

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.

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"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18)

SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

HEBREW NAMES OF GOD

By Richard Ebler

We who are Gentiles must never keep in mind that the Bible was inspired by God through the instrumentality of Hebrew writers. Therefore, if we want proper concepts of God we can look closely at the Hebrew names of God found in the Biblical account. Here are some of the most basic:

1. ELOHIM. This is the word used in Genesis 1:1 where we read "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Throughout Scripture it usually indicates the concept of Deity in itself. It pictures God as the creator of the whole earth. It is a common noun more than a proper name. The word "Elohim" is actually a plural form, perhaps denoting the plurality of persons in the Godhead. The singular form is "El" which is sometimes used by itself and sometimes used as a prefix, as in "El-Shaddai" (God-Almighty).

2. ADONAI. This word is used in Genesis 15:2 and many other places. The essential meaning of the word is "Lord" or "Master," i.e., one who owns something and controls it. A man might own a house and control it in such a way that all of the servants of that house are responsible to their master. So God owns and controls the world and all are responsible to Him. The Greek form of this word is "Kurios" (Lord).

3. JEHOVAH. This is the most common name of God in the Hebrew Scriptures. It was originally written as four consonants: "YHWH" since the Hebrew language does not have letters for vowels. The ancient Jews felt that the name was too sacred to pronounce. Today we have it as "Jehovah." The full meaning conveyed by this word is "Eternal Self-Existent One." The central thought is that of self-existent, independent being. Only One has this sort of being and it has ever been so. This is the same thought as given to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:14 where God refers to himself as "I AM THAT I AM." (Note the emphasis on "being.") All else depends on Him for its being, but He is what He will be, independent of all else.

This has well been called God's Redemptive Name. When God was about to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt, He spoke of revealing Himself to them as "Jehovah" (Exodus 6:3). In His miracles by the hand of Moses He revealed Himself as above the natural order and above the false gods of Egypt. He was the one true self-existent God. By His deliverance of them, He showed Himself to be ever faithful to the promises made to Abraham centuries earlier. His nature is timeless.

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The Word of Truth

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4. JEHOVAH-JIREH. This was the name used by Abraham on Mount Moriah at the offering of Isaac when God provided His own sacrifice. It means that "Jehovah sees" us in our needy situation and we can rest assured that the Lord will provide.

5. JEHOVAH-NISSI. Joshua had fought long and hard in defeating the Amalekites in the valley below the mountain where Moses had been interceding for the battle (Exodus 17:8-15). When Israel had finally won the victory, Moses built an altar to the Lord and called the name of it "Jehovah-nissi" or "the Lord my Banner." This alludes to the banners carried by armies as they went forth into battle. The soldiers would look to the banner and take courage in the fight. So victory was sure to the Israelites as long as Moses kept his eyes and hands of faith lifted toward heaven.

6. JEHOVAH-SHALOM. The angel of the Lord had just commissioned Gideon to deliver the Israelites out of the hand of their enemies. When the angel put forth his staff and consumed the unleavened cakes with fire, Gideon feared that he would die. However, the angel said to him, "Peace be unto thee." Therefore Gideon built an altar to the Lord and called it "Jehovah-shalom," which means "Jehovah is Peace" (Judges 6:24).

This is a precious revelation to the hearts of God's people. They hear the gospel today and learn that Christ has made peace between man and God by shedding His blood for man's sin at the cross. Faith lays hold of this truth and forgiveness of sins is experienced. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).

7. JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH. This is the name given by Ezekiel to the city of Jerusalem as seen in a vision (Ezekiel 48:35). The meaning is, literally, "The Lord is There." God is with His people.

8. JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU. Jeremiah predicted that this was the name that would be given to the righteous branch of David in the days when Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely. "His name shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Jer. 23:5,6).

This is the name of Christ. As Martin Luther said, "I am Christ's sin. He is my righteousness." Christ died for our sins that we might have His righteousness.

PUNGENT POINTS

The general synod of the Church of England in Australia is to have a new hymn book whose editor is one of liberal disbeliefs. The disbelief is reflected in Zinzendorw's famous hymn, translated by John Wesley, entitled, "Jesus, Thy Blood And Righteousness" being changed to "Jesus, Thy Robe Of Righteousness". This has drawn strong criticism and protest from Christians . . . who are asking why Christians should be ashamed to sing about the shed blood of Jesus. —Christian Victory.

* * *

If you want to make a real scandal, take a grain of falsehood, a handful of running about, the same quantity of nimble tongue, a sprig of herb backbite, a teaspoon of "don't you tell it", six drops of malice, and a few drops of envy. Add a little discontent and jealousy and strain through a bag of misconception; cork it up tight in a bottle of malevolence and hang it out on a skein of street yarn; keep it in hot atmosphere; shake it occasionally for a few days, and then it will be fit for use. Let a few drops be taken before walking out and the desired results will follow. —Selected.

* * *

Our Lord Jesus declared that He Himself is "THE TRUTH"! (Jno. 14:6). As such, He cannot be worshipped, trusted, adored, or embraced by means of a lie — sincerity or not! **Those that truly embrace the Lord by faith must do so through the truth.** It is only as the "truth" is "known" that we experience freedom (Jno. 8:32, 36). True conversion consists of and is maintained by an acknowledgement of the "truth" (II Tim. 2:25; Tit. 1:1). The teachings that men embrace have a very direct bearing upon their relationship to the Lord Jesus, and, consequently, to their salvation. **As ultimate Truth, the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be mixed or harmonized with falsehood, lies, and false doctrine.** It is for this reason that we take a long and a hard look at what men teach and embrace in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

* * *

In the basic consideration of life, it is imperative that the Lord's sons keep their eyes upon the goal, rather than upon the circumstances. In **all** things we are not to "look upon the things that are seen" but, rather, upon the things "that are not seen" (II Cor. 4:18). It was this precise posture of life that enabled our Lord to "endure the cross, despising the shame" — this attitude of going forward in view "of the joy that was set before Him" (Heb. 12:1-2). It is becoming for those that are confessedly being "conformed" to the image of that blessed Son of God (Rom. 8:28-29) to emulate Him by also "pressing" toward "the mark of the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). Let none of us become caught up in the problems of the moment so inordinately that our eyes are taken off of the goal. **The real mark of sober-mindedness is not morbidity, but it is rather that ability, as well as the willingness, to keep our eyes fastened on the end**

(Please turn to page 8)

THE SPIRITUAL FESTIVAL OF THE REVELATION GOD GAVE TO CHRIST

From September 30 thru October 4, 1975, the brethren from the New Elliott assembly and the brethren at 78th and Independence Streets engaged in a time of edification — edification that centered around the book of Revelation: the "Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him, to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John" (Rev. 1:1). The week was wonderfully blessed of the Lord, each speaker being endowed with the "spirit of prophecy", and the hearers being granted "circumcised ears" and "hearts." Five speakers (one each night) headed up this series of meetings: Brethren Kenny Smith, Al Stoner, Dick Ebler, Given O. Blakely, and Fred O. Blakely (Editor of The Banner of Truth publication). The messages were broken down as follows, with the intention of giving a grand overview of this book: 1. "The Overall Purpose of The Book" — Brother Kenny Smith. 2. "The Message To The Churches" — Brother Al Stoner. 3. "Satan's Warfare Against The Saints" — Brother Dick Ebler. 4. "The Conquest By Christ And The Church" — Brother Given O. Blakely. 5. "The Eternal Abode And State Of The Saved" — Brother Fred O. Blakely. The purpose of the Festival was not to identify segments of time, but to give the "sense" of the Scripture; not to indulge in theological possibilities, but in the real purpose and intent of this book; not to tantalize the intellects of the hearers with novel things, but to seek to build them up in the most holy faith.

In the development of each message, there was a fervent desire to transmit to the hearers the mind of Christ, the purpose of God, and the need of the churches. The aim was not to frighten, but to comfort the saints; not to discourage them, but to strengthen them; not to confuse them, but to edify them. It was at once noted with power that the words of this book were not "sealed" as were other revelations (Dan. 12:4; Rev. 10:4; 22:10). It was also observed that this was from the Lord Jesus Christ "to the churches", and as such could only be understood in any measure by those living the faith life. While it is impossible to here cover the content of each message, we offer to our readers some of the thought provoking observations made by each speaker. May they assist you in your own appreciation of the wonderful book of the Revelation.

Brother Kenny Smith: "The Overall Purpose Of The Book"

"The Book of Revelation, being a book of "prophecy" (Rev. 1:3; 22:7, 10, 18, 19), ought to fulfill the ministry of a prophet as described in I Corinthians 14:3; "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."

"Revelation is a BOOK of prophecy, not a WORD of prophecy. It deals with a large span of time, not a short one. This book is not for a particular time slot — it is for the people of God of all ages."

"The purpose of this book is to EDIFY. To be edified does not mean to be charged up, but to be built up. This means that the words of this book are expressly designed to build us up; to make us strong and stable. One of the purposes, for in-

stance, of "the beast" is to try us. The knowledge of this will prepare us, and thereby build us up."

"The poets have understood Revelation better than the theologians. It is the theologians that have confused men's minds."

"Revelation has never been a closed book. It is for every generation of God's people."

"The book of Revelation is Jesus coming down beside John and beside you saying, 'Come on, brother, overcome! If you do, I'll give you a crown of life.'"

"If you are not comforted by this book, you must be reading a new translation or something other than the Word itself."

"It won't be long until the clamor of the thunder will be overshadowed by the trump of God."

Brother Al Stoner: "The Message To The Churches"

"In these messages it is necessary for you to see Jesus as He really is. If you do not, you will not be able to understand what the Lord declares."

"Let's not get caught up in the number seven ("seven churches"), and thereby miss the message to the churches."

"The churches in this book existed in the beginning of the church age, when grace did much more abound; and yet there were difficulties just as there are today."

"The messages to the seven churches will make sense to you only if you have passed the outer court."

"There are some things you understand by books — but the book of the Revelation is not one of them. It is Christ's message to the churches, and as such we cannot go to another to find its meaning — at least not if we are a part of the church!"

"Jesus takes note of His people's virtues, but He will not tolerate the loss or diminishment of love for Himself in His people. He did not intend, furthermore, to give them much time to attend to faulty matters. "Repent . . . or else", was His repeated exhortation."

"Jesus has a great sympathy for those that are suffering. The only ones that He did not upbraid were those that were suffering for Him. The only ones He had something against were those that were not noted for their suffering."

"Jesus has an understanding for those that operate under great handicaps. . . . "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is."

"The Lord Jesus insists that we correct our faults between us and Him alone. "Buy of me" — that is something you cannot get from a commentator — it is between you and the Lord."

"Jesus is our High Priest, and as such has to explain our actions to God. He has to give an account to the Father for us, therefore He sometimes speaks firmly to us."

"There was no advantage in living in the days of the Apostles."

"I have sensed that from Pentecost until now there has been a temptation to be more like the church's leaders than like Jesus. This has caused people to lose their vision."

Brother Dick Ebler: "Satan's Warfare Against The Saints."

"Satan is a mere shadow, as it were, off to the side. He rules this world, but only as a sub-ruler."

"Satan is not omniscient, he has to guess at the future. I think he gets a lot of his knowledge by eavesdropping on the prophets."

"The Gospel was first preached by God to Satan in the Garden of Eden, and the whole human race was present."

"If Revelation had a single theme it would be warfare and victory."

"Satan's havoc wrought against those that have not the mark of God has an indirect bearing upon the church."

"There are twelve basic attacks of Satan outlined in this book: 6:1-8; 11:3-13; 12:4; 12:13; 12:15; 12:17; 13:1-9; 13:11-18; 19:19-20; 20:1ff."

"False religion is built upon the same principles as earthly government."

"Satan empowers government; government, in turn, promotes his worship. Government empowers false religion which, in turn, promotes worship of the government. Babylon brings men to the first beast, and the first beast brings them to Satan. This is an unholy trinity."

Brother Fred O. Blakely: "The Eternal Abode And State Of The Saved."

"My soul is vexed by the temporalities of this life. They cause friction to my spirit because I have partaken of the eternal Divine nature."

"The new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:1) is the "regeneration" of which Jesus spoke . . . a new physical order. The new spiritual order which we now have is to be envined with a new physical order which shall be compatible with it."

"In this new environment all vestiges of the curse will have been removed."

"Imperfection, a prominent part of the curse, will not be in the new order: there will not be one single discordant note in all of glory."

"In that world we will never meet a spirit that is not congenial; never a sour note; never vexation. The feeble accessories and inventions of feeble man will be done away."

"In that new order joy shall have no shade; the day of eternity will have no cloud."

"I anticipate drinking of pure spiritual water, without any taint of the earthen vessel. We will be nourished directly from God."

"The unveiled future of the saints leaves them ensconced upon their thrones."

"Philip's remark "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us" voiced 1500 years of pent-up Jewish desire. In view of this, it is blessed to know that we shall "see His face."

Let us remember that the book of the Revelation is about saints, for saints, and to saints. There is no purpose for the book if the church does not exist and stand in need of edification. The book is not for dry-land sailors; not for cold religious professionals, not for mere career men. It was written by one that was a "companion in tribulation and in the kingdom" (Rev. 1:9). Those whose faith has cost them nothing will derive no lasting benefit from this book. Those that are in a state of spiritual deterioration are to be warned and exhorted by this book. Those that are suffering for righteousness sake are to be encouraged by this book. The future is bright for the

saints, and dreadful for the ungodly. Satan's warfare, while it often appears to be successful, shall ultimately terminate in his complete and thorough overthrow. All earth government shall be ground into powder and cast into the lake of fire; all false religion shall be dethroned and cast into the lake of fire; Satan himself and his angels shall be cast into the lake of fire; all of the ungodly shall be cast into the lake of fire. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is pictured in Revelation as passing through the wilderness of the world order, the waters of rebellious earth-government, and the fires of spiritual Babylon. It has been opposed by the natural order, the political order, and the religious order. The blood of its martyrs stains the pages of history from its beginning until this current day — but not one drop of that blood shall go unvindicated. God shall avenge his saints before an assembled universe after every enemy has been put down; after every adverse power has been dethroned; after every delusion has been exposed. Satan has been cast out of heaven — he no longer accuses the brethren before our God day and night. Instead, we have an Intercessor in his place; the Lord Jesus Christ. Because "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus", Satan has been removed from God's presence, there being nothing that he can lay to the charge of God's elect. Many sophists tell us that the church is not mentioned in the Revelation after chapter four, thereby betraying their lamentable ignorance. She is seen in "the prayers of the saints" in 5:8; as part of the creatures "on the earth" saying "Blessing and honor and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever" in 5:13. She is seen as "the servants of our God" in 7:3, and those whose prayers arise to God in 8:4. She is portrayed as "the holy city" in 11:2, and "a woman clothed with the sun" in 12:1. We see the church as a "woman fled into the wilderness where she hath a place prepared of God" in 12:6, who was "given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished . . ." in 12:14. We see her as a woman "helped" by the earth and persecuted by "the dragon" in 12:16-17. She is seen glorified in chapters 21 and 22. The church is the theme of Revelation — there is absolutely no purpose to the book if the church is not central in it. The church is pictured as oppressed, persecuted, slain, as it were. The earth, political government, and earthly religion assaults her—and yet she stands. The book of the Revelation shows the kingdom of God to be the superior kingdom — able to withstand any and every attack made against it, while the kingdoms of earth are inferior, being thrown down and destroyed in virtually every chapter of the book.

May you, dear reader, find edification afresh as you peruse Revelation, as you search it and feed upon it. Suffering believer — this book was written for you. It tells you that your suffering is not in vain, your service is not in vain, your faith is not in vain. The book starts with Jesus washing the saints and making them kings and priests, and ends with them forever reigning with Him in glory. It tells us that God Himself is going to wipe all tears from their faces, take away sorrow and crying, pain, heat, and everything associated with the "former things." It tells us that

the saints shall reign uninhibited, unencumbered, without a single note of sorrow or a solitary case of an uncompleted or aborted work for God. Hallelujah!

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THE WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE OF THE CHURCH

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her. . . ." —

Revelation 1:6

The church is here pictured as resorting to a secret place for refuge from the face of that "old serpent". It is not that she is cowardly, but that she is wise; not that she lacks courage to fight, but that she values nourishment more than fatigue, strength more than weariness. It is her enlightenment, upbuilding, and feeding that is stressed here. There is not the slightest implication that the redeemed of the Lord are not "bold as a lion" (Prov. 28:1). The church does relentlessly "wrestle" against "principalities, against powers, against the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). She engages in such militancy as is called; "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (II Cor. 10:5). But that is not the topic of conversation in our text. The Lord is, rather, revealing to us how **Satan's efforts to expunge the church are frustrated in the providence and purpose of God!** The Devil simply cannot ultimately overthrow the redeemed. He may "weaken" them, along with many nations (Isa. 14:12), and even "wear them out" (Dan 7:25) and "overcome" them (Rev. 13:7) — but he cannot remove them, relieve the earth of their salty presence, or remove them from effectual and direct nourishment!

The people of God are declared as "fleeing" — **not so much fleeing from the face of the serpent as fleeing TO a place prepared of God for her.** We resort (often hastily and with great desire) to the place of feeding, nourishment, and sustenance. Not only is the church nourished there, in this "place prepared of God", but **her malicious adversary Satan has no access to this blessed abode!** Praise God for that!

The Woman flees into the WILDERNESS. Observe that the church is not here declared to flee into the city — a place of large populus; not into a garden — a place of rare beauty; but into the wilderness — waste, desolate, barren, lonely, and forsaken by all appearances and judgement. I gather that this is the same place where another woman is later found in this book — a woman that is termed "Mystery Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth" (Rev. 17:3-5). But there is a very essential difference in these two women — the true church and the false church! The "woman" belonging to Christ "**HATH A PLACE PREPARED OF GOD**". The spiritual whore is an intruder and a trespasser; while the true church is "in the wilderness" by the direction of the Lord, the false church is there only for religious identification. The first woman is **fed**, the second woman **feeds**. The first woman **flees**, the second woman **sits** there in alliance with the kings of the earth. The first woman **fellowships** with the saints in the wilderness, the second woman **sheds the blood** of the saints in the same area (17:6).

The term "wilderness" is to be interpreted by the Scriptures, and the Lord has gone to great lengths to show us precisely what He means to convey to our hearts by this word. Its meaning is chiefly to be seen in the pilgrimage of the Israelites of old. How often is reference made to **that wilderness**: "For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, **THE WILDERNESS** hath shut them in" (Ex. 14:3); ". . . we went through all that **GREAT AND TERRIBLE WILDERNESS**. . ." (Deut. 1:19); ". . . Who led thee through that **GREAT AND TERRIBLE WILDERNESS**, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water . . ." (Deut. 8:15); "Because all those men which have seen My glory, and My miracles, which I did . . . in **THE WILDERNESS** . . ." (Num. 14:22); "And thou shalt remember **the way** which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in **THE WILDERNESS**, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no" (Deut. 8:2); "And I have led you these forty years in **THE WILDERNESS**: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot" (Deut. 29:5); "For the children of Israel walked forty years in **THE WILDERNESS** . . ." (Josh. 5:6); "Yea forty years didst Thou sustain them in **THE WILDERNESS**, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not" (Neh. 9:21), etc.

When the children of Israel left Egypt, they actually did have a place prepared for them in the wilderness. To others, like Pharaoh, the wilderness appeared to have "shut them in" — but they were led, fed, strengthened, and cared for by God in that wilderness. Just a cursory observation of the texts that we have given reveal the following: 1. The wilderness was "great" by expanse, 2. "Terrible" by experience. 3. There were dangers there — "fiery serpents and scorpions". 4. There was deprivation there — "where there was no water." 5. There were "miracles" there — signs of the Lord's care and love, chastening and anger, which could not have been experienced anywhere else. 6. There was definite direction there — "the Lord thy God led thee . . ." 7. There was a crushing of the fleshly nature — "to **humble** thee." 8. There was a testing there which was designed to draw out of them what was really in their hearts — "to **prove** thee." 9. There was miraculous preservation there — "Thou didst sustain them."

It was here, in the wilderness, that the people of God became absolutely dependent upon the Lord God Almighty — completely, totally! There was **no** direction without Him, **no** food without Him, **no** water without Him, **no** clothing without Him. This was a place of proving and of sifting, wherein many fell whose hearts were not right with God (Ex. 16:4; Deut. 8:2, 16; I Cor. 10:8). It was God's **WAY** to put them in a disadvantage; to place them in an apparently impossible situation to surround them with emptiness, fearfulness; to make them helpless — and **THEN TO SUSTAIN AND NOURISH THEM!**

This is precisely what the Lord has done with the church! He has brought her into a spiritual

“wilderness” — a “dry and a thirsty land, where no water is” (Psa. 63:1; 143:6). He has actually “allured” her “into the wilderness” in order that He might “speak comfortably” to her; i.e., He has brought her to a place where no good, no comfort, no sustenance, no direction, no lasting satisfaction can be obtained from the world and the world order. We are brought to see how bereft this world is of nourishment for the soul. We are made to feel “poor in spirit”, and then we are blessed (Matt. 5:3). He has “weakened our strength in the way” (Psa. 102:23) and dried up our self-sufficiency like a potsherd! Now, this is not a curse, but a blessing. The natural man — the Adamic nature — together with the entire “fashion of this world passeth away” (I Cor. 7:31); i.e., **it has no faculties to ready for eternity or render eternal benefits, simply because it is temporal.**

Here — in the “wilderness” of life in Christ, there is “temptation, testing, and subjugation to the wiles of the Devil (Psa. 95:8). It was so with Moses (Acts 7:30, 38), the Lord Jesus Himself (Luke 4:1), and Paul the Apostle (II Cor. 11:26). However, there is not **complete** disadvantage in being in this wilderness, to which we have fled for nourishment. Israel was sustained in the wilderness; Moses was sustained in the wilderness; our Lord Jesus Christ was sustained in the wilderness, and Paul also was himself sustained in the wilderness. This was where Israel received bread, water, and the Law of God. It was there that Moses heard the voice of God in the burning bush (Ex. 3:2). It was there that Jesus was ministered to by angels (Matt. 4:11). We are so prone to forget that the promises to the faithful are said to be given them “in the wilderness” — It is **there**, that the place is “**PREPARED OF GOD, THAT THEY SHOULD FEED HER . . .**” There is **NO place for feeding in the world order!** There is no place for nourishment in self-sufficiency! There is no place for sustenance in religious systems or political orders! **The place prepared for the “woman” where she is to be fed all throughout the time of her opposition is “THE WILDERNESS”!**

The wilderness is where the blessing is to be found! It is “the wilderness” that “shall be glad and rejoice” (Isa. 35:1). It is “the wilderness” that shall be turned into a “standing water” (Psa. 107:35; Isa. 41:18). It is “the wilderness” that shall become “like Eden” (Isa. 51:3). It is “the wilderness” that shall have “trees planted there” (Isa. 41:19). It is in “the wilderness” that the Lord shall “make a way” (Isa. 43:19). Is it not in “the wilderness” that “grace” is found (Jer. 31:2). And the express promise of the Lord is that His people shall “dwell **safely** in the wilderness” (Ezek. 34:25). What we have declared here is this: the only place to experience the fellowship of the Lord, the feeding, direction, and sustaining of the Lord is “in the wilderness” — another way of saying “**without the camp**” (Heb. 13:13). That is the place where men repudiate the validity of the world order; where they renounce themselves and count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ (Phil. 3:8). Here is where men “mortify the deeds of the body” (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5), “crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24). Here is where men “confess” that they are “strangers and pilgrims in the earth” (Heb. 11:13; I Pet. 2:11), while “abstain-

ing from fleshly lusts that war against the soul”. From all outward appearance, fleshly analysis, and philosophical judgement, the “wilderness” appears to be a disadvantage, foolishness, and to be avoided. It is admittedly a place of weakness — but that weakness is converted into strength according to the proclamation of the Lord Himself; “My strength is made perfect in weakness” (II Cor. 12:9). This wilderness place also implies that there is a price-tag upon discipleship; a cost to following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth! It is only there — in the wilderness — that you are actually safe from the malicious intents of our adversary, the Devil (I Pet. 5:8). **The “wilderness” is a synonym for the faith life** — for walking, standing, and living by faith (Rom. 1:17; II Cor. 5:7; II Cor. 1:24). It simply declares that when we leave the worldly order, together with all that is in it (I Jno. 2:15-17), we “receive a kingdom which cannot be moved . . .” (Heb. 12:28) — **a kingdom which does not appear a kingdom now at all, but rather appears to be a wilderness!** But there are clouds here that lead, rocks that gush water, and dew that yields manna for the soul!

If you are seeking that “**prepared**” place — the place of nourishment, you must enter the wilderness of this world! You may flee to pleasure — but there is no place prepared there! You may run to earthly riches, but there is no prepared place there for feeding! You may engage in purely earthly pursuits apart from the Living God — no place is prepared for your nourishment there! You may become ensconced in an earthly religious system — but there is not a place prepared there either! You may drown yourself in selfish interests — the place for feeding is not there! You may immerse yourself in activities of all sorts — but there is not a single place for nourishment prepared there! They will only succeed in diverting your mind from the realities of eternity! **The prepared place is in the wilderness** — in the place where earth is absent. It is “without the camp” that you will be fed, nourished, built up and edified in the most holy faith. It is **there** that the streams break out and the cities of God are founded! It is **there** that the “way” is finally found. **God cuts us off from all that the world esteems good and precious; He leads us into what the world considers boredom and monotony — sheer nonsense and a burden. But there, amidst that seemingly fruitless place waters gush out, rivers begin to flow; peace and plenty are found, safety is experienced!**

Now, dear reader, where are you situated in your heart and soul? Do you know about “the wilderness”? Have you fled there? Are you attempting to serve the Lord, worship the Lord, seek the Lord, within the confines of the world order? retaining your lusts, your earthly ambitions, your carnal desires, your selfish pursuits? O, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord (II Cor. 6:17-18). Cast aside foolish pride, become a real “stranger and pilgrim” in the earth and confess plainly to all that you are seeking a better country, and a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God (Heb. 11:14-16). You will then find the truth of what is taught in Revelation 12:6!

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By declaring to us that “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to

man" (I Cor. 10:13), our Lord means to divest us of the stubborn notion that our particular case is unique! It is not! We are men, and have experiences common to men! If we fall under the temptation, let us know that there are other holy men which did not — men which found that certain "way of escape" that comes "with the temptation that we may be able to bear it."! It is far easier to face temptations as another man, rather than the first man! to face it as a common temptation rather than a unique temptation! Temptations may "take" us, but they "take" us graciously accompanied by a "way of escape". The whole purpose is that we "might be able to bear it." How gracious is our God! May we not view testings and temptations from a more holy vantage point in view of these things?

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The Church Has Suffered Much

There have been numerous and bloody formal persecutions registered against the saints of the Most High God. To name a few of them: 1. The persecution under Nero, A.D. 6. Among those martyred, Paul Peter, Erastus, Aristarchus, Trophimus, Barsabas, Ananias — each mentioned in Scripture. 2. The persecution under Domitian, A.D. 81. Among those martyred at that time were Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem, Dionysius the Areopagite (Acts 17:34), Nicodemus, and Timothy. 3. The persecution under Trajan, A.D. 108. Such early second generation brethren as Ignatius were slain. 4. The persecution under Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, A.D. 162. Polycarp and Justin died in this attack against the church. 5. The persecution beginning with Severus, A.D. 192. In this bloody onslaught Irenaeus and Origen suffered martyrdom. 6. The persecution under Maximus, A.D. 235. 7. The persecution under Decius, A.D. 249. Julian, early church father was slain in this persecution by being placed in a leather bag with a number of scorpions and serpents and cast into the sea. 8. The persecution under Valerian, A.D. 257. Cyprian and his disciples died at this time. 9. The persecution under Aurelian, A.D. 274. 10. The persecution under Diocletian, A.D. 303. These ten persecutions were all instigated by "the eternal city" — Rome, pagan or Imperial Rome. Thousands perished in a blood-bath sufficient to have floated ships into the ocean. Burned, racked, dragged to pieces, drowned, and beheaded they were for being followers of the Lamb. They committed no social crimes; harmed not their neighbors, but were doers of good. Their only transgression — they, as worshippers of God in spirit and truth, refused to deny the Lord Jesus Christ! Rome was pagan — but the churches persecutions did not only come from "pagans", nor, indeed, did Rome remain classified as "pagan." With the rise of the papacy, and the dominancy of the Roman Catholic church came other persecutions; just as fierce as those that came before her.

1. The "storm of papal persecution first burst upon the Waldenses in France," about the year 1000. These persecutions were continued for several centuries under different popes and other great dignitaries of the Catholic Church, and are a matter of historical record — even secular historical record. 2. There were the persecutions of the Albigenses, a people of reformed religion, as were the Waldenses. They were officially condemned at the Council of Lateran by order of

Pope Alexander III. As late as 1620 and 1648 the persecution raged, being termed by "the church" as a "holy war". Men were burned alive and their tongues torn out by the roots as a favorite means of persecution. 3. **The Bartholomew Day Massacre at Paris**, etc. This unbelievable brutality began on August 22, 1572. It was intended to completely destroy Protestantism with a single stroke. Centered about a feast in honor of a marriage between the sister of the king of France and the prince of Navarre, and amidst great pomp, soldiers were appointed at a certain signal to burst out instantly to the slaughter in all parts of the city. All of this in the name of the "holy mother church." Accounts tell us that blood "ran through the streets with a strong current, and the river appeared presently a stream of blood." Ten thousand were slain in Paris, a thousand were slain in Orleans, and six thousand at Rouen. At Meldith, two hundred were taken into prison and later methodically and cruelly killed. Lyons had eight hundred massacred, hardened monks refusing to even permit them burial. Such cities as Augustobona, Avaricum, Troys, Toulouse, and others closed the gates of their cities so that no Protestants might escape, searching diligently for them and murdering them.

In short, in a single week, one hundred thousand "protestants" were cut to pieces, slaughtered, massacred and slain in the provinces of France. Their only crime — they refused to worship the Living God according to the idolatrous and apostate dictates of the Roman Catholic church! How was that slaughter received in Rome? A high festival and Jubilee was proclaimed, the first bearer of the message of blood receiving 1000 crowns of the Cardinal of Lorraine for his ungodly message.

Time would fail us to enumerate the many other persecutions that have been leveled against the church of the Living God. I have only selected these two general categories to show that it has come from political and religious quarters, and, indeed, still does. In this very day the Protestants and Catholics are fighting in our world, the papers being filled with the same. What can we say to these things? We cannot but wonder why these things are kept quiet in so many circles — why some have made peace with the institution that has persecuted the church of God and spilled its blood. The price that the early believers paid for their faith makes convenient and contemporary religion seem very cheap, quite frankly. The once-a-week casual and cultured religion that prevails in many circles seems quite insipid next to that which upheld these older saints. Their faith sustained them in the trial — will yours? It is true, you may not be called upon to pass through the trials which others experienced — we pray God that you shall not! But you may rest assured that the one you do pass through — however small it may appear to be — will yield precisely the same eternal effects that theirs did. Rest assured that it is ever true: "Yea, and all that shall live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12). We cannot prognosticate the precise form that it will take, whether that of physical suffering, social pressure, expulsion from an officially recognized religious organization, etc. But whatever form it takes, the saints will be richly rewarded for cleaving to the

church, then we are certainly suspicious of those that ask it today. It appears that all such have a religion that has stemmed from something other than the "apostle's doctrine."

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Selflessness is a great spiritual attribute; it manifests the true Spirit of Christ. It is a trait that is marked by an eagerness for God's glory, Christ's exaltation, the benefit of the church, and goodness toward all men. It is made known by one being willing to spend and be spent for the Kingdom of God. It does not take into account the consequences of allegiance to the Truth. Those that possess it count not their lives dear unto themselves — even unto the death. This characteristic constrains one to pray "Not my will, but Thine be done", and compels its recipient to "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." It is not incensed when personal ills are experienced, and it thinks no evil, rather taking the charitable view of things.

* * *

We have heard it said by some that are supposed to have arisen to great heights in the world of the spiritual; "What a person wears and how he wears his hair is not important — it is his heart that matters." Now we must confess that this statement or attitude does have a show of wisdom — but it is only a show. The Word of the Lord DOES have something to say about dress (I Tim. 2:9; I Pet. 3:3; Deut. 22:5), and about the length of hair (I Cor. 11:14-15). Now we insist that we cannot and will not ignore those proclamations of truth. Therefore, we must deny that postulation which we quoted in the beginning, and strongly assert that it does make a difference how people dress and how they wear their hair. The difference, however, is to be measured by God's Word, and not by personal preference. The difference must not, furthermore, extend beyond the proclamation of the Word, nor fall short of it.

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"Is it wrong to go dancing"? That is really not the question — the question is, "Is it RIGHT to go dancing?" Does it compliment a profession of faith? Is it consistent with righteousness? Does it provide an outlet for the inner man? Does it permit a fellowship and intimacy with the Lord while indulgence is experienced? These are the questions that ought to be answered — and only the one with difficulty in that area can answer them.

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The parable of the ten virgins instructs us more perfectly in the way of the Lord. We have ten individuals that were **all** virgins; that **all** had lamps; that **all** went forth to see the Bridegroom; that **all** slumbered and slept; **that all arose**; **that all trimmed their lamps** — yet five of them were wise, and five of them were foolish; five of them were accepted and five of them were rejected; five of them went in to the Lord in the last day, and five of them did not. A bit shaking to some stilted theology, but gloriously refreshing to those that have received the love of the truth (Matt. 25:1-13).

Lord throughout the opposition, and the persecutors — however cultured and respectable they may seem to be — will receive just compensation from the Lord.

The facts that have been related in this article may be obtained from any reference library, and many of them are presented in capsule form in Foxes Book of Martyrs, in the very words of those that witnessed the abuses.

P U N G E N T P O I N T S

(From page 2)

of the race. By so doing we run and labor both surely and correctly.

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It must ever be remembered that the God of heaven is not our servant, but, rather, we are His servants (Acts 4:29; Psa. 119:91). It is not **our** will that we ultimately seek, but **His** will. Our good pleasure must always be subject to His good pleasure. He helps us, we do not help Him; we serve Him, He does not serve us. The knowledge of this basic truth must permeate our prayers, our aspirations, our labors, our aims!

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Believers are not so much interested in the world's analysis of the Bible as they are in the Bible's analysis of the world.

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Some have asked me the question — "Have you spoken in tongues?" That is a question which we will not answer, for it is not a Scriptural question. Our answer is not to be taken as an assumption that we have not, or that we have. It is, rather our reaction to a question that smacks of sectarianism. The true question is whether or not we have received the Spirit of God since we believed. Further, for those that know us, our lives ought to be such as render sufficient evidence to answer **that** question. We are not against tongues, we are against superfluous and denominational questions. Besides that, no one was ever asked such a question in the Scriptures — so we cannot but question the validity of it.

* * *

No one in Scripture was ever asked if they had been "baptized in the Holy Ghost"! Search and see if this is not so, and when you find it to be the truth, then ponder this question: Why is such a question asked today? If it was not important enough to be asked by the Apostles and prophets, and the early evangelists of the