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Chiliasm, or premillennialism in its simple form originated in the Jewish Apocalyptic writings of the inter-Biblical period, of which the following quotation is a sample from the Apocalypse of Baruch:

“The earth will yield its fruit ten-thousand fold, on each vine there will be a thousand branches, and each branch will produce a thousand grapes, each grape will produce a cor of wine, and those that have hungered will rejoice” (XXIX: 4-6).

The idea of a millennial reign on earth proceeded from Judaism, for “among the Jews the representation was growing, that the Messiah would reign a thousand years upon earth. Such products of Jewish imagination passed over into Christianity” (Neander’s, “*History of Christian Dogmas*,” Vol 1, P. 248.) (*The Millennium, What it is Not and What it Is*, Dr. George B. Fletcher).

Although Jesus referred to numerous things that will take place and precede his coming he makes no mention of Israel being restored. The teaching that the fig tree in the parable of Matthew 24:32-33 has reference to Israel’s restoration is ridiculous in view of Luke’s reference which adds all trees to the parable. Luke 21:29-33. If the budding of the fig tree is Israel being restored then “all trees” would mean all nations are going to be restored. Of course, this line of reasoning would be rejected by those who say the fig tree represents Israel.

A casual study of these scriptures and their context will show that it was false Christs, false prophets, false signs and wonders and the great tribulation to be followed immediately by darkened sun and moon that Jesus was talking about. As the budding leaves of the fig and all trees herald the coming of summer, these signs herald the coming of Christ. This is what Jesus was teaching. There are no scriptures dealing with Christ’s coming that point to the restoration of Israel as a sign.

Both Jesus and the Apostle Paul taught the same thing relative to Christ’s coming. Matthew 24 and II Thessalonians 2. Both warned us about false signs and wonders and being deceived by false prophets. Neither points to Israel restored as a sign. I believe this regathering of the Jew to earthly Jerusalem is one of Satan’s greatest lying signs and wonders.

## WORLD UNION

The world today is a restless sea of troubled humanity that defies solution. More and more the spirit of the age is toward world union. World leaders say we must get together or perish. This new manifestation is simply an expression of the same spirit of Anti-Christ that has come forth in all previous world powers that tried to make the world one.

Whereas many previous world powers tried to make the world one by military conquest, this last effort will be done by political genius. With the threat of annihilation by nuclear power, the argument for world union is more convincing than ever before. Surely the handwriting is on the wall and world leaders know this. Another war between the major powers would be a world catastrophe. To man without God, world union seems to be the only answer.

After World War I, there was a move in the direction of world union through the League of Nations. This eventually failed as the memory of that war grew dimmer and the nations got busy with their own domestic affairs. After World War II the spirit of world union was revived and came forth again in its present form called the United Nations. At the present time there are over one hundred nations belonging to the United Nations. All the major powers except Red China belong and sentiment for Red China's admission is growing every year. *[Since the writing of this article, as every one knows, Red China has been admitted to the United Nations.]* The United Nations could very well become the super world government that will cause all the world to wonder after the beast and say, "... Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" Revelation 13:3-4.

The hope of a united world under one system of government is, I believe, another lying sign. It is just another hopeless illusion that unbelieving man is turning to instead of God. Although it will temporarily succeed and be hailed as the world's saviour it will fail in the end as all other world empires have.

The spirit behind world union is the same spirit motivating church union. They will, in fact, be joined together again even as Imperial Rome married the apostate church under the reign of Constantine. I believe this is what we have in Revelation 17, where the great whore is seen riding upon the back of the scarlet colored beast.

The reason world union will be such a great lying sign is because the whole world will be affected in its desperate search for peace. Although mankind does not want the Prince of Peace, he desires peace and safety from war, famine and disease. In his carnal materialistic-oriented way of life these are the things that seem important to him. When at long last he thinks he has succeeded through world union he will indeed be deceived by

earth's greatest lying sign. This is why the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." I Thessalonians 5:2-3.

## **CHAPTER NINETEEN**

# **NEW HEAVENS**

### **II PETER 3:1-17**

This age will end with the coming of Christ and the destruction of the entire created universe (heavens) including the earth itself. The elements which will melt with a fervent heat has reference to the many celestial bodies in this great universe. According to verse 13, they will be replaced with new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The Old Testament likewise confirms the destruction of the heavens and the earth. “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.” Isaiah 51:6. Read also Psalm 102:25-26.

### **HEAVENS AND EARTH DEFILED**

In our carnal imagination we simply think of heaven as some beautiful place where the righteous will live forever after this life. Our saying that heaven is more of a state than it is a place does not set well with those who have been taught to think in terms of streets of gold and gates of pearl. But the truth is, all of God’s universe, including the heavens, has been affected by the fall. It’s going to take the fire of God’s eternal judgment to purge, purify, and destroy the evil that has contaminated the whole creation.

Even in the heavenly realm (heavenlies) there is a warfare going on between forces of good and evil. Although Satan’s head was bruised at Calvary, most of mankind is still ignorant of the victory that was wrought there. Colossians 2:15. It will be the preaching of the cross by a revived and rejuvenated church that will spell Satan’s final defeat. I Corinthians 1:18. Our Lord, the head of the Church, has already triumphed over Satan and the time is near for the Church, his body, to do likewise.

### **AS A THIEF**

We do not know the day nor the hour of his coming which will be like a thief in the night for most of the world. I Thessalonians 5:1-4. “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the

night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.”

Because we are so time-oriented, eternity seems far away in a dim vague future. But the truth is, it is just a step beyond us. We will soon be marveling that we lived so much for time and so little for eternity.

In the new creation it will be time that will grow dim and fade from our memories. Isaiah 65:17 says, “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”

## **MAN’S GREATEST REGRET**

However there will be a time of heartrending remorse and regret when those living in unbelief realize at last their opportunity for eternal life is gone forever. Matthew 13:40-43 says, “As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth will be the awful result of grim reality that eternity has dawned at last and all hope of salvation is gone. Not only will the lost face eternity with terrible regret but the saved will also stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

The certainty of judgment for all mankind is brought out in many scriptures. Matthew 12:36-37. Romans 2:2-6. Romans 14:10-12. I Corinthians 4:5. Perhaps Revelation 20:11-15 gives us the most vivid picture of the saved and the lost standing before God on that last great day of judgment. This is the day when all men will face the record of their earthly lives.

Those whose names are not found in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire. The other books, no doubt, contain the records of the works done in the flesh. Although the righteous are saved from eternal damnation in the lake of fire, many of them will suffer loss. I Corinthians 3:12-15. What we do or fail to do in this life will certainly affect our rewards and our position in eternity. Revelation 22:12. Matthew 25:14-30.

## **CURSE LIFTED FOREVER**

Though we do not as yet know God’s great plan for the ages to come, we can rejoice knowing that the curse will be lifted forever. And greatest of all,

the cross will forever stand between the redeemed and the fall such as Adam experienced.

Revelation 21:3-8. “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful, And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

According to II Peter 3 the world as a whole will not be looking for nor anticipating the coming of Christ. I believe this also includes most of the professors of Christianity as well as the non-professors. No doubt this will be the result of unbelief in general and misinterpretation of the scriptures.

Since we have already dealt with the question of the great deception that surely will and even now exists concerning the coming of Christ, very little more can be said here. However, I might add that many scriptures generally believed to be fulfilled in some far distant future have already been fulfilled and they knew it not. As also stated elsewhere, many scriptures looking to be fulfilled concerning the Jew and Israel have already been fulfilled in the first coming of Christ and the birth of the Church at Pentecost.

Recently a brother asked me, “What about that nation that will be born in a day?” He was simply repeating the popular notion that Isaiah 66:8 had reference to the Jew being restored as the nation Israel in the earth. I told him this was what took place at Pentecost when the Church was born.

I Peter 2:9 says, “ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:”

According to the scripture above we, the Church, the spiritual Jew, are that “holy nation.” This is the nation that was born in a day. And that day was Pentecost.

Another example of this misinterpretation of scripture is the belief in the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem prior to the supposed millennial reign of Christ on earth. It is very evident from a casual study of Peter’s explanation of this scripture in Acts 15:13-17 that the tabernacle of David

referred to here was merely a type which pointed to and was fulfilled in the Church.

One thing I am sure of: our world today, though much of it is very religious, is in just as great a darkness as the Jews were at his first coming.

How much scripture is yet to be fulfilled, I certainly do not know. Perhaps far less than we realize. One thing is certain, God is speaking to a little remnant that has ears to hear what the Spirit is saying. It has always been this way. Most religionists are either looking back at what has been or looking forward to what is supposed to be. Blinded by their denominational creeds, doctrines and religious programs they are never able to hear or see what God is doing now.

May I conclude this last chapter, which is a feeble effort to share some of the things we believe to be of God, by quoting Paul in II Corinthians 6:1-2. "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

## CHAPTER TWENTY

# 1995 UPDATE

BY PHIL ENLOW

This article, written in 1995, is intended to be an update, a new last chapter to the book, “Lying Signs and Wonders.” The book is a collection of articles on deception in the end of the age, most of them written roughly twenty-five years ago. What was written then continues to prove true today. The book has gone to many parts of the earth and continues to bless and enlighten God’s people.

Spiritually, conditions are far worse than they were then. More and more people have crossed the line to where God will no longer speak or strive with them.

Powerful winds of spiritual darkness and deception have been embraced as if they were breezes from heaven. Truly the earth (natural man — often religious) is opening her mouth to swallow the flood that is going forth out of the mouth of the dragon. Rev. 12:16.

Men and women who, when light came, refused to walk in it, are now walking in darkness and do not know where they are going. Worse, they aren’t even aware that they don’t know.

This is the state Paul warned of in II Thess. 2:10-12, a state of strong delusion God sends upon those who “received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.”

The truth God sends is an expression of His love. Man, by nature hates and fears the light of that truth. It exposes his true condition before God and demands that he repent and bow the knee to Jesus Christ. It demands that he prostrate himself upon the mercy of God as the helpless sinner he is.

When men, full of the darkness of sin, rebellion and pride, reject the light of truth, they are rejecting the love of God expressed through that truth. Truth and love are inseparable. What kind of love is it that would not tell us the truth?

The result is not simply delusion, but strong delusion, an irreversible condition in which the lie of Lucifer is embraced as truth.

Prov. 1:20-33 contains a sober warning from God of the need to recognize and bow to truth when it comes and the awful consequences of not doing so.

Verse 23 contains a great promise: “Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.”

Verse 24 begins the warning: “Because I have called, and ye refused ... I will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh ... Then shall they call upon me but I will not answer ... they despised all my reproof ... therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way....”

## **A GENERATION OF DECLINE**

Approximately a generation has passed since the Lord so clearly revealed to us the loosing of Satan that was taking place. We see everywhere the fruit of that as violence and evil increase and morality declines.

In about a generation we have seen TV degenerate from “I Love Lucy” and “Father Knows Best” to “Roseanne” and “Married With Children.” The public drinks up all the sex and violence Hollywood can put out and clamors for more and worse. What entertains man’s lusts today is boring tomorrow.

Perverted sex has left the closet and now marches in the streets demanding respect. The lie that people are born that way has been repeated so often that I dare say a majority of society now believes it even if it doesn’t make them exactly comfortable.

Men are blind to the hordes of demons that have been loosed upon them to find expression for their evil nature through human flesh. Man, having an evil nature of his own to begin with, has been mentally, spiritually and often physically conditioned to become a home for devils. Evil thoughts and impulses originating in devils are received by people as if they were their own. Psychologists and psychiatrists stand ready to “help” them if they should find that difficult.

A generation ago in our schools the concerns were chewing gum in class and smoking in the bathroom. Today they include drug trafficking and carrying guns. Classroom discipline is largely gone. Rebellion is the order of the day.

The spirit of rebellion is glorified in movies and on TV. Sex of all kinds, unrestrained by moral concerns, is portrayed as the norm.

Commitment and permanence in marriage are a joke. It is common today for couples to “marry” with an agreement already signed spelling out what each will get when they split up.

The fear of God is no longer a factor in either people’s thoughts or in their behavior. About the only restraint on most people is what others think and say about them. Otherwise they pursue their own personal pleasure as they see fit.

## **A NEW WORLD ORDER**

One thing that has come out into the open is man's desire and plan to remake the world without God. This expectation of a "new age" has pervaded every segment of society. In one way or another, the influential people of our day have embraced this "hope" and are busy planning for it and promoting its ideas in every possible way.

This includes not only the occultism of the so-called "New Age" movement but the plans and ideas of scientists, educators, philosophers and politicians as well. It is common to hear references to a "new world order" or to "remaking society." Of course, in this new order, neither the one true God nor His Son will be needed. Man will be his own god.

Part of the preparation for a new order is a doctrine being heavily promoted in education called multiculturalism. Taking note of the fact that American society in particular is composed of people from many different cultural backgrounds, this doctrine promotes the idea that the various beliefs and practices of these different cultures are all equally valid and deserving of respect. Various ethnic minorities are all but glorified in the attempt to drive the point home.

Under the guise of promoting harmony, tolerance and understanding, a generation is being brainwashed to believe that there are no "right" and "wrong" beliefs, only different ones. Whatever belief system suits the individual is fine so long as he is tolerant of others and doesn't believe that he is right and others are wrong.

It is not difficult to see that the devil's main target in promoting multiculturalism is Biblical Christianity. The idea that men are saved or lost, that Christ alone is the way, the truth and the life, that men must bow the knee to Him or be damned is especially hated.

In practice, multiculturalism, far from promoting all beliefs equally, teaches an intolerance of any belief that is considered to be intolerant! Hence it is not unusual for Biblical Christianity to be held up to scorn and ridicule even as other religions are portrayed sympathetically.

Apostate Christianity has in fact been guilty at times of promoting hatred and intolerance. However, we know that in Christ, true believers are free to love all men with His love, to proclaim the truth without compromise, and then to give men liberty to do what they will with that truth. Satan, however, lumps us all together that he might discredit the truth that he so hates and fears.

## **THE APOSTASY**

The apostasy of professing Christianity has gathered a frightening momentum. In the absence of the living presence of Christ in most

churches, devils have stepped in and taken over. Whole movements have arisen that draw huge crowds by catering to the natural man.

A major television news special was broadcast several months ago concerning some of these movements. The broadcast was entitled, “In the Name of God.” We might add “In the Name of Jesus Christ” to that as well. Each movement believed that they were representing Him. Matt. 7:21-23.

Some were depicted as using marketing consultants to teach them how to compete in the “marketplace” for crowds. Some have resorted to various forms of slick entertainment. Others, in their drive to offer what the news commentator called “emotional therapy,” have opened themselves up to all sorts of spirits offering a wide variety of “experiences” and manifestations.

## LYING SIGNS

The major thrust of this book has been to identify falsehood employed by Satan to deceive men in the end time. As has been established, a lying sign is a kind of lie that serves to point to and confirm another lie. It is like a road sign that says you are entering “The Promised Land” when in fact you are about to drive off a cliff!

Virtually all of the lying signs referred to earlier continue to be employed and more so. A few deserve particular mention.

The explosion in knowledge and technology continues to amaze men and serves to confirm the proud belief that man can solve his own problems — anything is possible. Knowledge has probably doubled several times over since this book was written! Of course Daniel knew of this long ago (Daniel 12:4).

There is an element of truth in this particular lie. In Gen. 11, when God confounded men’s language at the Tower of Babel, He observed (verse 6) “... this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do.” Left to himself today, man would continue to learn and would eventually travel to the stars.

However, God has a different plan and regardless of what He may allow man in his rebellion to achieve, his day will come to a sudden fiery end. Isaiah 2:10-22 is a passage which particularly warns against trusting in man and also warns of divine judgment on human pride.

Another area of great deception is the pursuit of peace. A lot has happened in 25 years — the dramatic decline of communism, the end of the cold war, the decline in the threat of nuclear war, various treaties involving Israel — all of these things signaling to many that peace is achievable.

There are still terrible conflicts going on yet they seem to be **civil wars**, wars between different ethnic groups **within** nations. The last time one nation invaded and conquered another — when Iraq invaded Kuwait — an

unprecedented coalition of nations led by an awesome display of U.S. military technology sent the conqueror home in defeat to lick his wounds.

The euphoria that followed signaled more than the simple joy of victory. There was also the feeling that a decisive message had been sent to any similar would-be aggressor that he risked the wrath of the United Nations.

Do you suppose there might be any significance to Rev. 13:4 where men say “Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” I believe it would be profitable to read Bro. Thomas’s thought-provoking article, first published almost 40 years ago, entitled, “Is The United Nations the Beast of Daniel and Revelation?”

On the subject of man’s hope of peace in this world the word of God is crystal clear: “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” I Thess. 5:3.

Do not be swept along with the world as it pursues a course of trusting in man and grasps at anything that seemingly confirms their hope in what man can do.

## **THE OCCULT**

Interest and belief in the occult has grown tremendously in the last 25 years. In a real sense it has become “mainstream.” We’ve seen intelligent and famous people openly promote their occult beliefs and experiences. We now even have a popular TV program called “Psychic Friends.”

God’s people need to be aware that the devil has real supernatural power and avoid the temptation to toy with the occult even a little. Things as seemingly innocent as ouija boards and horoscopes have been used by demons to bring people into terrible bondage. In Christ we have access to all the knowledge and wisdom we need.

There is a terrible spiritual void in men’s minds and hearts today. They cry out for answers, for something to believe in, to hope for. Satan is going all out to fill that void.

He has always propped up his lies and evil doctrines with supernatural signs. In today’s spiritual climate these lying signs are convincing ever-greater numbers of sin-blinded men.

More and more people are convinced about such things as reincarnation and psychic knowledge unaware that the memories of “other lives” and the knowledge are being supplied by demons through their current victims.

Until Philip came along with a true anointing from God, Simon the Sorcerer had the Samaritans bewitched into believing he was “the great

power of God.” Acts 8:5-25. He had genuine supernatural power, but its source was the realm of darkness.

Satan’s greatest means of bewitching mankind has always been religion, however, because religion comes under the guise of representing God and doing good.

## STRONG DELUSION

This present religious generation is more prepared and ripe for strong delusion than any in the history of the world. It is a generation that cannot discern the true anointing, that equates the word of God with their understanding of the Bible and their tradition. God and His presence have been associated with a wide range of emotions and bodily sensations. The “word” people have heard has left them spiritually empty in the face of the stress of today’s world and the flood tide of deception that is engulfing mankind. Satan is not holding anything back because he knows his time is about to run out.

One movement sweeping through many groups today merits special mention. It is a movement marked by many manifestations described even by some of its followers as “bizarre.” These include: laughing uncontrollably; falling down, sometimes unable to move for considerable periods of time; roaring like a lion; even barking like a dog; and other uncontrollable outbursts.

People come to believe that they are being “filled with the Spirit,” that they are entering into “the divine romance,” a relationship in which God “makes love” to His people.

Those who enter in are taught that their experience is repeatable and are encouraged to minister one to another as often as they feel inclined.

Not surprisingly many plausible ideas have been put forward to explain, justify and promote this “blessing.” As I said earlier, people have been prepared for this. Ideas planted in people’s minds, often years earlier, are “confirmed” as they encounter this phenomenon.

Taken all together — people prepared by Satan; the powerful emotions and sensations people experience; and the plausible rationale to explain it: this is, I believe, a diabolically clever deception.

**People don’t stop to think that what makes deception so deceptive is how good it looks and how right it seems.** They do not take adequately into account Satan’s ability to counterfeit the things of God.

Why would Jesus warn of deception so powerful that even the elect would almost be deceived if it were not so? Matt. 24:24. That has to apply to real people in real situations — maybe to people you and I know.

Most religious people are just that — religious — and certainly cannot be considered God’s people. Yet increasing numbers of these gullible souls are falling under the spell of a warm, gooey, touchy-feely “god” who stirs their inward emotions with feelings of unconditional love and acceptance. Noticeably absent is a spirit of deep conviction of sin and repentance. This spirit loves and receives everyone. “Just As I Am, Without One Plea,” has become, “Just As I Am,” **period!**

Uncontrollable laughter, often disorderly and inappropriate, is said to be “the joy of the Lord.” Considering the stress of living in today’s world, any spirit that stirs up a deep laughter will most certainly bring about an emotional release that makes people feel better.

## REASONINGS

Following are a few of the reasonings I have encountered along with some comments.

“We need to believe in God’s desire to bless us more than we fear Satan’s power to deceive us.” That sounds good and is designed to disarm someone who would rightly be concerned about deception.

On the one hand, the Bible clearly states that we are to beware — or to be concerned — about deception. Col. 2:8, I Tim. 4:1-6, I John 4:1, Matt. 24:4.

On the other hand, this statement assumes that it is God’s desire that His people live on a perpetual mountaintop of feeling and experience and that what they are experiencing is, in fact, God.

There is nothing in the New Testament to suggest that the Christian life in this world is like this. Paul certainly knew nothing of this. Although he experienced great revelations (II Cor. 12:7), his general experience was one of death that God’s life would come forth (II Cor. 4:7-12). Note some of the emotions and experiences that were Paul’s lot in this passage alone: trouble, perplexity, persecution, being cast down, always delivered unto death. He said “... death worketh in us ...” (verse 12). Other passages describing his experiences include: II Cor. 1:4-10, II Cor. 6:4-10, II Cor. 11:23-33.

The Lord even declined to deliver Paul from being buffeted by a demon, but rather told him, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Paul’s response was, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” II Cor. 12:9.

Folks today don’t want the cross, the way of death-to-self. They despise the living word that would search them out that they might be delivered and transformed. They would much rather have a “god” who loves, assures and receives them as they are and who gives them what they need through an

experience apart from the word. Any “word” involved is pretty much after the fact and selectively uses scripture to seemingly support the experience.

The same Bible that speaks of love and joy also warns of a spiritual condition people can get into when God sends light and they reject it in favor of their own way. I am persuaded that this is what has happened to this generation in a general sense.

In John 12:35 Jesus said, “Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.”

Isaiah 66:3-4 portrays a people that outwardly appeared to be walking in Moses’ law, doing all the right things. Yet God saw through the outward and compared their apparently righteous acts to abominable disgusting things. The consequence of this condition is in verse 4: “I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them: because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.”

Remember the warning in Prov. 1:20-32. It is a terrible thing to not walk in light, to be abandoned to darkness and delusion. Delusion is a condition in which people are absolutely sure they are right — but they’re wrong!

If perchance someone reads this to whom it applies, you will not recognize yourself. You will resent or pity me and go on as you are. God has a remnant capable of turning their hearts and minds to Him, however. This is to them.

Another idea put forward is to point to the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23 — including love and joy — and then to note that it says, “... against such there is no law.”

This is taken to mean that if you see someone in the throes of some spiritual experience he seems to be enjoying, you’re not to interfere or to question it. If the manifestation seems strange we’re to realize that God’s ways are above ours, that He’s God and we’re not to question how He does things.

The devil delights in that sort of reasoning. It contains a measure of truth that makes it sound good, but it is truth misapplied and distorted. The Lord never intended that we drop our spiritual defenses in the face of every mysterious supernatural manifestation claiming and appearing to be of God. I do not object to “letting God be God,” as some say; I do strongly object, however, to letting the devil pretend to be God!

Closely related is the argument that points to the fruit of this experience. People are “happier, freer, loving each other, praising God, etc.” The reasoning follows: “Surely Satan wouldn’t cause people to praise God.”

This argument is powerfully convincing to those who look “on the outward appearance.” I Samuel 16:7.

As to the fruit, I believe that people are being seduced by the sweet-smelling fragrance of blossoms. I fear that the real fruit is yet to come.

## **TAKE AWAY THE NOISE**

Imagine two people side by side. One is moving in God’s Spirit, genuinely worshipping God from the heart. The second is outwardly doing all that the first is, yet the inspiration behind it is not God at all, but a religious spirit, a demon.

You say, “Why would a devil praise God?” The answer is that a devil can appear to praise God as part of his strategy to deceive. Remember, Satan doesn’t appear as a devil of darkness but as an “angel of light” (II Cor. 11:14).

The question is not one of appearance. We are all too easily deceived by that, but how does God see a thing? What is its true nature? Would God recognize and receive the “praise” of the second person in our example above?

Amos 5:21-23 is another picture of apostate Israel outwardly serving God, walking in the law, singing and worshipping God. In verse 23, God says, “Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.”

The truth is that people can be very emotional and sincere in expressing their religious feelings and beliefs and be dead wrong. Most of the Pharisees went to their graves absolutely convinced that they had served the cause of God by instigating Christ’s crucifixion. They were very emotional about it and also about what they considered to be Stephen’s blasphemy (Acts 6:8-7:60). Until God intervened, Paul, then known as Saul, agreed with them (Acts 8:1).

Only when our hearts are genuinely turned to the Lord can we begin to see past the outward appearance and recognize the inspiration behind a thing. Just remember, however, that God’s Spirit is not given to equip us to walk alone but to fitly join us together (Eph. 4:16).

## **CUTENESS**

One thing I’ve observed, not only in this movement, but also in many others is a real lightness, a casual flippancy, in the way they speak of God and the things of God. Judging from the “flavor” of many things I’ve heard said, a lot of folks think of God almost as their “great buddy in the sky,” someone “really neat” to know.

I've heard people use the word "awesome" concerning God in virtually the same way they might use the word to describe a slam dunk in a basketball game. "Awesome" without any true awe!

I've heard more than one person's strong experience spoken of as God "blasting" them (ha ha) as though God were playing games with people and they found it amusing.

If such expressions make you cringe, good! This religious generation has lost all fear of God. If they knew Him they could not speak of Him as they do. What is called "the fear of God" is a human sentimentality taught by the precept of men (Isaiah 29:13).

Neither Job nor Isaiah were what we would think of as "sinners," that is, they were among the more godly men of their respective generations. Yet hear their words upon a genuine personal encounter with the presence of God: "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6); "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." Isaiah 6:5.

Contrast their words with a T-shirt I saw recently on which Gabriel was portrayed as "the original Bugle Boy!" A lot of religious people today get a real kick out of seeing how clever and "cute" they can be about God. In reality devils are mocking God through the very people who profess to be His followers.

## **CAN YOU IMAGINE?**

Imagine the following if you can. Jesus is sitting on a hillside teaching the people. Suddenly He is overcome by a fit of laughter and falls to the ground whooping uncontrollably. Peter quickly steps forward and says, "Not to worry, folks, He's just being blessed and filled with the Spirit. See how happy He is. You can be filled too: just let us pray for you. Some may laugh, some weep, and some may feel weak and fall down under the power. Don't worry, though, we'll have 'catchers' assigned to help you when you fall."

Pretty soon the hillside is littered with people laid out like cord wood, some giggling, some laughing out loud, most just immobile "under the power."

If you can find such a scene believable you might as well stop reading! Yet folks believe that this same Jesus is today responsible for similar scenes!

Another argument put forward is that these manifestations are not unique but that they were experienced in historical revivals. Rather than

causing me to believe in what's happening now, this causes me to question some things that happened back then!

I can say from personal observation that whenever God's Spirit is genuinely moving, the devil will try his best to plant his people and manifest a counterfeit to corrupt and confuse. Just because strange manifestations may have attended genuine revival doesn't guarantee that they are of God.

One thing this experience does is to seemingly offer people a spiritual shortcut. As we indicated earlier, folks are supposedly getting it all through an experience: no need for repentance, the Word, learning patience through tribulation, being disciples of those God anoints to minister the Word. Our flesh hates all of those things — the very things God has ordained to deliver and transform us — yet we love experiences! They feed our egos and deliver us from the need for faith.

One characteristic that afflicts great numbers of religious people is a spirit that aspires to be and do something they consider to be spiritually important. An experience such as this is very appealing to these people. It offers a shortcut to ministry. The only qualification necessary to be able to lay hands on people and have phenomenal things happen is to first partake of this experience.

Jesus encountered such people in John 6:28. They wanted to know what they had to do to “work the works of God.” Verse 29 shows us what God wants: “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” What God wants is for us to recognize and receive both His messenger and His message.

People with all kinds of motives flock to see phenomenal manifestations who would not stay five minutes where they had to walk by faith and be disciples under the living word that “is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Heb. 4:12.

The manifestation of people falling down or being caused to fall down “under the power” has become a great sign to many of this present generation. When this “sign” appears in the context of sincerity, sympathetic sentiment, emotional arousal and some actual miracles it becomes powerfully convincing to empty, needy souls not grounded in the living word of God.

Jesus never used his anointing to knock people down! He didn't need “catchers.” There were cases where people fell down (Mark 9:17-27, Luke 4:33-36), but in every instance it was caused by demons. Jesus' response was to cast out the demons and to lift the people up.

## A QUESTION

I'd like to pose a question concerning the deception Jesus referred to in Matt. 24:24 to anyone who claims to believe the Bible. He said it would involve "great signs and wonders" and would all but deceive "the very elect." What do you think that deception will be like? How would you recognize it if you encountered it?

The emphasis was not on how **false** it would be but on how **deceptive**. If you were the devil and were trying to deceive Bible-believers, you certainly would be very careful to do and say things that looked and sounded genuine. You would be a careful student of everything that professing Christians found convincing and then you would employ that knowledge to get them to receive lies along with a skillful counterfeit of what they believed.

## THE HOLY GHOST

Another thing that needs commenting on concerns the continuing unscriptural emphasis on the Holy Ghost. I recently heard a message on TV by one of the leading "sign and wonder" preachers. His message was such a distortion of the truth that I almost could hear someone saying, "Well, praise the Holy Ghost! — and, by the way, thank you, Jesus, for your minor role."

Every false doctrine allows Satan to divide, confuse, and bring people into spiritual bondage. Truth, in every area of doctrine, brings understanding, faith, rest and deliverance. I believe that the Remnant Church will experience a great measure of deliverance and freedom as she begins to understand the truth concerning our great sovereign God and the Son He brought forth to be Creator and Lord of all as well as Savior and Elder Brother to the redeemed of all ages!

## THE COMING OF CHRIST

One of the greatest areas of doctrinal deception continues to concern the coming of Christ. Even more so than twenty-five years ago the airwaves are filled with radio and TV preachers preaching some form of those teachings popularized by the footnotes in the Scofield Bible. I am persuaded that the Scofield Bible has long been one of Satan's greatest tools to pervert the understanding of professing Christians — including many who are genuinely part of God's remnant.

Let's play a game of "what if" for a moment. "What if" I were to tell you of a new understanding of the coming of Christ that is coming forth even as we speak? "What if" I were to tell you that the first appearance of this new understanding occurred about 40 years ago in the unpublished writings of a Spanish Jesuit Priest? "What if" I told you that his ideas, recently translated

into English, are now being enlarged upon in an unusual spiritual visitation in which people are supernaturally compelled to utter unpremeditated prophesyings, sometimes for as long as two hours at a time? “What if” I told you that these prophesyings, while warning of the imminent return of Christ, also are serving to establish many brand new doctrinal interpretations of the scriptures concerning the end of the age?

What do you suppose would be the reaction of today’s dispensational teachers were I to approach them with this information? Would they leap for joy? Would they rush to embrace these new ideas, believing that God was intervening to correct their theology?

You know as well as I do that these teachers would “lead the parade” in denouncing any new ideas that would arise in such a manner, especially if these ideas differed from their own, yet what I have described in our little game of “what if” would have been entirely accurate had I been writing in the year 1831! The Spanish Jesuit Priest was named Lacunza. The strange spiritual visitation occurred in the congregation of a minister named Edward Irving in England, who, coincidentally, was the translator of Lacunza’s manuscript.

The totally novel doctrine, never before suggested in the history of the church, was the two-stage theory of the second coming of Christ, the idea that Christ would first “rapture” believers out of the world, pour out judgments **for a period of time**, and then return for a “second” second coming to reign.

From this dubious beginning has evolved the popular dispensational teachings of today! Satan understands the power of tradition. He has spent two centuries establishing this system of falsehood and deception so that today’s generation would embrace it without question as time-honored truth.

The scheme of having it built into the footnotes of a popular edition of the Bible has proved a stroke of genius. It is much easier for people, preachers included, to consult these ready-made “answers” than it is to seek God and wait upon Him for true revelation. Take that fact and add several generations and it is easy to see how these ideas have become so enmeshed in people’s minds. When they read the Bible, they read it with “dispensational glasses.”

On top of this there have been a whole range of political developments, especially concerning Israel, that have strengthened the dispensational theories in people’s minds. In the light of the word, especially the New Testament, are these developments a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy or are they elaborate lying signs? If you are reading this apart from

the book, Lying Signs and Wonders, I hope you will get the book, read it with an honest heart and seek God about what you read.

There is apparently even some talk about plans to build a temple in Jerusalem. **If** this happens it could very well prove to be one of the greatest lying signs of all. In the light of the word, we can safely say that Christ will never reign there and that God will never sanction a return to bloody animal sacrifices for sin. That people can believe such stuff and claim to believe the word which says that Christ “offered one sacrifice forever,” (Heb. 10:12) is a pretty clear indication of the power of deception.

## THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD

All of this preoccupation with world events and the supposed fulfillment of scripture has served to divert the attention of multitudes from the voice of the Son of God who is gathering His Remnant Church and teaching her in preparation for His return and the end of this present world.

A little over a year ago there was a special stirring in our midst as the Lord re-emphasized the nearness of Christ’s coming and the fiery end of the world. Also emphasized was the fact that we are in the tribulation **now** and religious tradition is blinding men to what is happening even as it did at Jesus’ first coming. Incidentally, this stirring began the day **before** the Los Angeles-Northridge earthquake.

I found it very significant that just at the time this was occurring in our midst, at least two prominent TV preachers went **out of their way** to pause and say, “One thing we know for certain: the world is **not** about to end!” The devil was very aware of the emphasis of God’s Spirit and made a special effort to counter His message. Of course the preachers said what they did because of their belief in a coming millennial reign of Christ.

These subjects have been well covered in earlier chapters, yet a few comments are in order.

Something rises up in me when I hear someone speak of how wonderful it will be when Christ finally returns to set up his kingdom and reign. Through this false doctrine Satan has not only held out a false hope of salvation after Christ’s coming but has subtly implied that Christ is **not** reigning now. He is supposedly in heaven somewhere biding His time, waiting for the opportunity to **begin** His reign.

I have news for you: **Christ’s reign is not about to begin; it is about to end.** Before He went to the cross He said, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” John 12:31.

His reign began at the cross where He broke the power the devil had had over man through sin. It has continued nearly 2000 years as He has faithfully gathered an elect remnant from every nation through His word.

The climax of His reign will occur at earth's darkest hour. When the last of the elect is brought in and the work He has purposed to accomplish in this earth is complete, He will return to gather His elect to Himself, to destroy all else by fire, to preside over the final judgment and to hand over the Kingdom to His Father. Rom. 9:28, Matt. 24:29-31, II Thess. 1:7-10, II Peter 3:10-12, John 5:22, I Cor. 15:24.

Believers don't need to hear a fairy tale of some future reign. They need to know the simple truth that **Christ is reigning now!** He is actively in charge, carrying out His Father's will to prepare His brethren for the world to come.

What Lucifer does, he does by permission. He and his demon host have been loosed upon unbelieving man as never before in our day. This is simply a further sign of the end of this present age when, as it was in the days of Noah, God's Spirit will not always strive with man. Matt. 24:37. Gen. 6:3. Satan knows his time is short. Rev. 12:12.

Even as Satan's stranglehold upon lost mankind deepens, the light of God's truth grows brighter for the Remnant Church. She, with Christ's presence and leadership, is the ark of safety for God's people in the final flood of darkness.

At the very darkest hour, when it will appear that Satan has won, his kingdom will be utterly crushed by the sudden return of our Lord in power and great glory! II Thess. 2:8.

Are you ready?

## OTHER BOOKS

### **The Sure Foundation**, by C. Parker Thomas

A collection of four articles published in the early 1980's on the important subject of the foundation believers have in Christ. Suggested Price - \$3.00.

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