. Joyner's "vision" of the harvest? Genesis 6:5 says "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continuously". But Mr. Joyner says: "The Lord will continually be on the minds of the people" and "Whole towns...will swarm upon neighboring towns to evangelize them." Genesis 6:11 declares that: "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." But Mr. Joyner declares: "Large cities will experience periods of "zero crime" as their populations come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit", and "Street gangs will be sending Bibles and gifts to one another and prisons will become churches which will give the body of Christ some of its greatest teachers." Also, Mr. Joyner proclaims that "The Lord Himself will appear to councils of apostles and elders to give them directions". But our Lord warned "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. **Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.**" (Mat 24:26 NKJV)

A worldwide revival? We are told in the New Testament that Noah preached to his generation and warned them of the judgement to come:

"...and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly..." (2 Pet 2:5 NKJV)

Noah obviously spent those years in which he was laboring to build the ark also laboring to turn men back to God, warning them of the judgement to come - but no one listened. They carried on with business as usual, "marrying and giving in marriage" and ignoring or scoffing at Noah's warnings. In the end, only Noah and seven members of his family were saved in the ark. The world rejected God and His warnings given through Noah. Certainly scripture is clear, that not only the world, but also much of the Church will do the same in the last days!

I believe that Peter's prophecy in chapter 3 is being fulfilled by Mr. Joyner, Mr. Deere, and all of the Latter Rain apostles and prophets today who reject the rapture:

“...knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’” (2 Pet 3:3,4 NKJV)

They scoff at the rapture, derisively referring to it as “God’s helicopter escape”. It is like Noah suddenly denying the ark – and telling his family that God revealed to him “through a special revelation” that he and his family were going to convert the entire antediluvian world and usher in the kingdom of God on earth. But just as God gave no such promise to Noah, He has given no such promise to His Church today.

Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship pastor, John Arnott, scoffs at the teaching of the rapture and declares that God has chosen us to bring in the Kingdom:

...And so that brings in a whole lot of eschatological questions, you know. Is this the time? I don’t know. Is this the time Jesus is coming? Will He find faith on the earth when He returns? I hope the answer to that is yes. But He’s asking the question. It’s almost implied no in scripture when you read it, isn’t it? “Will I find faith on the earth when I return? Probably not.” Wait a minute. Yes, Lord, we’re going to go for it, we’re gonna try to do our part to bring the kingdom of God here. And, I don’t know what it all is going to look like in the aftermath, but I just cannot believe God would go to so much trouble to save fallen humanity and say “well we gave it our best shot, but we’re miserable failures; you know.” Can you? There’s this poor little remnant hiding in a cave somewhere waiting for the rapture to happen. I just don’t see that as a sovereign Lord. Everything He does, He does well. The hitch really is, He’s chosen to use fallen and redeemed man to get the job done, that’s kind of a hitch, isn’t it?¹⁵⁷

While looking to conquer this world instead of leaving it, they have developed a strategy of spiritual warfare that they believe will bind Satan and his army of demons in the spiritual realm, so that they can conquer in the physical realm. As we have seen, part of the vision that came through the “revival” at North Battleford involved the church laying waste to demonic principalities and powers:

...This mighty army was seen conquering all before it. Sickness and disease were vanishing, and all evil spirits were seen scattered before the triumphant power of God’s people.¹⁵⁸

While they wait for the “manifestation of the sons of God”, and earthly immortalization and deification to take place, they have already started to lay the groundwork, they believe, for worldly victory through “strategic-level spiritual warfare”. What is strategic-level spiritual warfare as opposed to just plain old simple everyday spiritual warfare? Spiritual warfare guru, C. Peter Wagner, writes of three levels of spiritual warfare that take place:

1. **Ground-level spiritual warfare** – This is the ministry of casting out demons...Ground level spiritual warfare is the most common variety practiced by Christians today. Groups and individuals involved in “deliverance ministries” by and large are engaged in ground level spiritual warfare.

2. **Occult-level spiritual warfare** – It seems evident that we see a kind of demonic power at work through shamans, New Age channelers, occult practitioners, witches and warlocks, Satanist priests, fortune-tellers and the like. This is substantially different from the ordinary demon who may cause headaches, marital blowups, drunkenness or scoliosis... not too many years ago, Christians in the United States were fairly ignorant of this occult-level spiritual activity...things are changing, however.

3. **Strategic-level spiritual warfare** – Here we contend with an even more ominous concentration of demonic power: territorial spirits. A clear Biblical account of strategic-level

spiritual warfare is found in Revelation 12 where we are told, “war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought.” (Rev. 12:7) This is something quite different from dealing with the occult or casting out a demon of lust. Undoubtedly, the single-most influential event that has stimulated interest in strategic-level spiritual warfare among American Christians was the publication of Frank Peretti’s two novels, *This Present Darkness* and *Piercing the Darkness* (Crossway Books)...In fact, even though they know better, many find themselves reading *This Present Darkness* as a documentary rather than as somewhat fanciful fiction.¹⁵⁹

So strategic-level spiritual warfare is battling against the most powerful of Satan’s “rulers”, the so-called “territorial spirits” who rule over whole nations and continents on Satan’s behalf. Where does this idea of powerful demonic spirits assigned by Satan to different areas of the world or territories originate? Wagner cites Daniel, Chapter 10:1-21 to support this idea.

*“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia...Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. **But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.”** (Dan 10:13;20-21 NKJV)*

Wagner claims that Daniel was obviously in some way involved in the spiritual battle that took place between the angel and the demonic “prince of Persia”. The angel reveals to Daniel that he only prevailed against the “prince of Persia” after receiving help from the archangel Michael – and no one else. After giving Daniel the message from God, he revealed that on his departure he would have to face the “prince of Persia” and the “prince of Greece”, but that Michael would help him prevail once again. At no time does the angel suggest that Daniel’s prayers had anything to do with his prevailing over the prince of Persia, and upon leaving he does not ask Daniel to pray that he might prevail once again. While this scripture gives us some insight into the spiritual warfare that is playing out unseen to us for the most part, and does present the picture of territorial spirits, it does not tell us that Daniel’s prayers (or ours) have any significant effect upon that warfare. Yet Wagner concludes:

This story leaves little doubt that territorial spirits greatly influence human life in all its sociopolitical aspects, and it also shows us clearly that the only weapon Daniel had to combat these rulers of darkness was warfare prayer.¹⁶⁰

Significantly, we find Daniel neither “binding” these territorial spirits nor “loosing” more of God’s holy angels to join the fight against them. Even more significantly we do not see our Lord or His apostles praying to “bind” the “territorial spirits” that were opposing them or their ministries. For instance, Paul did not spend a weekend in prayer with his companions binding the “territorial spirit” that was over the city of Ephesus or binding “the spirit of witchcraft” which was exemplified by the immense statue to “Diana of the Ephesians”. On the contrary, Paul simply entered the city and preached the Gospel. Yes - Satan stirred up tremendous opposition, in the form of a riot which threatened Paul’s life, but as usual the Gospel prevailed and a thriving church was established. All without the help of any so-called “strategic-level spiritual warfare”.

Do not misunderstand me. I believe in spiritual warfare and the necessity of prayer. The Word of God is clear. We have been instructed to wrestle against “*principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*”. To equip us for this battle the Lord has given us the “*spiritual armor*” outlined in Ephesians 6. He has also given us His promise – “*Resist the devil and he will flee from you*”. As well as, “*I will establish my Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.*”

We can fight the spiritual battles we are called to fight with confidence knowing that the Lord has equipped us and is standing behind us every step of the way. But nowhere in the New Testament are we told the key to success in the spiritual battles we are called to fight, or the fulfilling of the great commission, is learning and applying the principles of “strategic-level” spiritual warfare. These ideas were birthed from the elitism that permeates Latter Rain theology. Wagner writes:

I myself feel that God may be calling, equipping, and enabling a relatively small number of Christian leaders to move out in frontline, strategic-level spiritual warfare. And I also believe He is raising up large numbers of Christians to back up these people with moral support, intercession, encouragement, and material resources. God, I think, is in the process of choosing an expanding corps of spiritual green berets such as Eduardo Lorenzo, Cindy Jacobs, Larry Lea, Carlos Annacondia, John Dawson, Edgardo Silvano or Dick Bernal, who will engage in the crucial high-level battles against the rulers of darkness and consequently see measurable increases in the numbers of lost people who “turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. (Acts 26:18) ¹⁶¹

This spiritual elite, these spiritual “green berets” have been battling territorial spirits for years now to no avail. This teaching simply has more in common with the scenarios presented in the fictional novels of Frank Peretti than it does any scenario in the Word of God. In the introduction to his book, *Warfare Prayer*, C. Peter Wagner writes:

A wave of interest in the supernatural and in Christian positions relative to spiritual warfare has been growing for some years throughout the Christian world. Books by authors such as Frank Peretti have stimulated certain audiences while books of other authors such as Walter Wink have stimulated other audiences. ¹⁶²

Wagner admits that the interest generated in strategic-level spiritual warfare and territorial spirits is due more to the influence of novels such as Peretti’s than anything else. He says, “In fact, even though they know better, many find themselves reading *This Present Darkness* as a documentary rather than as somewhat fanciful fiction.” Like many others I have read and enjoyed Peretti’s novels – but only as entertaining fiction, not as any serious model for spiritual warfare. Our only model for that is the scripture. The scriptural support for these ideas is extremely weak at best. As my friend Larry Thomas pointed out:

The deluge of books and teachings on spiritual warfare seemed to follow closely the publication of two books by Frank Peretti called *This Present Darkness* and *Piercing the Darkness*. I’ve read the books and enjoyed them. They actually contained some sound instruction about the need for prayer and the networking of the New Age Movement, Satanists, and a variety of other anti-Christian forces. But Peretti’s books are novels: works of fiction, the creation of the vivid imagination of Mr. Peretti. They are not textbooks on angelology and demonology...I’m sorry to report that I have heard formerly sound Biblical preachers now claiming to have frequent visitations by angels and demons. Again, I’m not denying the reality of these entities. I merely point out that the frequency of their appearing has, I believe, directly increased in proportion to the number of books – be they fiction or non-fiction – being written about such bizarre manifestations. I guess the thing that intrigues me most about some of these reports is the individuals’ descriptions of their “visitors” and their activities that seem to be taken directly from the pages of Peretti’s books. It seems that all angels have flashing swords and all demons suffer from “sulphurous” halitosis...In Peretti’s books, the demons (and angels) all have names and certain warfare gifts and talents, and each has control over a specific territory. ¹⁶³

As I said before, this kind of “strategic-level” spiritual warfare has been put into practice for many years now – to little or no affect! In *Warfare Prayer* C. Peter Wagner writes:

Larry Lea, recognized as a top-ranking leader of the current prayer movement, arrives in Anaheim to conduct the first of what has become a long series of “prayer breakthroughs”. His stated purpose is to “do some serious damage to the strongholds of this city”. Before going to Anaheim Larry Lea sought the face of God, among other things, he asked the Lord to show him the identity of the strongholds over that part of southern California so that his prayers could be more specific. Through prayer he discerned that there were four principal warring spirits over the greater Los Angeles area: Spirits of religion, witchcraft, violence and greed. He proceeded to lead the 7,500 believers who attended the massive prayer meeting in warfare prayer against those specific spirits. ¹⁶⁴

What was the result of all of this “strategic-level” spiritual warfare? Nothing! Dave Hunt writes:

In 1989, more than 1300 pastors from many denominations, led by Lloyd Ogilvie and Jack Hayford, began meeting quarterly in prayer at the Hollywood Presbyterian Church to wage spiritual warfare for the “deliverance” of Los Angeles. In the years that followed evil has increased. There is *not one* example in the Bible to support such “deliverance”. One pastor wrote to us: “We meet and fast and pray and bind the spirits and as soon as we leave the meeting they’re on the loose again!” One of the leading pastors involved in the meetings had to leave his pastorate for sexual improprieties. While they were battling territorial spirits to deliver Los Angeles, one of the leaders was losing the battle in his own heart. These meetings, called Love LA, were inspired by Larry Lea, who declared: “This is a day to wage nothing less than militant warfare in the spirit realm...Demonic strongholds keeping the greater Los Angeles area and our country in bondage will be...pulled down.” Charisma showed Larry Lea, the “apostle of prayer” in combat fatigues calling for 300,000 “prayer warriors” to join him in taking America for God. Yet America and Los Angeles continue to worsen morally. ¹⁶⁵

These types of meetings have had the same result in city after city – nothing! You would think that these spiritual “green berets” would become discouraged and disillusioned with the “strategic-level” spiritual warfare concept and go back to the Bible. But they don’t. They continue to stubbornly claim “victory” in spite of the evidence. The “revival” at the Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida, was preceded by more than two years of prayer and fasting for revival utilizing “spiritual mapping” of the surrounding area to identify and bind the territorial spirits over the area. They continue to sweep the sanctuary before each meeting to drive out any demons that might be present, and they believe that “spiritual warfare” plays an important role in the ongoing success of the meetings. ¹⁶⁶

According to the leaders of the “revival” at Brownsville, the crime rate in the area has decreased since the meetings began. ¹⁶⁷ It is claimed that the “revival” has deeply touched the community and the surrounding area. It would appear on the surface that Satan is indeed on the run in Pensacola, Florida! But when one begins to look below the surface, the story is the same. Joseph Chambers writes:

I personally drove to Pensacola, Florida on January 28, 1997...The Brownsville church is located in a very depressed neighborhood. The neighborhood desperately needs a Holy Ghost revival. But this meeting has not touched it. I spent hours in the rain making a complete circle around the church. I did not find on person that attended this church or had been positively affected by the events’ occurring...One lady said that her children had attended the Sunday school, but became fearful of the strange events and had changed to another church. Others told me that no one had invited them and they had seen no one from the church in the community witnessing...A gambling enterprise operates directly beside the front parking lot and faces the church front. They informed me that business was great and had not been affected by this “revival”... I talked with the manager of a convenience store that is also directly across the corner from the front of the church. They sell alcoholic beverages and lottery tickets. The manager informed me that business had grown during the approximate two years of this “revival”. It was absolutely clear, beyond a doubt, that this

event has had no impact on the community of Brownsville. The administrative assistant to the sheriff of Escambia County gave me this quote, “The crime rate for 1996 increased by 2.9 percent over 1995.” (Brownsville is in this county, not the city of Pensacola).¹⁶⁸

Clearly the spiritual elite have not been able to put Satan on the defensive through their use of strategic-level spiritual warfare. Many claims of victory are made, but when closely scrutinized, most turn out to be false claims without any real substance. It is sad to read that after two years of “revival” at the Brownsville church that the surrounding area had remained untouched by the “revival”. These false claims are bad enough, but what is really disturbing is the flippant attitude that many of the Latter Rain proponents have developed towards our adversary the Devil today. I have witnessed healing evangelist Benny Hinn on his television show running around the stage during one of his crusades pretending to repeatedly kick Satan in the backside, proclaiming “This is the Christian who knows who he is in Jesus Christ!” All I could think of was Jude’s prophecy:

“Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’ But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.” (Jude 1:8-10 NKJV)

Yes, Satan is a defeated foe. Our Lord defeated him on the cross. But he is still the God of this world, until our Lord returns at the end of the Great Tribulation to throw him out. Then, and only then, will Satan be bound. Until then we must remember that he is still exercising great power and authority in this world, and is still capable of deceiving us and leading us away from Christ – to Anti-Christ! I’m not trying to glorify Satan, just point out that he is still a very dangerous adversary and is capable of doing great damage to the unwary! It is so important, especially in the last days in which we live, that we hold a proper respect for the power of our adversary to deceive and destroy. Even more so as the coming of our Lord draws near, because as the Word of God warns us through Peter’s admonition:

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” (1 Pet 5:8,9 NKJV)

I find it quite disturbing that at a time when the Word of God pictures the Church as a believing remnant of people with a “little strength” that a spiritual elite is arising within the Church promising victory and triumph instead. What’s most disturbing is the failure of so many “spirit-filled” Christians to discern the truth about this. Instead, they have swallowed the lie of dominion and earthly victory as they follow the lead of this spiritual elite – from “strategic level spiritual warfare” into immortalization and deification as “Joel’s army”. This is the promise of the super apostles and prophets of today. Those who are going to lead Joel’s army – the manifest sons of God, to earthly glory, defeating Satan and his army and establishing the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. This is the ultimate “delusion of grandeur”!

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Th 2:9-12 NKJV)

CHAPTER 7

THE NEW BREED

“But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.” (2 Cor 11:12, 13 NKJV)

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.” (Mat 7:15 NKJV)

According to the Latter Rain proponents in the Church today, God is raising up an elite company of apostles and prophets. These super apostles and prophets will lead the Church into the next “wave” of revival. This next “wave” of revival will bring forth the “manifestation of the sons of God” on this earth. An immortal, some say deified “Joel’s Army” of overcomers who will conquer this earth for Christ during the Tribulation and bring in the millennium. These elite apostles and prophets expect to be the agents through which Christ will lead the Church on to maturity, and manifestation as the sons of God. Bill Hamon writes:

Ministries of last-day apostles and prophets. They will be the generals that lead God’s fivefold officers and warrior saints into and through the coming moves of God after the Apostolic Movement...There is another restorational truth coming to the Church that will lead us into full reality...Every minister in Christendom, and even those among the Charismatics, will be faced with a challenging decision...God is not looking for a multitude of leaders, but for a few who are willing to cross their Jordan of death to self, arise in resurrection life, and be united with the believers into a mighty army that shall go in and possess their promised possessions...If I am privileged of the Holy Spirit to be a Joshua or a Caleb to this new generation, then I shall do all in my power to maintain a balance by the grace, wisdom, and maturity of the Head of the Church Himself, Jesus Christ our Lord. ¹⁶⁹

Supposedly, God began to raise up this group of spiritual elite leaders in the late 1980’s in the “Prophetic Movement”, and now in the late 1990’s with the emergence of the “Apostolic Movement”. As we have seen, this idea of a group of super apostles and prophets arising to lead Joel’s army to victory in the last days came directly out of the 1948 “revival”:

One of the points of controversy between the North Battleford brethren and established Pentecostal denominations was the belief of the leaders at Sharon that the Church had present-day apostles and prophets. ¹⁷⁰

Throughout the mid to late 1980’s a group of self-proclaimed prophets rose up within the Charismatic Movement. At the forefront of this movement was Dr. Bill Hamon whom I have quoted extensively. But without a doubt the most influential group of prophets to arise during this period were the so-called “Kansas City Prophets”.

The Kansas City Fellowship got its start in 1982 when a young “prophet” named Augustine confronted Mike Bickle, a pastor who had been pastoring a church in St. Louis, Missouri, during a Sunday morning service. Augustine singled Mike Bickle out that morning and delivered a “word from the Lord” concerning his future life and ministry:

Young man, the Lord has called you into the ministry and He is going to direct you into something new. ¹⁷¹

Not wanting to leave the ministry in St. Louis, where he had been perfectly happy, Bickle resisted the strange prophet and his word from the Lord - but Augustine persisted:

“I heard the audible voice of the Lord,” insisted Augustine, “This is a very serious word from God!”¹⁷²

Bickle, skeptical, replied, “It’s all so completely new to me.” Bickle should have rejected this “word” and stayed where God placed him. Had God revealed His will to Mike Bickle beforehand, and then confirmed it through the prophet Augustine, that would have been, I believe, a Biblical use of the gift of prophecy. But I do not believe that God will first reveal His will for our lives to others before He makes it clear to us. Bickle should have rejected this as a false prophecy. According to Bickle though, the Lord spoke to him soon afterward and told him to move to Kansas City. He saw this as a “confirmation” of the prophecy that had come through Augustine! I think Mike Bickle got it backwards. Shortly after this while traveling through Egypt, Bickle had a “visitation” from the Lord while praying in his hotel room in Cairo:

The Lord’s word to Mike was: “I am inviting you to be a part of a work that will reach to the ends of the earth.”¹⁷³

Soon after returning to St. Louis Bickle left with his wife and some friends for Kansas City to plant a new church in what he felt was obedience to the Lord. Finding a suitable building to set up in, and suitable finances took some time, but when that was accomplished Augustine showed up again with another word for Bickle in September of 1982:

...The Lord has told me four things you are to hide in your heart which will be very important for you. The first two are really glorious and the second two are terrible! One, multitudes of young people – thousands will be rallied to you...Two, in the days to come there will be a full manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit but it will be for an appointed time...Three, there will be a false prophet in your midst from the very beginning: If you are patient and discern him you will save the church great heartache. If you do not you will suffer many, many problems. Four, finally there will be resistance and misunderstanding. Do not lose heart.¹⁷⁴

The little group Bickle started continued in prayer for a couple of years and then in 1983 Bickle met “prophet” Bob Jones for the first time. Jones claimed that God had revealed to him ten years earlier that Bickle and his church would be coming to south Kansas City and they would be talking about intercession and revival. Bickle was somewhat suspicious of him because of the warning given by Augustine about a false prophet. But Jones persisted and shared several “visions” that God had given him involving Bickle.

“I have come to get involved with a purpose of God”, he said, “which is going to touch the nations of the earth with such power and glory that it will go far beyond the book of Acts!”¹⁷⁵

However, even though Jones would repeat the four part prophecy that Augustine had given Bickle almost word for word, Bickle would remain suspicious of him for quite some time, thinking that he was most likely the false prophet that Augustine had warned him of. However, he would come to believe eventually that Jones was a true prophet:

Without giving further details Mike said later that unwittingly, he was in fact meeting regularly with a false prophet (he has never revealed publicly who this was) and there he was watching for an excuse to throw out a genuine one - for that is what Bob Jones turned out to be.¹⁷⁶

Reading Jones’ biography in *Some Said it Thundered* one is reminded of the life of William M. Branham. His life, like Branham’s is characterized by supernatural visitations and mystical experiences.

Like Branham, he was born into poverty, the son of an “illiterate cotton-cuttin’ sharecropper.”¹⁷⁷ Like Branham, his earliest Christian experience was in a Baptist church. At an early age, he, like Branham, experienced his first supernatural visitation:

Ambling along a dusty track one day he suddenly saw an angel on a white charger coming towards him. The angel stopped right before him in the middle of the track and taking out a large silver trumpet, he put it to his lips and blew. The angel turned, looked straight at Bob, and disappeared. Paralyzed with fear, Bob stood transfixed where he was for quite a while before turning tail and running home. “I thought he was calling me to die and give up sin and I didn’t want to do either,” said Bob.¹⁷⁸

At the age of thirteen he received another visitation, this time hearing God speak to him and call his name while picking cotton in the fields. Another visitation would follow a couple of years later:

Two years later he had a further mystical experience of great significance. He was brought before the throne of God in a vision. The glory, the piercing light that went right through him and showed up in detail everything that he saw there so terrified him that it took him about three months to recover – he shook so much. He thought that to see what he had seen he should have died and only the presence of an angel standing in front of him protecting his eyes enabled him to survive. When the vision was over he was still hurting from a burning feeling within his very bones.¹⁷⁹

It would be many years later, after a stint in the Marine Corps and some time spent in a veteran’s hospital before Jones would surrender his heart to Christ. He started attending a Baptist church and soon discovered that during the worship as people praised God, that God would reveal things to him supernaturally. The story continues on in the same vein getting more colorful and fantastic as God began revealing more and more to Jones in visions and revelations, with demons materializing and threatening to kill him. Finally one day after another of “Satan’s attempts on his life” he cried out to the Lord during another mystical vision:

Then I asked the Lord, “How could the Devil do this to me when I was busy doing your work?” and the Lord put up His hand and said, “You go back and teach the leaders of the latter-day Church the old leadership is coming to an end. A new quality of leadership across the earth with a deep commitment to the Word of God, a passion for Jesus, and a burden for holiness is coming into being to bring forth the bride of Christ.”¹⁸⁰

Sounds remarkably like the “burden” the Lord gave to Joseph Smith. Eventually the Lord revealed to Jones that He would be “raising up a group of young people in the south of Kansas City”. After some time the young pastor of that church, Mike Bickle, finally accepted him as a “true prophet.” However, Jones has proved himself time and time again to be a false prophet. Pastor Bill Randles writes of Jones:

It would take an entire book to catalog the heresy of this one man...¹⁸¹

Jones is clearly committed to the “Sonship” heresy, the doctrine of the manifest sons of God. Pastor Bill Randles writes:

The new breed to come, the elected seed – Bob Jones has much to say about the actual blood line of the great last days overcomers... Jones goes on to promise prophetically the old manifested sons of God hopes that, “they will move into the things of the supernatural that no one has ever moved in before. Every miracle, sign, and wonder that has ever been in the Bible, they’ll move in it consistently. They’ll move in the power that Christ did... They themselves will be that generation that’s raised up to put death itself underneath their feet and glorify Christ in every way... So that glorious Church might be revealed in the last days

because the Lord Jesus is worthy to be lifted up by a Church that has reached the full maturity of the God-man!"¹⁸²

Another "prophet" who is part of the Kansas City Fellowship is Paul Cain. Cain is another, like Jones, whose early life reads like the early life of William M. Branham, replete with visitations from the Lord at an early age. Like Branham and Jones, Cain too was born into a poor family. His mother was in extremely poor health physically. Besides heart problems and tuberculosis she suffered from cancerous tumors in her uterus and breasts. Having returned home to Garland, Texas, to die after doctors in a Dallas hospital pronounced her incurable, she cried out to the Lord one night. Just past midnight that night the Lord appeared to her, in the form of an angel. She had promised in her prayers that if the Lord spared her she would dedicate her children to Him. The angel supposedly spoke to her and said:

"Daughter be of good cheer, you shall live and not die, the fruit of your womb is a male child whom I shall anoint to preach my gospel like the Apostle Paul; and you shall name him Paul."¹⁸³

So the story goes. Reportedly, her healing was immediate:

Specialists reported it as the first time they had seen new tissue restored to diseased breasts. When the time came, she gave birth to a baby boy, just as the Lord had said, and of course she named him Paul. He was nursed at the very breasts that had so recently been riddled with cancer. Her doctor called her a miracle woman. She is now, at the time of writing [1991], in her one hundred-fifth year!¹⁸⁴

Reportedly, the Lord Himself revealed His call upon Cain's life shortly after he had a conversion experience at the age of eight. The Lord promised Cain that if he "kept himself pure" the Lord would give him a ministry that would "reach the masses - that he would preach the gospel through healing".¹⁸⁵ As in Branham's family, there was apparently an occult influence at work in Cain's family:

Paul's mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother had all been born with the gift of "seeing". His great-grandmother would sometimes see things in broad daylight and ask her friends or family if they could see them too. If they could not, she would occasionally lay her hand upon them and they would immediately see the identical vision.¹⁸⁶

Although Cain's biographers attribute this gift of seeing to the Lord, it has more in common with the occult gift known as "clairvoyance" or "second-sight". These occult gifts are often passed down in families from one generation to the next. Kurt Koch, in his *Occult ABC* writes:

Clairvoyance, or second-sight, is an area where the Biblical and demonic are constantly confused. Biblical prophecy is of divine nature. Second-sight has roots in the occult.¹⁸⁷

This "gift" was passed down to Paul and he began to see things that were going to happen to his classmates and friends. By his ninth year, his Baptist pastor had discovered Paul's gift. The pastor began to take Paul with him when he went out on his pastoral visits. Reportedly, Paul would be able to "see" the people who needed their ministry of healing before they even arrived at the hospital. By the time Cain was eighteen he "had a regular radio ministry and was conducting healing services in a small tent".¹⁸⁸

It was at this time that Paul Cain would join William H. Branham's ministry team. As David Pytches says:

There were strong similarities in their anointing...¹⁸⁹

Branham apparently took a strong liking to the “Boy Prophet”, and took him under his wing. Pytches writes:

There was a special bond between William Branham and Little Brother in the early days of Paul’s ministry. Branham would often engage Paul’s help. The older man would open a healing mission in a certain city and then leave after a few days. There would be a twenty-four hour overlap when both were together and Paul would take over for the last few days. Sometimes, when Branham could not meet a commitment, he would send Paul in his place.¹⁹⁰

Cain claims that though he was an intimate associate of Branham’s for years that he was totally unaware of any of Branham’s false doctrines. Cain’s ministry expanded and in 1952 he began to film his miracle services. He was the first of the healing evangelists to have his meetings televised.¹⁹¹ He also spent a considerable amount of time in Europe ministering on behalf of William Branham. According to Cain, Branham’s promotion of his ministry caused jealousy and hard feelings among the other healing evangelists who were competing fiercely for money and fame, and some were even falling into immorality.

At this time Cain felt the Lord calling for him to separate himself from this. Reportedly, the Lord spoke to him clearly one night and said:

“I am going to take you aside into the desert until a new breed of men is raised up. In the days to come, this ministry will be taken forth without superstars.”¹⁹²

Cain left it all behind in obedience to the Lord and kept a relatively low profile, until re-emerging in the late 1980’s as one of the “Kansas City Prophets”. Like Bob Jones, Cain has become one of the most vocal Latter Rain proponents in the Church today. His denials of being aware of Branham’s false teachings seem disingenuous at best., as he is proclaiming the same Manifest Sons of God doctrine that his mentor Branham proclaimed. Cain’s “new breed of men” is clearly only another name for the Manifest Sons of God. Cain claims:

Many years ago...I came to the crossroads of life and I saw a vision of an illuminated billboard on which was written “Joel’s Army in training”. It was on these crossroads with an arrow pointing to this spot [The Granview Worship Center]- though there was no building on it then! I believe God has shown me that here He is going to raise up an army. This army is not a destructive army, but a deliverance army...the Lord is raising up a new breed of Christians who will not be looking for their own glory. A new breed of leaders and teachers is coming - Joel’s Army - who’ll be working for the glory of God.¹⁹³

In 1995, at the Toronto Airport Vineyard, Cain proclaimed:

My subject is about the last days latter day outpouring. For quite a while I have been embarrassed to say anything about Latter Rain, because you are associated and identified with something that people don’t seem to appreciate in certain evangelical circles. So I have played it cool and haven’t said much about it. But I don’t care what they think anymore. All the kind of rain that I know is latter rain. I believe that we are going to have latter rain, and I’m looking forward to it.¹⁹⁴

Bob Jones, fellow Kansas City Prophet, has referred to Cain as the *Terror of the Lord*.¹⁹⁵ What is it about this man’s ministry that would cause one his contemporaries to refer to it as the *Terror of the Lord*? Perhaps it is his ability to “see” into other men’s lives!

...As Paul Cain recalls: “I almost ruined my meeting. I jumped to my feet and pointed to one of the ushers - a real bruiser standing in the aisle. ‘You old hypocrite,’ the Lord says. ‘How can you stand there and have anything to do with what’s going on at this meeting when you know what’s going on in your own heart? You are planning to go off with that lady over

there [he was pointing directly at her] at the end of this week and leave your wife over there [and he pointed now at the wife - both the wife and the other woman were totally unknown to Paul but he identified them through the Spirit]. She has your three children and you are deserting them. You old hypocrite!"...he was within a yard of Paul when he was suddenly struck down to the floor. Looking up sobbing, he cried out, "it's all true- what must I do?"¹⁹⁶

This ability to "see" the sins of other people has characterized his ministry. Needless to say, this gift to see into other people's lives didn't make him very popular at times and has more in common with the occult gift of clairvoyance than the gifts of God's Spirit. Reportedly, at certain times Cain has even been responsible for power outages and power surges:

Mike Bickle told me of a particular night that week when Paul had been prophesying and the power of God came down mightily. Everyone began to sense the "manifest presence of God" powerfully in the room. Mike was speechless. A Spirit of great boldness came upon Paul and he reeled off about seven names in rapid succession with accompanying words of knowledge, all of which were incredibly accurate. There were many spontaneous healings and miracles and much revelatory information during sixty to ninety intense, power-packed seconds...Suddenly there was the sound of sirens as two fire engines screeched to a standstill outside the center...Mike shook his head... "There is no fire here", he said. "Oh, yes; There's a big one somewhere! Down at the station all the signals possible have blown and set off the alarm system. There are signs of a tremendous power surge," said the leading fireman, hardly waiting in his frenzied rush to find the fire...No fire could be found anywhere!...After the meeting Paul turned quietly to Mike and apologized. "I'm so sorry about the fire scare. I should have warned you that that does sometimes happen when there is a lot of divine power about!"¹⁹⁷

Pastor Bill Randles writes of another such incident:

In Anaheim, California, even a battery operated video camera was short circuited, and the telephone systems were "blown out!"¹⁹⁸

These manifestations of power seem more in line with those that accompany "poltergeist" or paranormal activity than they do anything else. Cain reportedly even accurately predicted an earthquake in 1989. Clearly, as with his mentor William Branham, there is some power at work in the life of this man Cain, but is it the power of God?

Is this "resident seer" at Kansas City, as fellow "prophet" Bob Jones refers to him, exhibiting the power of God in his life or some form of occult power and clairvoyance inherited from his mother and grandmother?

In January of 1990 a Kansas City pastor named Ernie Gruen made several accusations against Bickle and his prophets, an event that would eventually lead them into the Vineyard Movement, and "covering" under the ministry of signs and wonders guru John Wimber. Pastor Bill Randles records:

In January 1990, Ernie Gruen, a Charismatic pastor in Kansas City for 27 years, of the Full Faith Church of Love, released a 233 page document listing erroneous prophecies, statements, doctrines, and incidents involving the Kansas City prophets. "He accused Kansas City Fellowship of sending out false prophets; of prophesying area churches to close down (and then join Kansas City Fellowship) and of outright lying."¹⁹⁹

Before Bickle and Gruen could meet to resolve these issues John Wimber stepped in, offering the Vineyard Movement and himself as a covering for the Kansas City Fellowship and its prophets.²⁰⁰ The issues that Gruen had raised were never satisfactorily dealt with, although Mike Bickle was later to admit, in a *Charisma* interview:

1. We had an elite spirit. That's become more and more real to me – its so repulsive.
2. We promoted mystical experience in a disproportionate way and it was disastrous.
3. We were careless in the way we communicated prophetic words. This was hurtful in a lot of cases.
4. We were wrong in the way we promoted the city church concept. I still believe in it, but now I believe its' a unity based on friendship.²⁰¹

What was the end result of Wimber's actions? Not much in the way of correction. His "covering" became more of a "cover up!" He essentially ended up extending the influence of the "prophets" and their Joel's army heresy. Bill Randles writes:

The erroneous teachings were made available through the Vineyard catalogs.²⁰²

Roger Oakland writes:

John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard Movement, has become closely associated with Paul Cain, whose teachings about signs and wonders, miraculous healings, and prophetic utterances line up with his own theology that proposes that God would raise up a multitude of "apostles and prophets" to shepherd God's people through the end times and usher in the kingdom and the return of Jesus Christ. The Kansas City Prophets were in agreement that the Vineyard Movement would be the group that God would use to accomplish this purpose.²⁰³

Another prophet who has been closely associated with the Kansas City Prophets is Rick Joyner of Morning Star Ministries, in Charlotte, North Carolina. Like Cain and Jones, Joyner is something of a mystic. He receives most of his prophecies through lengthy "visions" that the Lord gives him. I've read several of his books, and most of them are essentially lengthy recitations of these visions, some of which I've cited here. The central focus of these mystical visions is the same - that Joel's Army is about to come forth and conquer this world. I recently read the latest of these visions entitled *The Call* and it's basically just more of the same kind of mysticism. Joyner carries on a conversation with an entity that identifies itself as *Wisdom*. Joyner later wonders about the identity of this being:

"Who is the one who helped you see?" I asked, not only wanting to know who had helped him to see, but also interested in how this was the prison that held every soul captive. He never told me his real name, but just called himself "Wisdom". "Wisdom! What did he look like?" I questioned. "He was a young, black athlete. He could see better than anyone and seemed to know everyone here. It is strange, though. I have met others here who said that they have also met wisdom, but they all described him differently. Some said that he was white and others said that he was a woman. Unless there are many 'Wisdoms', he is a master of disguise."²⁰⁴

It sounds to me like this spirit guide named *Wisdom* is one of Satan's angels masquerading as an angel of light. Especially since the revelation that he gives Joyner is the same old Joel's Army revelation that comes through his other visions. On page 162 we read:

*As I was wondering who these soldiers were, the Lord began to speak. "In my Father's house are many dwelling places," he replied. "These are my builders. Each of my houses will be a fortress from which I will send out my armies. Some will go forth as knights to fight for the poor and oppressed, while others will go forth as small companies that will raid the strongholds of the enemy and bring back the spoils. Some will send forth a host to conquer cities over which my truth will reign and others will join from armies from other fortress to liberate whole nations with my truth, my love, and my power."*²⁰⁵

This “new breed” of mystics and prophets are leading God’s people away from dependence upon the scriptures for discernment and understanding – to a dependence upon them for discernment and understanding. Only they can interpret the personal visions and revelations that God is continuously giving them; that is, the “present-day truth” in which all must walk to progress on to glory.

Without the revelations of these mystics and prophets we are led to believe that we will be left behind in the wilderness - to die with all the other “old generation”, “old truth” believers. Although most would vehemently deny it, they place their “new revelations” and “new understanding of the scriptures” on par with the revelation and understanding of the scriptures that were given to original Apostles. In fact, many of them proclaim that the book of Acts is not finished - it is still being written today - by them.

In the 1990’s, we have seen a shifting emphasis from prophets to apostles. According to Bill Hamon we have entered into one of the last restorational moves of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The restoration of the last of the five-fold ministries that was “lost to the Church”- the apostolic. Accordingly, Hamon has now appropriated the title of apostle, and proclaims himself be “an apostle to the prophets and a prophet to the apostles”:

In 1994 at CI’s eighth annual IGOP conference, I accepted God’s “commissioning” as one of His new breed of restored last-days apostles. This was in fulfillment of more than twenty prophecies during the last twenty-five years that contained statements such as, “called to be an apostle”, “apostolic anointing and mantle”, “an apostle to the prophets and a prophet to the apostles”, “an apostle that that would bring forth a company of apostles” (as I had fathered and brought forth a company of prophets).²⁰⁶

That’s quite an awesome responsibility that the Lord has handed Bill Hamon. But of course, with this awesome call, the Lord gave Mr. Hamon a “new revelation” to sustain and help him:

The Lord Jesus gave me a vision while seeking Him with prayer and fasting. He showed me a great book. Its title was *The Book of the Mortal Church on Earth*. He flipped through the book until he came to a page entitled “The Last Chapter of the Mortal Church”. On some pages I was able to read most of the contents under the headings and on other pages only enough time was given to read the bold headings. He said **some of his ministers** would only be shown one **page** or **paragraph** which would become their major message and ministry. They would have the anointing and responsibility to demonstrate and establish that part of the “Last Chapter” of his immortal Church. He said He was showing me an **overview** and **highlights of the whole chapter** because He was giving me the responsibility of keeping an overall perspective and making the progressive purpose of God known to his corporate Church.²⁰⁷

Hamon is given quite a privilege - the opportunity to see a “book”, a book that not even John the beloved was allowed to see when he was given the Revelation of Jesus Christ on the Isle of Patmos. The Lord supposedly revealed the following to Hamon through this vision:

Following are some of the things I was allowed to see, especially those that the Holy Spirit is presently working with and implementing in the Church...more appearances of God’s holy angels and the devil’s demonic manifestations are decreed to begin now and continue escalating until the coming of Jesus...**God has released his Holy Spirit to bring His revelations and activation to the end-time Church.** This will bring forth the last generation of mortal **people**, unlimited **power**, new **products** and more places dedicated to fulfilling God’s present-truth purposes...delay shall be no longer concerning the final preparation necessary for the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of Christ Jesus and his Church...**God is activating the second phase of apostles and prophets** and is fully restoring them to their rightful place of power and function...**Jesus is maturing and**

motivating his five-fold ministers to intensify their training, and equipping those who will be the soldiers in God's end-time army...the Holy Spirit has been commissioned to accelerate his restorational work in the Church...it's now time to activate the Joseph and Daniel company of apostles (Joseph) and prophets (Daniel) within the business field and political arena. The Esther and Deborah company is rising right along with them. God is preparing an apostolic and prophetic company of Christian businesspeople. They will not only bring the wealth of the wicked into the Church, but will also effect the economy in many nations of the world...Jesus choose twelve men from the business world and ordained them apostles. He did not chose men from the religious Rabbinical schools or the Levitical priesthood...the mortal church is in transition and preparation for becoming the immortal Church...²⁰⁸

Typical Manifest Sons of God teaching. It seems as though the Lord showed Bill the "master-plan" of conquest for Joel's Army. These "revelations" raise some interesting questions. What sorts of "new products" will be brought forth to "fulfill God's present-truth purposes"? Perhaps a "Present-Truth Study Bible" with blank pages that you fill in as you receive the latest revelations from God's end-time apostles and prophets...or maybe even a regulation Benny Hinn "Holy Ghost machine gun."²⁰⁹

I know I'm being facetious, but these visions and revelations are becoming increasingly more ludicrous. The situation reminds me of my earliest experience as a Christian in a church that was Baptist in name but Charismatic in practice. Many of the brethren, especially the ladies, seemed to be having face-to-face conversations with the Lord on an almost daily basis. Being a young Christian, I was impressed, and also a little concerned for quite some time, as the Lord wasn't in the habit of having such conversations with me. But I soon realized that most of these "visions" and "revelations" were in reality a product of the flesh, not the Spirit. They all had one thing in common - they promoted and lifted up self instead of Christ. The visions and revelations being promoted by the Manifest Sons of God adherents seem to have exactly this in common with my early experience - too much attention is placed upon the prophets and apostles and their importance as mouthpieces for God's "revelations" to the Church.

I believe in the importance of a personal relationship with Christ. I believe part of that entails hearing from God occasionally. In my sixteen years as a Christian, I can count the number of times I believe God has spoken to me directly, on my two hands. I'm Pentecostal, baptized in the Holy Spirit - and I even had a vision once (which lasted about 10 seconds) during which God didn't reveal any new or "present-day" truths to me. I believe we should experience Christ in a personal way as Christians, but that these kinds of experiences are the exception rather than the rule. I believe that ninety-nine percent of the revelation that we receive from God should come to us as we read and study His word, as the Holy Spirit brings it alive, and helps us to apply it to our lives.

In my opinion the kind of "mystic" spirituality that is being promoted by men such as Hamon, Jones, Cain, Joyner, and many others of their kind produces a "flaky" Christianity, that is self-centered and sensual. Jude prophesied and warned us of such men in the last days:

"But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit." (Jude 1:17-19 NKJV)

I have nothing against any of these men personally. As far as I know they are very sincere, although in one area I have noticed an amazing similarity. In the writing, teaching, and preaching of many of these men (not all of them), the emphasis is centered upon the Holy Spirit, and the Church - instead of Jesus and the cross. Jesus told us that when the Spirit came He would lift up and glorify our Lord - not Himself. While some of these men do speak of Jesus it often seems more of an afterthought. The main emphasis is always on the Holy Spirit or the Church - on us! These men do teach some good things like the necessity of holiness, and walking in obedience to Christ - but it is mixed in with some of the worst heresy that's ever

been proclaimed in the Church of Jesus Christ. While they spend most of their time lifting up and glorifying the Holy Spirit they seemingly forget it is the job of the Holy Spirit to lift up and glorify Jesus.

According to Hamon the new apostles and prophets are going to establish the Church in “present-truth” - they are going to formulate Church doctrine in the future - just as the original Apostles did in the beginning.

I personally believe that in the 1990’s and into the 21st century, as prophets and apostles are being restored back to proper order and function within the Church, many of these church councils of leading present-truth ministers will be necessary. One particular apostle or prophet or camp will never receive the whole revelation for the establishing of prophets and apostles back into the Church. Many will have visions (even of Jesus), dreams, rhemas, angelic visitations and supernatural personal experiences and sovereign moves of the Holy Spirit in their meetings. But doctrines that claim to be binding on all Christians must not be established by only one apostle, prophet, or camp. There must be meetings of a Church council with other leaders of past and present **restorational** streams of truth.²¹⁰

So as I understand it what we have here is basically going to be a Charismatic version of the Roman Catholic Magisterium of Bishops. As Dave Hunt has pointed out:

When it comes to faith and morals and the way of salvation, Catholics must check their minds at the door and accept whatever the Church says. They can’t even study the Bible for themselves because only the magisterium can interpret it...²¹¹ According to Vatican II; no one is allowed even to question the magisterium in matters of faith and morals. Only the hierarchy can interpret the Bible, and the faithful must accept that interpretation as from God.²¹²

These present-day apostles are going to form a Charismatic Magisterium of sorts and decide matters of faith and practice, based on “visions, dreams, rhemas [spoken words of “revelation”], angelic visitations and supernatural personal experiences”. And if they have time they may even consult the scripture. Hamon points out that “church order, doctrine and practices were not established by prophecy, dreams, or personal spiritual experiences of any **private individual** (2 Peter 1:20).”²¹³ No, these present-truth doctrines will have to be approved by the other apostles as well:

...There must be meetings of a church council of other leaders of past and present restorational truth...When the five-fold ministers come together to consider doctrines and practices this way, they will need to keep several areas of insight in mind: (1) The claimed revelation from God; (2) The fruit of the ministry among those who have received the doctrine or practice; (3) The supernatural working of God accompanying it; (4) The logos [written word of God – finally!] and rhema word of God application and authority for the doctrine or practice; and (5) The witness of the Spirit and the unified consent of those present.²¹⁴

Although Hamon says that the Logos, the written word of God will be consulted, as we’ve already seen, these people spiritualize the written word to conform to their doctrines, instead of conforming their doctrines to the written word of God. And if these apostles are going to be basing their “present-truth” doctrines on their mystical visions and prophecies, just how good is their prophetic record? About as good as Jeane Dixon’s was I’m afraid. This is according to their own estimation. In an interview the Kansas City prophets were asked if any of them were ever wrong:

We asked tactfully if any of them was ever wrong. They all agreed they had occasionally been proved wrong.²¹⁵

In the forward to David Pitches *Some Said It Thundered*, John White writes:

Anyone who has experience in helping to nurture “baby prophets” realizes they have difficulty in distinguishing the words that the Spirit speaks from those that come from their own hearts or from evil sources...Prophets are, of course, human beings. As such, they need not cease to be prophets for their mistakes and their failings...²¹⁶

What’s a “baby prophet”? The Bible makes it clear:

“...when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.” (Deu 18:22 NKJV)

The Lord tells us not to fear a false prophet. But according to Hamon I’m supposed to submit to them in matters of faith and practice, and rely on their judgement to okay their own dreams, visions, revelations, and personal experiences - to formulate doctrine. Bob Jones apparently has seen this Charismatic Magisterium in a “vision”:

The Holy Spirit took me to a place...He took me to a place and I saw the Lord, high and lifted up, by some young men that He set upon the golden ark...And I looked and there were men that had hold of the ark and they had the ark upon their shoulders. And the government will be upon their single shoulders...They will reign and reveal to the world that they truly are the faithful and true leaders and the government that will be upon His single shoulder. Mike Bickle comments, “I think there’ll be 35 like unto Paul...There would be 35 whom the Lord would separate in the highest way. The government rests on the apostles and prophets.”²¹⁷

What does Jones have to say about the accuracy of the prophecies and visions of himself and his fellow prophets and apostles? Bill Randles writes:

Bob Jones, in the tape “Shepherds Rod” told us that God had revealed to him that the rhema (spoken word) would be two-thirds accurate in the days to come. In other words, up to two-thirds of the time these prophets would be “right on”. Why not 100% of the time? If you listen to Bob Jones, you would be glad for inaccurate prophets! Why? God showed Bob, supposedly, that if enough power was released to give us 100% accuracy, we would have dead Annanias’ and Sapphiras’ all over the place! (How’s that for making people actually thankful for inaccurate prophets)...Bob Jones complains about people who “try to make us Old Testament prophets”, meaning to hold them to the standard of Deut. 18. He then quotes I Corinthians 14, about giving prophecy in church and judging to see if they are all right. There is a huge difference in giving a prophecy, “to edify, exhort, and comfort” the Church, and in being a prophet, who presumes to speak in the name of the Lord. But, we aren’t trying to make these modern “prophets” into Old Testament” prophets, they are. They are the ones who emphatically say, “The Lord said this,” or “I saw the Lord face to face, and He said thus and so...” that’s a far cry from supernatural utterance to edify, exhort, and comfort. Standing up and making bold pronouncements to the Church universal in the name of God is a serious matter, New or Old Testament.²¹⁸

And so is formulating doctrine and practice based on these prophecies and visions! It looks like I’m going to have to sell a big eraser with every “Present-Truth Study Bible”, just in case the prophets and apostles get it wrong the first time! Are these prophets claiming to be on par with the Old Testament prophets? Hamon writes:

The specialty of the prophets is their God-given ability to speak for God, not just teach and preach the Bible truths about God and His Son, Jesus Christ. They have the special calling to speak a “thus saith the Lord”. The prophet has rights and authority in his

prophesying that others do not have, such as those with the gift of prophecy or those who function on the saints' level of prophetic ministry. Those who are truly commissioned prophets have the right to prophesy direction, correction, guidance and new revelation to a person, church or nation. Some are used to pronounce God's judgements and reveal the calling and purposes of God to whomsoever God wants to speak. In fact, the prophets are sent to be God's mouthpieces to speak whenever and wherever and to whomever God wants to personally express His thoughts, purposes and specific will.²¹⁹

Obviously, many of these prophets are claiming to be on the same level with the Old Testament prophets, who spoke the word of the Lord, in the name of the Lord. This being the case, the same standard that applied to the Old Testament prophets needs to be applied to them – 100% accuracy. Of course, those of us who oppose these apostles and prophets and refuse to submit to their authority, and warn others against this unbiblical movement are accused of persecuting them. Hamon laments:

Old order pastors and denominational leaders always try to protect and warn their people against the new restorational truths, ministries, and spiritual experiences that the Holy Spirit is bringing forth in Christ's Church. There are only three options for our response to new truth; we can persecute it, be passive about it or participate and propagate the new restorational truths and ministries. Personally, I never want to be found resisting or fighting any new thing that Christ Jesus is doing within His Church.²²⁰

Essentially this latest restorational move of restoring authoritative apostles to the Church, is just a re-emergence of the old Discipleship Movement of the 1960's and 1970's. The Shepherding Movement, as it came to be known reached its apex in the 1970's under the leadership of five men in particular, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. They became known as the *Fort Lauderdale Five*. They were Don Basham, Ern Baxter, Bob Mumford, Derek Prince, and Charles Simpson.

As we have seen, Ern Baxter was an associate of William Branham's during the Latter Rain healing revival of the late 1940's and early 1950's. Richard Riss records:

During the first of a series of meetings in Vancouver B.C., in the fall of 1947, W.J. Ern Baxter began ministering with Branham, continuing from four to eight months during every year for a period of six years...Ern Baxter was the preacher-teacher and brother Branham was the evangelist and healer.²²¹

There is no doubt in my mind that the Latter Rain teaching concerning the restoration of authoritative apostles and prophets to the Church heavily influenced the whole Discipleship-Shepherding Movement. The Fort Lauderdale Five practiced and taught an extreme form of "discipleship." The spiritual abuses that took place during this movement have become legendary. As Al Dager writes:

In spite of extreme abuses against personal freedom in Christ, the thought control that characterized that movement continues to rear its ugly head among Kingdom Now groups...Shepherding-Discipleship as the movement it became...is nothing less than spiritual child-abuse. Through intimidation by the instilling of fear and unfounded guilt, it bludgeons babes in Christ into obedience to the wills of the "shepherds" in authority. And not only babes, but many "mature Christians" have fallen prey to this evil due to the misuse of scripture to establish "coverings" over every member. Ephesians 5:11-14 is used to convince the unwary that in order to be perfected they must submit to those in authority, regardless of what that authority requires of them. Thus, abuses are rampant in Shepherding-Discipleship. In extreme Shepherding-Discipleship many are compelled to live a communal lifestyle in total "obedience" to their shepherds. They may not marry, work, minister, buy or sell, or exercise their own wills in any matter without their shepherd's approval...Disobedience and even weariness common to such a stringent lifestyle, meet with strong disciplinary action. There have even been reports of physical abuse to keep the "sheep" in line...All these abuses

exceed the parameters of discipleship intended by Jesus, and establish the babes in Christ as disciples of men rather than disciples of Christ...Such a mentality is critical to Kingdom Now theology. For how can a significant portion of mankind be made to conform to the dictates of the apostles and prophets except through the instilling of fear and guilt? No one wants to miss out on what appears to be a move of God.²²²

The abuses grew so bad within the movement that even Pat Robertson was compelled to take a stand against it. Robertson wrote an open letter to Bob Mumford on June 27, 1975, complaining about the abuses of the movement. Robertson actually cited many such examples of abuse. He told of a secretary at CBN who had been turned into an emotional cripple by this movement. He said that she could scarcely type a letter without a long distance call to her "shepherd." Robertson went on to tell about wealthy Christians being forced by their shepherds to reveal confidential details of their financial and family life. Robertson quoted a key figure in the Shepherding Movement who said, "that if God spoke to him and he knew that it was God speaking, but his shepherd told him to do the opposite, he would obey his shepherd."²²³

Discredited, the movement began to break up. In March 1976 the Fort Lauderdale shepherds issued a public *Statement of Concern and Regret*, apologizing for the abuses of the movement. Since that time the Fort Lauderdale Five have backed away from the movement and tried to distance themselves from it and its negative image. But like the Latter Rain Movement of the late 1940's, it didn't disappear, it just backed out of the limelight for awhile and is now re-emerging as the Apostolic Restoration Movement. In a book entitled *Apostles Today, Christ's Love Gift to the Church* (forward written by Bob Mumford of the Fort Lauderdale Five), Barney Coombs declares:

These days we generally use the term *member* instead of *disciple*. The problem with *member* is that it suggests a somewhat passive state of belonging, whereas *disciple* carries the sense of active following and learning. Maybe the reason we "egalitarian" 20th century Christians prefer not to use the word disciple is because the word also suggests subordination, inequality, and hierarchy-concepts which are currently out of fashion (except perhaps in the army).²²⁴

Coombs then goes on to quote a letter in which a young girl who was spending a year in Buenos Aires in Claudio Freidzon's Rey de Reyes (King of Kings) Church sings the praises of the shepherding being practiced there:

The church believes that God has a special area for each person to use his or her giftings, and actively organizes these groups to work within the community...It may be evangelism, leadership, music, teaching, or Bible study, but **everyone** is in a group, under and instructor. Each person also has a "shepherd" figure to talk and pray with.²²⁵

In a book entitled *Moving in the Apostolic: God's Plan to Lead His Church to the Final Victory*, John Eckhard writes:

...The authority of the Church should be first apostolic, second prophetic, third teaching. The amount of authority we operate in is based on this order. Our ability to fulfill the Great Commission is based on this order...If the Church is apostolic...it will also be pastoral to protect and cover those who are saved.²²⁶

And:

The apostolic anointing provides a covering (protection) for those who submit to it...the apostolic anointing is a "keeping anointing" (see John 17:12). It provides the ability to maintain and keep what is committed to us.²²⁷

It quickly becomes obvious, at least to me, that this Apostolic Movement is just the old Shepherding Movement dressed in different clothing. Without these super apostolic shepherds to define doctrine for us, and tell us how to live, there is no way we will be able to move on to “Sonship” and manifestation as the sons of God. Without these apostles to impart “the anointing” to us, we’ll be left out in the cold. Eckhardt writes:

The apostolic anointing is transferable, meaning it can be transmitted from one person to another. This is the law of “impartation.”²²⁸

Without access to these apostles and the anointing that they alone can impart we will not be able to receive the full measure of the Holy Spirit. That’s the problem with these “anointings” and experiences that are being pushed today – they have to be imparted by point of personal contact. And the problem with that is that demonic “gifting” and occult manifestations also can be “imparted” in this manner.

We are also told that those apostles will be imparted with a special measure of grace, which they will in turn impart to others. Eckhardt writes of the “mega-grace” that these apostles will possess and dispense to the Church:

There are two ways a local church can access apostolic grace. The first and primary way is to have an apostle as the senior elder (pastor) of the local church. Apostles can pastor because there is a shepherding dimension to the apostolic anointing... The apostolic anointing releases large amounts of grace to the Church... God’s mega-grace gives the Church all the gifts and abilities it needs to fulfill the Great Commission. Without the grace, the Church will not be able to finish the work. Lack of grace means certain failure; for this reason, the principle anointing of the Church *must* be apostolic.²²⁹

Mega-grace? That the Church is lacking? Didn’t the Apostle Paul tell us:

*“And God is able to make **all** grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.” (2 Cor 9:8 NKJV)*

What is being established today through this “restorational move” of apostles to the Church is simply a Charismatic Magisterium and priesthood, dispensing the mega-grace of God to the laity as they see fit. This is no different in reality from the Roman Catholic priesthood that dispenses grace out of the “treasury of merit”. According to *The Faith of Millions*, a Roman Catholic catechism:

The existence of an infinite treasury of merits in the Church was formerly set forth by Pope Clement VI in 1343. “Upon the altar of the cross”, says the Pope, “Christ shed of His blood not merely a drop, though this would have sufficed, by reason of the union with the Word, to redeem the whole human race, but a copious torrent – thereby laying up an infinite treasure for mankind. This treasure He neither wrapped up in a napkin nor hid in a field, but entrusted to blessed Peter, the key-bearer, and his successors, that they might for just and reasonable causes distribute it to the faithful.”²³⁰

A new Charismatic priesthood would seem to be arising in these last days, a “new breed” of “apostolic successors” with all power and authority under heaven, to formulate Christian doctrine and practice, and dispense the grace of God through their “impartations”. Jesus, speaking to His Church in Pergamos warned:

“Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.” (Rev 2:15,16 NKJV)

What exactly was the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, and why did our Lord hate it so much? Gordon Lindsay, a contemporary and friend of William H. Branham wrote the following, in his commentary on the book of Revelation:

The Nicolaitan heresy had already begun to show itself in apostolic days. Jesus had commended the Ephesian Church when He said, "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Noclaitans which I also hate." (Revelation 2:6) What were deeds at that time, now became a doctrine...The word Nicolaitane comes from "nikao" meaning "to conquer", and "laos", the laity. It is symbolic of the development of a priestly order that ruled over the laity. Here was a fundamental deviation from Christ's command in Matthew 23:8-9:

"But be not ye called rabbi: for one is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."

...This development of a clergy that usurped rule over the people, and abrogated to itself authority over members of the Church to the point that the latter could not even think for themselves, became the tragic error of church history. It opened the way for all other error. Christ no longer was the mediator between God and man. Instead, the priest, or Mary, or dead saints, became the mediator. Thus was the headship of Christ set aside in favor of a substitute, or an ecclesiastical hierarchy.²³¹

It looks as though history is starting to repeat itself. Self proclaimed Charismatic "prophet" and "Bishop" of New York City Bernard Jordan has proclaimed himself "a spiritual successor of the Apostle Peter":

He claims to hold the office of bishop, and because of that he has the power and authority of the Apostle Peter. To underscore this Jordan's June /July 1994 *Zoe* magazine pictures him throughout the magazine as wearing a papal mitre and a staff holding a large ring in his right hand that his followers are enjoined to kiss as a sign of his authority... "Our Bishop, E. Bernard Jordan, is able to trace His spiritual genealogy to the Apostle Peter, the first bishop of the church...he is now in Apostolic Succession", the magazine states on page 3... "A Bishop is greeted by a deep bow," it adds matter of factly. "Some even kiss his ring in acknowledgement of who he represents, that is the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Kingdom of God."²³²

CHAPTER 8

MIRACLES, SIGNS, AND BLUNDERS

“Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith...” (2 Tim 3:8 NKJV)

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” (2 Th 2:9,10 NKJV)

One of the claims being made today by the “new apostles” proponents is that these apostles are going to evidence supernatural power to perform miracles, signs, and wonders. Power even greater than that which was exhibited by the Apostles of our Lord. As we have seen some have even gone so far as to claim that the original Apostles are going to want to stand in line to meet these latter-day apostles! John Echardt, in *Moving in the Apostolic*, writes:

The Acts of the Apostles continued after the death of the early apostles. As God raises up other apostles to replace them, the acts continue. The Church, therefore, will experience the same results when it embraces the same Spirit and anointing.²³³

And:

Apostolic ministry is characterized by mega-power, as well as mega-grace. This is a dimension of power that is beyond the norm. The result will be an unusually large number of healings and miracles. The powers of darkness will be blasted by great power from on high. I call this the “apostolic blast”.²³⁴

As we have seen, this hunger for power and the experience of that power, through miracles, signs, and wonders was an integral part of the Latter Rain Movement. As the brethren at Sharon received the “revelation” of the restoration of apostles and prophets in the latter-day Church, they could look to the healing evangelists such as William H. Branham as a confirmation that this was indeed beginning to come to pass:

The Branham campaign in Vancouver, B.C. was a great success. Your editor was privileged to attend and gives his report below. It is now becoming well known that Rev. Branham has the supernatural gift of healing. Never before in my life have I ever seen anything to equal what I saw in Vancouver...His sermons have the effect of inspiring faith in his hearers...I saw the deaf receive their hearing. I heard the dumb speak...I saw a goiter vanish. I saw sick people get up from their beds...To my best knowledge I did not see one person who was not healed when brother Branham took time to pray specially for him. I came home from those meetings realizing as never before that the real gifts of the Holy Spirit are far mightier than anything we have imagined in our wildest dreams...The next great outpouring is going to be marked by...such a demonstration of the nine gifts of the Spirit as the world, not even the apostolic world, has witnessed before.²³⁵

Obviously some form of supernatural power was working through this man Branham. Some very real miracles took place through his ministry. As to the power behind those miracles, it was very likely the power of “another Jesus” that was “anointing” this man. I say that with confidence because this man was preaching “another gospel”, the gospel of the Manifest Sons of God. With

Branham, as with all of the other healing evangelists, I've found that the more you scrutinize their claims, the more you realize that there is little, if any, substance to most of them.

I am certainly not against miracles or divine healing, having experienced this gift of healing personally once myself through the ministry of the laying on of hands. The Bible is clear about gifts of healing – they function like all the other gifts of the Spirit, “*But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as **He** wills*”.

The main problem I have with the “healing evangelists” is their claim to be able to minister healing or predict that healing is going to, in fact, occur in their meetings **as they will**. They usurp the role of the Holy Spirit, proclaiming themselves to be “healers”. They claim that they **possess** the gift, and **they** can operate in it at will. While most would deny it, this idea certainly comes across in the advertisements for their “healing crusades.” Charles and Frances Hunter, better known in Charismatic circles as *The Happy Hunters*, are Charismatic healing evangelists who advertise their meetings as *Healing Explosions*. In these ads they claim that “Every Spirit-filled Christian can and should be healing the sick on a daily basis.”

According to them, we should all be able to minister the gift of healing at will, just as they and their predecessors have. Is this Biblical? Does God's Word proclaim - “**But our spirit** works all these things, distributing to each one individually as **we will**.” Certainly not! The Spirit minister's the gift, and we must yield to the Spirit and exercise the gift by faith, but we don't control the gift or exercise it at will.

As a minister of the Gospel I've often laid my hands on individuals along with the elders of the church and prayed for a healing to occur. On occasion, God has answered the prayer of faith and ministered healing to the individual. These occasions have been the exception rather than the rule. God is sovereign, and I can not predict when He will heal or when He will choose not to anymore than I can perform the healing myself. To proclaim myself a “Faith Healer” and advertise “Healing Explosions” in which I could heal the sick almost at will, seems to me the ultimate in presumption, not faith.

Nevertheless, great claims of healing miracles are being made by these men and women in their healing “campaigns” and “crusades”. Note the Joel's Army style military language used. But as I said, most of these claims are very shallow, and when you look below the surface a different picture emerges.

Alfred Pohl was a leader and teacher in a Pentecostal denomination in Canada. In an interview with David Cloud, editor of *O Timothy* magazine, Pohl described his experiences in a healing campaign with William M. Branham:

...So he would take the patient's hand and hold it. He would say, “Yes the vibrations tell me that you have cancer.” Then he'd say something like this, “We're going to pray for you, that the Lord will heal you.” And he proceeded to do this. Then he went on, and when he was through praying, he would take that hand again or else he would hold the hand throughout the prayer, and he would say, “The vibrations are gone. The cancer is dead. You are healed.” And the person would rejoice of course, so would I. I thoroughly believed in Branham. I thought he was God's man and so forth, and we wanted to see people healed. So [supposedly] the cancer was dead, and we were happy about this. But then he would add a little statement there, and that was something like this, “Now, just keep on trusting the Lord. You're healed. Don't lose your faith in the Lord. Just keep your faith and trust the Lord and you're healed.” He said, “You're going to be quite sick for a few days.” Quite often he referred to three days. “You're going to be very sick for three days.” The people often asked, “Well, what do you mean, Brother Branham? If I'm healed, why should I be sick?” He said, “The cancerous growth which is now dead inside your body has to be carried out; it's poison material, and so you'll be sick for quite awhile until that is carried away.” But what happened then was this: That in the meantime the people wouldn't worry about it. They'd say, “Well,

that's what Branham said would happen, I'm healed." But this went on, till some of these people got sicker and died. So he had an out, by this time he was gone [from that place].²³⁶

This is a favorite tactic of many of the faith healers. They claim the miracles they minister are dependent upon the faith of the recipient. In other words, the miracle can be "lost" if the recipient doesn't keep on "believing God" for it! This of course gives them a convenient out, if the "miracle" fails. It is the recipient's fault, for "losing faith" in the healing. Benny Hinn proclaims that healings may be lost after their reception because of a lack of faith:

*The Lord not only wants you to receive your healing, he wants it to continue. Here are seven specific ways you can keep your healing...*²³⁷

Hinn then goes on to list the seven steps, the lack of any of which could cause the loss of a miracle. How convenient for Benny. In the interview with *O Timothy* magazine Pohl reveals that a local newspaper in Winnipeg did some follow up after the meetings there. The result? Not one genuine case of a miracle of healing could be found:

And when these reporters went back, they discovered that these people had died, or were in the same state or in a worse state that they were before. So, the editor then put it in the paper that these cases had turned out to be phonies, and that these people weren't healed after all. And there was something wrong with these so-called miracles and healings. But when the pastor of the church saw these reports in the paper, he went to the editor rather disturbed and not very happy about the situation, and he confronted the editor: "Why do you do this to our church? You're hurting the reputation of our church, and you shouldn't do that to us." And the editor said words something to this effect, "Well, Pastor, if the healings are genuine, you don't have to worry, do you?" And I thought to myself later when I heard this, well, that editor certainly had a lot of common sense, because, if they're genuine, why worry? If they're not, well then they should be exposed – which is what the paper did. And the editor said, "Pastor, we gave you good coverage when Mr. Branham was here." The pastor had to admit that they did. "Now", he said, "We owe it to our people to give them the rest of the story." And he said, "That's what we found." He said to the pastor, "I'll tell you what I'll do, if you can bring me one genuine case of a genuine healing, I'll give you the front page." And I was told right in that pastor's home that they couldn't find one. Not one.²³⁸

This same pattern holds true for the other "healing evangelists" as well, when you go back after their meetings and follow up, very little practical evidence of genuine miracles can be found. For instance, in an article entitled *The Life and Ministry of Oral Roberts* which is a review of a book entitled *Oral Roberts: An American Life* by David Edwin Harrel Jr., we read:

Probably the most damaging religious attack on Oral ever published appeared in the "Presbyterian Outlook" in 1955. The article, [was] written by Carrol R. Stegall, Jr., pastor of the Pryor Street Presbyterian Church in Atlanta Georgia... "Stegall's curiosity was piqued by the March 1952 issue of "Healing Waters", which featured a cover picture of "three great medical doctors congratulating Oral Roberts". Stegall and Donald Grey Barnhouse, noted conservative Presbyterian pastor, in Philadelphia, addressed an inquiry to the American Medical Association that "brought the answer from their bureau of investigation that not one of the men mentioned... could be identified as doctors of medicine... one of the three men was found operating in Phoenix as a 'naturopathic physician' [meaning he was not a licensed medical doctor]." No organization headed by "Dr. J. H. Miller, outstanding medical doctor and president of a medical society of over 20,000 physicians" was discovered. Stegall later attended a number of campaigns, interviewed Oral Roberts, and did some follow-up interviews with those who had passed through the healing line. He concluded that Oral was "not as bad as some others in the miracle business", but found no basis to support his claims. "I have never seen a vestige of change. I challenge any honest investigator to follow my

technique and see whether his findings do not agree with mine.” Stegall concluded: “So far from glorifying God with this they (the healing evangelists) cause His name to be blasphemed by the world because of their excesses. So far from curing, they often kill. Far from blessing, their arrival in a city is rather a curse, a misery, a racket, a destruction of faith in simple people.”²³⁹

As a matter of fact, it could probably be fairly stated that there were more documented cases of deaths in Roberts’ meetings than there were documented healings.

According to Harrell: the negative assessments were exacerbated by the morbid fascination of the press with the periodic tragedies which struck the crusades. In 1951, an Alabama businessman died while attending a Roberts campaign in Atlanta...in 1955, the death of an elderly Indian, Jonas Rider, during Oral’s campaign in Calgary, Alberta...a prominent “southern Alberta physician” condemned the campaign as “ridiculous”, no more than “mass hypnotism”...the following January, Mary Ida Buddington Vondersher, who had appeared the year before on Oral’s television program healing line, returned to testify of her healing of cancer, but she died in her California home only 12 hours after her testimony was aired. The year 1959 was particularly beset by tragedy. In January, a sixty-four-year-old California man died of a heart attack during a campaign in an Oakland auditorium. Then, in May, death struck twice in a campaign in Fayetteville, North Carolina. First, a three-year-old girl died under the tent in her parents arms while waiting for the service to begin...²⁴⁰

The closer one looks at the lives and ministries of these “healing evangelists”, the more one has to wonder how people could have continued to support and follow them as long as they did, and do today. In *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn*, M. Kurt Goedelmann points out:

Faith healing is big business...But is it really all that it appears to be? Those who view telecasts such as Hinn’s “This is Your Day” see spectacular displays of apparent miracle after miracle without being aware that the programs have been carefully edited. What they see is Hinn running back and forth upon the stage, counting empty wheelchairs, roaring, “This is your night for a miracle. Look at someone next to you and say it!” What they don’t see is the number of victims leaving the crusade in the same wheelchair in which they arrived or with the same physical affliction. In March 1995, when Hinn brought his traveling “healing” road show to the Assemblies of God “Signs and Wonders” conference in Springfield, Mo., this writer and W.E. Nunally, one of this book’s co-authors, waited at the church auditorium’s two exits at the conclusion of the service, watching to see how many empty wheelchairs left the building. Although dozens of occupied wheelchairs made their way from the crusade, not a single empty one passed through either of the two exits. Not only is what the television audience sees edited what the live audience sees is carefully staged. Those who are terribly deformed, children with Down’s Syndrome, amputees and the like are kept from the stage and out of sight of TV cameras...The heightened emotional level created among the crowds of people attending such crusades places the faith healer in a win/win situation. In what can be regarded as sheer acts of desperation, the sick take that “leap of faith”, hoping the miraculous will materialize, thereby allowing the faith healer to parade them as a trophy back and forth across the stage. The 20,000-plus faithful in the arena, in addition to the potential millions viewing by telecast or videotape, believe a healing really has occurred. However, when the victim returns home and the reality of the affliction remains, no one is the wiser. And even if the truth leaks out, it is easy to shift blame back to the afflicted one’s unconfessed sin or lack of faith or, if all else fails, Satan himself.²⁴¹

Hinn has had a remarkable career. In spite of teaching some of the most damnable of heresies, such as his statement that there are “nine gods”, Hinn claims a special “anointing” of the Holy Spirit to heal the sick. But Hinn and his crusade team have, at least to my knowledge, never been able to produce one documented case of genuine healing that has occurred through his ministry.

This does not seem to matter today in Charismatic circles. Extravagant claims of miracles, signs, and wonders are being made on a regular basis, and the sheep seem to be soaking them up with nary a critical or discerning thought. To question their leaders and their claims, they are told, is tantamount to the Pharisees questioning of Jesus and His miracles, and nobody wants to be counted as a “Pharisee” or a “heresy hunter.” To question the validity of their “visions” and “revelations”, or their “signs and wonders” is to risk the unthinkable – blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Michael Brown, “Theologian of the Brownsville revival”, after proclaiming that he isn’t “saying for a moment that the Christian brothers and sisters who attack the current outpouring are guilty of blaspheming the Spirit”,²⁴² nevertheless goes on in the same chapter of his book *Let No One Deceive You: Confronting the Critics of Revival*, to issue this threat:

Are you totally and absolutely sure that you are right in attacking the current revival? **Are you willing to wager your salvation on the fact that you are correct?** If not, how in the world can you risk the possibility that your zeal is misguided and that you are opposing God Himself? Is there no holy fear in you, no sense of the greatness of the Lord, no, and of His mighty works, no recognition that it is far better to tread carefully in your public judgements than to speak rashly about matters in which you are not, in fact, expert? Will you risk reviling the very one you represent? I hear the Spirit saying once more, “Careful! Are you sure I’m wrong?...Really, it makes me wonder. How could anyone walk closely to Jesus and cleave to His Holy Word yet be so quick to speak about something so sacred to so many of God’s people? How could anyone be so hasty in dealing with the Holy?”²⁴³ (Emphasis mine.)

Just what are the “mighty works” that Brown is defending, things that are so “sacred” and so “holy” to so many of God’s people today? They are the “miracles, signs, and wonders” that have come to be associated with the Vineyard Movement, and these Latter Rain types of revivals that are springing forth from within it.

The *Vineyard* is an association of Charismatic churches that now numbers over 700 congregations in eight countries. The Vineyard is not a denomination, at least in the classical sense, but more of a voluntary association of churches that share the same Latter Rain outlook and goals. It began with a Bible study in 1977 in John Wimber’s home. It grew into a church named *The Vineyard Christian Fellowship* (Anaheim, California). Eventually Wimber’s church became associated with Chuck Smith’s *Calvary Chapel*.

Prior to forming the church Wimber had been on the staff of the Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Wimber spent four years here, studying church growth. One of his fellow professors was C. Peter Wagner, spiritual warfare guru, at that time an “expert” on church growth. Wagner had a tremendous impact on Wimber, especially in the area of the importance of miracles, signs, and wonders in connection with church growth.

The result was Wimber’s theory of “power evangelism”. Essentially Wimber came to believe that for the gospel to be effective, and win lost souls to Christ, signs and wonders **must** follow its preaching. Thus began an emphasis upon personal experience that would become the trademark of the Vineyard churches, and remains so today, after Wimber’s death.

Wimber’s emphasis upon personal experience of God was probably a part of his theology even before he joined Fuller. Between the time he was converted in 1962 and his four years at Fuller he had been associated with the Quakers. He attended a Quaker church and eventually became the co-pastor of a Quaker church in Yorba Linda, California. The Quakers are essentially a group of Christian mystics, who placed an emphasis upon “inner light” as an authority and downplayed the importance of scripture. Reportedly, when George Fox, the founder of the movement would preach, the Lord’s power would fall upon the people and they would begin to shake uncontrollably, hence the nickname “Quakers”.

Wimber himself would always place personal experience, and inner-light above the scriptures. In a Charisma article in February of 1995, in which he addressed the bizarre manifestations that had broken out in the Toronto Airport Vineyard, Wimber responded:

“There’s nothing in scripture that supports these kinds of phenomena that I can see, and I can’t think of anything throughout the church age that would.”, Wimber writes, “So I feel no obligation to try to explain it. It’s just phenomena. It’s just people responding to God.” Wimber maintains that a spiritual experience should be judged by its affect on a person’s life. “I don’t want to make our meeting a focus on phenomena,” he says. “I would like to make our meetings focused on the Word and [on the] works of the Spirit.”²⁴⁴

As you can see from his statement, the experience, the “phenomena” is the primary thing. It doesn’t matter that Wimber can’t find any support for it in scripture or church history. Experience has always been the primary focus in the Vineyard. Personal experience - and miracles, signs, and wonders. In an interview for an ABC television special entitled *In The Name of God*, which looked at the new pragmatic approach to church growth today, Wimber elaborates on this in a way that really disturbed me when I first heard it. Wimber refers to the miracles of our Lord and His Apostles in a very irreverent way – as “the stuff”:

I love Jesus, I love the stuff He did, I love the multiplying the food, and, and the healing of the sick, and giving sight to the blind – spitting in peoples’ eyes, I mean, I love that stuff! You know...so I went up to this guy and pulled on his sleeve and he had something on his chest with his name on it so I figured he must know something. I said, “When do they do it?” He said, “Do what?” I said, “The stuff.” He said, “What stuff?” I said, “The stuff in the Bible.” He said, “Well, ah, what do you mean?” I said, “Well, you know, multiply the fishes, and loaves, and feed the hungry, and all that stuff, when do they do it?” He said, “Oh, we don’t do that. We believe in it, we pray about it. But we don’t do it.” And I was terribly disappointed and I said, “Wait a minute, you don’t understand, I gave up drugs for this! I gave up my career for this! You mean I don’t get to do it? When I worked for the Devil, I got to do the Devil’s stuff. If I’m workin for Jesus I want to do what Jesus did.”²⁴⁵

At one point Peter Jennings asked Wimber about the shaking manifestations that occur in the Vineyard, “Are you utterly, totally convinced that it always is the Holy Spirit?” Wimber replies, “No, I’m largely convinced it is the Spirit, but I believe it’s a mixture of humanity and Spirit.”²⁴⁶

Not only is the flesh often on display, but according to Vineyard Pastors so is the demonic, and there has been much confusion over the years as to how to discern the real form the fleshly and demonic. John Wimber wrote in a statement to *All Vineyard Pastors* in October of 1994:

...I recognize that there are certain manifestations of the Spirit that have gone on in our meetings for fifteen years that we supposed were demonic in origin.²⁴⁷

According to Steve Long, an Associate Pastor at the Toronto Airport Vineyard:

Demonic stuff is happening. The bigger question is: is it stuff coming out or going in? If it is stuff going in, we are obviously very much against that, but to the best of my knowledge that doesn’t happen.²⁴⁸

There has always been confusion in the Vineyard over the source of the signs and wonders that are being manifest because the signs and wonders are things that the Church has largely understood to be demonic in origin throughout her history.

John Arnott, pastor of the Toronto Airport Vineyard has said:

We used to think if people shook, shouted, flopped, rolled, etc., that it was a demonic thing manifesting and we needed to take them out of the room. That was our grid, that's what our experience had taught us...²⁴⁹

Cheryl and Steve Thompson are former Toronto Vineyard insiders who became disillusioned and left the movement. In a statement outlining some of their concerns Cheryl Thompson writes:

Demonic powers, I believe, have gained control over the Vineyard Movement and the Kansas City Fellowship "prophetic movement".²⁵⁰

Many Christians, like myself, who have witnessed the Vineyard phenomena, have come to believe that not only is the flesh much in evidence in these phenomena but also clearly the demonic. I have seen many hours of videotaped examples of Vineyard phenomena, and I can only say that I believe seducing spirits are having much success at the Vineyard, because of the confusion and lack of discernment of Vineyard leaders. Vineyard leadership had obviously accepted the Latter Rain belief that Christians can be demon possessed. Whenever they feel they have discerned demonic activity they perform an "exorcism" upon the affected Christian. Bill Jackson, in a paper on the phenomena entitled, *What in the World is Happening to Us?* writes:

Certain body movements are indicative of demonic presence.²⁵¹

Jackson never describes which body movements in particular denote a demonic presence which would have been very helpful because there is so much shaking and jerking going on and so many peculiar body movements in evidence. Once they recognize demonic activity "in" a Christian they "deliver" them through prayer. Steve Long says:

Demonic activity is usually very easy to recognize. If a person begins to scream, shake violently or speak in a different voice, our team will quickly take them to a private area so they don't embarrass themselves, or we will pray the peace of God into their lives. Those from our congregation are encouraged to make appointments with our prayer team should we feel the deliverance process may be a long one.²⁵²

These kinds of demonic manifestation have been a part of the Vineyard Movement since the very beginning. Whenever God's people elevate personal experience and mysticism above the scriptures these kinds of demonic manifestations are inevitably going to break out. Historically, the Church has always recognized them for what they were and put a stop to them. But in the Vineyard they have been embraced and held up as examples of the mighty "anointing" of the Holy Ghost.

It wasn't long after the Vineyard began and joined Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel as a "covering" that concerned Calvary Chapel pastors began to question Wimber about reports of levitating, aura reading and being slain in the Spirit, along with other occult and unbiblical practices. Wimber's response? A statement in which he repeated his Quaker beliefs that "God is above His Word" and "God is not limited by His Word", saying essentially that he didn't need a scriptural basis for the manifestations. The Vineyard then separated itself from Calvary Chapel and went its own way. Many within Smith's Calvary Chapel choose to follow Wimber, converting their churches to Vineyards.²⁵³

Of course after the split with Calvary Chapel these kinds of manifestations continued to grow and expand throughout the Vineyard. What was at first labeled as demonic activity has of necessity over the years come to be labeled as the "power of the Holy Ghost". Many Biblically based outside observers who have witnessed Vineyard phenomena have clearly recognized the demonic in it. A few have "jumped into the river" and joined the party, but the majority have recognized it for what it is – a mixture of the flesh and the demonic. What is being passed around by point of personal contact in the Vineyard? Is it the Holy Spirit, or seducing spirits? Is it the "new wine" of the Holy Spirit, or is it the wine of the Great Harlot, the "wine of

her [spiritual] fornication”? (Rev. 17) Gordon Williams, a Canadian minister, claims he has had to pray for the same woman twice to deliver her from demonic oppression which she picked up in Vineyard meetings:

Every time she went to a Vineyard meeting she came away with an evil spirit... There is a “transference of spirits” occurring at the Vineyard meetings. They are obviously unaware of the wiles of the devil... At Vineyard, the leadership is looking at these manifestations... and misidentifying them as the Holy Spirit when they are either the work of an evil spirit or the flesh... because of the Vineyard approach to ministry, their worship services expose people to the demonic...²⁵⁴

The manifestations had been occurring at the Vineyard from almost the very beginning, but in 1990 when Wimber embraced the mystical Latter Rain prophets at Kansas City and threw them and their Manifest Sons of God teachings into the mix - it wasn't long until there was an explosion of “signs and wonders” within the Vineyard. The “Toronto Blessing” would be born in 1994, with all of the Vineyard signs and wonders following, with one in particular taking center stage: the so-called “Holy Laughter”.

Holy laughter is among the most important “signs and wonders” to these Latter Rain adherents, signs and wonders that are so holy that Dr. Michael Brown threatens that we risk “losing our salvation” should we even question their validity. This “holy laughter” is all part of an experience known in the Vineyard as “spiritual drunkenness”. This experience was introduced into the American Church by South African evangelist and self-professed “Holy Ghost bartender”, Rodney Howard-Browne. I have already quoted Rodney's statement that he didn't care if the demonic was manifesting in his meetings, just so long as something was manifesting!

Although Rodney Howard-Browne is generally credited with introducing the experience of spiritual drunkenness and holy laughter into the American Church, I have seen some indications that these things were being experienced during and even before the Latter Rain revival in the late 1940's. I have already cited Franklin Hall's reference to one of the women at his fasting and prayer Daily Revival Center:

She ran and danced all over the place, being **drunk** on both the inner and outer filling of the precious Holy Spirit.

In *The Next Move of God*, Charismatic “prophetess” Fuchsia Pickett writes:

I am told that laughter was a large part of the revival of 1948.²⁵⁵

Nevertheless it is Rodney Howard-Browne who is mainly responsible for the “spiritual drunkenness” and “holy laughter” that is being experienced in the Church today. Howard-Browne was born into a Pentecostal home, and claims he was saved at the age of five and baptized in the Holy Spirit at the age of eight. So far, O.K., but Rodney claims that he had an experience at the age of nineteen that he says was the result of his “demand” on God for more of His Holy Spirit:

I told the Lord, either you come down here and touch me, or I am going to come up there and touch you.²⁵⁶

Such a demand on a holy God sounds similar to that of Satan's declaration to God when he rebelled – “*I will ascend into heaven*”. Supposedly God rewarded Rodney's demand with a special supernatural impartation that Rodney could in turn “impart” to others:

...I was plugged into heavens electric light supply... My desire has been to go and plug other people in... Out of my belly began to flow a river of living water. I began to laugh uncontrollably and then I began to weep and then speak with tongues. I was so intoxicated on the wine of the Holy Ghost that I was beside myself.²⁵⁷

In 1987 Rodney Howard-Browne left South Africa and came to the United States seeking to impart this “anointing” to the American Church. But Rodney only experienced limited success in imparting his anointing until 1993 when he ministered in a series of meetings at *Carpenter’s Home Church* in Lakeland, Florida. This was the breakthrough event that Rodney was looking for. According to the “Happy Hunters”:

Pastor Karl Strader of the Carpenter’s Home Church in Lakeland, Florida, started excitedly calling us and telling us about this most unusual sign and wonder which was occurring in his church...He said that he had spent six weeks on the floor of his church laughing...Marilyn Hickey had been there and he said Marilyn had spent the entire time on the floor laughing. Then he shared with us how Rodney had called Marilyn to the microphone and she just laughed and laughed and then fell under the power of God without saying anything...We saw demonstrations of power with Rodney just pointing at people who would then fall under the power of God. We saw people trying to crawl away from the power, but they couldn’t get up off the floor.²⁵⁸

These meetings, scheduled for just one week, expanded into four. People flew in from all over the world to Lakeland to experience Rodney’s “anointing”.

Apparently Rodney was quite successful in “imparting” this anointing to many people. I have a videotape in my possession, entitled *The Laugh Heard Round The World*. This video chronicles the ministry of Ken and Nancy Curtis of Lakeland, Florida, as they travel around the world “imparting” the “anointing” which had been imparted to them by Howard-Browne at *Carpenter’s Home Church*. At location after location; in Russia, the Philippines, Singapore, Uganda, and Kenya, in city after city – all around the world, they “impart” the anointing that had been “imparted” to them. Ken Curtis lays his hands on people, or “points at them” Howard-Browne style, and they collapse on the floor in spasms of “uncontrollable” laughter.

In 1993 Randy Clark, a Vineyard pastor, also received an impartation of “the anointing” from Rodney Howard-Browne. While in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Rodney laid hands on him during a revival meeting. Rodney would later comment:

I remember him coming to me with his hands ablaze and [he] said, “My hands are burning.” I said, “Yeah, that’s the anointing. You know what it’s for?” I said, “Go back to your church and lay hands on everything that moves.” And he went back to his church, laid hands on everything that moved; the next week he went to Toronto and the rest is history.²⁵⁹

“Spiritual drunkenness” and “holy laughter” now characterize the revivals in Toronto and Pensacola. And make no mistake about it, those who lead these Latter Rain “revivals” believe it is going to usher in the manifestation of the sons of God – Joel’s Army. In a February 1995 *Charisma* article celebrating the first full year of “revival” in Toronto we read:

Marc Dupont believes God is in the process of forming an army throughout this renewal. “I believe this will lead to major, major revival in the Western world,” he told *Alpha*. Other leaders have made similar predictions...²⁶⁰

This brings us to an important point. When the leadership of the Latter Rain “revivals” that are occurring today speak of “revival”, especially future “revival”, it is synonymous with the formation of Joel’s Manifest Sons of God Army. They are speaking of the same thing. As far as they are concerned, what is happening today is “just the waters rising ankle deep”. The manifestations, the “signs and wonders” that are being exhibited in these “revivals” are just the beginning.

Is spiritual drunkenness really a sign of God’s favor? Or is it in reality a clear sign of God’s judgement? In looking at the scriptural references to drunkenness one can only conclude the latter. In Jeremiah chapter 51, in a prophecy of judgement upon Babylon, we read:

“Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand, That made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; Therefore the nations are deranged...In their excitement I will prepare their feasts; I will make them drunk, That they may rejoice, And sleep a perpetual sleep And not awake, says the LORD... And I will make drunk Her princes and wise men, Her governors, her deputies, and her mighty men. And they shall sleep a perpetual sleep And not awake, says the King, Whose name is the LORD of hosts.” (Jer 51:7;39;57 NKJV)

Here we clearly see that drunkenness is a direct judgement from God. Is it possible that God is judging His apostate Church (Mystery Babylon) with spiritual drunkenness even now? It is my belief that is exactly what is happening through these Latter Rain “revivals” today.

In Isaiah 63:6, a prophecy of the last days, we read *“I have trodden down the peoples in my anger, made them drunk in my fury, and brought down their strength to the earth.”*

The Bible nowhere contains a suggestion that to be drunk, spiritually or otherwise, is a good thing for God's people. In fact, in the Word of God, we are constantly exhorted to sobriety and self-control.

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit...” (Eph 5:18 NKJV)

Proponents of spiritual drunkenness like to point to Acts, chapter 2, and what occurred on the day of Pentecost, particularly the response of some of the people to it:

...Cretans and Arabs; we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?” Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.” (Acts 2:11-13 NKJV)

Having seen videotape examples of people who are supposedly “drunk in the spirit”; staggering around, struggling to talk (or preach), talking with slurred speech, and falling down, as well as behavior that is unseemly or immodest, I am totally convinced that this is not God's Spirit at work in at the Toronto Airport Vineyard or at the Brownsville Church in Pensacola. This kind of behavior is identical to the type of behavior exhibited by literal drunks - drunk on alcohol. There is absolutely no reason to infer from the book of Acts (Chapter 2) that the disciples of our Lord were exhibiting even one of these “symptoms” of drunkenness. If you read Acts, chapter 2 you realize that what the populace was responding to was the supernatural sign that was in evidence – they were speaking in tongues. Unable to explain this sign in any other way, some mocked and accused them of being drunk. That this charge was spurious and not even considered by the majority can be seen in the fact that 3,000 listened and responded to Peter's (coherent) presentation of the gospel, repented of their sins, and were added to the Church that day.

Things have degenerated at Toronto to the point that they are writing drinking songs, like the patrons of some bar. Katheryn Riss, wife of Richard Riss, now the resident Toronto revival historian, wrote *The New Winos Drinking Song Number One*:

If you feel too serious and kind of blue,
I've got a suggestion, just the thing for you!
It's a little unconventional, but so much more fun,
That you won't even mind, when people think you're dumb!
Just come to the party God is throwing right now,
We can all lighten up and show the pagans how,
Christians have more fun and keep everyone guessing,
Since the Holy Ghost sent us the Toronto blessing!
I used to think life was serious stuff
I wouldn't dare cry and I acted kind of tough

Until God's Spirit put laughter in my soul,
 Now the Holy Ghost's got me and I'm out of control!
 Now I'm just a party animal grazing at God's trough,
 I'm a Jesus junkie, and I can't get enough!
 I'm an alcoholic for that great new wine,
 Cause the Holy Ghost is pouring, and I'm drinking all the time!
 I just laugh like an idiot and bark like a dog,
 If I don't sober up I'll likely hop like a frog!
 I'll crow like a rooster at the break of day,
 Cause the Holy Ghost is moving and I can't stay away!
 I'll roar like a lioness who's on the prowl,
 I'll laugh and shake, maybe hoot like an owl!
 Since God's holy river started bubbling up in me,
 It spills outside, and now it's setting me free
 So I'll crunch and I'll dip and I'll dance round and round,
 The pew was fine, but it's more fun on the ground!
 So I'll jump like a pogo stick, then fall to the floor,
 Cause the Holy Ghost is moving, and I want MORE!

There is a "party spirit" loose in the Church today. Thousands are dying and slipping into an eternity in hell every day. Occultism and New Age beliefs, not to mention secular humanism and the myriad of new cults arising daily are leading millions down the wide road that leads to destruction. Yet I'm supposed to believe that God would have me sit back, relax, and enjoy some "Holy Ghost drinking party"? This is just the very thing that our Lord warned us about:

"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly." (Luke 21:34 NKJV)

This scripture takes on a whole new significance in light of the things we've been looking at. I am reminded of the Lord's admonition to Israel through His prophet Amos:

"Woe to you who are at ease in Zion... Woe to you who put far off the day of doom, Who cause the seat of violence to come near; Who lie on beds of ivory, Stretch out on your couches, Eat lambs from the flock And calves from the midst of the stall; Who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments, And invent for yourselves musical instruments like David; Who drink wine from bowls, And anoint yourselves with the best ointments, But are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Therefore they shall now go captive as the first of the captives, And those who recline at banquets shall be removed." (Amos 6:1-7 NKJV)

How blind can God's people get – partying it up on the very eve of destruction. Bellying up to "Joel's bar", while millions perish. According to holy laughter proponents there is no urgency to win the lost:

The ever present question, "Are people being saved?" has placed a self-imposed burden on renewal leaders to push for evangelism. Yet, on occasions when Arnott has shifted his focus to preach salvation messages, he says he has felt the Lord check him. He says God told him, "You are pushing me. Just let me love on my people."²⁶¹

Incredible. Even more incredible was this statement of Rodney Howard-Browne. When asked about the beginnings of the laughter phenomena, he replied:

One night I was preaching on hell, and [laughter] just hit the whole place. The more I told people what hell was like, the more they laughed.²⁶²

I can not believe that “Spirit-filled Christians” could ever laugh at hell. What could possibly be funny about eternal torment? **This was definitely not the Holy Spirit moving.** It was obviously a demonic spirit that moved these people to laugh uncontrollably as Howard-Browne preached about hell. This brings up another spiritual problem, “uncontrollable” laughter, or shaking, or any other such “uncontrollable manifestation of the Spirit”. The Holy Ghost does not force anyone to do or manifest anything against his or her own will. The scriptures make that clear:

“And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” (1 Cor 14:32 NKJV)

When the Holy Spirit is operating through a person, that person is always in control. Only demonic spirits seek to usurp control over individuals and force them to do things against their will. The spirits behind these manifestations are clearly demonic.

Another “sign and wonder” that is occurring in these Latter Rain revivals is people making all kinds of animal noises. I witnessed one Vineyard pastor trying to “preach” a sermon, staggering around “drunk on new wine” and uncontrollably crowing like a rooster. I’ve seen people on videotape crawling around on the floor, roaring like lions, barking like dogs, and one woman who said the Lord told her to “Howl like a wolf for Me” - and then proceeded to do so. Eric E. Wright chronicles some of the different “animals” that have been “manifesting” at Toronto in his book *Strange Fire*:

Two people started barking loudly like dogs. The barks were interspersed with howling noise like wolves, or possibly, dogs baying at the moon. I also heard one person screeching like a cat at night. Robert Hough did an article for *Toronto Life Magazine* in which he writes, “The man sitting beside me, Dwayne from California, roared like a wounded lion...They howled like wolves, brayed like donkeys, and – in the case of a young man standing near the sound board – started clucking like a feral chicken.” James Beverly reports: “Still others roared like lions or barked like dogs, I have personally heard both in various meetings. I also heard one man making noises like a cow. Others have reported people oinking like pigs and crowing like roosters...The lion roaring is said to be prophetic action to signal a powerful word from Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” Randy Clark credits someone oinking like a pig near him with ushering him into “holy laughter” and being “drunk in the Spirit”. “One person, about two people down, had the ‘anoinking’. The ‘anoinking’, and I explained this the other night, you know when you [sound of a pig grunting]...and I started laughing...then I was drunk.”²⁶³

Sorry Dr. Brown, but I’ll take my chances here – **this definitely is not the work of the Holy Spirit!** To compare the precious anointing of the Holy Spirit to the oinking of a pig is nothing short of blasphemy. Even to associate the name of the Lord with such as this is in my opinion, tantamount to blasphemy. This is the work of unholy spirits, not the Holy Spirit. After careful scrutiny, and reading the feeble attempts by the Vineyard to explain this absurdity scripturally, I believe I have a Biblical explanation for this circus. God is judging them! The same way God judged the King of Babylon for his pride.

“All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. The king spoke, saying, ‘Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?’ While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: ‘King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.’ That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.” (Dan 4:28-33 NKJV)

God judged Nebuchadnezzar because of his pride in the kingdom which he had built “for the honor of his majesty”. I think that God is perhaps judging the Latter Rain church that is building a kingdom by its pride - for it’s own honor and glory. (Rev. 17:1-6) Like Nebuchadnezzar they are being debased like animals. One can only hope and pray that like Nebuchadnezzar they will wake up and come to their senses before it is too late. It certainly looks like it is time for judgement to begin – in the house of God.

“Babylon shall become a heap, A dwelling place for jackals, An astonishment and a hissing, Without an inhabitant. They shall roar together like lions, They shall growl like lions' whelps.” (Jer 51:37, 38 NKJV)

I am not saying that in every case the demonic is being manifested, although I certainly believe that this is true in many cases. I believe that there is a tremendous amount of peer pressure to conform and “manifest something” on the part of many participants. I’m sure much of this can be directly attributed to the flesh. Some is probably produced intentionally to set the atmosphere for the manifestations:

Vicky Conroy says that she was told to fake manifestations – physical demonstrations [at Brownsville Assembly of God] that the Holy Spirit had filled her body. She says she came to her senses when she took what the revival leaders were saying – about how to pray, what to say, how to act – and held that up to the light of her convictions and her deep knowledge of Biblical truth.²⁶⁴

Clearly, the “anointing” passed on to the Vineyard from Rodney Howard-Browne is a sensuous, fleshly anointing. Pastor Bill Randles, in *Weighed and Found Wanting* writes:

Rodney Howard-Browne proceeds in the book to relate changes in his ministry after that anointing with fire, while preaching in a Methodist church. I’ll let him tell it in his own humorous way: **“We were preaching in a Methodist church. I was back in the vestibule – which is a holy name for a plain old office – preparing for service. One of the young ladies came into the office and asked me to pray for her because she was in terrible pain...I got my hand halfway to her head, almost like a gunslinger would draw a gun out of a holster, and point it at his opponent. Suddenly, unexpectedly, it felt like my fingertips came off. I felt a full volume of anointing flow out of my hand. The only way I can explain it is to liken it to a fireman holding a fire hose with a full volume of water flowing out of it. The anointing went right into her. It looked like someone had hit her in the head with an invisible baseball bat and she fell to the floor...”** On and on it goes. Notice the sensuality of the testimony though. The fire of God courses through his body. It shoots out of his fingers, like a gun, she gets hit by an invisible bat! The concept behind the word sensual is not always referring to “sexual”. Sensual refers to the things pertaining to the five physical senses. Rodney Howard-Browne has a very sensual ministry. The promise is held out that you are going to be touched by God, you’re going to feel God, you’ll even get drunk on the new wine! You’ll laugh, stagger, get stuck to the floor, and generally have an all out good time! It’s “fun” going to these meetings.²⁶⁵

It makes me wonder, since the results seem to be the same, what is the difference between a Christian getting drunk at “Joel’s bar”, or walking in to a local saloon and getting drunk on scotch whiskey? These two things are equal to each other and equal the same thing – sin.

Just as at Toronto, at Brownsville the flesh is not the only thing on display. Demonic manifestations abound. John Kirkpatrick says:

I have hundreds of times laid hands on the unsaved and I have then watched them being thrown across the ground. I mean, I have watched them fly through the air, fall to the ground to where they couldn’t get up for an hour or two hours...²⁶⁶

Larry Thomas wrote, in an article entitled *Brownsville Revival: Toronto Revisited*, of another sign and wonder occurring in the revivals:

Another manifestation is called *groaning and travailing*. This is the key to the ministry of intercession which is widely encouraged at Pensacola. But it has taken on more than Biblical connotations. The groanings and travail are likened to birth pangs and those so afflicted are said to be giving birth to manifestations and ministries.

Here is how one woman described this manifestation: “As they were slain in the Spirit, they would go into a fetal position and tremble and shake. Some of the women would go into a sitting down birthing position to give birth to whatever. This was accompanied with grunts, moans and shrill screeching. Next, the ushers physically picked up the intercessors from the floor (who were still in travail in a fetal position) and carry them through the congregation to the balcony as effigies of intercession. [This was done] so that conviction and repentance would come down to the people as they passed by.”

Similar manifestations were reported several years ago in areas of the country where the laughing phenomena had occurred. It’s recycled.²⁶⁷

In an article in *End Times and Victorious Living*, by Joseph Chambers, entitled *Pensacola: Impartations – Apparitions*, we read:

This is a quote from the *Bible Answer Man* radio program with Hank Hanegraff. Mr. Hanegraff was discussing a man on the stage of the Brownsville Assembly Church. According to the documentation, he was lying on the stage “thrusting his pelvis up and down, writhing on the floor...” This was Steve Hill’s explanation to the audience: “Now, some of you are watching this young man up here. I want to tell you exactly what he is doing. Then I want you to turn your eyes from him. He’s interceding for your soul...He’s giving spiritual birth to you...”²⁶⁸

I could go on and on recounting and citing various examples of the “signs and wonders” that are occurring in the present day Latter Rain revivals. What has been conspicuously missing is the report of miracles. John Eckhardt promised that these new apostles would bring forth “a large number of healings and miracles”. An “apostolic blast” as he referred to it. So far there are few reports of miracles issuing forth from the present Latter Rain revivals.

However, as I write, this is beginning to change. Claims of miracles involving gold teeth and fillings are beginning to issue forth out of the revivals. In an official statement entitled *Gold Teeth Make Their Mark in Toronto* we read:

On Wednesday evening, March 3, [1999] during TACF’s Intercession Conference, a new dimension of the Holy Spirit’s presence fell, this time in healing power and signs and wonders. Two women from Capetown, South Africa, testified before the nearly 4,000 conference attendees that their father had received a gold filling while watching a video of John and Carol Arnott’s meeting at the Hatfield Christian Church in Pretoria, South Africa in February, where several people had reported receiving gold fillings. After their testimonies, John Arnott asked everyone who needed healing or a touch from God on their mouth, necks, jaws, teeth, or gums or who wanted to ask God to supernaturally fill their teeth to stand. Almost everyone stood to their feet and prayed. Within moments approximately twenty people began to stream to the altar reporting that gold teeth had miraculously appeared in their mouths immediately after prayer...As the conference attendees, including a professional dental hygienist from Germany, shone penlights on each others teeth, many reported observing changes in the metallic composition of the fillings taking place before their eyes. The room was filled with people in awe. Some were shouting and gasping and others were falling under the power...On Sunday evening more people testified to receiving gold fillings

in place of amalgam. One woman from Idaho testified that she asked God to put a sign in her mouth as He was doing for others. He gave her the scripture, Psalm 34, "His praise shall continually be in my mouth" . . . In the meantime, other healings began to break out as the faith level at the conference rose. One woman threw her back brace across the platform and began to bend over, touch her toes and run across the stage screaming, "I don't need this anymore; I'm healed. . ." The outbreak of new signs and healing miracles gave rise to speculation that a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit has begun, and the river is rising to a new level. Prophetic voices at the conference and throughout the U.S. and Canada were phoning in interpretations to the events. "It's a sign that a new filling has begun," some said. Others quoted the scripture, "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it." Still others remembered, "Buy of me gold, refined in the fire. . ." Sue Mitchell, one of the conference speakers, interpreted the appearance of gold in the mouth of believers as a sign of the gospel being preached and the end-time harvest beginning. All of these are undoubtedly true. But John Arnott's characteristically gracious interpretation may be the most accurate. "I just believe God loves His people and wants to bless them." ²⁶⁹

How perfect - a Laodicean sign and wonder for a Laodicean Church. The Latter Rain proponents of course see this as a sign that a new wave of "revival" is coming, one that will usher in the end-time harvest. (i.e. Manifest Sons/Joel's Army). In a *Charisma* article on the gold tooth phenomena, at least one Charismatic pastor expressed some reservations:

Though he believes the manifestations were genuine in many cases, he is reluctant to endorse the phenomenon. "I've seen it abused to get attention," [Dutch] Sheets added. "It's not the kind of thing that can really be proven. . . [but] some of these people, there's no way they could have been phonies, they just couldn't act that well." ²⁷⁰

Sheet's does well to express reservations. Undoubtedly many of these "miracles" are going to be proven false, the product of too much excitement and "spiritual" titillation. This has happened and I'm sure proved somewhat embarrassing. In an article in Canada's *National Post* (May 12, 1999) we read:

God works in mysterious ways, but two high-profile Evangelical Christians in Western Canada have been forced to back down from claims that He gave them gold teeth. A chastened Willard Thiessen, host of a daily religion program on Winnipeg television, admitted yesterday that he was wrong in telling his tele-flock the God had inexplicably planted a gold tooth in his mouth. It turned out the gold tooth had been implanted by his brother Elmer, a dentist in British Columbia. . . Mr. Thiessen is not alone in his embarrassment. Dick Dewart, a religious broadcaster in Lethbridge, Alta., told a CJIL-TV audience during an on-air fundraising marathon in March that God had implanted a gold tooth in his mouth after a bout of intensive prayer. But Dr. Jack Sherman, Mr. Dewart's longtime dentist, said he had put it in 10 years earlier.

However, fraudulent claims like this aside, it would be a big mistake to dismiss all these claims of miracles as false. We must never forget, Satan has the power to perform miracles, and the Word of God tells us clearly that this power is going to be increased as the return of Christ draws near. Another "sign" that is appearing alongside the gold teeth and gold fillings is the appearance of "gold dust" upon some people - falling from people's heads and bodies. I've seen pictures of this and this is very intriguing to me in light of what Franklin Hall taught and experienced prior to the 1948 Latter Rain revival:

Among many of Hall's heretical teachings was his claim that there is an "immortal substance" that comes upon the believer who feeds upon it "from within Christ's new body." Hall called this so-called substance "the shiny metal-like Jesus substance". Hall claimed that this "immortal substance" could be seen on those who attended his meetings, as a fine, gold and silver sparkling material, emanating from visible "Immortal Heavenly Objects" (IHO's), "Unusual Heavenly Objects (UHO's), and "Unidentified Flying Objects" (UFO's). Similar to

the teachings of the Toronto Vineyard, Hall encouraged open-eyed prayer in order to release “the blessing”.²⁷¹

The current revivals at Toronto, Pensacola, and various other places are just a continuation of the Latter Rain revival of 1948. The emphasis upon “personal experience” over scripture is producing a Laodicean Church, with an obsession for miracles, signs, and wonders along with an obsession for gold, just as our Lord predicted. In this chapter I’ve only touched on the many “manifestations” that are coming forth in these “revivals”. There are many, many more. So many in fact, that it would take several books to document all of them. I have pointed out that, in my opinion, most of what is happening is of the flesh at best, demonic at worst. It gives me no pleasure or satisfaction to do so. As someone who considers himself to be Pentecostal in belief and practice, I can only shake my head in sadness at what is happening. How the mighty have fallen!

It is my hope and prayer that those involved in these Latter Rain “revivals” will turn back to the Bible before it is too late. We Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians can sometimes be far too susceptible to “spiritual manipulation”. It is our greatest weakness and to overcome it we must stay centered in the Word of God. To depart from God’s Word always opens us up to this kind of demonic delusion. I’d like to end this chapter with the warning and admonition of well-known Pentecostal preacher, Dr. Joseph Chambers:

No segment of people within the body of Jesus Christ has suffered so many imposters as we Pentecostals...Satan approaches men by titillating their flesh. He scorn’s the use of one’s mind to believe and receive on the basis of faith and truth and convinces men to act on the basis of feeling and excitement...[This] is utterly false and is another gospel...Holy laughter...is nothing less than the rotten fruit of a downward trend...raw witchcraft mixed with a religious experience...It is unbiblical to give your body to emotions that are not controlled by your reason and spirit. This is Satan’s style; not God’s...The Holy Spirit is a gentleman. He does not indulge men to act like fools, but to honor Jesus Christ.²⁷²

Amen.

CHAPTER 9

THE WAY OF CAIN

“Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.” (Jude 1:11 NKJV)

Two brothers – two ways. Cain rejected God’s way and Abel embraced it. In Hebrews 11:4 we read:

“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.” (Heb 11:4 NKJV)

We understand through this and other scripture that God had already revealed a way by which man might approach Him. God’s way required the sacrifice of an innocent substitute – dying in the place of the guilty.

Adam and Eve had tried to cover the shame of their own nakedness, the result of their rebellion, with fig leaves that they had gathered and sewn together. God revealed to them that the coverings they had made by the work of their own hands were totally unacceptable to Him. God slew an innocent animal and covered their nakedness with the animal skin illustrating that an innocent must die and innocent blood must be shed in order to provide an acceptable covering for sin.

God hereby gives them a picture of the death of the Messiah whom He promises to send and who will die that they might be redeemed. He will be the second Adam – the “seed” of the woman.

We are told in scripture that Abel had faith in God’s way and believed what God had established. Because of his faith, he offered up a sacrifice based on the pattern that God had revealed to his parents. Because of Abel’s faith and obedience, God honored his sacrifice and showed His approval in some visible way.

“Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering...” (Gen 4:4 NKJV)

His brother Cain, on the other hand, apparently had no faith in the way of approach that God had revealed to his parents. Cain decided that he was going to approach God in his own way. So he made the same mistake that his parents had originally made. They had simply done what their own natures, now fallen, had told them to do, covering themselves with the work of their own hands. Although Adam and Eve were wrong in doing this they had an excuse – ignorance. God had not yet given them any revelation concerning how they should approach Him in the future.

Cain, on the other hand, had years to think about the way God had established - the way of sacrifice. Cain was without excuse because God had clearly revealed the way through his parents, but Cain knowingly decided to depart from God’s way and approach God in a way of his own, through a work of his flesh.

“And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.” (Gen 4:3 NKJV)

As a result, God rejected Cain’s offering. Cain became angry, and in the Bible it says his “countenance fell”. He became discouraged and downcast. God, in His love, reached out to Cain and gave him an opportunity to repent. Cain refused and his anger at the Lord for rejecting his sacrifice would ultimately end in the hatred for (and murder of) his brother Abel.

“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.” (Gen 4:7 NKJV)

As theologians and preachers have always pointed out, Cain and Abel represent the two ways to approach God - God's way and man's way. Abel is a type of God's way, the way of sacrifice and trusting in the blood of an innocent - foreshadowing the way of the cross. Cain represents man's way - religion. Man through the works of his own hands, through a way which he establishes himself, trying to approach God in his own righteousness. Even as Cain in his jealousy was filled with hatred for his brother Abel, so the religious have always hated and persecuted the righteous.

During Jesus' time, the Pharisees had developed their own way, their own laws and traditions, which they considered to be just as binding upon God and man as the scriptures. They persecuted Jesus because of His neglect of their traditions and were instrumental in his death. As Paul, who was a Pharisee himself and the chief persecutor of the early Church admitted, they were extremely zealous for their traditions handed down to them by their fathers. They elevated *their* laws and *their* traditions, to the same authoritative level as God's word and thus persecuted and “laid waste” the early Church for their rejection of it.

Saul, the chief persecutor who was to become Paul – the Apostle to the Gentiles – describes how he let go of his traditions and embraced the Word of God and God's way alone after the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus:

“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith...” (Phil 3:3-9 NKJV)

Paul embraced God's way. The persecutor then became the persecuted.

During the Dark Ages, hundreds of thousands of Bible believing Christians were put to death by a church that had embraced “*the way of Cain.*” A church that elevated its own tradition to the level of scripture, just as the Pharisees before them had. Becoming zealous for their traditions, many of which blatantly contradicted God's word and God's way, they ruthlessly persecuted and killed all that would not submit to their way of salvation. The sad fact of the matter is that many more Christians were murdered by this wayward church than were murdered by the pagan Emperors of Rome.

So it has been down through the centuries. An Abel church has always existed, insisting on adhering to God's way as it is revealed through His Word. There has also existed a Cain church insisting on following it's own way and elevating it's traditions to the level of, or even above, the scriptures. The Cain church has persecuted all who refuse to accept their way and who stubbornly cling to God's revealed way, refusing to venture outside the Word of God for a “new revelation”, a “new way” or a “new thing”.

It is extremely sad to see the Pentecostal and Charismatic world dividing up into two camps today. Indeed, it's not just the Pentecostal and Charismatic world, but all of Christendom that is splitting - forming two churches. One will become the Bride of Christ, the other the bride of Anti-Christ - gone after “*the way of Cain*”, “*drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus*”.

There is a disturbing militancy and threatening tone that is issuing forth from the Latter Rain “revivals” and their proponents today. Unable to defend their mystical form of Christianity

scripturally they have resorted to bullying and threatening their critics. These threats have taken on an ominous tone at times and in my opinion they are getting out of hand. It's one thing to stridently defend a position but it's an altogether different thing to issue threats of mayhem and death to your critics.

The favorite tactic they have adopted has been to "accuse the accusers". They have gone on the offensive, labeling their critics as "self-righteous Pharisees and hypocrites" or "spiritual Babylon". As I have previously pointed out this tendency was evident in the 1948 revival as well. Unable to scripturally defend the Manifest Sons of God heresies they would classify all of their critics together under the title of "spiritual Babylon". George Hawtin would later write of the sectarian spirit and spiritual pride that characterized the "revival" at Sharon:

I can see with clearness that the great and blessed move of God was not two years old before the sectarian spirit began to show its ugly head...It is true that we vociferously denied that we had become a sect...There was to be no fellowship with anybody who was not within the confines of our ever narrowing circle. We were the true Church. We were the elect. We stood on the foundation and all other men stood on sinking sand...we had the gifts of the Spirit, and we were going to 'call the shots' in the tribulation...I shall never cease to thank God that I was vomited out of the belly of this whale also...²⁷³

Rather than change their doctrine to conform to scripture, they spiritualized and allegorized the scripture to fit their doctrine. If you refused to accept their doctrines and interpretations you were doomed to fall with spiritual Babylon in the end-times, and they themselves were going to execute the judgement of God upon you. Hawtin had said, "We were going to 'call the shots' in the Tribulation." What he meant by this statement becomes clear when one reads George Warnock's *Feast of Tabernacles*:

Now we have come to the end of the ages. Once again there is an apostate religious system, upon which the wrath of God shall descend with great fury...And all the earth – especially apostate Christendom – shall feel the mighty impact of the Day of the Lord...The Day of the Lord is at hand, even the ends of the ages, and great shall be the display of God's glory...It shall therefore be great tribulation, such as was never known from the foundation of the world. To the one class of people it shall be a day of "darkness" and of "gloominess". But to the other, "as the morning spread upon the mountains" (Joel 2:2). To the one, Great Tribulation; but to the other, "The manifestation of the sons of God."²⁷⁴

Just who is going to execute God's judgement upon this world and upon apostate Christianity? Why, they are, of course – Joel's Army, also known as "The Moses-Elijah company", or "the two witnesses":

*The whole transfiguration scene is a beautiful picture of the **power and coming** of the Lord into the midst of His people in this glorious hour to create the Moses-Elijah ministry. Moses, and Elijah; because this is the day and hour when the old must give way to the new, when death is to be swallowed up in life, when law must be fulfilled in grace. And so Moses typifies the old order of law and death. Elijah speaks of the new order, of grace and life. This is the hour known as the 'end of the ages' when the judgements that have been written concerning the Church and the world must be fulfilled on the one hand, and all the glory and power that is written concerning the church must be fulfilled on the other hand. Hence the Moses-Elijah company: the fullness of God in the midst of His people, **to do away with the old and establish the new**...This is the hour of God's vengeance upon the earth; but it is also the hour of God's glory in the midst of His people...Such then, is the ministry of the Moses-Elijah Company, we are told that the "two-witnesses" shall have the power "to smite the earth" with all plagues, as often as they will (Rev. 11:6). "As often as **they will**" – for the simple reason that they have overcome, they **abide** in Christ, and their will is the very will of the Father manifested through them. They have the "mind of Christ"; so that they minister judgments according to the Spirit of God...They are sent forth into the earth to administer*

*God's power. If there is repentance, there is power to bless; if there is enmity, there is power to destroy. Says Paul, "To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life". (2 Cor. 2:16)*²⁷⁵

These are disturbing words if you reject the Manifest Sons of God heresy as I do, and are counted by them as part of apostate Christianity. This is where they draw the line, and either you join them and accept their heresies or "die in the wilderness." Warnock writes:

*If men choose to remain where they are in their Christian experience, then this message is not for them. Thank God that they may eat the manna that falls from heaven, and drink out of the water that flows out of the Rock, and receive healing and strength for their journey. But sorry to say they shall die in the wilderness, and shall not see this good heritage of the Spirit.*²⁷⁶

In another book entitled Who Are You Warnock writes:

*The Church of Jesus Christ was destined and equipped with the armor of God to be a warring Church... God is preparing an army, beloved, who will go forth in the Day of the Lord to put an end to the reign of evil, and to deliver the people of God from their oppressor...*²⁷⁷

And:

*Your refuge in doctrines about the Second Coming that promise safety and security will be swept away when the hailstones of God begin to fall. No wonder the teachers and the prophets and those who assure the people that God will snatch them away from it all, will scramble for safety in that day, and find none... **The Day of the Lord, the day of vengeance.** Vengeance for what? For His temple. God has a controversy with Zion. And after the cleansing of Zion He will deal with Babylon... That system that has captivated His people and prevented them from becoming His own dwelling place in the earth.*²⁷⁸

What does Warnock mean by "His own dwelling place in the earth"? I have no doubt that he's referring to the Manifest Sons of God, Joel's Army. The "corporate body of Christ." They are going to deal with those of us who have been opposing them and holding them back. Make no mistake about it, we are part of "spiritual Babylon" as far as they are concerned, and they believe they are going to execute God's judgement upon us. If you think this is just something that Warnock wrote years ago and nobody could possibly take it seriously today, please allow me to quote this example taken recently from the Internet (6/1/99). This is from an article entitled Sonship – The Hidden Message written March 6, 1999:

A mantle of sonship is beginning to rest upon a few, and that mantle of sonship means more than just being "cleaned up" and perfected, it is a calling to move into the highest level of life that man has known. Not a level relegated below the angels and below Christ, but a level in His presence, the same as Jesus, who opened the door for us. We are not talking about a "sweet Jesus" mentality, we are talking about Sons. A vast difference. A difference as wide as the Grand Canyon...the judgment that issues forth in this day is upon the deception in high places that has been specifically set to deter the manifestation of the sonship within a people, for this is the level that will destroy the fortresses of evil in the earth. This is a level that will accomplish the works of God in this hour. Nothing less, and there are not too many at the top. The deception has been seeped too deep and too long. God's message is one of Authority and Power, for God's agencies of the judgements and His mercies will be His sons in this hour. We are not just tuning into what will come to pass, and warning everyone, **we are creating what is coming to pass.** And there are not many, nor does there need to be, and if Satan and the hosts of wickedness can dull your perception enough, you will not enter into this level, and this is the only level that will make things happen. There is no other message.

Christ said in the New Testament, I come not to bring peace, but I come with a sword... **It is time to rise up with the jawbone of an ass, as Samson, and begin to slay the wickedness**... Mind you, judgements are here in the earth, and are coming. But what comes forth on the earth is a product of what is being created by the sons of God. **God's sons will no be the unwitting benefactors of God's wrath towards a planet which has been wrought with evil; they are the ones that will bring the greatest heights and depths of this tribulation and Earth Changes that have already begun.** His word is now coming that will shake the heavens and the earth... that word is the word through your mouth. Let everyone else discern the sign of the times – we are the ones creating the times. Let everyone else get prepared for what is to come on the earth – we are the ones bringing it in.²⁷⁹
(Emphasis mine)

They are going to usher in the Great Tribulation. It is clear from this kind of rhetoric that all of us who oppose them will become the objects of God's wrath, as **they** pour it out during the Tribulation. Does the Bible teach that the saints will participate in God's wrath being poured out upon this unbelieving world – and spiritual Babylon?

“And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, **these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.** For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.” (Rev 17:16-18 NKJV)

Let's begin with the judgement on spiritual Babylon – the Great Harlot. This is the one-world church of the last days. A large and certainly the dominant part of this “Harlot” will be the professing Christian church. The tares that were bundled together (unified) and “left in the field” (the world) “to be burned” (suffer the wrath of God). Verse 18 tells us that the woman is identified as the city of Rome. The seat of her power and authority will be the city of Rome.

We are also told that God will judge her, and the agents of God's judgement upon her will be the ten horns (rulers) who will submit to the beast (Anti-Christ) and become a part of his kingdom. It is these ten kings who God will use to execute judgement upon the Harlot, not the Church of Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact we don't see the Church participating in any of the judgements of the Great Tribulation. It is Christ alone, with the participation of His holy angels, pouring out the “wine of the wrath of God” on His enemies.

No one in heaven is found who is worthy to “open the scroll” and open the seals, initiating the judgement of God, but one – Jesus Christ. The Lamb of God. We see the angels participating with Him as He opens the seals and the judgments are poured out upon the earth. But nowhere do we see the church participating in these judgments. In Revelation chapter twelve we read of Satan being cast out of the heavens to the earth:

“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.” (Rev 12:7-12 NKJV)

Please note carefully that nowhere does it say here that the saints in any way participate in this war. It speaks only of angels. The 11th verse merely describes how the saints overcame the accuser of the brethren. To say this implies that the saints are participating in this heavenly war that breaks out is maybe

inferring too much. But for the sake of argument let's say that the saints help the holy angels in their war against the unholy angels and help cast them down to earth during the Tribulation. This places the Church in heaven and speaks of a rapture. It certainly does nothing to promote the idea of an earthly Church administering the wrath of God upon an unbelieving world and apostate church.

To avoid dealing with this problem the passage is spiritualized to picture the saints participating in "strategic-level spiritual warfare" right here on this earth. The fact is we simply have no evidence in scripture that the Church is going to be participating in, or executing the judgements of God on this earth.

"Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe. So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs." (Rev 14:14-20 NKJV)

In this passage we see our Lord trampling out the great winepress of the wrath of God. In a passage in Isaiah 63:1-6 that obviously refers to the same event, we are again told :

"Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength"; "I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." "Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?" "I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come. I looked, but there was no one to help, And I wondered That there was no one to uphold; Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; And My own fury, it sustained Me. I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, Made them drunk in My fury, And brought down their strength to the earth." (Isa 63:1-6 NKJV)

It couldn't be clearer. The Lord will execute His wrath upon this earth, with some angelic participation but without any participation by the saints. In Revelation chapter nineteen we see the Lord returning from heaven at the end of the Tribulation – **with** His saints. It is at this time that He "treads out the winepress of the wrath of God", as the leaders of the world, and their armies who have assembled together in the valley of Armageddon turn against Him.

"Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." (Psa 2:1-3 NKJV)

"Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the winepress is full, The vats overflow; For their wickedness is great." (Joel 3:12,13 NKJV)

We see the Church referred to in Revelation nineteen as the "armies in heaven." Not the "armies of earth." There isn't even a hint that we participate in any of the judgements that commence prior to this time. Only now can we talk of the Church triumphantly following the rider of the white horse to victory over her enemies.

And yet, Bill Hamon writes:

*God's great end-time army is being prepared to execute God's written judgements with Christ's victory and divine judgement decrees that have already been established in heaven. The time is set when they will be administered and executed on earth through God's saintly army... **The church – God's weapons of war against spiritual Babylon.** "You are my battle-ax and weapons of war: for with you I will break the nation in pieces; with you I will destroy kingdoms;...and I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all the evil they have done in Zion in your sight," says the Lord...and the land will tremble with sorrow; for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon...(Jer 51:20, 24, 29 NKJV).²⁸⁰*

Rick Joyner, mystic-prophet to the Church, has claimed that God gave him a vision of a coming "civil war" that is soon to take place in the Church. Many of the other present-day apostles and prophets have shared this same vision. In a copy of Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin (May 1996) Joyner shares his vision of a coming civil war in the Church:

On February 23rd of this year I was shown for the third time that the Church was headed for a "spiritual civil war"...the definition of a complete victory in this war would be the complete overthrow of the accuser of the brethren's strongholds in the Church...this will, in fact, be **one of the most cruel battles the Church has ever faced.** Like every civil war, it will cause brother to turn against brother like we may never have witnessed in the church before...this battle must be fought. It is an opportunity to drive the Accuser out of the Church, and for the Church then to come into unity that would otherwise be impossible...**what is coming will be dark.** At times Christians almost universally will be loath to even call themselves Christians. **Believers and unbelievers alike will think it is the end of Christianity as we know it, and it will be, through this the very definition of Christianity will be changed for the better.** The Church that emerges from what is coming will be full of unprecedented grace, unprecedented truth, and unprecedented power.²⁸¹ (Emphasis mine)

Sounds foreboding, doesn't it? He uses the words "cruel" and "dark" and it sounds as though he's predicting physical warfare and bloodshed. And although Joyner says it's a "spiritual" war that is going to be fought in the church his fellow prophets and mystics make it clear that it's not just going to be a "spiritual" war. What will this coming conflict be over?

Like the American Civil War, the coming spiritual civil war will also be between the Blue and the Gray. In dreams and visions blue often represents heavenly-mindedness (i.e. the sky is blue), and gray speaks of those who live by the power of their own minds (i.e. the brain is often called "gray matter"). This will be a conflict between those who well may be genuine Christians, but who live mostly according to their natural minds and human wisdom, and those who follow the Holy Spirit.²⁸²

So this battle will be fought, by the "Blues" on one side, those who are open to the "visions and revelation" of present-truth prophets and apostles. And of course, the "miracles, signs, and wonders" that are following their ministries. On the other side will be the "Grays", the "old-truth" Christians who stubbornly hold to scriptural doctrine and reject extra-biblical revelations and visions (at least those that don't line up with scripture). All of the "Pharisees" and "heresy hunters" who have the audacity to proclaim with the prophet Isaiah "to the Law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."

What is the main point of contention in this spiritual civil war? Just as in the American Civil War, the primary purpose is going to be to free the slaves - the spiritual slaves who are being held in bondage by the Grays who are insisting on Biblical accuracy:

Again, the main point in the impending civil war will be over the institution of slavery - or the institutions of spiritual slavery. When I speak of “institutions of slavery”, I am not necessarily speaking of denominations, but rather of any organization including denominations or movements, that are holding their people in spiritual bondage. The longer we continue to compromise with such institutions, which use manipulation or control for the sake of unity or any other reason, the more it ultimately cost us to remove the cancer from our midst.²⁸³

Joyner never defines exactly what this spiritual bondage means or gives any examples of such, but his interpretation becomes apparent as we read on:

Another cause for the American Civil War was the compulsion for many in the South to simply “preserve their way of life” or “traditions”. This will likewise be a cause of many conflicts in the impending spiritual civil war...one of the powers of a religious spirit is to honor the things that God has done in the past in order for them to justify their opposition to what he is presently doing...there is a huge portion of the Church held in bondage to the same religious spirit that manifested itself in the Pharisees, and it will attack any new movement that arises in the church. The more anointed a new movement is, the more these traditionalist will be threatened by it, and the more vehemently they will attack it.²⁸⁴

According to them, religious “slavery” or “bondage” is anything or anyone that would demand that their visions and revelations be judged against the Word of God as the Bereans did. Labeling their critics as “Pharisees” with “a religious spirit” is one of their favorite tactics. These men are promising liberty, but it is a false and unscriptural liberty - a liberty of which Peter prophesied:

“For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’” (2 Pet 2:18-22 NKJV)

The liberty that these men are promising is a liberty from the restraints and principles of scripture that often turns to license. A number of these modern-day visionaries and prophets such as Bob Jones and Earl Paulk have had to be chastised by the Church for moral failures. The problem is that this spiritual elitism promotes a “the same rules that apply to others no longer apply to me” mentality.

How this “cancer” is going to be removed from their midst in this civil war Joyner never really specifies. He characterizes the “Blues” as being “spiritually ruthless and cruel”. But who is really being spiritually ruthless and cruel here? Those who simply stand on Biblical truth and Biblical revelation, refusing to go outside the limits of the Bible for all things pertaining to belief and practice, or those like Joyner and others who seem to be going the way of Cain and prophesying death and destruction to their enemies?

In an audiocassette message entitled Joel’s Army, Jack Deere proclaims:

How is God going to bring judgement upon his Church and then judgement upon the land after his Church? He’s going to do it with a large and mighty army. Now what is this army like? He says, first off in verse 3, well first of all he said that this army is totally unique. This army, there’s never been one like it and there never will be one like it in ages to come... “Begin the slaughter and begin it in the temple and begin it with the elders, the leaders of my

people.” And they walk through the land and they start and they begin to slaughter and you know God has already started that? He has already started with the biggest names in His household? He has already started the slaughter... And, it is coming now among the Church. He’ll start with the leaders, but He’ll move out into the Church. That’s why when He says in verse 2, “It’s a day not of rejoicing and happiness, it’s a day of darkness and gloom. It’s a day of clouds and blackness, like dawn spreading across the mountains...”²⁸⁵

Some pretty inflammatory rhetoric, to say the least. These men would all deny that they have plans to wage any kind of physical warfare in the Church and that they are proclaiming a coming “spiritual” warfare. But when you read statements like this you have to wonder if they are being entirely honest. Others have added to the civil war “vision” and it just keeps growing worse. Wes Campbell, speaking at the Toronto Vineyard, proclaims:

In 1984 we didn’t just have a vision about the cup bearer and the baker. He had another one, and that was about the Church. And the Church was gathered in a large civil war-type stately mansion, a big ballroom, and they were dancing. And they were dressed in colorful clothes and happy, and they were moving and they were laughing and they were dancing and they were just having the most wonderful party of their life. And He looked at that and Bob [Jones] began to laugh and he said look at them dance, look at them have fun. And an angel came and said, wait. Not yet. And then what happened is that strangely in the ballroom, the crowd began to change, and they began to take sides, and they began to have blue coats and gray coats, and in a moment civil war broke out. **A bloody civil war broke out.** James Ryle has had a similar vision. The Lord even showed him how the blue coats stand for the revelatory, the revelation, and the gray for gray matter, man’s wisdom. And in this context, the North fought the South and the South fought the North, and the South wanted to keep the people enslaved. They wanted their money. They wanted their bodies. They wanted their personhood to keep the system going. And the North said no! Freedom! Freedom! And they went into a terrible fight, and it was father against son, brother against brother, and a man’s enemies were in his own house. And the angel said this: **“There won’t be a house that escapes weeping.”** We do not know how long this time of visitation will continue in this capacity. But when the time is up you run with all your might, because as this begins to be known throughout the entire Christian community of the world, there will come a polarization, there always has come a polarization. And there will eventually become wars. There will be wars in your household. Your own family may not understand what’s going on. Your own family may turn against you. That doesn’t mean they’re evil. That just means as Christians they haven’t seen this aspect of the Holy Spirit. ‘Cause they’re Christians. We’re talking about Christians. But the end of the vision was this: That after the **time of bloodshed**, the Lord was going to heal the breach.²⁸⁶ (Emphasis mine)

Here we have it – brother against brother in a **“bloody”** civil war. What these men are proclaiming in their visions is not just a “spiritual” war, it is a physical war in which people are going to die. Why? Because they are a cancer in the body of Christ, a cancer that will not join the ecumenical one-world Church and be healed; therefore they must be surgically removed. Wes Campbell invites his wife to the stage and she gives a “prophecy”:

And, this is very similar to what Wes has just said, you know that Bob Jones and different other people have prophesied. But I feel like the Lord would like to just prophesy afresh to you:

As Elijah spoke on Mount Carmel immediately after, showing great displays of His power. He did not stop with the display of his powers. He said choose, choose, choose this day whom you will serve... And I tell you there are those even among you now who are here simply to spread discord among the brethren. And there are seven things that the Lord hates, that are an abomination to Him, and one of them is a man who deliberately comes seeking to

spread division in His Church, seeking to destroy and to divide, who, in the name of truth abandons love and stirs up hate, who does not understand that love covers a multitude of sins. And the Lord says the word of correction is to be brought in love. And the Lord does like correction, and He calls for it to happen, but the Lord hates, haaaatttteeesssss division, and for the one who comes to bring division, to divide the Church of Christ, to cut off His arms from His legs, and the toes from His feet, the Lord says it would be better for Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for that one on that day. But I tell you, nonetheless, that division will come, and it is even now brewing like a leaven in the Church... The Lord wants you to purpose in your heart this night, is it God or isn't it, and to stand by your commitment as you are called to stand by your confession of faith.²⁸⁷

It seems “division” is the greatest sin that a Christian can commit in the Church today. Or being a Berean. To judge the “present-truth” apostles and prophets and their mystical dreams and visions and reject them as scripturally unfounded is tantamount (in their minds) to rejecting Christ and His Word. Who is really causing division in the body of Christ? I believe it is those who are drawing a line and demanding that God’s people cross over to one side or the other – to the “blue” or the “gray”. Who is issuing threats of bloodshed and war upon all that refuse to cross over to their side? Where is all of this leading?

“I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.” (Rev 17:6 NKJV)

The leaders of the Latter Rain revivals of today identify their critics as modern-day Pharisees. William DeArtega is one of the chief defenders of the “Toronto Blessing” and he wrote a book entitled Quenching the Spirit in which he credits the Church with stopping many of the historical revivals God had tried to usher in. Men who are pointing out and protesting the acceptance of occult teachings into the Church, such as Dave Hunt, D.R. McConnel, and Hank Hanegraff are all labeled by him as modern-day Pharisees. DeArtega draws the conclusion that it is the modern-day “Pharisee” that must be removed from the Church – not the heresy (which he defends).

The immediate task of the Church is to pray that the harm from this latest wave of Pharisaism be dissipated quickly. With God’s providential intervention, the confusion, division, fear and paranoia that have been loosed by the current Pharisees and witch-hunters could be turned to good. If the Church could indeed learn that Pharisaism is indeed a perennial heresy of the Church and recognize it as it manifests, then the current crisis will have served as a painful but necessary landmark along the road to a higher level of discernment and spiritual maturity.²⁸⁸

Apologetics and doctrinal orthodoxy are now to be equated with Pharisaism. I believe it is important to understand the problem Jesus had with the Pharisees. It is essential to understand that the Lord did **not** have a problem with the Pharisee’s interpretation of the scripture. Their interpretation of the Law of Moses was correct - as Jesus acknowledged:

“Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.’” (Mat 23:1-3 NKJV)

It was their hypocrisy that the Lord objected to. The Pharisees added to the Word of God, formulating endless laws of their own, contained in the “oral law”. This law was passed down and added to from generation to generation. The Pharisees elevated their own laws to the same authoritative level as the scripture and in their hypocrisy were using their traditions to escape the demands of the written Law of God:

“Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, ‘Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.’ He answered and said to them, ‘Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your

tradition?’ For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God’; then he need not honor his father or mother. Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’” (Mat 15:1-9 NKJV)

The “heresy of Pharisaism” consists of adding to the Word of God through extra-biblical revelations or “traditions” which are declared to be on the same level as the Word of God. I think the real Pharisees are the modern-day “apostles and prophets” with their “present-truth” revelations, mystical visions, and extra-biblical experiences that they are demanding the rest of us should uncritically accept. The threatenings of retribution and persecution on all who refuse to accept their doctrines and revelations reminds one of the Pharisees of Jesus’ day.

I believe Dave Hunt and others have a biblical right and obligation to question the extra-biblical teachings, revelations, and experiences of the modern-day prophets and apostles. I have yet to see Dave Hunt or Hank Hanegraaff threaten any of the “revival” leaders who are labeling them as Pharisees and threatening them. Unhappy with Hank Hanegraaff’s criticism of the Brownsville “revival”, Brownsville pastor, John Kirkpatrick “prophesied” the following threat against Hank Hanegraaff and his ministry:

“If you want to keep any semblance of a ministry, you’d better back off this revival and what God is doing,” Mr. Kirkpatrick said on April 6. “I am going to prophesy that if you don’t...within 90 days the Holy Ghost will bring you down. And I speak that as a man of God.”²⁸⁹

Needless to say, the Holy Spirit did no such thing and Hanegraaff and his ministry survived. Kirkpatrick apologized. Admittedly some of the criticism of these revivals can seem harsh at times, because of the bizarre nature of the “revelations” and manifestations that are coming out of them, and the incredulity of those who are trying to understand them. I find it hard to remain detached and not become sarcastic and a little harsh when I hear the anointing of the Holy Spirit referred to as “the anointing”, and likened to the squealing of a pig. Yet I don’t find this same militant and threatening spirit in the critics of the revival that I so often run across in its proponents. For example, Dave Hunt, in responding to Michael Brown’s charge that the critics of revival have the same “negative, narrow, and nit-picking spirit that would have rejected Jesus – failing to hear Him out sympathetically, looking to accuse and disprove, disregarding the overall tenor of the scriptural message in the name of loyalty to the word...”²⁹⁰

Dave Hunt responds:

On the contrary, we do not doubt the sincerity of those involved nor that souls have been saved and lives changed. But there are manifestations which are not glorifying to the Lord and some that even appear to be demonic. These problems need to be honestly faced.²⁹¹

Dave Hunt offers what I would call a reasonable and measured response to his critics. How different from the tenor of the response that Paul Crouch offers to his critics! Dr. Joseph Chambers writes:

In fact, Paul Crouch calls theology “doo-doo”. On a Praise the Lord telecast, he shouted, “Let Him (God) sort out all this doctrinal doo-doo, I don’t care about it.” He apparently hates no one worse than those he calls “heresy hunters”. On another occasion he spoke to his world-wide audience by stating, “Heretic hunters, those guys who spend their lives straightening us all out doctrinally, they are going to go straight to hell.”... “I refuse to argue any longer with any of you out there. Don’t even call me if you want to argue doctrine, if you want to straighten somebody out over here...if you want to criticize Kenneth Copeland for his preaching on faith or Dad Hagin, get out of my life. I don’t ever want to talk to you or

hear. I don't want to see your ugly face. I think they are damned and on their way to hell and I don't think there is any redemption for them. I say, to hell with you. I say, get out of God's way, quite blocking God's bridges (apparently, he defines God's bridges as the one world church and ecumenism.); **or God is going to shoot you if I don't.**"²⁹² (Emphasis mine)

"God is going to shoot you if I don't!" This is not exactly what I would call a reasonable and measured response to the critics. I think I detect the murderous spirit of Cain in these threats. The "visions" of the Latter Rain prophets of civil war, bloodshed and retribution soon to come in the Church are encouraging this militant response to the critics of the movement.

Healing evangelist Benny Hinn responds to his critics on TBN's "Praise the Lord" show:

You wonderful people of God quit attacking men of God by name! Somebody's attacking me because of something I'm teaching! Let me tell you something brother, you watch it!...I don't mind if they attack Benny and the way he is and the way he walks, but don't attack the anointing on my life...Don't attack this man of God [speaking of Paul Crouch]. There is a group here in California that thinks they are the judgement seat of Christ! They judge everything that you do. Listen here fella', let me tell you something, you're not my judge. Jesus is my judge! You walk around with your stiff lip and your collar on your neck – Dear God in heaven I wish I could just – ooh! They call it a "ministry", my foot! You know I've looked for one verse in the Bible, I just can't seem to find it, one verse that says, "If you don't like 'em, kill 'em." I really wish I could find it!...Ladies and gentlemen, don't publicly attack them by name!...Don't mention people's names of your radio program and your T.V. program – thinking your doing God service – you're not! Frankly That's the way I feel about it...It angers me to no end – there's no power but judgement; no life but death! Quit it! I'm sorry, I'm not exactly the normal kind of guy you know, I'm from Israel. Sometimes I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machine gun – I'd blow your head off!

293

Such ominous threats coming from a man who claims to be a disciple of Jesus – the same Jesus who proclaimed:

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you..." (Mat 5:44 NKJV)

In a sermon entitled Touch Not Mine Anointed, Benny proclaims his hatred for his critics, saved and unsaved alike:

Hinn began the message with the preface that video cameras might have to be turned off because he had some things to say that he did not want taped. This is when we began to take notes. Hinn began to decry the "persecution" he was receiving. He told a story of an incident with a customs agent at a Chicago airport. Hinn said, "Those people are mean up in Chicago, just because I am a preacher they gave me a hard time. I told that customs man, I want to see your supervisor! When I got to the supervisor's office he said to me, 'You're just like [Jim] Baker.' That made me so angry – if I could have killed him, I would have!" As shocking as these words are coming from a supposed preacher of the gospel, "death" and the judgement of death, was a central theme in his message: Death to all "persecutors" and all those who question Hinn and his teaching. Hinn continued: "Now I'm going to tell you that God prophetically is showing us in the Psalms, that the body of Jesus Christ in America will sooner or later become militant, and say: 'We've had it! You touch us one more time and, **DROP DEAD BROTHER.**'"²⁹⁴

You can only hope from these statements that Hinn and others are not serious about these threats, and if given the chance, would not carry them out. Those who dare criticize the Latter Rain proponents are increasingly being characterized as evil, and a cancer that needs to be removed from the body of Christ. They even are going so far as to identify us as the Anti-Christ! Tricia Tillin in *The New Thing* writes:

Scripture identifies the Antichrist as **those who deny that Christ “is come in the flesh”**. If an anointing, or a glory cloud, is believed to be the coming of Christ into a body of flesh (His Church), then anyone who denies the reality of such a thing could be labeled, scripturally, an Antichrist. Because we deny that Christ has come invisibly into this body of people – thus **we are the antichrist** and we must be destroyed. Far fetched? Unlikely ever to be applied to us? Well, the reasoning has already been applied: Earl Paulk writes in “The Wounded Body of Christ”

“Every spirit that does not confess that Jesus is come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming and is now already in the world. (I John 4:3) When John dealt with identifying the Antichrist, he said the spirit of Antichrist was already at work. This spirit was identifiable by the fact that it...does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This is an area in which we must test the spirits. **The greatest test of the Antichrist is its attitude towards the Church – Jesus Christ Himself is not a threat to any community unless there is a living thriving church in that community. Therefore, the spirit of Antichrist refuses to recognize that God is HERE IN THE FLESH.** Attacking such figures as Oral Roberts, Jim Baker, and Kenneth Copeland [is] attacking the Church of Jesus Christ - such mockery and criticism are **the means by which the spirit of Antichrist operates.**”

Ken Copeland makes the same application. He goes to great lengths to try to prove that the word Christ means anointing, so every time you come to the word Christ in the Bible you should re-translate it, “the anointing.” Jesus was a man who was Christed, He had the anointing. Now that same anointing is coming upon the Church, and if you oppose it you are anti-anointing, and that makes you anti-Christ!

“Once you start re-translating the word Christ, as anointing you’ll realize how the message of the anointing permeates the entire New Testament. Even in those early days, the Devil sent people in to steal the message, --- people with the spirit of Anti-Christ (anti-anointing). For if you re-translate the word Anti-Christ you’ll realize it’s referring **to someone who is opposed to the anointing.**”²⁹⁵

Now we are the Anti-Christ. Where will it end? I’m afraid it may end in bloodshed, just as some of the modern prophets have predicted. What could be more noble than to do battle against the Anti-Christ, as they follow the “rider on the white horse”? But who is really following the Anti-Christ? Who is the “rider on the white horse”, whom they claim they will follow on to victory in the Great Tribulation.

Kansas City prophet Paul Cain stated:

...This army is also in the New Testament. It’s referred to as the manchild. I know some of you’s gonna disagree with this; don’t you even stop to disagree. Revelation 12:25, if you disagree just file it in “miscellaneous” and don’t bother with it. When you get to heaven we’ll check it out, and you’ll find out I’m right. Here it is...the bride of the Lamb’s wife...See why they call me on the carpet? ...**And the white horse, Revelation 6:2...**²⁹⁶

Who is this rider on the white horse that Cain and other modern day Apostles and prophets claim will lead Joel’s army to victory in the Great Tribulation? **Anti-Christ!** I can cite author after author after author,

prophetic teacher after prophetic teacher, many of them Charismatics, who over the years have correctly identified this rider of the white horse in Revelation 6:2 as the Anti-Christ.

At Brownsville Assembly of God they sing a song, a song that proclaims their determination to follow this rider on the white horse to victory over all of their enemies. It is called Fire In His Eyes:

He has fire in His eyes and sword in His hands,
He's riding a white horse across this land.
He has fire in his eyes and a sword in his hands,
He's riding a white horse across this land.
He's calling out to you and me, "Will you ride with me?"

We are saying, "Lord we'll ride with you"
We will stand up and fight
We will ride, we will be dressed in white.
We're saying "Lord, we'll ride, yes Lord, I'll ride with you."

He has a crown on his head,
He carries a scepter in his hand,
And he's leading the army all across this land,
He's calling out to you and me,
"Will you ride with me." ²⁹⁷

There is a false anointing loose in the world, breathing out murderous threats against all who would oppose it. It is the spirit of Anti-Christ leading the apostate church to an ecumenical unity, into spiritual drunkenness, and into "the way of Cain".

"And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed." (1 Pet 3:113-16 NKJV)

According to the Latter Rain apostles and prophets a "bloody civil war" is about to break out in the Church. And there will be no neutrality. You will be forced to line up on one side or the other. Larry Randolph, speaking at the Toronto Airport Vineyard during the early days of the "revival" there, proclaimed:

Now let me say, before I begin, there are two groups of people in the church today. I categorize them. Those that are affected by what God's doing and those that are offended by what God is doing. There is not a lot of neutral ground. The neutral ground is dissipating by the hour. You can't stand in the middle anymore and say "Well, I don't know. Maybe it's God, maybe it's not" You're going to get rolled over. Remember the song "I'm a steam roller, baby, and I'm going to roll right over you?" Well, I think the Holy Spirit is singing that song. There is no middle ground. You're either affected or offended by what God is doing. And if you're offended, you may continue to get offended because you haven't seen nothing yet. If you haven't been able to run, walk with a footman, what are you going to do when the horses come? ²⁹⁸

"Revival" leader John White, speaking of a coming judgement upon the leadership of the Canadian Church that "God" revealed to him was coming because of their rejection of the "revival" at Toronto, prophesied the following threat:

*...I believe a far more terrible judgement is coming on the church, particularly in Ontario, and I don't know what form that will take. **I only know that I have seen it and it frightened me out of my tree.***²⁹⁹

I believe the Spirit of God is calling out to this wayward Latter Rain church of His today, a church that is rapidly going “the way of Cain”, to repent of the Spirit of murder that led Cain to slay his brother Abel so many years ago.

“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.” (Gen 4:7 NKJV)

CHAPTER 10

A NEW PARADIGM

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.” (1 John 4:1-3 NKJV)

During the infancy of the Christian Church, while the original Apostles of Christ were still alive Satan made an effort to destroy the Church through the introduction of a mixture – a mixture of the pure faith as it was revealed through the Apostles of Christ with something impure.

One such attempt came through an effort to retain the traditions and rituals of Judaism such as circumcision, feast days, and dietary laws – holding on to them as essential for salvation. This mixture of law and grace by the Judaizers was very successful at first. Even the Apostle Peter was carried away by their influence and had to be rebuked by Paul publicly. At the Council of Jerusalem the Apostles met and officially put a stop to this heresy. Much of the New Testament was written in response to this error, in particular Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain; if indeed it was in vain?” (Gal 3:1-4 NKJV)

Satan’s next attempt to introduce a mixture into the Church came through the heresy of Gnosticism, which is an attempt to mix pagan philosophies and beliefs with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Gnosticism had its beginning with a man named Philo Judaeus, in Alexandria, Egypt. The son of a prominent Jewish family, Philo was educated both in the Jewish faith and in Greek philosophy and culture.

A contemporary of Jesus (25 BC to 40AD) Philo sought to combine in one the best of both of the traditions he had been raised in – Judaism and Hellenism. Philo himself carefully observed the Jewish law and believed in its inspiration but also fell in love with Greek philosophy which he came to believe was also full of God’s truth. Thus Philo set himself to the task of harmonizing the two, producing a mixture of the scriptural truth and the “truths” of the Greek philosophers.

In order to do this Philo had to abandon a literal interpretation of the scriptures for the spiritual or allegorical method of interpretation. He borrowed this allegorical method from the Greeks who had invented and employed it to re-interpret the early Greek poets such as Hesiod and Homer to fit their contemporary traditions. According to the *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible (Vol. 1)*:

Hellenistic Judaism, best exemplified by Philo of Alexandria (*d. c. AD 45-50*), used allegory to make the O.T. relevant in the Greco-Roman world. Later, a group of Christian interpreters centered around Alexandria employed allegory as their principal method of handling both the Old Testament and the New Testament. In one form or another allegory was the dominant interpretative method of the Middle Ages. It continued to be highly regarded by some peitistically and mystically oriented contemporary Christians, both Protestant and Catholic...Allegory provides no “controls” to protect the interpreter from

reading his own meanings into Scripture (eisogesis) rather than drawing out its own message (exegesis).³⁰⁰

The effect of Philo's allegorical attempts to reconcile Judaism with pagan philosophy was of course to destroy the true meaning of the Scriptures. The bread of God's word cannot be mixed with the leaven of man's foolish speculations. The effect of such a mixture is to destroy the truth of God's Word. God hates a mixture, His Word is to remain pure, uncontaminated with the philosophies of men.

"The words of the LORD are pure words, Like silver tried in a furnace of earth, Purified seven times. You shall keep them, O LORD, You shall preserve them from this generation forever." (Psa 12:6,7 NKJV)

Philo's methods of interpretation were later to be applied to scripture by a group of false apostles and mystics in the early Christian Church who would come to be known as the Gnostics. When Satan's first attempt to destroy the Gospel through the Judaizers failed he made another attempt through the Gnostics but as long as the original Apostles remained alive, these attempts met with failure.

"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars..." (Rev 2:2 NKJV)

It wasn't until John, the last of the original apostles died, that Gnosticism would be able to make any significant inroads into the Church. Again, as with the Judaizers, much of the New Testament was written as a refutation of the Gnostic heresies. For example, John identifies the spirit of Anti-Christ as the spirit that was behind the Gnostic doctrine that Christ never possessed a physical body – that He was merely one of a series of "spiritual emanations" from God. John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, refutes this teaching in his gospel and his epistles:

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...**And the Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* (John 1:1,14 NKJV)

*"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, **and our hands have handled**, concerning the Word of life; the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us..."* (1 John 1:1,2 NKJV)

The term Gnostic comes from the Greek word Gnosis which means "knowledge." The Gnostics claimed to possess special secret or "esoteric" knowledge. This special knowledge could only be received by a spiritually elite class of humanity, the "pneumatic", or "spiritual". According to *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*:

There was a second class of men, those who were only "psychic" and could not get beyond faith. The prophets and other good Hebrews belonged to this class but they must be eternally in a sphere much inferior to that occupied by those who had "gnosis". A third class represented the overwhelming mass of human kind. They were merely "hyclic" (i.e. subject to matter) and their class was utterly hopeless for they were in endless bondage to Satan and their own lusts, and their end was to be completely destroyed. Here was one of the worst features of Gnosticism, the elevating of a limited number into a specially privileged class, and the consigning of the majority of mankind to unredeemable destruction...In general, all the varied schools taught that matter was utterly and irretrievably evil. They agreed that the God of the Jews, the Creator of the world, was not the Supreme Being but a very inferior being whom they called the Demiurge...The historical Christ was a mere man, but He was taken possession of by the heavenly Christ who was the brightest of all aeons [emanations from the Gnostic God]. This heavenly Christ acted in the man Jesus but was never incarnate. He could

not be, because matter was so evil...Another version was that the heavenly Christ only had the semblance of a body...The Ophites were a Gnostic sect which venerated the serpent. They taught that God was bad and the serpent good. One school of thought turned the scriptures upside down, teaching that Pharaoh and Ahab were saints while Moses and Elijah were sinners. Altogether, Gnosticism was a deadly peril in the Church for about 150 years.³⁰¹

I think we are going to have to expand that estimate of 150 years. In these last days we have seen the re-emergence of Gnosticism in two areas. The first one being outside of the Church in the New Age Movement and the second inside of the Church through the Latter Rain Movement. Both of these movements, the New Age and the Latter Rain, show remarkable similarities upon close examination. The reason for this being the common thread of Gnosticism that is woven into both movements.

To the New Age, like the Gnostics before them, Jesus Christ is not God incarnate. Christ is a spirit or “spiritual emanation”, an “aeon” that “took possession” of the man Jesus Christ – the “Christ spirit”:

Jesus was not always Christ. Jesus won his Christship by a strenuous life, and in...chapter 55, we have a record of the events of his christing, or receiving the degree of Christ...we recognize the fact that Jesus was a man and that Christ was God...³⁰²

Jesus was just a man who was “christed” or who received the “Christ-spirit.” According to the New Age Jesus was, like Buddha, just one of many such “christed” men. The New Age is looking for a return of the “Christ-spirit.” He will rest upon the next “great teacher” whom they refer to as “the Christ”, or “Lord Mayitreya”. (Christians know him as Anti-Christ)

According to the Manifest Sons of God or Joel’s Army doctrine being embraced by the church today Jesus is also not unique or alone as the incarnated Son of God. Although they do not deny the incarnation of Christ many teach that the manifest sons of God are also going to become “divine sons” – God incarnate. Jesus becomes just a pattern, the “pattern son” or the “seed” from which many “Christ’s” will emerge. Kelly Varner writes:

Jesus was the pattern son, the “firstborn son”...The time has come again for the woman to be “delivered”, to “travail and bring forth”...In the time of the corporate Messiah – Christ being formed in a people...³⁰³

And:

Jesus Christ is the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15) as well as the seed of Abraham and the seed of David...In that seed is God’s name or nature- all that God is, all that God has, and all that God does! ...Jesus will realize the spiritual seed who shall prolong his days (Jn. 14:12; Acts 1:1). This enchristed seed (Gal 3:16) is an anointed army of servants, the 42nd generation, the glorious, end-time Church marked by righteousness (Ps. 14:5), prayer (Ps. 24:6), and praise (Ps. 102:18).³⁰⁴

Another Manifest Sons of God proponent, E.E. Brooks writes:

We shall be EXACTLY LIKE HIM. Not the mere shadow of what we see now when we look into a mirror. His seed *will* produce perfection when placed in *good ground*. God’s seed is not defective that it can not bring forth. It is not weak, bringing forth something less than himself. There will be a group of sons who will partake of the divine nature and become like Him.³⁰⁵

And:

We have the opportunity to partake of the divine nature, the very essence of God. Currently we find ourselves immersed in human nature. Peter tells us there is a possibility to partake of the same nature that God has. Some of us will shed our human nature and awaken

to a much higher destiny. Once fully clothed with the Divine Nature, we will be the Manifested Sons of God. Every thought will be Divine. God's thoughts will become our thoughts. We will know the will of the Father, for it will become our Nature. Those of us who fully mature will experience a change, casting off the confines of human mortality to enter the frontier of divine immortality.³⁰⁶

The Manifest Son of God proponents are teaching a form of spiritual evolution. They teach we are evolving into God and this evolution will be complete when the sons of God become manifested to the world. When Christ returns not *for*, but *in* His body the Church, as a "corporate anointing" in "His corporate body." At that time, this spiritual evolution will be completed and they shall become God – Christ on this earth.

This exactly parallels the New Age teaching of today. The New Agers are also teaching that man is spiritually evolving into God. The spiritual evolution of the New Age is to be accomplished through the experience of "Cosmic consciousness":

New Age doctrine holds that as more and more racially superior human beings become aware of their divine nature and their latent powers within, a *critical mass* of energy will develop and a new *cosmic consciousness* will envelop the globe. Transformed into super-beings, *homo sapiens* will become a race of gods. Enlightened man shall rule the universe, unite with it, and he and it shall become one.³⁰⁷

The New Age spiritual evolution will be completed through "Cosmic consciousness" instead of the "corporate anointing" of the Latter Rain. Both groups are evolving into God – they're just using different terminology! Note also the claims of spiritual superiority and elitism made by both groups.

"*You shall be as God.*" That is the promise of Satan and the New Age and that is also the promise of the Manifest Sons of God. As we have seen, the Manifest Sons of God proponents are labeling and identifying their critics in the Church as Anti-Christ. Kenneth Copeland proclaims:

Even in those early days, the Devil sent people in to steal that message...people with the spirit of Anti-Christ (anti-anointing). For if you retranslate the word Anti-Christ you'll realize it's referring to someone who is opposed to the anointing.

Much the same, prominent New Ager John Randolph Price, when asked "How do you define the Anti-Christ?", replied:

Any individual or group who denies the divinity of man as exemplified by Jesus Christ; i.e. to be in opposition to Christ in you. The indwelling Christ or Higher Self of each individual.³⁰⁸

Both groups are essentially saying the same thing – the Anti-Christ is anyone who does not believe that God is here now incarnate in our flesh, or will come and incarnate in our flesh. Well, God *was* here in the flesh, and His name is Jesus Christ. But now God-in-the-flesh is seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for the saints. As has already been pointed out, the fact that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us as believers does not make us God, as the Manifest Sons of God proponents teach. This is the heresy of Apotheosis.

Jesus was unique. He alone was the God-man. He was fully God, and He was fully man. We are only men, even though the Spirit of God dwells in us. It is my belief that the spirit of Anti-Christ not only denies that Jesus was God incarnate – it also denies the *uniqueness* of Christ as the God-man. The spirit that would seek to elevate man to the place of Christ, whether in the Church or in the world, is the spirit of Anti-Christ.

Many of us saw Shirley McClaine stand on that beach and reluctantly at first, but with increasingly more confidence and boldness, proclaim, "I am God." We recognize the spirit behind that as the spirit of

Anti-Christ. Sadly however this was no different than Casey Treat's congregation following him, reluctantly at first like Shirley, and then with more boldness and enthusiasm in his declaration, "I'm an exact duplicate of God".

This is clearly the spirit of Anti-Christ at work and yet those of us who reject the idea that "Christ in us" makes us God's are labeled as Anti-Christ. To believe in a literal personal Anti-Christ would logically lead to a belief in what the Bible tells us concerning him - that he will be given power to make war with and overcome the saints during the Tribulation. For this reason, some Latter Rain proponents in the Church today are increasingly denying the existence of a personal Anti-Christ.

Just as Christ and the rapture have been turned into a "spiritual coming of Christ into His elect", so the Anti-Christ has been spiritualized as well. No longer a literal person he is now the spirit that motivates the critics of the anointing – revival critics.

Tens of thousands of scary sermons have been preached through the years warning that the days would come when the Antichrist would arise, and then the Christians in western lands would have their Bibles taken from them, their children would be trained in Atheism. They would be put against the wall and shot in mass massacres, and then with its last gasp the beaten, battered, bruised, broken, bleeding would cry, "Even so, come Lord Jesus, and rescue us from total defeat!"...The profound truth which all of popular religion has missed, is the fact of the Christ actually coming into this flesh, my flesh, your flesh, and becoming an eternal and inseparable part of us! "Every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ IS (now) COME in the flesh is not of God: and THIS is that spirit of Antichrist" ...By personal application, if my spirit does not confess that Christ has come in my flesh, I am Antichrist...I do not hesitate to tell you, precious brothers of mine, that Satan has a DUMMY ANTICHRIST set up, a horrible creature who will never appear, and the Christian Church is busily engaged in wasting their time and ammunition on this dummy. They are telling what a terrible creature he will be, all the while ignorant of the fact that the true criminal is in their very midst.³⁰⁹

Although many still hold to the Biblical teaching of a personal Anti-Christ they hold to the unbiblical position that the saints will make war with him and overcome him during the Tribulation. This is just the opposite of what the Bible proclaims:

"It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation." (Rev 13:7 NKJV)

Another area in which the Joel's Army Movement closely parallels the New Age Movement is in their belief that "evil" will soon be removed from the earth and a "cleansing" will take place. We have already seen that according to the Joel's Army proponents that the rapture is when the wicked or the "tares" in the Church will be removed from the world. Again, this is just the opposite of the Biblical teaching that states the tares will be united (bundled together) and left in the field (the world) to be burned. One Charismatic pastor by the name of John Hinkle "prophesied" nationally that on Thursday, June 9, 1993, God was going to remove "the evil" from the earth. On March 14, Rev. Hinkle prophesied in front of his congregation and a large television audience (TBN):

...On Thursday night, March the 11th, the Lord spoke to me in a loud firm voice...And here is what He said: "On Thursday, June the 9th, I will rip the evil out of this world." Now immediately I thought wait a minute! Nobody knows what hour the Son of Man is coming. And I thought is Satan trying to trick me or something? That was my first thought. Immediately, the voice spoke this time deep within my heart but just as clear, and he said, "I did not say the Second Coming."...Now I didn't say the world's Destruction. I'm not prophesying that. ***I'm prophesying a cleansing.*** [Emphasis added] I'm saying what the Lord said to me...But He [God] said in those last days I will send out my angels and they will gather what first? What? The tares. They'll bind them into bundles, and throw them into the

furnace of fire...In other words get rid of them...The cleansing. Again this is referred to in scripture after scripture...³¹⁰

Needless to say this false prophecy never came to pass. But it underscores the fact that these Latter Rain proponents share a common belief of the New Age Movement in a “cleansing” that will take place in which all the wicked of the earth will be removed. And just who are the wicked who will be cleansed from the Earth? Bible believing Christians of course - and all others who resist the coming of the New Age. Leading New Age proponent David Spangler proclaims:

Now a vast work of purification is upon us to cleanse and beautify Earth as one would beautify a bride before her marriage; in this fashion, we greet Earth in her time of joy and accomplishment.³¹¹

New Ager John Randolph Price reveals that his spirit guide, named Asher, revealed to him:

Nature will soon enter her cleansing cycle. Those who reject the Earth changes with an attitude of “It can’t happen here” will experience the greatest emotion of fear and panic, followed by rage and violent action. These individuals, with their lower vibratory rates, will be removed during the next two decades.³¹²

How will this “cleansing take place”? Leading New Ager Ruth Montgomery writes:

The souls who helped to bring on the chaos of the present century will have passed into spirit to rethink their attitudes.³¹³

And:

Millions will survive and millions won’t. Those that won’t will go into the spirit state, because there is truly no death.³¹⁴

Just like Joel’s Army, the New Agers are predicting that a “rapture” will occur, in which millions of people (the evil ones) will disappear into the spiritual realm. So we see that Satan has developed a lie which the Anti-Christ can proclaim to explain away the rapture to the world. Tragically those who are adherents of Latter Rain theology will also accept this lie as it is the same one that they are perpetrating to explain away a literal rapture of the saints into heaven. Many will protest at this point that these Latter Rain proponents are not true Christians – just “false professors” who never really experienced salvation.

Nothing could be further from the truth. An apostasy is a falling away from the faith. You can’t “fall away” from something you didn’t really have to begin with. These people are Christians – born-again, Spirit-filled Christians who have unfortunately been deceived. Those who have been led away from Christ to Anti-Christ by seducing spirits proclaiming doctrines of devils. Because of the pervasive influence of Calvinism in today’s Church, many Christians refuse to believe that a true born-again believer can be deceived and led away from Christ. I respectfully disagree. God warned the prophet Ezekiel:

“Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul.” (Ezek 3:20,21 NKJV)

God clearly says here that if a *righteous man turns from his righteousness* and commits iniquity “*He shall die in his sin and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered*”. In the New Testament we are warned:

*“And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight; **if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel** which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.” (Col 1:23 NKJV)*

That little word “if” here speaks volumes. The Apostle Paul wrote of the importance of finishing the race that we all have been called to run, and of the danger of being “disqualified”:

*“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, **lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.**” (1 Cor 9:24-27 NKJV)*

While it is beyond the scope of this book to discuss the merits of either Calvinism or Arminianism I believe we make a great mistake when we proclaim that true believers can not fall away from the faith and forfeit their salvation, much as Esau forfeited his birthright for a “bowl of pottage”. You can’t “lose” your salvation and God will never take it away, but I believe that we can willfully turn away from Christ and forfeit our salvation, “disqualifying” ourselves through our willful disobedience. I believe thousands of true Christians are falling away today, just as Paul predicted and are forfeiting their birthright (their heavenly hope) for an earthly bowl of pottage (an earthly kingdom established by Joel’s Army). As David Wilkerson writes, they are falling away from Christ to Antichrist:

Right now we see a growing antichrist sentiment and conduct. But soon this will turn into a flowing stream, and eventually, a vast ocean. And when the Antichrist finally appears, even many former Christians will welcome him – because their hearts will be of a kindred spirit! Paul warned of this. He said that in the last days false prophets would infiltrate the Church, preaching another gospel and another Jesus. Many such false prophets have already appeared, preaching the gospel of the Antichrist...The antichrist spirit is invading the hearts of many apostate Christians even now. They are being absolutely possessed of evil. “But how?”, you ask. Why would certain apostate Christians ever turn to the Antichrist? It is because they are like-minded with him. John writes:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world...” “..Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.”

John is warning us that those who still love the things of this world have opened themselves to the spirit of Antichrist. He’s saying “You know these are the last days because so many are full of the covetous antichrist spirit!”³¹⁵

The spirit of Anti-Christ has come into the Church through the Latter Rain revival of 1948 and it is producing a “New Age” form of Christianity that is leading thousands away from Christ to Anti-Christ and into the Great Harlot Church of Revelation Chapter 17. This “church” is pictured as being “*drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus*”. Not only do the Latter Rain proponents share the idea of a rapture of the wicked with the New Age, they also share alike in the idea that the kingdom to come is going to be established through much bloodshed and suffering. I believe that Satan has not only developed a lie to explain away the rapture but has also developed one to justify the persecution and martyrdom of the Tribulation saints as well. It is clear from scripture that most of those who come to Christ after the rapture will be persecuted relentlessly and martyred for their faith. I believe that the chief agent of the Antichrist in this world-wide persecution will be the Harlot one-world church.

As we have seen, many of the Latter Rain apostles and prophets are proclaiming a coming “civil war” in the Church. A time of purging and bloodshed in which all of the “grays”, those who stubbornly hold to ‘scripture only’ as the basis for belief and practice, will be destroyed. A cleansing – a time of bloodshed – exactly the same thing the New Age is declaring:

The New Age teaches that the removal and physical destruction of all Christians will be a *holy act*. This is carefully and elaborately explained in a key New Age bible called *The Keys of Enoch*. First published in 1978 by a group calling itself the Academy of Future Science, this incredibly revealing text – 618 pages in length – describes the wrath that will befall those who, in the last days, refuse to embrace the New Age religion and its gods. It speaks of a “great cleansing” to take place as the Earth is advanced to the New Age, an era in which our planet will enjoy “a higher orbital frequency”. The death and passing form the scene of the unbelievers in the New Age will open the earth up for a higher “spiritual frequency”. This higher frequency will, in turn, allow a “New Communion” to occur as the higher angelic beings (Christians call them “demons”) join and merge with the holier race of humans, [Genesis 6:1-5 ; Luke 17:26!] who have become gods. All this is supposedly to transpire around the year 2005, following a series of wars between the forces of good (New Age) and evil (Christians)...Not surprisingly, *The Keys of Enoch* teaches that the Antichrist is not a man (Revelation 13 says he *is* to be a man). Instead, he is said to be the collective spirit [the anti-anointing] of all those who stick to the “contaminated” man-made doctrines of Christianity and who teach against the “living word” [rhema] given by New Age religious leaders. This “Living Word” is said to consist of new “mystery texts” to be revealed later [present-truth], as well as the Dead Sea scrolls. These new mystery texts, or “sacred scriptures” shall be brought to man by interplanetary messengers who will reveal them only to the New Age “sons of light”. [Present-day apostles and prophets.]³¹⁶ (comments in brackets mine)

Not only do the Manifest Sons and the New Age share a common belief in a rapture of the wicked and a cleansing to follow but both are claiming that they are going to become a “victorious army” which will triumph over all their enemies. We have seen The Manifest Sons of God claim they will go forth as Joel’s Army conquering and triumphing over all in the Tribulation. In a statement that could very well have come from one of today’s Latter Rain proponents, New Age “Lord Maitreya” issues this “call to arms” through his spokesman Benjamin Crème:

The time of My Emergence has arrived, and soon now, in full vision and fact, My Face and Words will become known. May you be among those who quickly find and recognize me, for if you do, you may become My Warriors. My Army is now on the move and soon the clash of battle will be heard. The outcome of this battle is assured, for at my side are the True Sons of God. Take your places in the ranks of My Army, my friends, and create the New Time, the Time of God.³¹⁷

Both groups claim to be forming an army - a **militant** and **aggressive** army. New Age author Ron Hogart writes:

One could say we’re a race of rather **aggressive mystics**. Aggressiveness is demanded from us these days; how else can we begin to reverse Humanity’s slide toward doom.³¹⁸ (Emphasis mine)

“A race of rather aggressive mystics” seems to be a perfect description of the Latter Rain apostles and prophets. It would seem that these two armies are one and the same. I’m afraid both will be part of the same one-world church and both share the same goals. Constance Cumbey was one of the first to expose the New Age Movement and its goals in her book *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*. In a later book entitled *A Planned Deception* she writes:

Rev. Ernest Ramsey, an associate pastor at Unity's Kansas City's Founder's Church, Unity on the Plaza, is an enthusiastic follower of the Alice Bailey and Benjamin Crème teachings. In his Research Report #2, he tells of something he was led to by a spirit guide – what he terms “neo-Pentecostalism”. An aberrant branch of Pentecostalism, this is more commonly known as “Manifest Sons of God.” That movement is also referred to as “sonship” or “overcomers”. Ramsey concludes on less evidence than I have personally collected that this is part of the New Age Movement... Ramsey spent a semester at one of the New-Pentecostal or Manifest Sons of God seminaries – in upstate New York “at location surrounded by tall pine trees”. Already familiar with the Alice Bailey writings, he was amazed to see that there was a branch of Pentecostalism that embraced the same teachings – albeit using sometimes-different terminology. Like those seeking the “Age of Aquarius” these people too were seeking a “New Age”. Like the other New Agers, these people taught the “Christ” was an anointing – not necessarily one man. They taught that Jesus was a pattern son who was to be a sign of something even greater to come – the “manifestation of the sons of God”. They too believed the Earth was to be cleansed of evil. And chillingly like the other New Agers, they believed they were to be “God's” instruments to do such cleansing. The New Agers believed they were gods. The Manifest Sons of God likewise taught that if one accepted their “new revelation” that they themselves would actually become Christ at the time of the unveiling or manifestation of the sons of God. Ernest Ramsey believed the “neo-Pentecostals” did not accept astrology in any way. This is obviously not true as some Manifest Sons of God teachers, such as David Ebaugh, obviously do accept it. However, Ernest Ramsey excitedly pointed out in his report that they had a teaching which indeed did parallel the Aquarian teaching of the Age of Aquarius – the Old Testament “Year of Jubilee as well as the Feast of Tabernacles”. The year of Jubilee paralleled the redistribution of the world's wealth. The Feast of Tabernacles was the equivalent of the coming together of the world's peoples and varied religions under one tent or tabernacle – the equivalent of the New Ager's long awaited “New-world Religion”. Ramsey said in his report that there were three major centers of the Manifest Sons of God or “neo-Pentecostals”. Obviously there are more. But the three locations given by Ramsey were (1) recently deceased Bill Britton's *House of Prayer* and associated networking churches headquartered in Springfield, Missouri; (2) Virginia Beach, Virginia [Rock Church]; and (3) Upstate New York “on a mountain top at a location surrounded by tall pine trees. [Elim Bible Institute].³¹⁹

The upstate New York location, *Elim Bible Institute*, is referred to many times in Richard Riss' *Latter Rain* which chronicles the 1948 “revival”:

The Elim Missionary Assemblies, which had also been in existence before the revival, was a fellowship of churches closely associated with Elim Bible Institute in Lima, New York, one of the major centers of the Latter Rain revival.³²⁰

Clearly, the closer one examines both movements the more apparent it becomes that they are, as New Ager Ramsey proclaims “part of the same movement”. One thing both groups have in common is their insistence on unity. The New Agers place an emphasis upon “networking” which is really just another way of saying, “uniting”. New Ager Marilyn Ferguson wrote:

There are tens of thousands of entry points to this conspiracy. **Wherever people share experiences, they connect sooner or later with each other and eventually with larger circles.** Each day their number grows.³²¹ [emphasis mine]

Networking – unity through common experiences or “unity through signs and wonders”. As anyone who has studied the New Age Movement can attest it has developed within it an extreme emphasis upon “networks”. And so it seems also to be in the Latter Rain Movement today. In David Cannistraci's book, *Apostles and the Emerging Apostolic Movement*, we read:

The New Testament abounds with practical applications of networking. The early Church networked to share resources so effectively that not one among many thousands lacked for anything. (See Acts 4:34,35) The pattern continued as the apostles came together to network at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. Since the earliest days of the Church, the kingdom had grown upon a foundation of combined effort and relational unity. This paradigm needs to be recovered today. If the pattern of networking is recaptured and reproduced in the Church today, I am convinced that our effectiveness can equal – and even surpass – that of the early Church. The words of Jesus validate the Kingdom net. In a powerful illustration, Jesus declared a dynamic reality: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net...Church-growth analysts are beginning to identify *apostolic networks* as a modern movement.”³²²

Note the reference to the fact that the early Church “networked to share resources”. One of the stated goals of the New Age Movement is the redistribution of the world’s wealth. Failure to “go along” with the Latter Rain proponents today and “integrate” or “network” with them is the greatest “sin” in the Church. We must set aside our insistence on Biblical purity and unify with them or face the consequences. Charles Simpson, one of the *Fort Lauderdale Five* writes:

Failure to integrate into larger structures indicated a tendency towards isolation, and therefore reveals an unhealthy condition or malfunction...The condition expresses itself in many ways: sectarianism, fear, doubt, guilt, selfishness. If a cell turns and rejects the physiological structure of which it is a part; if a person turns and rejects the family of which he is a part; or if a family turns and rejects the community of which it is a part; the rejection indicates an unhealthy condition or some sort of malfunction...Cancer is a biological example of what I am talking about. Cancerous cells want to live, but they refuse to integrate with other cells; they will not function with the whole. They draw life from the body, they multiply, but they will not integrate with others...³²³

Spoken like a true New Ager. New Age author of a series of books entitled *New Age Bible Interpretation* Corinne Heline states:

Through the powers of the Christ...All nations will be welded into one vast fellowship...The brand upon the head of Cain was separativeness...³²⁴

Clearly both camps are gearing up for a coming war to be waged upon their enemies. All those who resist the Latter Rain revivals and their New Age form of Christianity are being marked for destruction. Those who stubbornly adhere to the Word of God as the only standard of belief and practice are going to be purged from the kingdom that both the New Age and Manifest Sons are laboring to bring forth:

Modern-day zealots want to use the name of Jesus, and the power of the Church, to transform the secular government of our world and to raise up a new religious order. Just like the Jews in Jesus’ day, they believe the land is theirs by right, and they want to take it by force. And, just like the Jews in Jesus’ day, they will not allow anyone to stand in their way – even God Himself! This so-called prophecy says it all: “As Jesus rose from the dead 2,000 years ago, so I have arisen in these days. As He conquered every foe by His resurrection, so I have come forth to claim the victory in these days.” WHO is speaking here? He makes himself distinct from Jesus, yet claims the same resurrection and victory. This is a sinister reminder right away that we are dealing with another spirit, another christ. “For Jesus staked a claim over every piece of ground on this earth and I have arisen to fully possess it...This is the day when I will cast out the deceivers who have settled on land that rightfully belongs to Me...For this land belongs to Christ and His Heirs and we are about to dispossess the ones who have falsely possessed it. Come one and all for we must fight for our rights. Do as I say and we shall surely reclaim our ground...” The imagery and “words” coming out of Toronto meetings are growing ever more militant, with visions of swords, warriors, war dances, battle

head-dresses, armies, and guided missiles being launched. At the Toronto Airport Anniversary celebrations, [January 1996] where Gerald Coates spoke along with Paul Cain and others, it was said that: “Some of us received war strategies that are not to be disclosed – some things are almost too sacred or holy to be revealed.” Again, at a conference held by Rick Joyner’s ministry *Morning Star*, it was reported that: “At one point, during four hours of worship, there were many manifestations of the war cry a shout as one running into battle”. The doctrine behind the renewal also supports a war, one that will eliminate all remaining opposition to the new teachings.³²⁵

Not only are the teachings and goals of both groups practically the same, but there is a remarkable resemblance between the experiences that both groups partake of and promote. I think, or at least hope, that many of the “holy laughers” would be dismayed to find that witches and those involved in the occult also experience bouts of “uncontrollable laughter”. In an excellent article entitled, *Holy Laughter and Company: A Toronto Blessing or a Kundalini Curse?* author Greg DesVoignes points out:

We have “tested the spirit” of this “anointing” using the Word and cannot find anything to validate this phenomena. This should put up warning flags and tell us there is something wrong. So if it is not found in the Word of God, if it cannot be validated by the standard God gave us, where can it be found?...Holy Laughter and its benefits are not confined to inside churches. The WICCAN witch Carol Christ says in her book *The Laughter of Aphrodite*:

“I laughed for hours and hours. All my private personal suffering...was dissolved in laughter...I felt transformed...and have always viewed what happened as a kind of spiritual experience...People do not think of laughter as a spiritual experience. I now understand that laughter can be a mediator of transformation. Gavreil’s laughter, like Aphrodite’s enabled me to distance myself from pain, opening a new perspective to my life.” [Carol Christ, “The Laughter of Aphrodite: Reflections on a Journey to the Goddess” (Harper and Row, 1987, pp. 5,6)]³²⁶

I am becoming increasingly convinced that many Christians are having these experiences because they are entering into altered states of consciousness. These altered states of consciousness are produced when they spend hours “worshipping” God through repetitions of choruses, often accompanied by rock music and “dancing in the spirit”. It has been proven that this kind of strenuous activity can sometimes produce altered states of consciousness if engaged in for long enough periods of time. Truly I think it can be said that there is an unbalanced emphasis upon worship in the Latter Rain churches today. In many of the video tapes I have seen hours are spent in worship and generally little or no time is spent in the Word of God. They often ignore the Word altogether and move right on into “ministry time”. I believe the reason they do this is to take advantage of the receptive state of the people after such a prolonged time in intense worship.

As someone who considers himself to be Pentecostal in belief and practice I certainly have nothing against worship but what I have seen has convinced me that these people are using worship as a means to an end. The end is of course the experience that comes, the “anointing that falls”, after spending a prolonged time of worship. In other words – it’s all about us, and becomes a technique for manipulating God. It becomes us worshipping God, not because He is worthy of our praise, but for the experience we can gain - the experience du jour. The more intense the activity of the worship, and the more prolonged, the more intense and prolonged the “experience” we will receive from God. This is really nothing more than self-worship or spiritual narcissism and unfortunately I think it often ends in an altered state of consciousness and the reception of some occult experience from a seducing spirit.

Probably the most disturbing trend is the increasing use of rock music in “worship”. It is well documented that prolonged exposure to rock music can cause altered states of consciousness. As one who was an avid fan of rock music in my youth I can testify from experience that this is true. Recently Vineyard

Pastor James Ryle reportedly had a “vision” in which God showed him that the rock and roll sound of the Beatles was a gift from Him. A special musical anointing which was, in his words, to bring a “revelation of the truth” and “usher men into my presence”.³²⁷

I grew up listening to the Beatles as well as many other rock groups and I know there is an anointing on this music – a demonic anointing. The music used to produce emotional “highs” and “lows” all by itself. At times the music would produce intense feelings of aggression. If drug and/or alcohol abuse is added this music can be dangerous. I speak as one who knows from experience. One of the first things that the Holy Spirit convicted me of after my conversion to Christ was the need to get rid of my considerable collection of rock music – to get it out of my life. So I did. And now only sixteen years later rock music has become an integral part of the “worship” in many churches.

When the music of devils becomes the music of worship in God’s house there is no doubt that we have fallen into a great apostasy. In 1987 David Wilkerson shared his experience at a Christian rock concert in an article entitled *Driven to Darkness*:

Last night I attended a Christian music festival. I will never forget what I saw, and I can truly say it was a heartbreaking experience. Since leaving the concert I have been weeping for hours, groaning in the Spirit, feeling the wrath of a Holy God burning against what I saw. I went to the festival because the “star performer” featured last night had been in my office just hours before, crying, telling me how much he loved Jesus, how sincere he was, how he wanted to learn more about holiness. He told me my written messages convicted him. His words seemed right – his attitude seemed humble. At his request I went to see him and his group because he assured me I would not be offended... Suddenly the singer yelled in the microphone, “JESUS IS COMING – HE IS GOING TO CRACK THE SKIES - GET READY!” The song was entitled, “CRACK THE SKIES”. Suddenly smoke was billowing out of smoke machines, the pounding beat was turned up to a frenzied pitch, eerie lights began flashing, the musicians stood like phantoms rising from a murky swamp. It was ghostly, weird, strange - and the crowd went wild – they seemed to love it... At first I couldn’t believe what I was seeing on stage. I said out loud, “This can’t be happening at a Christian festival – they can’t do this to my Jesus! These people can’t be this blind – the leaders of this youth ministry can’t be so undiscerning! Oh God – What has happened to your Church that its leaders, its people, can’t see the evil of this abomination?” Suddenly I was on the ground, on my back, weeping and sobbing, and groaning in the Spirit. I sat up and took another look at the stage. I WAS HORRIFIED BY WHAT I SAW IN THE SPIRIT. I SAW DEMONIC IMAGES RISING FROM THAT STAGE! I HEARD SATAN LAUGHING! Laughing at all the blind shepherds – the blind youth – the backslidden Church! It was an overt manifestation of Satan – worse than anything I’ve ever seen on the streets of New York... What hurt my spirit the most, and what is hard for me to understand, is that this particular group, and many others, attend Pentecostal churches. The musician I refer to told me he gave up drugs, drinking, evil sex, and rock and roll performing when he got saved. He cut his long feminine hair, he quit dressing like an exhibitionist and began to change all his ways. It was a pastor who encouraged him to “quit looking so square and use rock and roll to reach the kids.” A teacher, in his sixties, travels on occasion with them, teaching them and encouraging them in their evil methods. According to their teacher, rock and roll is going to be the normal music in all Pentecostal and Evangelical churches.³²⁸

It looks as if the “prophecy” of this “teacher” is coming to pass. Rock and roll has found its way from the “Christian concerts” into the sanctuary. And I believe it is being used to help induce altered states of consciousness in Christians. Altered states that make them more receptive to the “anointing” that is being passed around.

I am all for the proper place of worship in the Church, and know its importance to the life and proper functioning of the New Testament Church. However, Latter Rain “revival” has brought an unbiblical

emphasis upon worship and its importance into the Church. At Toronto and Pensecola they spend hours in worship, and sometimes little or no time in the Word of God. When we look at the book of Acts we find no such emphasis upon worship in the early Church:

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:41,42 NKJV)

It would be foolish to imply from this that there was no place for worship in the early Church. Many of the early Christians continued to attend the daily services in the Temple which were accompanied by worship. Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning “*Psalms*” and “*singing*” in the Church. But the point is that you simply do not find the same kind of emphasis upon the importance of worship in the early Church that we are finding in the Latter Rain revivals of today. In his “Morning Star Prophetic Bulletin” Rick Joyner writes:

In our first meeting there was a holy electricity that charged the air. The worship immediately hit a level that was as strong as we have ever experienced, and immediately started pushing back the limits. It continued for over two and a half-hours. ***There was no time left for a message or ministry, but it was right.*** We did not want to talk about worship and warfare, we came to do it! ***Experience is a much better teacher than words.*** The intensity continued to grow in each meeting through Friday afternoon. It was during that meeting that the gulf between heaven and earth had somehow been bridged in a powerful way. [Through an altered state of consciousness?] After the musicians had stopped, the people continued with the volume rising dramatically. Then it was as if “the sound of many waters” filled the grand assembly hall. It was deafening. We seemed to be vibrating as if a tidal wave was sweeping over us. It continued for several minutes until I did not think we could take much more. When it stopped a great sense of awe filled the room. Ray Hughes, one of our speakers and a man who has studied and led worship for many years, later told me it was impossible for human voices to make the sound that we heard in that meeting. He said that it seemed to cover the entire sound spectrum at one time, and that he had only heard such a thing in dreams and visions that he had heard about ten years before. ***I do not understand the technicalities of what we heard, but I have been in many concerts and rock festivals with hundreds of thousands of people, and I have never heard anything like it.*** Members of our worship band who have played in such huge concerts said they have never seen or heard anything like it either... There had to have been heavenly help.³²⁹

I believe that what Joyner is describing is the result of many in this group entering into altered states of consciousness induced by “over two and one half-hours” of intense worship which was performed to a rock style beat and music. Music has always played an integral part in the occult world of the New Age. Music that is used to lead the participants into altered states of consciousness, opening them up to the spirits!

In a like manner after hours of intense worship these people become open to the “anointing” and reception of the experiences that go with it. “Holy laughter”, “Holy Ghost glue”, “slain in the Spirit”, psychosomatic healings, animal noises, uncontrollable shaking and all the other phenomena associated with the “anointing” begin to break out and bedlam ensues. The fact is that these experiences are the same kind of experiences that have characterized the occult and New Age for years. The technique used to produce them is the same. Eric E. Wright proclaims:

They have discovered that repetitive, emotional and lengthy singing, testimonies of phenomena and healings, exhortations to be open to whatever the Spirit has for them, combined with a meeting lasting three hours or longer, creates a charged atmosphere. The meeting is full of expectation of the unusual. The focus of the meeting is not on the preaching of the Word, but on the “ministry” time at the end. During the preaching many of those present get restless, as with hypnosis, the “reactions of subjects depend upon the intensity of

the emotions of the hypnotists and the general atmosphere”. During “ministry time” excitement mounts and many respond by shaking, falling, moaning, etc.. Albert Dager comments that the people who react in these meetings are “normal, everyday folks” who “can’t believe that they can be brainwashed or manipulated”. But the manner in which the excitement and fervor builds in some meetings catches them off guard. They are susceptible to suggestion – even the suggestion that they have been healed! The power of highly charged meetings is widely recognized. “Any hypnotherapist who has had the chance of inducing hypnosis in a collective environment will confirm the ease with which untrained people, taken at random, rapidly enter the hypnotic state and present by simple imitation, the hypnotic phenomena they have just observed in others... While Vineyard leaders may not set out to deliberately manipulate people or engage in mass hypnosis they are very naïve in their understanding of human emotions and the dangers they are unleashing.”³³⁰

Years ago I saw a video of a New Age group headed by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. Hundreds of his followers danced and chanted strenuously for about an hour or so as they “worshipped” Rajneesh who sat serenely before them taking it all in. After about an hour most of the worshippers began to tire and slowly the noise died down and the worshippers became still, continuing to meditate upon their god Rajneesh. Suddenly pandemonium broke out! They all began to experience something – most began shaking or jerking. Some would fall to the floor and continue to shake violently and uncontrollably. Some laughed uncontrollably while some cried. Some looked to be in distress and very frightened. It seemed that all had entered into the same types of experiences simultaneously. If one couldn’t tell by the dress of the disciples of Rajneesh, and their chanting, he would be hard pressed to tell the difference between this meeting and many of the meetings in Toronto or Pensecola today. The experiences are the same.

In his article *Holy Laughter and Company – A Toronto Blessing ...or Kundalini Curse*, Greg DesVoignes writes:

The most revealing book I found was one on Kundalini Yoga. What was not found in scripture on the manifestations and other aspects of the Toronto blessing, I found in a book called “Kundalini: The Arousal of Inner Energy”, by Ajit Mookerjee. The purpose of this Eastern practice is to arouse the Kundalini [serpent force] at the base of the spine. It is a form of Yogi meditation and the phenomena, experiences, and manifestations happen while the mind goes into an altered state. The altered state is triggered in many fashions, including the use of repetitive music...Like the Toronto blessing, Kundalini “energy”, experiences, and manifestations can be passed from person to person...How interesting that the Kundalini manifestations (which are described as “disturbances”), as well as the Toronto manifestations, are considered therapeutic. In other words, they have a healing effect.³³¹

At the end of his article Desvoignes lists some forty-nine ways in which the Kundalini experience parallels the experiences breaking out in the Latter Rain revivals of today. Clearly the New Age Movement has been very successful in establishing a “New Age” or Gnostic form of Christianity that is at work within the Christian Church today – to seduce God’s people away from Christ to Anti-Christ. The Manifest Sons of God/Joel’s Army share most of the same goals, doctrines, and experiences of the New Age Movement. Constance Cumby wrote in 1985:

Norman Grubb is a man who dedicated his life to Christ. Thereafter, he labored long and diligently in the mission field. Tragically, he has succumbed to occult deception. It appears he has done so by going outside the scriptures to seek inspiration from the realm of the “great Christian mystics”...In 1975 Norman Grubb and his lawyer friend Bill Volkman formed *Union Life*...Sadly, in the April 1981 issue of their magazine, Norman Grubb expressed satisfaction that: “ - people are popping up like mushrooms, here, there and everywhere, who are now what we call “knowers” – inwardly by the revelation of the Spirit. *Knowing that they are human forms of Christ* – Christ walking about and spontaneously operating in his human forms... [emphasis added]

Had Grubb read the *Aquarian Conspiracy* (hopefully, he had not), he would have known this new spirituality of his and his *Union Life* friends was not all that unique. It was as old as the serpent's original lie to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Reading Marilyn Ferguson's description of what was happening in the churches (she approves those changes and many of those adopting them in their turn approve of her philosophy), we see that the "new spirituality" of Union Life indeed has lots of comparisons: (sic)

"Now the heretics are gaining ground, doctrine is losing its authority, *and knowing is superseding belief.*"³³²

CHAPTER 11

COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE

“And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.’” (Rev 18:4 NKJV)

My only hope in writing this book is that some will read it, heed it, and come out of these Latter Rain revivals. There is no “new paradigm” as far as Christianity is concerned, just the same old narrow road that leads to eternal life in Christ. No immortality or streets of gold on this side of heaven. Just the truth. The Way, the Truth, and the Life - and that “old rugged cross”.

It comes as no surprise that we are in the midst of a terrible apostasy in these last days as we have clearly been warned that it would come. It is still a little frightening that so many of God’s people today could fall for the same old lie that first deceived Eve so many thousands of years ago.

“You shall be as gods.” The same old lie of Satan is the lie at the heart of the New Age Movement. Even sadder is the fact that it is the same lie that the Latter Rain “prophets” and “apostles” of “Joel’s Army” are putting forth today. You will become Christ – God on this earth. The heresy of Apotheosis. And yet thousands of Christians are swallowing it – hook, line, and sinker.

The Church is trading her heavenly hope for an earthly delusion. Like those foolish virgins of the parable, their lamps have run out of oil. What they perceive to be oil, “the anointing of the Holy Spirit”, is instead a sensual counterfeit offered up by seducing spirits. This counterfeit anointing comes with a counterfeit gospel of a false triumphalism that will lead to a New Age “Kingdom” under Anti-Christ. They will accept Anti-Christ with open arms, perceiving him to be Christ, whom they mistakenly identify as the “*rider on the white horse*” of Revelation chapter six verse two.

What is so desperately needed in the Church today is so desperately lacking – discernment. Discernment to tell the Spirit of Christ from the ecumenical spirit of Antichrist. To discern the true anointing from the false anointing, the true Christ from the Gnostic Anti-Christ of the Manifest Sons of God.

If you are participating in any of these Latter Rain revivals or churches today I urge you to turn back to the Bible. Compare what you are hearing and seeing with what is recorded and portrayed in the scriptures. *“Test all things, hold fast to what is good.”* Call the leadership into account for everything they say, or teach, or do that does not line up with the word of God. If they refuse to repent – leave. Flee from the place and don’t look back. *“Remember Lot’s wife.”* I know it can be hard to leave a church, especially if you have family and close personal friends there. But if they will not hear you – leave them behind.

The Latter Rain prophets are right about one thing – doctrine divides. Truth separates the wheat from the chaff. In the early Church the Apostles kept the deceivers and false apostles out. They did this by publicly identifying the heretics and warning the sheep of their false doctrines. Because of the diligence of the true apostles of our Lord, the false apostles and their followers were forced to leave the Church. The Apostle John writes:

“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. **They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”** (1 John 2:18,19 NKJV)

Today we face just the opposite situation in that the false prophets and apostles are in the majority in many churches. When they gain inroads into a church it’s more likely that only a minority will reject their false doctrines, revelations, and counterfeit “anointing” and stand on the Bible, being forced to go out from

among the apostate majority. In a recent *Charisma* article we read of a church in Georgia that has recently broken out in a Latter Rain “revival”:

In October 1996, Pastor R. Keith Reid returned to Calhoun from Cleveland, Tennessee, where he attended a renewal conference and received ministry from John Kirkpatrick, pastor of Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola... “After a time I told the people to stand to their feet and get ready for the fire of God to fall, for where sin is removed, there is where the fire falls,” Reid said. “I also told them that what God was doing in Pensacola, He was going to do at East Calhoun. We stepped out in faith, and the fire of God fell. People were slain in the Spirit wall to wall,” Reid described, “Some were shouting, dancing, jerking, and falling beneath the power of God.”³³³

And what of the people who rejected this so-called move of God? They were forced out:

The revival has not gone without stiff opposition. A small contingency within the Church did not want the move and wished to have their “old” church back. Because they believed too many people were being offended, they wanted the power in the services to be toned down. Several left, but Reid says that for every one who left God has sent in four.³³⁴

Unfortunately, we can expect this apostasy to continue to spread and grow worse until the Lord returns. The spirit of Anti-Christ is growing increasingly more powerful and seductive and more and more churches are falling under its ecumenical Latter Rain spell. And as the “revivals” continue to spread there is going to be increasing pressure upon those of us who continue to stubbornly stand against them. As lying signs and wonders grow more and more powerful and as the claimed “salvations” increase they will put more pressure upon us to “jump into the river”, accusing us of being “Pharisees with a religious Spirit” or worse – “Anti-Christ”, if we continue to reject what they consider to be so great a move of God. “Look at the sinners being saved! The lives changed! The fruit! The miracles, signs and wonders! How can you continue to stand against this mighty move of God?” In what I am afraid is a sign of things to come, we read in the same *Charisma* article of a local pastor who gave in to the pressure to embrace this counterfeit revival as the real thing:

One local minister accused Reid of being a cult leader and labeled the church a cult. He later apologized, “There has been too many converts for me to deny any longer this is a move of God,” the minister said.³³⁵

The Gnostic heretics of the first century gained many converts. So did the later Arian heretics. Did this make their rising up within the midst of the church “moves of God”? No! The Holy Spirit is still the Spirit of truth. Until our Lord returns, and we rise up to meet Him in the clouds at the rapture - let us remember His admonition to the faithful Philadelphia Church:

“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.” (Rev 3:10,11 NKJV)

Remember – *“He who endures to the end shall be saved.”*

“Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.”

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