

"Take heed lest any one deceive you."

by John Joseph

Every one of us, dear brothers and sisters, at this time at the closing of this age would do well to most diligently give heed to the admonition of the Lord Jesus given to His select disciples every time He was asked about end times.

The Lord considered this matter of such import that invariably every time before uttering a word in reply to their questions He issued a warning: *Take heed that no man deceive you* (Matt. 24.8 – see also Mark 13.5 and Luke 21.8). The Holy Spirit considers this of such import as to include it in all three synoptic gospels.

Deception

Deception has ever been a danger to God's people; ever there to attempt to corrupt the image that God's people have of God and so lead them away from Him. And the Lord warns that a key marker of end times is very great deception all over the world and in the church. It behoves us never to think we have arrived at a certain level of spiritual maturity guaranteeing our immunity from that shadow. If we think that way we shall surely be taken in and deceived. And to be deceived is to be in darkness and led away from Truth and the Way. It is not our spiritual maturity that protects us. It is our closeness to the Lord, though we be but babes.

From the pen of Andrew Jukes these words more than a century ago have great relevance for us today:

A Story is still current in the East respecting Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, which, though unrecorded in the Word of God, is not without instruction, nor unworthy of the wisdom of David's peaceful son. We are told that the Queen of Sheba was anxious to prove the king. She had already in many ways tried his wisdom by her hard questions; but her subtleties had not perplexed him: every difficulty which she could suggest found its solution when submitted to his wisdom. At last, as a practical trial of his powers, she brought in her hands two bouquets, the one of artificial, the other of real flowers; and standing at some distance from him, she demanded of the king that he should, without nearer inspection, point out which was the real flower, and which the work of art.

"I desire," said she, "to try your wisdom and that of your lords by this test. Can you or they, without further examination, tell me which is man's work and which is God's work?" The king turned to those about him, and bid them give an answer; but none was found before him who would venture, without nearer inspection, to pronounce on this question.

For a moment the queen seemed to think she had overcome the boasted skill and penetration of him who sat on David's throne. But her thought was checked that instant. The king's voice was again heard, gently reproving his servants for their want of understanding. "Can you not," said he, "even here discern the things that differ? Open the casements, and let in the bees. They shall teach you at once which are the true flowers."

The command was obeyed, and in an instant the bees buzzed throughout the hall, and were then seen crowding upon one of the bouquets, without deigning even to touch the other. "There," said the king, "is the work of God: it has in it food and sweetness; therefore it is attacked. There is no food or sweetness in man's imitations."

In this world many are the imitations of the work of God. Some of these are so nearly perfect, so much like the truth, that they are enough to perplex even the faithful Israelite. But though too much for the narrow wisdom of many of God's elect, they are not too much for the wisdom of the true Solomon. He has ways of instantly detecting all counterfeits, for he is "the truth," and of discerning and distinguishing genuine things from the most cunning imitations. And such as dwell near His throne of grace, though they be but babes and sucklings, shall learn, in His presence, to discern the things that differ, which wiser souls, out of His presence, fail to apprehend. (end quote)

A great deception, a great apostasy has been foretold that it should come and is come and that it will deceive the whole world. It is again and again foretold that it is a counterfeit aping the truth, a clever imitation so powerfully compelling and appearing so close to the truth that none but God's elect shall know it from the very truth itself.

Counterfeit Christianity: Origins

This deception has been encroaching upon and fermenting within the Church since the earliest days, but in our day it reaches the height of its full expression. It is the greatest deception: a deception in plain sight! We need heavenly sight and our eyes anointed by the Lord Himself to see through it. This is not about a heresy or sectarian error or about backsliding or lukewarm Christians, as these are but fruit of the deception. This is about a counterfeit 'christianity' which is in truth the enemy of the true Church and which has spread over the whole world. This is the whore who sits over many waters. (Rev, 17.1&15).

The genesis of this, of course, began at the tower of Babel. Here man (Adam man) is working to ascend up to heaven. Self elevation is the aim; self-energy the means, all wrapped in self-glory as their "glory", with the end – "to make a name".

The True Church in her faithfulness would take no name but the name of her husband. The denominational church system, even as the word implies, adopts the many names of her many lovers, her many idols, her many doctrines.

In an article entitled "Babylonian Religion", Ironside writes:

As we go back into the dim twilight of history with Scripture, we learn that the founder of Babel, or Babylon, was Nimrod, of whose unholy achievements we read in the 10th chapter of Genesis. He was the arch-apostate of the patriarchal age. He is described as a "mighty hunter before the Lord"---"a hunter of the souls of men", the rabbis said.

Going out from the presence of the Lord, he impiously sought to gather a multitude about himself, and in defiance of the express command of God to spread abroad upon the face of the earth, he persuaded his associates and followers to join together in "building a city and a tower which should reach unto heaven." Not surely as some of us were taught in our childhood a tower by which they might climb up into the skies to escape another possible flood, but a tower of renown, rising to a great height, to be recognized as a temple or rallying center for those who did not walk in obedience to the word of the

Lord. With all the effrontery of our modern apostates, they called their city and tower Bab-El, the gate of God; but it was soon changed by divine judgment into Babel, Confusion. It bore the stamp of unreality from the first, for we are told, "they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar." An imitation of that which is real and true has ever since characterized Babylon in all ages. (end quote)

Consider some examples of the imitation of truth in Great Babylon as it is at this day. For this is the city which is not only built up, but filled with images of the truths of God. On her outside, as one has said, is the likeness of a church, the likeness of service and ministry, the likeness of the ordinances, duties, and ways of holiness. On her inside there is the likeness of good knowledge, the likeness of repentance and conversion, the likeness of faith, the likeness of zeal for God, the likeness of love to God and His saints, the likeness of the Lamb's meekness, the likeness of justification, the likeness of sanctification, the likeness of mortification, the likeness of peace, joy, rest, and satisfaction: but the substance, the truth, the virtue of all these is not in her; and she herself is found persecuting that very thing, where it is found in truth, the image of which she cries up so boastfully. This is the woman that hath bewitched the whole earth. And what truth shall we not find the likeness of in great Babel? She has the form of every truth. But she has not the Spirit of Truth.

And the greatest sign of her apostasy and desolation is that the Holy Spirit has been banished from her temple. And we will see that having mere forms of truth means that these forms are by her corrupted eventually into lies.

One thing is needed

It is not the purpose of this treatise to investigate error or particular false doctrine. In fact a readiness to take that up is itself an unfailing mark of error. The Lord is never content in His teachings merely to set points right; His one great aim is ever to set souls right. The purpose of this writing is to provoke the Lord's elect Sons to watchfulness, to the imperative of prioritising closeness to Him above all else in this end of the age in which we live. For our safety is not in arriving at all right doctrine, nor in finding a

ministry that we may sit under and trust will preserve us from the winds of error and deception. It is in being so close to the Lord Jesus that for deception to draw us away, it would have to draw Him away. Not all those who rightly call themselves disciples can be said to be as close as this.

The Lord called only twelve to be with Him, and of these only three were privy to His most intimate thoughts and teachings. Only Peter, James and John see the Lord on the mount transfigured; again only these three are with Him in the inner sanctum of the garden in His agony. And again only these ask Him *privately* about end times and only to them does He thus speak. The closer we are to Him the closer we are to the light and the darkness cannot enter in where the light is.

“He who follows me shall not walk in darkness”
(John 8.12).

The Evil of Babylon

What then is the insidious thing about Babylon? What is the essence of the evil of Babylon? Is it false doctrines, vicarial rule, [man standing in the place of the Lord], the traditions of men making void the Word of God? These are all evil plants growing in Babylon. But what is the very core and purpose of the evil? It is the propagation of a life. It is the nurturing and protecting of a life that the Lord Jesus came to slay. It is a life manifesting as praising God in the flesh, preaching the word out of self, running all kinds of church activities with religious zeal in the power of human effort. Its operation is the antithesis of the work of God, for the work of God is to kill that Adamic corrupted life.

So what is the purpose of the evil of Babylon?

It is the prevention of the growth of a Life and the preservation and propagation of another life. That is what it is. This is the first principle.

What Babylon is today

How does Babylon prevent one form of life and foster another? And just what is Babylon?

Babylon is Christianity without the Cross. And Christianity without the cross is she who is *“full of the names of blasphemy”* (Rev. 17.3). A church without the cross and without the Holy Spirit is become Babylon, *the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird* (Rev. 18.2). The Holy Spirit will be seen to be present in the Church if the cross is in the lives of the people in the Church. Paul told the Philippian Church that *“many walk...I tell you often and even weeping that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.”* (Phil.3.18). Why was Paul weeping? We must not, we dare not, pass over this lightly, brethren, for in the next breath the apostle warns in stark terms: *whose end is destruction...who mind earthly things* (vs.19). Paul did not say these were the enemies of Christ, but they were the enemies of the Cross. Our salvation is the cross and death and resurrection into new life – and it is ongoing. Remove the Cross and you remove the Life. This is Babylon – Covering over and replacing the heart of the Christian life with myriad church programs, activities, promotions, meetings, conferences, rituals, hierarchies, titles, doctrines of temporal prosperity, and the list is almost endless.

Within the walls of Babylon, its subjects are either spiritually apathetic and inactive, or forever kept occupied with church activities lest at any time they might seek and find the Living God and have His Life grow up in them. It is well known that a camaraderie develops among prisoners and fosters a sense of group belonging. This is taken for spiritual fellowship, yet fellowship without the Head is akin to group support extant in the world’s community organisations. *“Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”* (1 John 1.3). A false sense of safety, a dependence on man and an open door to deception is what Babylon’s sense of belonging engenders.

Right here is where we are safe and cannot be deceived: It is closeness to the Lord Jesus which includes the Cross. To Babylon the Cross is negative, not spoken of, and to be avoided, but in the light of the Holy Spirit we see that the Cross is wholly positive, the doorway to Life. When we come to the place of death (to self-will) we find that we no longer bear the cross but the cross bears us. Here we are safe.

The apostle goes on to say *but our conversation (life and thoughts) is in heaven from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ..(vs.20)*. The life and words of church goers whether toward heavenly things or toward earthly things accurately reveals their inner life, their degree of spirituality; and points also to the Cross or its absence, and whether the church is journeying toward Babylon or New Jerusalem.

Is Babylon a church, the false church? Yes, but even deeper than that is the mystery! And Babylon is called a mystery (Rev. 17.5). Babylon is a process and an end state. It is an insidious process that spreads and pervades, a disease organism that is given entrance into another organism until the whole organism is diseased. The parables of the Lord Jesus illustrate this and shed light on the 'christian' church. 'Leaven' is that element that is referred to in His teaching to paint the picture of being bred of corruption, coming from previous evil, and spreading through the mass of that in which it is mixed.

The Kingdom comes: The Kingdom does not come

Matt 13.31-33:

31 *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:*

32 *Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.*

33 *Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.*

It is the Son of Man who sows the good seed (see vs.37). It is the woman, the receiver of seed, who takes in addition to the seed and subsequently, the leaven (corruption) of Adamic Man – the ways of the world, traditions of men etc. In other words, all the rotten fruit of the natural carnal mind. This parable is put forward by the Lord in the context of the parable of the tares, and others in the same discourse and is illustrative of the same truth

which is about the progress and regress of the kingdom of heaven. It is about the Seed and its end state, AND it is about what happens when leaven comes in, and the end state in that case. The kingdom of heaven is as the smallest seed which becomes a great tree, greater than all other plants. The end is the kingdom fills all! The leaven is that which would prevent this, which would permeate all, progressively and secretly, until the end state is reached – all then is leaven. That is, all is rottenness. In this scenario the kingdom does not come. Here are the two progressions: As to the True Church, the remnant church, this magnificent tree, the kingdom of heaven, fills all of it. The kingdom comes!

As to Babylon, it too receives the seed of the kingdom (for Babylon cannot exist until after regeneration) but takes into itself the leaven of error and the things of the world and hides them somewhere (we will see where presently) thereby corrupting it until fully corrupted. The kingdom does not come. The end state here is the harlot church of Revelation 17. 3-6(NIV):

³ Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns.

⁴ The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries.

⁵ The name written on her forehead was a mystery:

**BABYLON THE GREAT
THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**

⁶ I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God's holy people, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.

We must not be astonished to see that the natural progression of the Church is always to apostasy. I say, the natural progression. As the natural progression of a stone is to roll down a hill and never up, so the natural progression of the church

is downward to apostasy. The history of Christendom bears this out over and over down the ages. The natural progression occurs naturally when the flesh is in control. This is Babylon.

The remnant church, New Jerusalem, moves against the downward inertia because of a supernatural progression upward in the power of the Holy Ghost who also moves to purge out any leaven.

Paul speaks of this in 1Cor.5.6-8: *“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.”*

In Babylonish systems today we see various stages of “leavening”. Some are more fully corrupted than others, but, no doubt, the visible church has universally become fallen and apostate. ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen.’ The injunction is not to fix this thing but to *“Come out of her my people that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”*(Rev.18.4). Let us not be astonished either when we see a mixture in the church. Babylon is mixture! We may see some anointed preaching together with gross flesh and the ways of man and the world. But where leaven is present and not removed, and where the Holy Spirit is repressed and replaced by human effort, there will occur the inexorable downhill slide to apostasy and bondage.

The Letter and the Spirit

There is only one thing that will promote life and growth and bring the Church to perfection, and that is the Word. There is only one thing that will cleanse and separate from the world, and that is the Word. As with the disciples of old, the Lord said: *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you* (John 15.3), so it is true of disciples today. No building, no growth, no sanctification occurs except by the Word. But what word is that? The letter is the word but the letter kills (2 Cor. 3.6). It must be *“the word I have spoken to you”*. Surely not the dead letter word that has spawned 33,000 denominations* today. The Lord Jesus said: *“On this rock I will build my church”* ---ONE church. The Rock that can never be moved is the Revealed Word of God

– revealed by the Holy Spirit. The letter of the word is a mere pointer to the REAL WORD.

There is no famine for the written word. There’s never been more bibles, books, teachings, blogs, courses, programs etc than there are today. The famine is for fresh bread, living food that not only sustains but empowers. Babylon is rich in forms and trinkets but she is miserable and poor and wretched and blind and naked because she has not this: She has no food, no empowered Word; she has no Holy Spirit. The evil of Babylon therefore has a purpose. That purpose is to keep believers in a state of perpetual starvation in which the whole purpose of God in redemption is thwarted. For God’s purpose in redemption is for His babies and children to grow up into the stature of Jesus Christ by receiving the living Word as their necessary food. Babylonish systems stymie this because they have no living food and instead feed death through a dead word creating stunted, weak and unbalanced ‘church members’.

In Matthew 16 are the well known words of the Lord Jesus to Simon Peter: *“Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee...on this rock I will build my church”*. The revealed Word, not just in this passage, but everywhere that the Spirit does reveal, is THE WORD upon which the Church is built and upon which the Church prevails. Only the Holy Ghost Word builds. This is the True Church, small, faithful, waiting on the Spirit of God.

The Church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. And the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets is the One who is the Revealed Word Himself.

What does the letter of the word build? Answer: Babylon, 33,000 denominations* and counting! – large, rich (worldly), having a form of godliness but denying the power (Spirit) thereof.

All holding up the bible in their right hands and claiming it as their legitimacy.

NOTE (*There are 33,000 Christian denominations according to Google. A recent issue of Christianity Today magazine puts that figure at 50,000 and increasing.)

Every Word by which Zion is built is by Revelation. God's Zion is a city which overcame the world and overspread the nations. How the faith of the gospel did overrun the world in early days! So has this city overrun the world. What kindreds and tongues have drunk of her cup, as she took, first whole territories from the holy seed, and then, as far as she might, laid Zion in the dust, and led her children captive. She continues so today but her end is coming. It will come in one hour!

In the scripture cited in Matthew's gospel, we see that a MAN took a seed and planted it and a WOMAN took leaven and hid it. A man is a depositor of seed and a woman is a receiver of seed. The sower is the Son of Man and the receiver is whoever receives that seed. We are here considering the Church. The woman took two things: firstly, the seed and secondly, leaven. She took leaven and hid it. Hid it where? In three measures of meal. The three measures of meal spoken of by the Lord refer to the word of God. Perfectly measured, perfectly given, a perfect word, yet awaiting, as was the pre-creation, the Spirit of God to brood upon it. A complete recipe for something else to follow, as we will see. The symbolic number three is the perfect, the complete, number of God, the Divine Being. It is the number of the Godhead; the number of complete and ordered Man – spirit, soul and body. The instances of this number in the scriptures are so numerous, it is not possible to present them all here, but a brief few are illustrative: "These three years I came seeking fruit" (Luke.13.7) – completeness of opportunity; Moses insisting on three days' journey into the wilderness – completeness of separation; Jonah, the type, and the Lord Jesus, being three days in the deep – completeness of death and its destruction; three measures of meal – something perfect in a primitive state awaiting the Spirit of Life to give it Life.

The Living Word of God is a creative Word. The letter of the word is a dead letter; it cannot give life. The words that the Lord Jesus spoke were 'spirit and life'. The Scribes and Pharisees waved the dead letter of the word in His face daily, carrying their scrolls while the living, breathing, quickening Word of Life was standing before them.

The three measures of meal is the word of God, but only the letter of the word. Meal (flour) is a precursor to bread and must undergo transformation before it is bread. It is bread potentially. It is on the way to becoming bread, but it is not yet bread. Similarly, the letter is not the Living Word of God. The meaning is yet unrevealed and remains ever so without the Holy Spirit acting upon it. Any attempt to interpret the Word without the Holy Spirit breathing upon it means that the Word is corrupted.

Leaven

Leaven can be hidden in the letter of the word to corrupt it, but leaven can never be hidden in the revealed, living Word of God. Babylon does not have the revealed Word of God, but it has the letter and it has the leaven one in another, and when it hides the leaven in the letter, the evil works insidiously in the letter of the word and corrupts it. And the result is corruption in the Church and ever-dividing denominationalism. Any system readily identified by continuing division can be readily identified as not being of God, for God is a God of integration not disintegration. *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all..."* (Eph.4.4-6).

The leaven of carnal reasonings, doctrines of devils, things and ways of the world, traditions of men, works in the unvivified word to transform the word of God into error and obscenity, and the tree of the kingdom never grows. Here is found the genesis of all deception and falsehood. It fractures the church into ever multiplying denominations by following a carnal, perverted word.

*Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees....he spoke...of the **doctrine** of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.* (Matt16. 6&12).

Another view of this is well illustrated in this extract from JP Eby:

The most outstanding characteristic of the Serpent is his ability to deceive. From the very dawn of human history, as recorded in the Bible, he is depicted as a liar and deceiver... And just how does Satan deceive? A key is found in the Greek New Testament name for Satan — the devil. The Greek word is DIABOLLOS. DIABOLLOS is a compound of two words — DIA and BOLLO. DIA means "a channel of an act" and BOLLO means "to throw." Hence, the Devil is A CHANNEL SOMETHING PASSES THROUGH. The pipe through which water enters your home is a channel. This explains very well why Strong's Analytical Concordance has rendered the compound word DIABOLLOS as "a traducer."

The English word "traduce" means "TO TRANSFER FROM ONE ORDER OF REASONING TO ANOTHER ORDER OF REASONING, as to translate from one language to another language." Hence, the Traducer, the Devil, the Translator, the Interpreter sits enthroned in the mind of man and his primary job is to transfer or translate KNOWLEDGE!

In the temptation of Jesus we discover this wily adversary coming upon the Master with Bible in hand, so to speak. "It is written!" — this was the glittering weapon, the fiery dart, the master-stroke of the Traducer. "If Thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread." "It is written!" he thundered as he offered the kingdoms of earth to Jesus if He would bow to the shrewd worldly wisdom the Traducer outlined in His mind by which He could have conquered even the might of the Roman empire. An easy way to popularity was pointed out — it was suggested that He cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. No harm would come to Him for God had promised to send His angels to care for Him. And the multitude, amazed, would follow Him. What gave immeasurable force to the Traducer's suggestions was his appeal to the awful authority of God's Word. He cast about the things he offered the glow of Divine approval. He enforced his ideas with the sacred sanction of the scriptures. It was with the Bible in hand that he approached the Son of man. "It is written!" If the Word of God supports it, if the Bible sanctions it, why it must be good.

How the Traducer loves to come to us with the Bible in his hand! It casts about him such a holy air. But here is where we discover the awful depths of the Traducer's duplicity. He is no stranger to the scriptures, and he will quote the Word when such a procedure will serve his purpose.

It must be through the Word. It must be through a carnal, twisted, literalistic and erroneous understanding of that Word — the letter that killeth. The letter killeth, and Satan has the power of death! The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are the same tree in the midst — the tree of knowledge is the outer form of truth, whereas the tree of life is the spirit of truth. To be carnally minded is death, says the apostle. How much plainer can it be that the crowning work of the Traducer is to put a natural, carnal, reasoned, intellectual interpretation to the Word which is spirit and life. He takes the language of SPIRIT and translates it into the perverted, garbled dialect of fleshly wisdom and carnal understanding... Ah, what a Translator he is! What a liar and deceiver! And all the time he is quoting the Word of God and rejoicing in what a really sound "fundamentalist" he is.

There isn't a vice you cannot justify, there isn't a doctrine, however contrary to the heart of God, you cannot prove, there isn't a religious methodology you cannot deify, there isn't a Babylonian garment you cannot glorify, by appealing to the scriptures.

All have an, "it is written" to fall back on, The damndest lie can be made to appear true. All the Traducer needs to do is to quote scripture.

Every dirty heresy abroad, every false cult, all find in God's Word their foundation. "They that are unstable and (spiritually) unlearned wrest... the...scriptures unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3: 16). I have learned that one can prove or disprove anything with scripture. (end quote)

Religion

Although Babylon has become 'institutionalised christianity', it is an ancient mystery religion which predates Christianity reaching back into antiquity. Babylon is a theme that runs right through scripture beginning at Babel in Genesis

and ending in Revelation when God finally destroys it utterly. Its aim ever has been to turn Man away from the True God. Its highest expression, its 'glory' is institutionalised christianity. Babylon is an insidious process like unto leaven, a creeping mould that leavens until all is leavened. It can be likened to a virus that attaches itself to a host. The host is the word of God, the letter. It cannot attach to the revealed Word because the Holy Ghost is attached to that imbuing it with incorruptible life – the Word of God which lives and abides forever.

Judaism was an earlier version of Babylon now evolved into Christian Judaism which is the institutionalised denominational system today all over the world. The *corrupted* word of God is the origin and ultimate end of all the multitude of denominations we see today. It is the author and finisher of their unbelief.

The devil has subverted more souls by contaminating the letter of the word than ever he did through pornography. What cruelty and damage down the centuries has been done in the name of God by carnal men armed with a bible!! These are they who hold the Word of God in unrighteousness. Oh the damage from a dead word being picked up and used by a dead man in a dead church!! Oh my Lord, how we need the Holy Spirit! Oh, we need the Word indeed! But oh, how we need the Holy Spirit to come upon the scriptures, to come upon our hearts, to put the living, anointed True Word in our hearts to burn in our hearts – to LIVE in our hearts!

Here again man meddles in the sovereign work of God through carnal reasonings as though he with his natural mind opposed in very essence to the Spirit of God, could accurately interpret the Word. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. Only the Holy Spirit can effect the process of transformation of the letter of the word to the Living Word. Come Lord Jesus! On this Rock build the Church.

The Word belongs to the Holy Spirit

"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." The Holy Spirit, the transmitter of the quickened Word, not only transmits the Word as the Sender, but that same quickened Word creates the hearing in the receiver.

The Word in its hearing, i.e. the kernel not the outer husk, comes into the heart creatively with its meaning intact. God does the whole work conveying the Word and its meaning, and the reception of that Word produces faith, and God is the Author of that too. In all of God's work upon His Word, God is sovereign.

Let us know and be sure of this: The Word can never unfold to us and give us its treasures and be understood without the Holy Spirit. In ending the parable we've been considering here (Matthew 13), the scripture says:

34*All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:*

35*That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*

These are the treasures beyond price that many prophets and righteous men have desired to look into in ages past, but are now being revealed in the closing days of this dispensation to His servants "who esteem His words more than their necessary food."

The End of Babylon

In the Book of Revelation in Chapter 18 we are told three times that Babylon's end will come in one hour. But, before we look at that, for a moment let us hearken back to another end which is really very important and relevant. In John Chapter 4 we have the wonderful story of the woman at the well. The Lord says to this woman *"the hour cometh and now is"*. The hour of which He speaks is not sixty minutes. He is the hour! In so speaking of Himself what He really does is He dismisses the whole dispensation and system then obtaining. The whole religious system of Judaism is ended and He introduces a new order of things. That new order is a Person. In vs. 25 the woman says:

"I know that the Messiah is coming". Jesus replies: *"I that speak unto thee, I AM."* This is the only case in scripture where He ever says to anyone – I am the Messiah.

To elect Israel He never says this, though He is repeatedly asked. But to the non-elect, a despised Samaritan woman, the greatest secret is made plain. Why is this?

The end of the dispensation was the end of Israel's exclusive hold on God. Now salvation is to the whole world, and the Samaritans proclaimed this: "...we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." (vs. 42). He was saying: the hour has come because I am here. The hour of His first coming terminated a dispensation. In the hour of His next coming – in the Sons – another dispensation and religious system is terminated. "Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is thy judgment come...For in one hour so great riches is come to nought...For in one hour she is made desolate." (Rev.18.10,17,19). This is surely not the physical destruction of churches all over the world in a short time period. This rather is the sudden, shocking end of Babylon, institutionalised Christianity, by the advent of Christ again– in the Sons! The hour cometh and now is! The manifestation of the Sons of God is the abrupt (and violent because of its abruptness) end of the "church" age. It is the end of religion and the beginning of the manifested kingdom age. The harlot church is made desolate, because revealed as having no true riches but being wretched and miserable and blind and naked - in the out-shining of the True Church.

Oh, the weeping that will take place in that hour – revealed in advance in this 18th chapter. At that time will be seen also the veil lifted from the hearts of old Israel as they, provoked to jealousy, recognise their true Messiah. Their weeping is described in scripture (Zech12.9,10; John 19.37; Rev.1.7). And what rejoicing!! For if the casting off of them brought salvation to the world, their return will be nothing short of life from the dead. Hallelujah! What an hour! What a day awaits!

Come out of her my people

Still, there are to this time many remaining in Babylon who, though sensing the awfulness of the famine upon their land, settle for the husks of the word as their daily (or weekly) ration which can never satisfy them let alone nourish or promote spiritual growth.

Notwithstanding the famine, for various reasons they wish to stay where they are. Others are not aware of their own deprivation, or are not too bothered about it. For these groups this treatise will have little appeal.

But, most likely, those who are reading these lines are those who have heeded or are in the process of heeding the call of the Spirit now to "*Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues*" (Rev. 18.4).

God's true people are in Babylon: "Come out of her my people...". We who have come out of her have seen the evil. But although there was a time before we came out when we sensed there was something wrong, isn't it true that really clear vision of where we were and what it is came only after we came out?

Like a fish which can't see the water which is all around it we couldn't *fully* see what we were in while we were in it.

If you have come out of Babylon and now see what it is, then thank God for His deliverance. Bring to remembrance the process that brought you out: the words, the steps, the painful experiences, the persons who crossed your path, the books or articles God put before you, the moving of the Spirit, your growing awareness of what to do. For most people this most likely took some time. Have patience therefore in urging brethren still in the system to make the move. It must be by the Spirit of God and our part is to tune in to Him. Just as He brought out His people from the bondage of Egypt and turned the captivity of His people held in ancient Babylon, so will He bring out His people from the bondage of modern Babylon.

When people have reached a point where they know they are starving; when they know desperately they want to be fed; when they want to again find the Presence of the Lord, then, if the Lord should give you a message to such as these, it may well be: "Come out of her My people...". Then people may ask you: "What do we do when we come out? What's the next move? Will you be our pastor?"

You may tell them this: The Lord gives you this instruction – Come out of her..! The Lord almost never gives step 2, step 3, step 4 in advance. When the Israelites came out of Egypt, the Lord gave them step 1 – sprinkle blood on the door posts. He didn't say that after you do that, when you get up in the morning you will find out that all the first born of Egypt are dead but none of you are dead, then follow Moses to the Red Sea and the waters will part and you will cross over safely but all the Egyptians will drown...so, don't worry! No! He doesn't work like that. If your exit is Holy Spirit inspired, do the first thing and come out and seek Him and wait on Him and most surely He will guide you one step at a time. You will marvel at what He does. You will not *fully* recognise Babylon till you come out of her and go into the wilderness. The wilderness is that place outside Jerusalem, outside the church system. *"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy....And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"* (Rev 17.3,5). Babylon is a mystery; it's not easy to see a mystery. Only away from it - in the wilderness, the place of the eagle, is the seeing.

Return to Babylon?

All who have been brought out of Babylon by God and seen it as it is would never return to it. But, wonder of wonders, at this time, God is sending some of His servants back into Babylon. These are watchmen who sit on the walls ... and *watch* (Ezek3.15-17). They are appointed by God and positioned by Him in the church. Some may serve a season, watching, and warning *if God directs*, gaining inside information to be used in God's future purposes, then suddenly He takes them out at the express Word of the Spirit. Others may stay awaiting God's instructions. They are as hidden caterpillars.

Jeremiah Chapter 51:

"Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: ..for His device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple. (vs.11)

Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon. (vs.12)

O thou that dwellest upon many waters, [see Rev.17.15] abundant in many treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness. (vs.13)

The LORD of hosts hath sworn by himself, saying, Surely I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillars; and they shall lift up a shout against thee." (vs.14)

Now Prophet Jeremiah issued these words around 600 BC. Centuries later John the Revelator wrote using the same phraseology as Jeremiah: *"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."* (Rev17.15). Quite plainly, this is not the historical city of Babylon which is but a type. The city here is peoples, multitudes, nations – the whole religious world!

God is, even right now, teaching and feeding and preparing an army of caterpillars who will at His command in His time stand up in the midst and to the astonishment of all, utter a cry and unmask the false shepherds and strip the whore naked to be seen for what she is. Those who are so positioned know these things. They know who they are and they know Him who sent them.

They are watching and being prepared by the Father and will move and speak at the appointed hour in His power. They are priests after the order of Melchizedek. *"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."* (Ps 110.3).

Note: All of Ps 110 speaks of this ministry.

Closeness to the Lord the way of safety

Spiritual understanding is the life and growth of the Church. It is God who gives the increase, which occurs when all of us individually and collectively draw close to the Lord Jesus and follow the Lamb wherever He goes – seeking God intimately and spending much time with Him. Conversely, a carnal understanding leads away from the Spirit, halts growth and accounts for all

the proliferation of denominations and almost all the conflicts that arise between believers.

The Word of God is a mystery, declares the Apostle Paul. The Word, His ways, His plan are hidden from the fallen carnal mind of man. But God's mysteries and His ways are revealed to us who wait for Him. *"Now we have received...the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God."* (1Cor 2.12). In writing this, Paul is referring to Isaiah 64: *"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither has the eye seen, a God except You who works for him who waits for Him."* (vs.4). Waiting upon God is one of the cardinal themes that runs consistently right through the scriptures. Waiting on the LORD to receive His understanding of His Word involves denial of the flesh – crucifixion of the carnal, analytical mind. It is the one thing that Babylon will not do. For they will set to work to interpret the Word according to their traditions.

*"And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition....**making the word of God of no effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered.**"* (Mark 7.9&13).

The three measures of meal stands, as it were, in a state of limbo, ready to be risen into bread by the Holy Spirit or to go wormy and mouldy in the influence of flesh and corruption.

Babylon is a principle: it is the Flesh doing the work of the Spirit, which is an abomination and hateful to God. No flesh shall glory in His presence. T. Austin-Sparks expresses it succinctly: *What is called "Christianity" is really the greatest enemy of Christ.*

Man excels in complexifying everything, while the LORD Almighty who knows all things speaks in simple terms and with economy of words. We live in an age of double-speak where often we are left wondering what on earth someone has just said, particularly public figures, through a multitude of words. Truth is fallen in the street.

The words of Jesus refresh us for He is straight and true and full of grace. He tells us plainly how we can know true and false doctrine:

"If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7.17).

Sometimes we trip over obvious simple things. The True Church is one where the Presence of God is; the false church is one where the Presence of God is not.

False prophets and false shepherds preaching false doctrine to lead astray the child of God will gain no traction with the one who is walking in the middle of the will of God. This is our safeguard rather than much study and analysis. Jesus was always safe whether reclining at dinner with His friends at Bethany, or even on the cross. He was always in the will of the Father with all heavenly resources available to Him. He was always safe. So will it be with you too.

For centuries believers have anticipated the "coming of the Lord", and to their way of thinking He has not come. His coming is approaching in the Sons of God made manifest. The travail that is all over the earth and IN the Sons at this time is both the ending of an age and the birth pangs of an about-to-be-born new age. The fear that is gripping those in the world in looking at those things that are coming upon the earth is understandable. This fear is not our portion who see that these things are labour pains or 'throes' (Gk). *"All these are the beginning of throes"* (Matthew 24.8). Thank God that although you might be undergoing internal travail at this time, there is purpose in it and it is good purpose. It is your good future. This keeps our heads above water when the waves of adversity are seen all around us.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21.28).

The emphasis in all the foregoing is that our safety from deception in these climactic days is to be close to and follow the Lord Jesus in the will of the Father, and be wise to recognise "the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive" – those who pervert the written word of God and deceive those who follow them.

"He who follows me shall not walk in darkness"