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Satan's Fools are Satan's Tools

Let's begin by defining a few basic terms. A fool is one who confidently carries on concerning something he knows nothing about. However, a fool is greatly surpassed in ignorance by the imbecile who assumes he has learned some great esoteric truth while sitting at the feet of the fool. The moron, by way of contrast, doesn't even bother to sit. Like a talking parrot, he repetitiously recites—at the most appropriate (or, most often, inappropriate) time—the trite phrases he has heard the fool and the imbecile use.

The Church has seen its share of fools, imbeciles, and morons over the past two millenia. Yet during the past three centuries there has been a profound resurgence of the spectacle wherein fools teach imbeciles whose rubbish is repeated by a vast crowd of morons. And each new generation is just as firmly convinced as the last that they have, by their great erudition, somehow attained some worthwhile knowledge concerning the Truth of Scripture.

Satan, meanwhile, has been watch-

ing the proceedings with absolute glee. Like the father of fools that he is, he actually believes he is going to triumph by means of the confusion generated through the half-witted speculations of the best minds this world has had to offer. Amazingly, he has, until now, assumed God's Church was rapidly approaching its ignominious end. On the face of it, one would have to agree with his assessment of the situation. The evidence in the Church would lead one to believe all that remains to be done is to read the eulogy and lower the casket.

Anybody with a shred of common sense can see that the Church today, in all its various and sundry forms, is nothing more than a farce. It has become, under the stewardship of Satan's agents, a mocking caricature of the Church established by the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

How did we get into such a mess? Contrary to what one might assume, it was easy. All we had to do was, like mindless morons, repeat the folly of fools and imbeciles who explained things about which they knew next to nothing. As the ongoing accretion of various *oral traditions* put forward by fools, the Church today is, for the most part, the visible product of our great confidence in our ability as rational beings. Unfortunately, that confidence is seriously misplaced.

God did not create us to find the Truth on our own. He created us to learn the Truth from Him. If that were not the case, the revelation He provided in the Scriptures would not even be necessary. Therefore, those who have sought, or are

Some People Will Make Light of Anything

Some of you have become my disciples over the three and a half years this publication has been appearing. Others don't quite know what to make of what I've written. Most have no interest in anything I have to say. That's as it should be. To each his (or her) own. God never said everybody would be saved. In fact, Jesus indicated most would be lost.

For the benefit of those who read what I write in order to learn what God has called me to teach, I want to explain something now that you must understand before the events of recent history make much sense at all. Perhaps after reading this article, you will better understand why I frequently say the important thing is not *that* you believe but *what* you believe. So here goes.

For centuries after the Church lost *The Apostolic Teaching*, Satan was able to dominate and control the thinking of True Believers through the stranglehold imposed on them by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. The ordinary layperson had no access to the Scriptures and was forced to seek God's forgiveness through cumbersome rituals devised by men.

The Protestant Reformation changed all that. The work accomplished by the likes of Martin Luther and John Calvin dealt a devastating blow to Satan be-

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Letters to the Editor

As many of you will recall, Larry Harper had planned on writing an article on Søren Kierkegaard for the October 1993 issue. Well, the article you have been anxious to read is here. Kierkegaard was responsible for the notion that a “leap of faith” is all that is required for salvation. As you read this article, you will begin to understand why for so many in the Church *what* you believe is not nearly as important as *that* you believe.

Current Events

The seminar tape set, *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, was shipped this quarter. That tape set provides the best source currently available for those who wish to understand what we believe. Evidently, our subscribers think so too as we have begun to receive gift orders for the set. If you have not already ordered, I encourage you to get a set for yourself or for your friends and family members. The information on these tapes provides a foundation for the things you have learned and will learn from *The Voice of Elijah* and other publications from The Elijah Project in the months and years to come.

Speaking of other publications, work is progressing on *The Mystery of Scripture, Volume 1*. The final edit is close to completion and then all that remains is the printing. If all goes well, those who have been patiently waiting for its release will have it in their hands before I write the next edition of this letter. Please pray with us that there will be no further obstacles to delay this project.

As I mentioned in the last “Letter to the Editor,” we intended to begin a concentrated mailing effort in January. And we did. The pace has not slowed since the new year began. In the first two months of this year we mailed more pieces than we did in the final six months of 1993. The responses from this effort have been coming in daily, and our family of subscribers continues to grow. As the year progresses we plan to explore new ways to increase our subscriber base and reach more people with *The Teaching* they will need in these Last Days.

The number of our Monthly Contributors has grown considerably over the last quarter as well. I told you in January to expect a letter in the mail concerning the Monthly Contributor program. Our thanks go out to those who have joined us by becoming Monthly Contributors in response to that letter. We appreciate your commitment to helping us grow so that we can reach those True Believers who are still out there searching for Truth.

As our base of contributors increases so too will our level of effectiveness. There are still so many we have yet to reach, so many who have not had the same opportunity you have had to hear the Truth that is now available. Your regular contributions will make it possible for us to continue expanding our outreach as we fulfill our mission to distribute the publications that are available from The Elijah Project. I encourage anyone who has been considering becoming a Monthly Contributor to take the time now and fill out the Order Form at the back of this issue. Your support will be appreciated by those who benefit from it.

Until July,

Satan's Fools

From Page 1

still seeking, to find the Truth for themselves are nothing more than fools. And none are more foolish than those who take such great pride in their own stupendous mental capacity that they look for the Truth within themselves.

Satan's Fool

One such sagacious fool was the man Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855). Kierkegaard was a Danish author who thought he was a genius. And the imbeciles who have sat at his feet over the past century and a half, standing in awe of what they see as his prodigious mental capabilities, have unquestioningly accepted his own arrogant assessment of himself.

I could have said “the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard” but the term hardly applies. As a philosopher of any note, he qualifies only in the sense that he rivals the best of them in his ability to use a tumult of words to obfuscate rather than to clarify. His one great claim to fame (as far as the Church is concerned) relates specifically to his introduction of the “leap of faith” nonsense you hear bandied about from the pulpit nowadays.

“If Kierkegaard had never been born again, and did not accept the fact that one could be born again, what in the world could he possibly have to teach any born-again Believer about the basis for their relationship to God?”

Søren Kierkegaard (I will call him S.K.) was a Pretender of the worst sort. His followers have claimed he was, and apparently even thought he was, a Christian, although he never claimed to be. The confusion arises because his followers have had a different view of what it *means* to be a Christian than most who came before them. Hence, the Pretenders since Kierkegaard who have accepted his lunacy have merely chosen to assume he was a Christian. Some have even accepted his own misguided assumption that he was a “prophet.” Their estimate notwithstanding,

on his sudden demise in 1855 at the age of 42, S.K. was still, to put it in his own terms, only “becoming a Christian.”

S.K. was certainly a unique individual. There is no disputing that. However, whether his uniqueness was due to mental illness is a point of some contention. I personally believe he was insane. At the very least he was a manic-depressive who died in a state of neurotic hatred and ill temper, estranged from more than a few of his former friends and family members.

It is a well known fact that the Kierkegaard family had a history of depression and suicidal tendencies. Those affected included his father, his older brother and a nephew who actually succeeded in killing himself. In his personal journal S.K. records his own thoughts of suicide on several occasions. At one point he was apparently caught with a gun in his hand and had to be physically prevented from going through with the act.

S.K. also mentions having heard audible voices talking to him, which would indicate he was psychotic. My own pessimistic view of his unstable mental condition comes from reading his writings. Any individual who had Satan sitting on his shoulder dictating to him as S.K. most assuredly did would have had to be somewhat less than sane.

I mentioned above that S.K. was a Pretender—that is, that he had never been born again. His father was a leader among the Moravian Brethren, a group which emphasized that experience. And S.K. was himself a contemporary of the great revivalist Charles Finney (see “Charles Finney: My Conversion to Christ,” *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1992), so he knew something of the Holy Spirit’s working in the Church. Yet S.K. rejected the revivalist movement. He condemned what God was doing among True Believers in his own day, choosing instead to be-

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lieve the fabrication Satan whispered in his ear.

For the most part, the widespread revivals of the Second Great Awakening bypassed Denmark. They touched the Danish church only through the person of Nikolai F. S. Gruntvig (1783–1872), a True Believer who had been born again in 1811. Gruntvig proclaimed what he called “the great natural law of the spiritual life”—that is, “the necessity of the spoken word for the awakening of life and the transmission of the spirit.” In other words, Gruntvig believed “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17). As a result, he was unable to secure a pastorate in the Danish state church and worked for some years outside the organized church.

S.K. found the spiritual movement Gruntvig established in Denmark to be completely repugnant. From that we may assume he did not believe the new-birth experience was even a viable option. Now I ask you: If Kierkegaard had never been born again, and did not accept the fact that one could be born again, what in the world could he possibly have to teach any born-again Believer about the basis for their relationship to God? As you will discover shortly, he had nothing at all.

The problem with which S.K. concerned himself in his later years was how to “become an individual” by “finding God” intellectually within himself through introspection. He has for that reason rightly been called “the father of existentialism.” Yet what he advocated is a downright risky venture, isn’t it? What if God isn’t in there? What if Satan is? You can understand the risks a fool like that would run, looking inside himself for some “subjective” Truth. (See “Mystics,

“As True Believers, we should at least seek to identify and root out the basic distortions Satan successfully introduced into the Church.”

Meatballs, and the Marvelous Works of God,” *The Voice of Elijah*, April 1993.) Nevertheless, the fellow took the risks, egged on by the master of delusion himself. And he left a written record to advise any other dolt who cared to (or dared to) follow in his footsteps.

The sad fact regarding this madman’s search for subjective truth within himself is the fact that his views have had a far greater impact on our generation than they should have, or would have, had it not been for the imbeciles who picked up his idiocy and echoed the sentiment. His writings are significant only because they influenced the thinking of men like Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) and Karl Barth (1886–1968). The writings of these men and those who were influenced by them have, in turn, shaped the thought of all Christians in our time, conservatives and liberals alike.

“S.K. simply did not believe Jesus Christ was God.”

As True Believers, we should at least seek to identify and root out the basic distortions Satan successfully introduced into the Church through the stupidity S.K. propounded concerning a subject about which he knew nothing whatsoever. You will, after all, encounter Pretenders throughout the Church today who still spout his insane conclusions as though they are the Gospel Truth.

The Liar

The basic presupposition behind the thought of S.K. is that “the truth” necessary to “find God” resides in every person. Consequently, Christian faith is not based in objective Truth because the only valid Truth resides within each individual. The person has only to discover the Truth through his own insight and decision to believe. Hence, there is no need for

anyone to teach any Christian doctrine as objective Truth. As the idiot was fond of saying, “truth is subjectivity” and “subjectivity is the truth.” Listen to what he said:

Christianity has declared itself to be the eternal essential truth which has come into being in time. It has proclaimed itself as the Paradox, and it has required of the individual the inwardness of faith in relation to that which is an offense to the Jews and a folly to the Greeks—and an absurdity to the understanding. It is impossible to express more strongly the fact that subjectivity is truth and that objectivity merely repels, even by virtue of the absurd. And indeed it would seem very strange that Christianity should have come into the world just to receive an explanation; as if it had been somewhat bewildered about itself, and hence had entered the world to consult that wise man, the speculative philosopher, who can help by furnishing the explanation. It is impossible to express with more intensive inwardness the principle that subjectivity is truth, than when subjectivity is in the first instance untruth, and yet subjectivity is the truth.

(S. Kierkegaard, “Concluding Unscientific Postscript,” R. Bretall editor, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946, p. 222.)

The folly of S.K.’s position lies in the fact that, in making such statements, he has thereby presented the doctrine “subjectivity is truth” as objective Truth. So much for subjectivity being the Truth. Where can he and his moronic followers go from there?

S.K. was not a Christian in any sense of the term. He certainly did not act like one. Throughout his life he sought out controversy and contention, lashing out bitterly in his writings against any who disputed with him. Finally, he died refusing to admit those with whom he had

quarreled into his hospital room.

Although S.K. piously proclaimed Christian love as the ideal, he deliberately ruined the reputation of one man, causing him to withdraw to Spain in disgrace where he died soon thereafter as a pauper. What sort of Christian love is that?

I mentioned above that the lunatic hated the revivals he saw happening in the Protestant Church. More than that, however, he apparently hated the Church itself. He despised the success Martin Luther had achieved in establishing the Lutheran Church as a counterbalance to the error of the Roman Catholic Church. He laments the fact that Luther did not die as a martyr before he could establish a following.

Yet S.K. goes back even further in history to condemn the baptism of those first True Believers who believed at Pentecost (Acts 2:41). How can one help but hear in this man’s craziness the whining of Satan as he rails against the victories God has achieved in history?

S.K. simply did not believe Jesus Christ was God. Therefore, he set about creating a counterfeit “Christianity” for the benefit of those who, like himself, could not believe that particular doctrine. In other words, he was just another fool doing Satan’s dirty work by creating a delusion. And imbeciles enamored by his eloquently stated ignorance have carried on his work after him. Consequently, today you can find all sorts of moronic Pretenders in the Church confidently holding forth on a subject—what it *means* to be a Christian—about which they know nothing whatsoever.

S.K. often speaks concerning the “offense” of Christianity as though he understands what Paul *meant* in the following:

“S.K. was not a Christian in any sense of the term.”

“The founders of Protestant Christianity held that the most logical position, and the only rational position, was belief in the historical Jesus as the Son of God who died as an atonement for sins.”

But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.
(Galatians 5:11)

The Apostle was referring to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross as one of the things that kept the Jews of his day from believing the Truth of the Old Testament Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, S.K. twists the terminology to suit his own ends. He uses “offense” to refer to the “stumbling block” one discovers in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. He does so because he finds that concept particularly “offensive.”

Satan was able to use S.K. to achieve his own ends because the man evidently had some neurotic need to live up to his father’s expectations. Psychiatrists have suggested he secretly hated his father but publicly paid him homage because of the guilt and shame his hatred evoked. To understand how Satan manipulated S.K., you must understand his father was a Pretender who wrestled with an inordinate amount of guilt. That feeling of condemnation drove him to impose a harsh Christian discipline on his children. His son Søren apparently rebelled against not only his father but also the Church.

In his early years, S.K. rejected Christianity outright, finding he simply could not believe Jesus Christ was God. Look at what he said:

What now is the absurd? The absurd is—that the eternal truth has come into being in time, that God has come

“Christianity has always said one must believe in Jesus Christ to be a Christian. Yet S.K. realized he didn’t believe.”

into being, has been born, has grown up, and so forth, has come into being precisely like any other individual human being, quite indistinguishable from other individuals.
(Bretall, p. 220)

Later on, however, S.K. found himself wrestling with the same load of guilt his father carried. In desperation, he sought some way to believe in Jesus Christ in spite of his unbelief. His contrivance is nothing less than Satan’s lie, but it is ingenious to say the least.

The Lie

Christianity has always said one must believe in Jesus Christ to be a Christian. Yet S.K. realized he didn’t believe. Therefore, our psychotic “genius” decided the only way to believe when one did not believe was to subjectively “decide” to believe. That’s where his “leap of faith” nonsense comes into the picture. If one can’t find any reason to believe, one can always just *say they believe*. Isn’t that a marvelous piece of baloney?

Can you see how that sort of nonsense would lead to all sorts of Pretenders coming into the Church in our own day? Doesn’t it also sound suspiciously like the ambiguous “profession of faith” you hear some preach today? If all those people who “profess” to be Christian have actually repented and been born again, why don’t they just say so? It’s because they don’t really believe. They only “profess” to believe. But why do they hide behind a “profession of faith”? That one is easy to answer.

You see, Satan set out to accomplish a couple of specific objectives through S.K. and his followers. First, he used them to argue that reason cannot be used as a basis for Christian faith (belief). They willingly argued that case because they themselves could find no reason to believe historic Christian doctrines. How-

ever, you should keep one thing in mind in that regard. Their arguments, as sophisticated and abstruse as they are, don’t actually demonstrate the fact that no rational basis for believing the historic tenets of Christianity exists. They just demonstrate they weren’t smart enough to find it.

As I’ve said before and as you will undoubtedly hear me say time and again: Absence of presence is not the same as nonexistence. So the philosophers and liberal theologians of this and past centuries may well have shown that a rational basis for belief was absent at the time they set forth their much ballyhooed ruminations. That doesn’t *mean* a rational basis for Christian belief does not exist now, nor that it is not known to some. It just *means* they were too dumb to discover it themselves in their own day.

“In desperation, he [S.K.] sought some way to believe in Jesus Christ in spite of his unbelief.”

We already know from the negative attitude he had toward Martin Luther that S.K. rejected the things accomplished during the Protestant Reformation and considered them contemptible. That being the case, we should ask why he would take up the most basic doctrine of Protestant Christianity—salvation by faith—and make it the basis for his own goofiness. The answer lies in the fact that he was driven to it by Satan, the author of his insanity. Satan wanted to use him to distort the Reformers’ doctrine of salvation by faith.

The founders of Protestant Christianity held that the most logical position, and the only rational position, was belief in the historical Jesus as the Son of God who died as an atonement for sins. Indeed, as I have shown in an earlier issue of *The Voice of Elijah*, John Calvin be-

“Knowing nothing whatsoever about the new-birth experience, S.K. now proved himself to be the ultimate fool, dogmatically explaining something about which he knew nothing at all.”

lied the only truly rational person was the person who had been born again through faith in Jesus Christ. [See “The Natural Man Is an Idiot (When It Comes to the Truth)” *The Voice of Elijah*, October 1993.] You can see from that how, if Calvin’s position is true, it completely precludes the idiocy put forward by S.K. that one could somehow “find God” within oneself as some sort of “subjective truth.” According to Calvin, the unregenerate person lacks the ability to understand the Truth concerning God.

Although S.K. spoke in terms of salvation by faith, he did not base that concept on the thought of the Protestant Reformers. Instead, he accepted the philosophical nonsense prevalent in his own day as a valid starting point. That included the thinking of the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). Kant argued mankind has no rational basis for knowledge of God’s existence or nature. At the same time, however, he insisted that belief in God was completely rational.

“S.K. intentionally distorted the historic meaning of the term faith.”

S.K. accepted Kant’s argument that knowledge of God has no rational basis. But he took Kant’s position one step further. He argued that belief in the incarnation of Jesus Christ could only be valid if it was “subjective”—that is, completely irrational. He insisted that such belief can only depend directly on what he called a subjective “leap of faith”—that is, on a sudden subjective decision to believe. Here is some of his verbose discussion of the topic:

Without risk there is no faith. Faith is precisely the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual’s inwardness and the objective uncertainty.

If I am capable of grasping God objectively, I do not believe, but precisely because I cannot do this I must believe. If I wish to preserve myself in faith I must constantly be intent upon holding fast the objective uncertainty, so that in the objective uncertainty I am out “upon the seventy thousand fathoms of water,” and yet believe.
(Bretall, p. 215.)

S.K. held that the individual’s subjective decision to believe results in a personal inward transformation whereby one “becomes an individual.” That sounds somewhat like the new birth. However, in contrast to John Calvin and the other Reformers who knew the new birth was a single act of self-surrender, S.K. contended it was a process—a continual striving to bring the idea of God into every area of one’s existence. Knowing nothing whatsoever about the new-birth experience, S.K. now proved himself to be the ultimate fool, dogmatically explaining something about which he knew nothing at all.

Having looked at how S.K. tried to discredit reason as a basis for faith, let’s now take a look at the second thing Satan sought to accomplish through his folly. Satan has used S.K. and the philosophers who followed him to completely redefine the term “faith.” He needed that done so that he could blend their new definition of the term into the mysticism he was cultivating among evangelical Christians coming out of the revivalist wing of Protestant Christianity. Satan knew that if he could put a variety of lies together in one big pot he would have concocted a potent witch’s brew he could use to completely delude some future generation. Unfortunately for many in our time, that future is now.

We’ll talk more about the Christian mysticism Satan has foisted off on evangelical Christianity some other time. Right now I want to show you how Satan used S.K. to twist the Truth of Protestant

Christianity into a weird distortion that philosophers and liberal theologians have successfully disseminated throughout all segments of the Church. Let’s look first at how Satan used his agents to question the validity of reason as a basis for faith.

S.K. intentionally distorted the historic meaning of the term *faith*. When he realized he did not and could not believe the Truth of Christianity, he merely changed the rules of the game. He did that by redefining the term *faith*, turning it into something it had never been.

“For S.K., faith was not being definite about what one believed, it was being definite that one believed.”

Before S.K. advocated his warped understanding of the term, Christian faith had always been focused objectively in Christian doctrine. That’s because Christians had always understood the term *faith* in the Scriptures *meant* nothing more than “belief.” Moreover, it was generally understood by Christians that the content of Christian belief could be found in specific theological doctrines. As a matter of fact, throughout the long history of the Church from the time of Jesus Christ and His Apostles, the term *faith* had never *meant* anything other than belief in theological doctrine.

To be sure, there had been theological disputes among Christians over the appropriate content of Christian faith. But the debate had always been concerned with which Christian doctrines were true and which were false. Even during the years when S.K. was postulating his ridiculous notions concerning faith, other scholars were still debating whether faith—that is, belief in certain theological doctrines—could have any rational basis

in empirical fact. S.K. sought to change all that.

In Kierkegaard's view, faith should not be based in Christian doctrine at all. It should be founded on the belief that one is "becoming" what one ought to be. Listen to this:

For Kierkegaard, what I recognize first is not that I ought to accept certain doctrines. Rather I recognize that I have an obligation to become something which I am not and cannot become on my own; hence I must believe in the objective reality of the condition of becoming what I ought to be.

(C.S. Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief, Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1978, p. 121.*)

Did you get that? Kierkegaard said all you have to do to be a Christian is believe you are becoming what you know you ought to be. If you do that, you believe all that is necessary to be a Christian. Listen to me, True Believers! You know more than a few Pretenders like that today, don't you? Now you know who their spiritual father is.

For S.K., faith was not being definite about *what* one believed, it was being definite *that* one believed. In other words, if you can delude yourself completely into believing you believe, you are a Christian! All you have to do then is go on saying you believe and everything will be okay. You True Believers can now understand how a vast majority of the Pretenders around you came to roost in the Church.

S.K. insisted one could "find God" only by being totally honest with oneself. However, since he personally did not believe in Jesus Christ, that became rather difficult. The only way he found he could say he believed in Jesus Christ was to lie to himself, telling himself he believed when, in fact, he didn't. In other words, he convinced himself via a multitude of words that he believed when he actually didn't believe. If that isn't the characteristic of a deluded individual, I don't know what is. Come to think of it, however, I've met more than a few "Christians" today who fit that description.

Do you know why people pretend to

be Christian? It's because Satan's agents are still issuing the invitation: "Hey, Pretenders! Come on out and worship with us next Sunday. It doesn't matter *what* you believe, it only matters *that* you *say* you believe." Does that sound a lot like Søren Kierkegaard? Sure it does. And it should. Fools have been heeding his call in droves over the past century. As a result, even conservative Christianity is no longer what it was just thirty years ago.

The spiritual descendants of this raving lunatic have no interest in learning the Truth of the Scriptures because they have bought into the asinine conjectures of one of Satan's own. Don't be deceived. The writings of Søren Kierkegaard have had an impact on our generation more deleterious than any the Church has ever before experienced.

Had the matter been left up to him, S.K. would have almost certainly become



During his relatively short lifetime, Søren Kierkegaard managed to engage in bitter disputes with most of the literary and religious figures in Copenhagen. None of those disputes was more vicious than the one he initiated with Copenhagen's 19th century equivalent of *The National Enquirer*, a popular gossip magazine called *The Coursair*. Before the acrimony died down, *The Coursair* had published numerous caricatures of Kierkegaard like the one above.

As a result of the ridicule to which he was subjected in this dispute, Søren Kierkegaard became the object of public scorn. Prior to the dispute, Kierkegaard had been accustomed to taking public walks around Copenhagen every afternoon. Afterward, public ridicule restricted him to coach rides in the country. Worse yet, the name "Søren" became a euphemism for "stupid" as parents began to tell their children, "Don't be a Søren!" □

“Satan had definite plans for this bitter little man. He intended to use him to cut the heart right out of Christianity.”

a humanist. However, Satan had definite plans for this bitter little man. He intended to use him to cut the heart right out of Christianity. To do that, however, he knew S.K. had to continue to argue that some part of Christian doctrine was true. That was the only way his humanist views could masquerade as Christian. That's why S.K. contradicts himself. Listen to what he says:

Christianity is no doctrine concerning the unity of the divine and the human, or concerning the identity of subject and object; nor is it any other of the logical transcriptions of Christianity. If Christianity were a doctrine, the relationship to it would not be one of faith, for only an intellectual type of relationship can correspond to a doctrine. Christianity is therefore not a doctrine, but the fact that God has existed.

(E.L. Miller, *Classical Statements on Faith and Reason*, New York: Random House, 1970, p. 167.)

Let's ignore the fact that his reasoning is a bit circular and that he is doing his usual philosophical “stand 'em on their head with ambiguous statements that are, for the most part, windbagery” routine. He ignorantly (and quite confidently) states, “Christianity is therefore not a doctrine, but the fact that God has existed.” Never once does he realize he has made “the fact” a “doctrine” by setting it down in print. As one who has thoroughly analyzed Kierkegaard's writings put it:

*His position was, indeed, one of the most paradoxical it is possible to conceive. In the very attempt to deny that truth is doctrine, he set up the doctrine that truth is not a doctrine! That truth is existential is to be proved not by the printed page, but by the life, and this evidence was sadly wanting in his case. (E.L. Allen, *Kierkegaard: His Life and Thought*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935, p. 156.)*

The point is, the existential philosophy S.K. sought to prove can only be proven subjectively if, in fact, “subjectivity is truth.” If S.K. had wanted to be true to his philosophical system, he would have omitted all mention of God and spoken solely in terms of individual self-actualization as the theoretical goal of all humanity. However, that was not Satan's intent for his “prophet.”

Satan wanted S.K. to create a philosophical delusion whereby he could convince himself he believed something he did not actually believe. That way, he would not only deceive himself, his philosophical goofiness could be used to carry away millions in our own day. Satan has been phenomenally successful in that regard. Christians today who have never heard of Søren Kierkegaard are seeing things exactly the same way he saw them.

The Absurdity

S.K. liked to talk about the incarnation of Jesus Christ as “absurd.” Yet, in seeking to discredit Christian doctrine as essential to Christian faith, he discloses his own views are the absurdity. You see, our moronic “genius” overlooked the simple distinction that exists between faith (belief) and hope. The biblical view concerning the relationship between these two is that since we believe certain things to be true, we have hope:

In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, in order that by

“Christians today who have never heard of Søren Kierkegaard are seeing things exactly the same way he saw them.”

two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.

(Hebrews 6:17–18)

Hope is the *subjective inwardness* S.K. makes so much of. In his desperate desire to get rid of the need for believing certain things to be true, he rather stupidly described an irrational hope as though it were faith (belief). As one writer has stated Kierkegaard's views:

Faith operates on the farther side of explanation, and its motto is “I do not understand, yet I trust.”

(*Ibid.*, p. 51.)

“The spiritual descendants of this raving lunatic have no interest in learning the Truth of the Scriptures.”

The same writer has summarized Kierkegaard's position this way in another place:

The most the intellect can provide is a greater or less degree of approximation to the facts. For we can put no trust in the sophism that “knowledge and being are one.” They never can be. There is always an ultimate residuum of uncertainty, a disquiet which only the “will to believe” can lay to rest. We must act even when we do not know, and we cannot wait till our knowledge is complete, for long before that goal is reached death will have made useless such poor knowledge as we have. The intellect may guide us to within sight of what we seek, but at that moment it will turn back, leaving us standing before a

“When you boil all of this fool’s peculiarly pious and pompous philosophical pronouncements down to their basics, hope is about all you can come up with.”

frightful chasm. The brave man will shut his eyes and leap. Truth is the not-yet-proved over which a man cries, “This shall be true; for without this I cannot live.”
(*Ibid.*, p. 151.)

I’m sorry to have to tell you this folks, as enamored as this generation is by the folly of Kierkegaard and his ilk, but that’s not faith (belief). It’s hope. I’ll admit hope is a near kinsman to faith (belief). But that’s as far as I’ll go. I may hope a rich uncle will die and leave me his multiplied millions. That doesn’t mean I can somehow believe that will happen without being a complete lunatic on the order of Søren Kierkegaard. I don’t even have a rich uncle.

When you boil all of this fool’s peculiarly pious and pompous philosophical pronouncements down to their basics, hope is about all you can come up with. The “existential truth” he makes so much of is nothing more than the defiant raging of a madman held prisoner by his own pride and arrogance. Fortunately for us, he has long since gone swaggering into hell saying, “I will be saved because I hope I will.” Countless fools in our own generation willingly follow in his footsteps because they have no content for their faith (belief) and they want none. They would rather take this lunatic’s “leap of faith” because it requires them to believe nothing more than *that* they believe. I have news for you folks. It’s a long leap across the Abyss.

The Truth

Now I want to talk directly to those of you who are True Believers. By that I mean those who have come to God on the basis of fear, confessing your sins to God with a contrite repentance prompted by an honest desire to avoid the wrath of God. I’m not talking to all those fools out there who have believed Satan’s lie, which tells them God is not a God to be

feared. Don’t be deceived. The Scriptures plainly state God hates the wicked and plans to destroy them:

*The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked,
And the one who loves violence
His soul hates.*

***Upon the wicked He will rain snares;
Fire and brimstone and burning wind
will be the portion of their cup.***
(*Psalms 11:5–6*)

That’s reason enough for anyone but the completely sinless person to fear God. The only reason all those fools out there won’t admit the fact that fear is necessary for anyone to come to God is because they have never admitted they are a part of the wicked. In other words, like the idiot Kierkegaard, they’ve never been born again. I admonish you True Believers. Wake up! Pretenders are all around you!

Only an abject fool would claim the God of wrath described in the Bible is not a God the wicked should fear. Ergo: A “Christian” who has never experienced “fear and trembling” is nothing but a Pretender:

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.
(*Philippians 2:12*)

“Countless fools in our own generation willingly follow in his footsteps because they have no content for their faith (belief) and they want none.”

Before the wicked person can repent, he/she must be given some reason to repent. That’s logical, isn’t it? That’s also what the hellfire and brimstone preaching of the great revivalists John Wesley and Charles Finney was all about. It gave the multitudes who came to God through their preaching an incentive to repent.

Don’t be confused. The Pretenders today who preach “God is love” are Satan’s own. They are the spiritual descendants of those who came out of the many counterfeit “revivals” Satan has concocted over the past century and a half. You don’t have to be taken in by the Pretenders’ charade any longer. If they don’t believe in a God of wrath who will destroy those who fail to live a holy life before Him, they don’t believe in the God of the Bible.

Just as a final word on the topic, you also shouldn’t be put off by those mindless slaves of Satan who toss out the following verse as some sort of ridiculous “proof” of their inane position:

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.
(*1 John 4:18*)

It has never occurred to them that, in writing that statement, the Apostle John obviously understood some sort of fear that “involves punishment” would initially be present in the Believer’s life. If fear were not present to begin with, how could love ever “cast it out”?

Satan’s stooges are blind. They have never, and will never, see the stupidity inherent in their absurd beliefs. Yet to become free from their delusion, you must understand that Satan has, over the past century and a half, been able to instill in us all a fundamental distortion of the meaning of the term “faith.”

“We are saved by what we believe, not by the fact that we believe. Everybody believes something. But only those who believe the Truth will be saved.”

So What’s the Big Deal?

Now that I have provided you some of the basic information you need to know and understand in *Not All Israel Is Israel, The Advent of Christ and AntiChrist, The Mystery of Scripture*, and *The Way, The Truth, The Life* seminar tapes, I want to put you on notice concerning what Satan has been able to accomplish through Søren Kierkegaard’s lunacy.

I’m sure most of you have heard about Kierkegaard’s “leap of faith.” You may have even heard conservative ministers preach against it. That nonsense was just a diversionary tactic on Satan’s part. It was a strawman he set up to give conservative Christian theologians something to rail at while he tore up the very foundation of Christianity.

The postulate of Kierkegaard you probably have never heard anyone argue against is the idea that faith is a *subjective decision*. That’s because that insidious belief has infiltrated all segments of the Church through the notions held by society at large. It is a prevalent belief in our time because Satan has successfully instilled it not just in the Church but in the whole of our society. Listen to people when they *talk about* faith. See if they don’t understand faith to be *contentless*—that is, a subjective existential act.

“The Pretenders all around you don’t believe in the same God that you do.”

You see, Satan has known for some time that God intends to *restore The Apostolic Teaching* in order to provide a solid basis for the faith (belief) of those True Believers living at the time of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Knowing that, he set out to discredit the notion

that Christians must believe any definite theological content in order to be saved. Nothing could be more warped and distorted. Yet you will find a multitude of “Christians” today who are willing to argue that case.

The Pretenders in the Church will readily admit that one must believe Jesus Christ died for our sins. Some will even argue vehemently for this theological doctrine or the other, as though they are firmly convinced that what one believes is supremely important. Don’t be deceived. The Book of Proverbs tells us the argumentative person is nothing more than Satan’s fool (Prov. 13:10; 17:19; et al.). He is only interested in showing what he knows.

Most Christians will also readily and illogically grant (as Kierkegaard ignorantly did) that one must believe some bare minimum of objective Truth in order to be a Christian. Yet they will inevitably try to restrict that Truth to the barest of essentials. Moreover, they will probably also view faith (belief) as a *subjective decision* that has no necessary connection to the definite theological content they defend. That is all part of Satan’s lie.

The Truth is, we are saved by *what* we believe, not by the fact *that* we believe. Everybody believes something. But only those who believe the Truth will be saved. If that were not true, Christian missionary activity would make no sense. A heathen person could, just as Kierkegaard idiotically contended, “stand in relation to” the Truth within them just as easily as any Christian.

The Truth is, the only way anyone can be born again is to come to God with fear and trembling, honestly confessing sins out of the belief that He is a God Who has an absolute hatred for the wicked. That is one of the bare essentials of the Truth one must believe in order to be saved. Now can you understand why Satan has fought so hard to instill in us the notion of an all-forgiving god of love? If you came to God out of fear, because of a broken and contrite heart, I have news for

you. You are part of a distinct minority in the Church today. The Pretenders all around you don’t believe in the same God that you do. Their god is a benign, benevolent being they can spit on and curse at all week yet still approach without fear of any kind on Sunday. That’s a comforting delusion, isn’t it? I wish them nothing but the sweetest of dreams in the here and now, because their nightmare has yet to begin.

“The Truth is, the only way anyone can be born again is to come to God with fear and trembling.”

If one can only be saved by believing the Truth found in Christianity alone, it makes sense that anyone who sincerely wants to be saved would be concerned about whether or not *what* they believe is true. I submit to you, therefore, that anyone in the Church who is not concerned about such things is, by definition, a Pretender. However, having said that, I also submit to you that anyone who wants to argue about such things is also, by definition, a Pretender. The Christian life is not, as Kierkegaard would have us all believe, the mere confession that I know what I *ought* to be. Truth is something to be believed and lived by. If someone knows what they ought to be, then that is what they ought to be if they actually believe the Truth.

A final word to you True Believers: If someone wants to believe the lies they have been taught by the Pretenders in the Church, I suggest you not try to dissuade them. The time is too far spent for theological arguments. Believe those things you know to be true and live accordingly. Otherwise you show yourself to be nothing more than Satan’s fool. And Satan’s fool is a ready tool to be used by him whenever he so chooses. ■

Q & A nswers

The Voice of Elijah publishes articles based on the findings of *The Elijah Project*, a private research group headed by Larry D. Harper. In this column we seek answers to general-interest questions concerning the findings, purpose and philosophy of this project.

Editor: *We've seen much more activity around here this past quarter than we have in the past. A lot of that activity involved deadlines you had to meet and, quite often, missed. Does the stress of missing deadlines sometimes get to you?*

Elijah: It used to. But I can honestly say I've finally learned how to handle it. When the amount of work increases and the number of people available to handle it doesn't, the time it takes to get it done is going to increase. There's nothing I can do about it. I'm not going to put unreasonable demands on myself or anyone else for the sake of some artificial deadline. All I can do is be diligent and keep working.

Editor: *It must be frustrating to you, understanding all the things I've heard you explain over the years, to not have people available to help so that you can just sit down and write day after day. How do you handle that?*

Elijah: I've been forced to accept the fact that God has a definite timetable and nothing is going to change that timing. When I started writing articles for *The Voice of Elijah*, I had been trying to write *Not All Israel Is Israel* for more than six months just because I didn't know what else to do. I had already decided writing was one of the most difficult things I had ever attempted. At the time, I couldn't organize my thoughts. But that's no great surprise either, considering the fact that I was just coming out of the stupor I had been in for



most of the '80s, and I had all sorts of misconceptions about my calling and everything else I was about. That should be obvious to anyone who has read the back issues of *The Voice of Elijah*.

Editor: *You mentioned a "stupor" and your "misconceptions." Can you tell us more about that?*

Elijah: Well, first of all, let me make a confession. I'll admit that I'm stupid. I'll admit that I'm stubborn. I'll even admit that I quite often forget things. But I don't think I'm stupid enough or stubborn enough to ever get into a situation where I'll forget what I went through in the '80s. I have only this past year begun to understand all the things God taught me during that decade. And after I've managed to sort all those things out, I don't intend to ever forget what I've learned.

The thing about the confusion I went through in the '80s that gets me every time I think about it is the fact that in 1980 I already understood a lot of the things I'm explaining to people now. I had even begun to put some of those things down in print. But unfortunately, it wasn't God's timing for me to write them down then.

The '80s were completely different from anything I had gone through before. All during the '70s I was pursuing a degree of one sort or the other. That gave me a definite focus for my life. I knew exactly what God expected me to do, so I did it. During that entire time I assumed God had called me to teach in a Christian college or seminary. So I didn't think much about what would happen when I completed my studies.

My certainty about what I was supposed to be doing suddenly disappeared in 1980 when I was forced to admit the fact that what I understood God had called me to teach would never be acceptable in an academic setting. That's when I started writing down some of the things I understood. I've thought a lot about what I was thinking at that time, just trying to figure out how things got so completely out of control over the next several years. But I honestly don't think my confusion could have been avoided. I had lessons I needed to learn, and some things can only be learned through experience.

Editor: *I can understand why you would be confused if you didn't know what God expected you to do, but why would that confusion last for ten years?*

Elijah: To tell the truth, I understood exactly what God expected me to do even then. I knew I was supposed to teach. But I didn't understand who it was He had called me to teach. I've known for a long time that all I am supposed to do is provide information to those who have been born again. My confusion stemmed from the fact that I found it impossible to believe so many people would claim to be Christian when so few have actually been born again.

You know what I went through in 1981 and 1982. I was talking to people constantly, to people who said they wanted to hear what I was teaching, to people who appeared to be interested. Yet the things those people heard made absolutely no difference in their life. I couldn't reconcile the fact that God had called me to provide information that would completely transform anyone who believed it when all I saw around me were people who appeared to be accepting everything I said, yet went on living in sin. I look back at that now and marvel at how dense I was. Good trees produce good fruit. Bad trees produce bad. It's incredibly simple when you know the Truth.

Editor: *So when did you begin to see reality?*

Elijah: That's where God's timing comes in. I honestly don't believe it was a matter of me accepting anything. It was a matter of information becoming available that had not been available before that time. I don't believe I would have ever been able to look at the situation logically had circumstances not changed. I've already written about the seven seals that have been on the Scriptures, so I don't need to explain all that here. But, if what I understand is true, the third seal came off the Scriptures in April of 1988. The third message sealed by that seal is titled *The Light*. And the *light* explained in that message is the same *light* I've written about in one of the articles for this issue. [Editor: See "Some People Will Make Light of Anything" in this issue.]

The fact is, prior to 1988 I was wrestling with an incredibly confusing set of circumstances because I was ignorant of the specific things I needed to know about Pretenders. To put it *parabolically*, I was living in darkness. I'm convinced God allowed me to go through all that confusion to teach me the hazards of accepting the pretense of Pretenders who want to continue in their deception. I have nothing to say that will help a Pretender. If they won't repent and ask God for forgiveness, the best I can do is encourage them to look elsewhere.

Editor: *Pretenders are not a favorite topic with you, are they?*

Elijah: I have nothing against Pretenders. We are what we believe. They've been taught the goofiness they believe, so that's what they are. But we can all become something other than what we have been. It's simply a matter of believing something different. In the case of what I have been given to teach, however, a person can't honestly say they believe it until they are willing to come to God in humble repentance. That's the case only because we all act in accordance with what we believe. So if they believe what I teach, they will repent.

The problem with most Pretenders lies in the fact that they believe the most incredible lies. And having believed those lies, they do the most ignorant things. Even then, I have no problem with what they do. It's their life. Let them live it as they see fit. However, many of them aren't content with just living their own lives. They have bought into Satan's grand delusion that we are somehow responsible for living other people's lives for them as well. So they want to control people, to tell them they must do this or do that. That kind of Pretender is an absolute moron. What a person believes is going to control them, one way or the other. The only issue worth discussing is whether or not we believe the Truth.

Editor: *Your use of the term moron brings up another issue. I've noticed you have gotten a harder "edge" in the articles you've written over the past year, especially in the articles in The Update. What's that all about?*

Elijah: I'm just having a bit of fun mocking Pretenders. They don't know that they don't know. That's why they're ignorant. But I would never call anyone a "fool" or a "moron" to their face or by name. If someone wants to proudly wear the title by disputing what I've written, that's their choice. As long as they don't expect me to stoop to their level by naming names, they can assail me personally to their hearts' content. After all, it's a free country and, given the freedom, stupid people will do stupid things.

Editor: *First you say you're just having fun, then you take off on the same tangent like you really mean it. Which is it?*

Elijah: I know I understand the Truth. Thousands of True Believers are going to come to that same conclusion over the next several years leading up to the Return of Jesus Christ. Under those circumstances, what do you think? If people all around reject the Truth and continue to assume nobody knows the Truth, are they morons or are they intelligent beings? ■

Light

From Page 1

cause it shattered his control over True Believers. The Reformers did that by recovering essential Christian doctrines concerning the new birth and the need for individual study of the Scriptures.

Over the centuries since the Protestant Reformation, millions of people have been saved through the hellfire and brimstone preaching of Evangelists like John Wesley and Charles Finney. These humble Believers came to God on the basis of an honest repentance, desperately seeking forgiveness for their sins because they understood God would destroy them if they refused.

Today, however, the flow of True Believers into the Church has slowed to a trickle. That is the result of the message preached by Satan's agents—that is, Pretenders who have infiltrated the Church and, like Søren Kierkegaard (see "Satan's Fools Are Satan's Tools" in this issue), encouraged people to "come to God" on the basis of some silly "profession of faith" rather than confession of sin.

Because of Satan's activity, most of the people who "profess" to be Christian today are nothing more than Pretenders. Yet God has still managed to accomplish His objectives in spite of the best that Satan's agents could do. To this very day He has His Remnant—that is, True Believers who honestly want to know and understand the Truth no matter what it costs. And God will accomplish His purpose through those True Believers in these Last Days. You can count on it.

To comprehend how Satan has worked in the Church, you must first understand how he operates as the master manipulator. He uses various enticements to get people to do what he wants. Yet he always approaches them with the suggestion that they want what he has to offer. Should you doubt that, take a look at the temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4:1–11). That account reveals the invariable method Satan uses to get what he wants.

However, Satan has always had one intransigent problem. His children are all stubborn and contentious. They will sometimes irrationally cut off their

nose to spite their face. In other words, while his agents have always done his bidding, they have frequently preferred to do it in their own way. Consequently, Satan has quite often had difficulty getting his people to accomplish the precise objectives he set out to accomplish.

That's why Søren Kierkegaard was so valuable to him. (See "Satan's Fools are Satan's Tools" in this issue.) That particular individual was apparently under Satan's complete control. I say that because to read the writings of Kierkegaard is to read absolute stupidity. When you get that close to such purity of thought, you know you're close to the source. And Satan is the source of all stupidity.

Since Satan cannot always exert total control over his agents, he has most often been reduced to using their own stubbornness and contention to achieve his goals. Consequently he has resorted to advocating conflicting theological doctrines in order to introduce confusion. That has been the case especially since the Protestant Reformation.

A brief survey of the past four centuries discloses a primary goal of Satan has been to distort the Truth recovered by the leaders of the Protestant Reformation. As a result of his efforts, a growing plethora of "Christian" Pretenders have advocated a variety of different beliefs. The cacophony produced by advocates of multifarious Christian doctrines has produced such a confusion that Pretenders have been able to easily hide themselves in the delusion that they are "Christian" just because they say so.

Over the last few centuries, however, Satan has also come to understand that the time for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is rapidly drawing near. Therefore, he has not only tried to distort the Truth recovered during the Protestant Reformation, he has also unleashed an all out assault against the very foundations of Christianity. By studying the history of the Protestant Church, one can clearly see the tactics Satan has used to accomplish that goal, and it is obvious Søren Kierkegaard led the charge.

Satan's strategy has been incredibly deceptive. Time and time again he has used diversionary tactics to draw attention away from the actual goals he has sought to achieve. Such has been the

case especially over the past century. While conservative theologians have fought valiantly to defend the historic Christian belief in the inspiration of Scripture, Satan has totally demolished the very foundation on which the Protestant Reformers based the doctrine of salvation by faith. The evidence of that sad fact can be seen today in the presence of all the Pretenders who fill the pews every Sunday morning.

Until now, True Believers have not always understood what all the fuss over theological doctrine was all about. They understood the basic Truth that God required them to hold to, so they held to it. And quite often, the commotion introduced by Satan's agents was much ado about nothing. But one thing you can count on. It was always the visible evidence of the spiritual battle that is raging yet today between the forces of light and the forces of darkness.

Whether you like it or not, you are a participant in that battle. That's why I'm writing this article. By the time you finish reading, the only question remaining to be answered will be, "Are you allied with the forces of light, or are you fighting desperately to remain in darkness?" Only you can answer that question. And answer it you will. Because, as they say, "Actions speak louder than words."

Before you can comprehend the New Testament statements made concerning the struggle that goes on between the forces of light and the forces of darkness, you must first understand the terminology the Apostles use when they *talk about The Apostolic Teaching*.

Where Do We Stand?

I have explained elsewhere how the Early Church lost the understanding of the message of the Hebrew Scriptures that Jesus Christ revealed to the Apostles. (See "Did You Mean That Literally?" and "The Origin of Folly" *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1993 issue. See also *The Way, The Truth, The Life* seminar tape series.) I call the Early Christians' understanding of that message *The Apostolic Teaching*.

Under different circumstances, it would be amusing to watch the theological gymnastics performed by tradition-loving wags as they vehemently

deny their spiritual forebearers lost *The Apostolic Teaching*. Unfortunately, under current circumstances the antics of traditionalists are far from amusing. The loss of *The Apostolic Teaching* cuts to the very core of what is wrong with God's Church today. And the efforts of Satan's agents to cloud that issue are anything but funny.

Those who love tradition will illogically deny that the Early Church even had a coherent body of beliefs concerning the Scriptures, thinking they can thereby refute the claim that the Early Church's understanding of the message of the Old Testament was lost by subsequent generations. Nothing could be more absurd. Whether true or false, every generation of the Church has had its own understanding of the Scriptures. To believe otherwise would be to argue that the Early Church had the Scriptures but understood nothing about them. Obviously that was not the case.

Having determined that the Early Church must have had at least some understanding of the message of the Scriptures, the question then becomes, "Has any one group of Christians maintained that understanding down through the centuries?" Only a fool with no knowledge of Church history at all would attempt to argue that their particular brand of Christianity has done that. But fools being what they are, I'm sure you will find more than a few are willing to show how stupid they are.

The Truth is, the most anyone could argue is that their Christian denomination, organization, sect or splinter group has somehow managed to *restore* what the Early Church lost. As I've shown previously, more than a few Protestants have set out to do just that, although few of them understood what they were seeking to *restore*. Nonetheless, most eventually came to the conclusion they had somehow accomplished the task. (See "Protestants All Agree on This: Somebody Laid an Egg!" *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1994.)

It should be obvious to all that the Church lost the apostolic understanding of the message of the Scriptures. Therefore, the only remaining issue to be settled is whether that understanding was the Truth. I happen to believe it was. But I realize Satan's agents will argue otherwise.

The more ignorant among us would happily live with the delusion that an accurate understanding of the Truth of Scripture has never and can never be known to any generation of Believers. I would readily agree with that conclusion insofar as it pertains to them. However, God may not have the same in mind for all.

I mentioned above "those who love tradition." You could assume from that phrase that I have no great love for tradition. You would be wrong. I love God's tradition, but I have no respect at all for any tradition of men that changes with the fashion of the day. Truth doesn't change. If anyone claims their tradition embodies the Truth, let them show that it has never changed.

Tradition Has Its Place

We are all aware that the Jews have a *tradition*. Yet we are hesitant to apply the term to Christians. We should do so nonetheless. Let me tell you why.

When we *talk about tradition* today, we normally talk in terms of things that are done—that is, customs that are observed. That's because Satan has done his best to instill in Christians the illogical belief that external patterns of behavior—that is, religious rituals and customs—are all that a religion *hands down* from generation to generation. That is a lie. It is impossible to *hand down* practices without including some accompanying beliefs.

Every religious group believes and teaches its religious beliefs to the next generation. If that were not so, every generation would be reduced to creating its own religious beliefs anew. That is obviously not the case. So religious beliefs must be part of every religious *tradition*.

The *traditional* beliefs one generation teaches the next are usually called an *oral tradition*. Therefore, in discussing the understanding of the Scriptures that has been/is held by different groups of Christian believers, we will use that terminology. For example, we can say the Methodists have one *oral tradition* (one understanding of the message of the Scriptures), the Baptists have another. It should be obvious that both the Methodists and the Baptists believe their *oral tradition* is the correct one. If they didn't

believe it was true, they wouldn't believe it.

The reason you need to think in terms of religious *tradition* as *oral tradition* is simple. Satan has managed to conceal an essential Truth behind a *traditional* biblical translation. The Greek term translated *tradition* in the New Testament (*paradosis*) actually means *oral tradition*. However, since it is usually translated *tradition*, English readers are left thinking the New Testament Scriptures must be referring to *things that are done*. That is not the case.

The root form of the Greek term *paradosis* means to "hand over" or "hand down." However, it is pointing to the *beliefs that are "handed down"* from one generation to the next as opposed to meaningless rituals performed by men. You can see that is exactly how the term is used in the following passages:

*See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the **tradition** of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.*
(Colossians 2:8)

*So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the **traditions** which you were taught, whether by word {of mouth} or by letter from us.*
(2 Thessalonians 2:15)

In *The Way, The Truth, The Life* seminar tape series, I mentioned that the Pharisees were *handing down* an *oral torah* (teaching) that they believed had been *handed down* to them from the time of Moses. I also mentioned that the *oral torah* of the Pharisees was not written down until it was recorded in the Mishnah around A.D. 200.

Prior to that time, the Pharisees *handed down* their *oral torah* from one generation to the next *orally*. They did that through a process known as *discipling*. That is, a *teacher (rabbi)* would teach his understanding of the *oral tradition (torah)* to a *disciple*. (See "Where Are Jesus' Disciples?" *The Voice of Elijah*, April 1991.)

Knowledge of the facts concerning the Pharisees' transmission of their *oral tradition* becomes crucial to our under-

standing of the New Testament message. It is obvious God expected the Early Christians to follow exactly the same process the Pharisees were using as they *handed down The Apostolic Teaching* as an *oral tradition* to subsequent generations (Matt. 28:18–20). Therefore, we can begin by looking at what the text says concerning the Pharisees. Mark mentions their *oral tradition* in a context where you can clearly see the Greek term normally translated “tradition” actually means *oral tradition*:

And the Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered together around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, {thus} observing the traditions of the elders; and {when they come} from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.)
(Mark 7:1–4)

Even from this English translation you can see Mark understood that the Pharisees did the things they did—“observing the *traditions* of the elders”—because of “things which they have *received* to observe.” The things they did were not the *traditions* he had in mind. The *traditions* were “the things which they have *received*.” In other words, the *traditions* were the things the elders taught—that is, the doctrines the Pharisees were *handing down* verbally from one generation to the next through the *discipling* process.

To fully understand what Mark has stated in this passage, you must first understand a couple of technical terms related to the Greek concept of *oral tradition*. The verb translated “observe” in verses 3 and 4 (Greek: *krateo*) has a meaning similar to the verb translated “receive” in verse 4 (Greek: *paralambano*). Both verbs have the basic meaning of “to take.” However, *krateo* has more the sense of “grasp” or “seize.”

How do these two verbs have anything to do with *oral tradition*? Well, think of an *oral tradition* as a baton *handed down* from one generation to the next in a relay race. Both generations have responsibility for seeing that the baton is *handed down* without mishap. The older generation must see to it that the baton is made available so that it may be easily *grasped*. However, the new generation must *take* the baton and *seize* it firmly.

The technical terminology related to the *handing down* of an *oral tradition* can be seen in what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning *The Apostolic Teaching*:

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.
(1 Corinthians 15:1–4)

You can see from this passage that Paul is speaking in terms of “the Gospel”—that is, *The Apostolic Teaching*—as an *oral tradition*. He states in verse 1 that the Corinthians *received* (Greek: *paralambano*) the Gospel from him and were expected to *hold fast* (Greek: *katexo*) to what they had heard. Moreover, in verse 3 Paul indicates he also *received* (Greek: *paralambano*) what he taught the Corinthians from someone else, although he doesn’t indicate how or when that happened. Notice, however, that Paul used exactly the same Greek verb (*paralambano*) when he referred to his own and to the Corinthians’ *reception of The Apostolic Teaching*.

In verse 3, Paul uses still more technical terminology related to the transmission of an *oral tradition*. He says he “delivered” his knowledge concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to the Corinthians. Here he uses a Greek verb (*paradidomi*) from the same root as the noun (*paradosis*) we earlier saw trans-

lated as “tradition.” The text literally says he *handed down* the Gospel to them.

Paul does not tell us in 1 Corinthians 15:1–4 who *handed down* to him the *oral tradition* he claims he *received*. However, in other passages Paul lets us know that he and all the other Apostles had *received* (Greek: *paralambano*) the *oral tradition of The Apostolic Teaching* through revelation from Jesus Christ. He tells us that using exactly the same technical terminology we have already seen is related to the *handing down* of any *oral tradition*:

As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed. For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ. For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but {I received it} through a revelation of Jesus Christ.
(Galatians 1:9–12)

This passage tells us precisely where Paul got the things he taught the Early Church. In verse 9 he indicates the Galatians had *received* (Greek: *paralambano*) the Gospel from him as an *oral tradition*. In verse 12 he says he *received* the things he understood about the message of the Scriptures from Jesus Christ, Who *handed down* (1 Cor. 15:3) that information to him through supernatural revelation. So Paul’s use of the technical terminology related to the transmission of an *oral tradition* confirms what we learned from 1 Corinthians 15. The Apostles were, through the process of *discipling* others, *handing down The Apostolic Teaching* as an *oral tradition*.

Paul uses the same technical terminology in other passages where he mentions the revelation he *received* from Jesus Christ. For example, he *talks about* it in the following passage and confirms again that he understood Jesus Christ intended *The Apostolic Teaching* to be an *oral tradition*:

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way {He took} the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink {it}, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.
(1 Corinthians 11:23–26)

This passage corroborates what we learned from the last two passages. It tells us Jesus Christ explained to Paul the meaning of the *parabolic pantomimes* He had conducted during the time of His ministry here on Earth. We know that because, in verse 23, Paul tells us he *received* (Greek: *paralambano*) these things from Jesus Christ Himself. He states immediately thereafter that he had already *handed down* (Greek: *paradidomi*) those things to the Corinthians.

Earlier in that same chapter Paul mentions the same thing. His use of the technical terminology related to the transmission of an *oral tradition* lets us know that is exactly what he is *talking about*:

Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.
(1 Corinthians 11:2)

Here Paul has used three Greek terms related to the transmission of an *oral tradition*: *katexo* is translated "hold firmly"; *paradosis* is translated "tradition"; and *paradidomi* is translated "delivered." There can now be no doubt Paul understood *The Apostolic Teaching* was an *oral tradition* the Early Church was supposed to *hand down* from one generation to the next.

All these passages together tell us Paul understood *The Apostolic Teaching* was an *oral tradition* the Apostles had *received* from Jesus Christ by revelation. Paul also knew he and the other Apostles

had been charged with the task of *handing down The Apostolic Teaching* to the Early Church through their teaching. One would naturally assume, therefore, that the Early Church was expected to continue *handing down The Apostolic Teaching* to subsequent generations. However, that assumption isn't necessary since Paul confirms it in a letter to Timothy:

And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.
(2 Timothy 2:2)

Writing sometime in the early to mid-second century, the author of the apostolic writing known as "The Epistle to Diognetus" uses the same terminology (*paradidomi*) and thereby confirms that at least some in his day still understood the task the Church had been assigned:

Mine are no strange discourses nor perverse questionings, but having been a disciple of Apostles I come forward as a teacher of the Gentiles, ministering worthily to them, as they present themselves disciples of the truth, the lessons which have been handed down.
(J.B. Lightfoot, "The Epistle of Diognetus," 11:6, from his work *The Apostolic Fathers, London: Macmillan and Company, 1891. See also The Voice of Elijah Update, February 1994, p. 11.*)

What a shame! If the Early Church had not failed to do as Paul admonished Timothy, it would not even be necessary for us to *restore The Apostolic Teaching* today. But no need to cry over spilled milk now. What's done is done. And "what if" is nothing more than Satan's snare.

Let me show you how neatly God has managed to tie up all the loose ends. If the Early Church got its understanding of the message of the Scriptures from the Apostles, and the Apostles got their understanding of the message of the Scriptures from Jesus Christ by revelation, where did Jesus Christ get His understanding of the message of the Scriptures? Well, He tells you:

"All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal {Him}."
(Luke 10:22)

The word translated "handed over" in this verse is the Greek verb *paradidomi*—"handed down." And, as we saw above, Jesus Christ revealed "who the Father is" to His Apostles.

Just a reminder before we move on. The technical terms I have pointed out so far are important. Keep them in mind. You can use the Scripture references listed in the "Tradition References" table on the opposite page to conduct your own study of the Scriptures. We'll talk about how these terms are used in some of the other passages you find listed there later on. Right now I want to introduce you to another perspective, a slightly different *Way* of looking at the things you find stated in the Scriptures.

The Living Word of God

Every *oral tradition* (understanding of the message of the Scriptures) in the Protestant Church today is (or at least pretends to be) based on the Scriptures. So let's think of those *oral traditions* in terms of the *Word of God*. We can begin by calling the Scriptures the *written Word of God*.

Now we all know that, in contrast to the *written Word of God* (the Scriptures) which never changes, every *oral tradition* (understanding of the message of the Scriptures) is subject to constant change. That is, every generation poses the distinct threat of adding to and taking away from the *oral tradition* they have *received* from an earlier generation. For example, the Methodists today don't actually believe the same things about the message of the Scriptures that Methodists believed two centuries ago.

Therefore, since every *oral tradition* (understanding of the message of the Scriptures) tends to change over time, let's call *oral tradition* the *Living Word of God*. There is a basic reason why you should start to think in terms of the *written Word of God* and the *Living*

Word of God. You see, the *written Word of God* is an objective entity that exists outside the person. It can be viewed, handled and read by all. The *Living Word of God* is entirely different.

In contrast to the *written Word of God* which stands alone, the *Living Word of God* resides in each person as the understanding the individual has regarding the *meaning of the written Word of God.* That *Living Word of God* is *handed down* from one generation to the next and comes to *reside* in the person who *receives* the spoken *explanation* of the Scriptures they hear taught verbally by a Teacher from the earlier generation. They *receive* the *Living Word of God* when they *believe* what they have been taught. Therefore, we can think of it as *living* within *Believers.*

In the Church today, the *Living Word of God* (the Believer's understanding of the message of the Scriptures) differs from individual to individual. That was not the case in the Apostolic Age. The Apostles taught the Early Church only one understanding of the message of the Scriptures. Anyone who argues otherwise obviously has not studied the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul makes that point emphatically in the first two chapters of the Book of Galatians.

As we saw above, Paul says in Galatians 1:11–12 that he *received* his understanding of the message of the Scriptures from Jesus Christ by *revelation.* He goes on to say in Galatians 2:7–9 that the other Apostles recognized that Jesus Christ had given Paul exactly the same understanding of the Gospel message as He had *revealed* to them earlier (Luke 24:27, 32, 44–45).

If God *revealed* the message of the Scriptures to the Apostles and they taught that message to the Early Church, the *Living Word of God* known to those first two generations of Believers must have been the Truth. Obviously, I realize Satan's agents will ignorantly dispute that. But look at it logically. Why would the God of Truth reveal a lie to His Own?

If the Apostles' understanding of the message of the Scriptures was true, it does not make sense that God would ever expect any subsequent generation to change that *oral tradition* in any way. Why would He? Truth is Truth. And Truth does not change. If you change the

Truth, you make it a lie. Therefore, God must have intended the Early Church to *hand down* the *oral tradition* they had *received*—that is, their understanding of the message of the Scriptures—to each new generation of Believers just as they had *received* it from the previous generation. Why wouldn't He? The only other option is that they say nothing and let the new generation fend for itself.

The Truth is, the Apostles gave the Early Church an accurate understanding of the message of the Scriptures but the Early Church failed to do as God intended. God expected the Church to *hand down* that *Living Word of God* from generation to generation as an *oral tradition* in the same way that every church, denomination, sect and splinter group *hands down* their own *oral traditions* today. The only difference was, God did not expect the Church to change the *Living Word of God* He had *delivered* to the Apostles.

As I have stated repeatedly, by A.D. 200 the Church had essentially lost *The Apostolic Teaching.* Therefore, every generation since that time has had something less than the totality of the *Living Word of God.* At best, they have had only bits and pieces of the *Living Word of God*

that existed in the Early Church as an *oral tradition.* Yet the point to be remembered here is that, for as long as the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* was known and understood, it existed in every True Believer as the *Living Word of God.*

The Apostolic Teaching

The predicament the Church faces today lies in the fact that, after 2,000 years of intense spiritual warfare, Satan has finally managed to obscure vital information concerning the link that exists between the *written Word of God* and the *Living Word of God.* Without that link, the Church today—being a mere shadow of itself, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing—has little, if anything at all, to offer those who would be saved.

You see, I had ulterior motives in describing *The Apostolic Teaching* as the *(Living) Word of God.* That's terminology the New Testament uses to refer to the *oral tradition* Jesus Christ *revealed* to the Apostles. It does so because the image of the *Word of God* is a part of the *parabolic* message hidden in *The Teaching of Moses.*

Although the Prophets discuss the *parabolic imagery* of the Old Testament

Tradition Terminology

paradosis = "tradition/oral tradition"

Matt. 15:2–3, 6; Mark 7:3, 5, 8–9, 13; 1 Cor. 11:2; Gal. 1:14; Col. 2:8; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6

paradidomi = "deliver/hand down"

Matt. 11:27; 25:20, 22; Mark 7:13; Luke 1:2; 4:6; 10:22; Acts 6:14; Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 11:2, 23; 15:3; 2 Pet. 2:21; Jude 1:3

paralambano = "receive"

Mark 7:4; John 1:11; 1 Cor. 11:23; 15:1, 3; Gal. 1:9, 12; Phil. 4:9; Col. 2:6; 4:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 4:1; 2 Thess. 3:6; Heb. 12:28

katexo = "receive/hold fast"

Luke 8:15; Rom. 1:18; 1 Cor. 11:2; 15:2; 2 Cor. 6:10; 1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Thess. 2:6–7; Heb. 3:6, 14; 10:23

dexomai = "receive/hold fast"

Matt. 10:14; Luke 8:13; Acts 8:14, 11:1, 17:11; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:13; James 1:21

krateo = "observe/hold fast"

Mark 7:3–4, 8; Col. 2:19; 2 Thess. 2:15; Heb. 4:14; 6:18; Rev. 2:14–15, 25; 3:11

Gospel of Jesus Christ at some length in their writings, I'm not going to explain anything at all about *The Teaching of Moses*, or *The Teaching of the Prophets*, or *The Apostolic Teaching* in this article. But I do want to show you what the Apostles have said concerning the *oral tradition* the Early Church called the *Word of God*. Perhaps you will then better understand how far down the Church has come to its present condition.

Today, when we think about the *Word of God*, we immediately think in terms of the *written Word of God*—that is, the Scriptures. That mind-set automatically carries over when we study the Scriptures themselves so that when we read the phrase *Word of God* in the New Testament, we subconsciously think *written Word of God*. I want to show you the fallacy in that viewpoint as yet another example of how Satan has deluded us into believing things that are patently false.

At the time of Jesus Christ people had various ideas concerning the “word” (Greek: *logos*) as it applied to God. We could, for example, look at the term as the speculative philosophers—that is, the Greek sophists, Socrates, Plato, the Stoics and Neo-platonists, used it to discuss the nature of God. Or we could investigate its use in the Greek Mystery Religions where the one in whom the “word” dwells is a son of god. We could go even further and discuss its use in Hermeticism, where the god Hermes is the messenger who reveals the “word.” If one were so inclined, we could even discuss how the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria incorporated the concept into his understanding of the message of the Old Testament.

Without going into the specifics related to any of these Greek ideas about the “word” (*logos*), it is sufficient to point out that they all agreed on one fundamental point: The “word” (Greek: *logos*) pertains specifically to “what is said.” To the mind of those alive at the time of Christ, the *logos* was a *living* entity. It had direct connection to the Living God Who was, as the source of all Truth, a *Word*.

The Greek mind-set has relevance to us only because, if we want to understand what the Prophets and Apostles have written, we must understand the things they have written in terms of the

time in which they wrote. (See *The Way, The Truth, The Life* seminar tape series.) In saying that, however, I realize there are many in the Church today who would argue against any such notion. They want to be free of any such constraints. In other words, they do not want the Scriptures to *mean* what their authors *meant* to say; they want them to *mean* only what they are willing to understand. Such people are nothing more than Satan's pawns.

The Greek concept of the *logos* (“word”) involves not so much *what is spoken* as *what is said*. That is so because one may hear *what is spoken* without actually understanding *what is said*. For example, one may speak in a language the listener does not understand. In such cases, the person listening has not actually *heard* the *logos* (“word”). They have only heard meaningless sounds.

The basic point at issue regarding the Greek concept of the *Word (logos) of God* is not whether something has been spoken, but whether a transfer of *meaning* has occurred. At its very heart, the term *logos* relates to *hearing with understanding*. We must keep that in mind as we look at the New Testament record left us by the Apostles because their every mention of the *Word of God* carries that basic Greek understanding of the term.

When we hear the phrase *Word of God* today, however, we immediately think of the Scriptures—the *written Word of God*. The Apostles would agree with that designation only if it is clearly understood one must *hear* what the Scriptures *say*—that is, one must read them with *understanding*. In other words, the Scriptures contain a message—the *Word of God*—that they intend the reader to *understand*. If the reader has not *understood* that message, they have not actually *heard* the *Word of God*.

Satan has (as usual) sought to confuse this issue as well, although I don't have time to explain the matter fully here. Conservative theologians are today prepared to argue against the explanation I have just given because Satan's agents have already introduced the silly notion that the Scriptures *contain the Word of God*, thereby making *subjective revelation* necessary if one is ever to gain understanding while reading the Scriptures. That's nothing more than Satan's nonsense.

The fact that the message of the Scriptures is the *Word of God* has nothing to do with the issue of whether or not the Scriptures themselves are *objective revelation*. They are indeed *objective revelation*. However, only an idiot would argue that such *objective revelation* obviates the need for *subjective understanding* in the Believer. It is not possible for one to read a written text and thoroughly *understand* it without going through some mental process of *interpreting* what is read. If that were not so, everybody would have exactly the same understanding of the *revelation* found in the Scriptures just by reading it. That is certainly not the case.

The process of *interpretation* as a means of *understanding the Word of God* is precisely where the Apostles would condemn what has gone on in the Church over the past 1,800 years since the Church lost *The Apostolic Teaching*. You see, the Apostles did not get their understanding of the message of the Scriptures by means of *interpretation*. As Paul plainly tells you in the first two chapters of Galatians, they got it by *revelation*.

Thus, when the Apostles mention the *Word of God*, they are referring to the *understanding* of the message of the Scriptures that they got from Jesus Christ by *revelation*. Since all other Believers in the Early Church *received the Word of God* as it was *handed down* to them by people who had been taught by someone from an earlier generation, there was never any need for *interpretation* of the Scriptures until after the Church lost *The Apostolic Teaching*.

The Word is the Word, is the Word ...

Let's pause here and do a bit of review. First of all, I said above that every religious group/individual (whether they want to admit it or not) *hands down* some particular *understanding* of the message of the Scriptures as an *oral tradition*. Then I showed you that, when the New Testament uses the term *tradition*, it is actually referring to an *oral tradition*. And I introduced you to some of the technical terminology the New Testament uses to refer to the transmission of *The Apostolic Teaching* as an *oral tradition*.

Then I suggested we talk in terms of *oral tradition*—that is, a particular religious group’s *understanding* of the message of the Scriptures—as the *Word of God*. And I recommended we call such an *oral tradition* “the *Living Word of God*” to distinguish it from the Scriptures, which are the *written Word of God*.

Next I explained how the Apostles, being members of the Greek culture, reflect a thoroughly Greek understanding of the Greek term *logos* that we find translated “word” in the New Testament. As you may have noticed, at that point I dropped the term *Living* and started talking only in terms of the *Word of God*. That was intentional. I was just easing you into the terminology the Apostles use in the New Testament when they refer to *The Apostolic Teaching*.

In contrast to the distorted understanding of the phrase “the Word of God” that Satan has successfully foisted off on the Church, the Apostles never talk about the Hebrew Scriptures as the *Word of God*. They only use that rubric when they are referring to the *understanding* of the message of the Scriptures they got from Jesus Christ by revelation. So what do they call the Scriptures? Take a look. Jesus called the Scriptures “the Scripture/the Scriptures”:

*“Have you not even read **this Scripture**:*

‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER {stone}.’”

(Mark 12:10)

*“You search **the Scriptures**, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me.”*

(John 5:39)

Luke called the Scriptures “the Scripture/the Scriptures”:

*And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from **this Scripture** he preached Jesus to him.*

(Acts 8:35)

And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the

*things concerning Himself in all **the Scriptures**.*

(Luke 24:27)

The Apostle John called the Scriptures “the Scripture”:

*When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed **the Scripture**, and the word which Jesus had spoken.*

(John 2:22)

The Apostle Paul called the Scriptures “the Scripture/the Scriptures”:

*For what does **the Scripture** say? “AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”*

(Romans 4:3)

*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to **the Scriptures**.*

(1 Corinthians 15:3)

James called the Scriptures “the Scripture”:

*Or do you think that **the Scripture** speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”?*

(James 4:5)

Finally, Peter also called the Scriptures “the Scripture/the Scriptures”:

*“Brethren, **the Scripture** had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.”*

(Acts 1:16)

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord {to be} salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all {his} letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and un-

*stable distort, as {they do} also the rest of **the Scriptures**, to their own destruction.*

(2 Peter 3:14–16)

We can see from this brief survey that Jesus and the Apostles used a consistent terminology when referring to the *written Word of God*. That same consistency is evident in the terminology they use when referring to the *oral tradition*—the *understanding* of the message of the Scriptures—that Jesus Christ revealed to them and told them to teach the next generation (Matt. 28:18–20).

When the Apostles *talk about the Word of God*, they invariably *mean The Apostolic Teaching*. And they always call it “the Word of the Lord,” “the Word of Christ,” “the Word of Truth” or some other similar designation. Quite often they simply call it “the Word.” But *The Apostolic Teaching* is always in view. They never use any such rubric to refer to the Scriptures. However, there is an interesting thing you need to know about the way the Apostles refer to the *Word of God*. When *talking about the Word of God*, they sometimes use the same technical terminology we have already seen them use in connection with the *oral tradition* Jesus Christ established by revealing *The Apostolic Teaching* to the Apostles. Notice what Paul says:

*And for this reason we also constantly thank God that **when you received from us the word of God’s message, you accepted {it} not {as} the word of men, but {for} what it really is, the word of God**, which also performs its work in you who believe.*

(1 Thessalonians 2:13)

The Greek verb translated *received* (Greek: *paralambano*) in this verse is the same verb translated *received* in the verses quoted above. So we know that Paul is here referring to the fact that the Thessalonians *received the Word of God* from him as an *oral tradition* when he preached “the Gospel” to them. However, the verb here translated *accepted* (Greek: *dexomai*) introduces a new technical term related to the transmission of an *oral tradition*. That term is the one most often used to describe Believers *receiving the Word of God* (in the sense of

believing it). For example, we find it used that way in the Book of Acts:

*Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had **received the word of God**, they sent them Peter and John.*
(Acts 8:14)

*Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had **received the word of God**.*
(Acts 11:1)

I won't go into all the occurrences of the *Word of God* and its related mentions in the New Testament. You can use the list of references in the "Word Terminology" table on this page to study the subject on your own. As you're reading through the passages, however, notice how many times "speaking," "hearing," "teaching" and "preaching" are mentioned. That's because the *Word* was an oral tradition that was to be handed down from generation to generation orally.

The last reference in the "Word Terminology" table tells all there is to tell about the futility of the great "hope" of Pretenders like Søren Kierkegaard. (See "Satan's Fools Are Satan's Tools" in this issue):

Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with

*whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow. In the exercise of His will **He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures.***
(James 1:17–18)

If you are a True Believer, you were born again through one incredibly simple process. You heard one small bit of the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* that, by God's grace, still remains in the Church today. Having heard that Truth, you believed it, and responded in total repentance with a humble confession of your sins, asking God to forgive you.

The Pretenders in the Church today know nothing at all about what you experienced. What it means to be born again totally eludes them. You and I know only because we have been born again. And we know that our experience came about because, at some point in our lives, we firmly believed God was a God of wrath, a God to be feared—that is, a God Who would destroy us if we continued living in sin. That is exactly what was happening in the Early Church.

The point I am making here relates to the fact that *we heard and believed an oral tradition* that still remains in the Church, an *oral tradition* that still contains some of the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching*. Having been born again because you once believed just a small bit of the Truth and accepted God's offer of salvation, you were transformed. You became something other than what you

had been before:

Therefore, if any man is in Christ, {he is} a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

The Pretenders in the Church—Satan's agents—want you to think of the new birth you have experienced as nothing more than a *mystical* experience. They do that because that's all their father Satan has ever given them—*mystical* experiences. But you have something far greater than they. You have within you the *Living Word of God*:

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, {that is}, through the living and abiding word of God.
(1 Peter 1:22–23)

Peter is talking about *The Apostolic Teaching* as an oral tradition that lives in the Believer. You probably haven't noticed it before, but the Apostles talk in those terms on various occasions. Take a look:

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms {and} hymns {and} spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
(Colossians 3:16)

*I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and **the word of God abides in you**, and you have overcome the evil one.*
(1 John 2:14)

Although you may not have consciously thought about it, the challenge you have faced since being born again has been *continuing to believe the Truth that came to live within you* when you first believed the Truth and responded to it. That is where, whether you knew it or not, you became Satan's target in the bat-

Word Terminology

Word of God:

Matt. 15:6; Mark 7:13; Luke 5:1; 8:11, 21; 11:28; John 10:35; Acts 4:31; 6:2, 7; 8:14; 11:1; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 46; 17:13; 18:11; Rom. 9:6; 1 Cor. 14:36; 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2; Col. 1:25; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 4:5; 2 Tim. 2:9; Titus 2:5; Heb. 4:12; 13:7; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 John 2:14; Rev. 1:2, 9; 6:9; 19:13; 20:4.

Word of the Lord:

Acts 8:25; 13:44, 48, 49; 15:35–36; 16:32; 19:10; 1 Thess. 1:8; 4:15; 2 Thess. 3:1

Word of Christ:

Col. 3:16

Word of Truth:

2 Cor. 6:7; Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:15; James 1:18

tle that rages between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. You see, by being born again, you allied yourself with the forces of *light*:

For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
(Colossians 1:13–14)

Have you ever wondered why the New Testament authors *talk about* the Gospel in terms of *light* and *darkness*? They do that because that is part of the *parabolic imagery* found in *The Teaching of Moses, The Teaching of the Prophets, The Teaching of Jesus* and *The Apostolic Teaching*. I'm not going to explain anything concerning any of those *Teachings* here; I just want to explain what the Apostles were *talking about* when they mention *light* and *darkness*. Keep in mind what I have told you on other occasions: A parable only tells you what something is *LIKE*. That is, it describes one thing in terms of another.

Those Who Love Darkness

Luke tells us that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, prophesied concerning his son's ministry and said this:

*"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS;
To give to His people {the} knowledge of salvation
By the forgiveness of their sins,
Because of the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Sunrise from on high shall visit us,
TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH,
To guide our feet into the way of peace."*
(Luke 1:76–79)

Laying aside for now the issue of John the Baptist giving the Jews "a knowledge of salvation," I want to key on the fact that Zacharias was speaking in terms of the *parabolic imagery* of *The*

Teaching of the Prophets when he *talked about* the "Sunrise from on high." Notice that he quotes Isaiah 9:1–2 to tell us the purpose of that "Sunrise" was "to shine upon those who sit in darkness . . . to guide our feet into the way of peace." In mentioning "the Way of peace" Zacharias alerts us to the fact that he is talking in terms of the Hebrew idiom "walk in *The Way*." I have already discussed that idiom at some length in *The Way, The Truth, The Life* seminar tape series; therefore, I won't go into any great detail here except to say that *The Way* is *The Teaching*. So Zacharias is *talking about* "walking in *The Teaching*." And he has just told us the purpose of the *light* God provided is to make it possible for people to "walk in *The Teaching*." Keep that in mind as we go along.

Matthew tells us Jesus moved to Capernaum so that when He began to preach, the prophecy of Isaiah that Zacharias mentioned would be fulfilled.

*{This was} to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,
"THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI,
BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES—
THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT,
AND TO THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH,
UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED."*
(Matthew 4:14–16)

That tells us the ministry of Jesus was intended to provide *light*. But what was that *light*? Again, Luke records another prophecy, the prophecy of Simeon, and tells us what we need to know:

*"Now Lord, Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart
In peace, according to Thy word;
For my eyes have seen Thy salvation,
Which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples,
A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES,
And the glory of Thy people Israel."*
(Luke 2:29–32)

Notice, the *light* Jesus Christ provided was a "light of revelation to the

Gentiles." That not only tells us the *light* was *revelation*, it also tells us when the *light* was given. The only *revelation* any Gentile ever *received* from Jesus Christ was mediated through the Apostle Paul. Therefore, this passage points directly to the *revelation* Paul mentions he *received* (Gal. 1:9–12; 1 Cor. 11:23–25; Eph. 3:3). So the image of *light* must be a *parabolic description* of the content of *The Apostolic Teaching*. Let's see if that conclusion doesn't withstand closer scrutiny. Have you ever read this passage before?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but {came} that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, {even} to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"
(John 1:1–15)

Did you notice what he said about the *Word*? He said:

There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. (John 1:9)

The Apostle is speaking *parabolically* concerning Jesus Christ as *light*—the *Living Word of God* that comes to dwell in those who believe *The Apostolic Teaching*. But notice that he said the *light* “enlightens.” That Greek term (*photizo*) means both “to illuminate” and “to make known/teach.” That’s why he said:

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, {even} to those who believe in His name. (John 1:11–12)

You may have already guessed that John is talking in terms of Believers *receiving* (Greek: *paralambano*) the *Word of God* as an *oral tradition* that *enlightens* them concerning the Truth. He is doing that because what he has written is nothing more than a statement made in the *parabolic imagery* of *The Apostolic Teaching*. It is meant to mock what the ancient Greeks believed concerning God as a *Living Word*.

It is important to note that John was not the only Apostle to use the *parabolic image* of *The Teaching* as *light*. All of the Apostles use the image because it is part of *The Apostolic Teaching*. John, however, seems to have had a fondness for it. He has recorded in His Gospel numerous occasions on which Jesus talked *parabolically* about Himself as the *Light*:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone

who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

(John 3:16–21)

All that *believing* sort of makes you wonder, doesn’t it? What must one believe in order to be saved? That’s something Satan doesn’t want you to consider. That’s why he has worked through the goofiness Søren Kierkegaard introduced into the Church. (See “Satan’s Fools Are Satan’s Tools” in this issue.) Satan wants you to think of the new-birth experience as nothing more than a *mystical* experience that came about through a completely *subjective decision* to believe anything at all about God. That concoction is a lie. A person cannot be born again without *believing the Truth*.

You were born again because you *believed the Truth* and acted according to it—that is, you confessed your sins and repented. That’s why, after *talking about* being “saved,” Jesus goes on to *talk about the light*. You see, those who hear the Truth and refuse to believe it have chosen to remain in *darkness*. That’s because *light* is the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* and *darkness* is any lie that contradicts that Truth. That’s what Jesus was *talking about* when He said this:

“The lamp of your body is your eye; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Then watch out that the light in you may not be darkness. If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it shall be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays.” (Luke 11:34–36)

Jesus is speaking *parabolically*. He lets us know that by using a Greek particle of *comparison*: “*as* when the lamp illumines you with its rays.” In *talking about The Way* we “see” things down here, He is telling us people choose to *believe* what they choose to *believe*—that is, they “see” things the way they choose to “see” them. Those who choose to *be-*

lieve lies when confronted with the *light* of *The Teaching*, however, have chosen to remain in *darkness*.

John records yet another occasion when Jesus *talked about* the need for *believing the light* of the Truth one can find only in *The Teaching*:

“If I {alone} bear witness of Myself, My testimony is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the testimony which He bears of Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. But the witness which I receive is not from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the witness which I have is greater than {that of} John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. And you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life.” (John 5:31–40)

Don’t be confused by all the seemingly intricate statements in this passage that mention “witness,” “bear witness,” and “testimony.” Just convert those words to ordinary phrases like “a person who knows the Truth,” “talk about” and “what was said.” That way you can easily get the essential drift of what Jesus said. He has merely told us John the Baptist, as a “person who knows the Truth,” “talked about” Him. Therefore, John’s *teaching* was *light* in which the Jews rejoiced for a while. But God is also a “Person Who knows the Truth,” and Jesus *received* the things He “*talked about*” from God.

Jesus also mentions in this passage the fact that God gave Him *parabolic pantomimes* to do as a part of His ministry—“the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish.” He then says

those *parabolic pantomimes* also “talk about” Who He is. The Jews, however, refuse to *believe* what Jesus says verbally or through His *parabolic pantomimes* because the *Word of God* is not in them. Instead, they go to the Scriptures looking for the *Word of God*, not knowing that the Scriptures “talk about” Jesus Christ.

Jesus said all these things to the Jews in order to mock their stubborn ignorance. The incarnate *Word of God* was standing right in front of them, and they refused to *believe* what the *Word* was *teaching*. The *Teaching of Jesus* provided *light* so anyone who *believed* it could have that *Light within* them to show them *The Way* in which they should *walk*. That is just a *parabolic statement* made according to the *parabolic imagery* of *The Apostolic Teaching*. However, you can find the same thing stated in *The Teaching of Jesus*:

Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, **“I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.”**

(John 8:12)

“While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

(John 9:5)

The disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?” Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”

(John 11:8–10)

The multitude therefore answered Him, “We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?” Jesus therefore said to them, **“For a little while longer the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light,**

in order that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, and He departed and hid Himself from them.

(John 12:34–36)

And Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me. I have come {as} light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”

(John 12:44–50)

You have probably already deduced that the word translated *receive* in John 12:48 is referring to the *reception* of an *oral tradition*. That’s true. It is. However, it is not the compound verb *paralambano* that we have seen previously, it is the simple verb *lambano*. That presents no problem. We saw the two used as synonyms in John 1:11–12:

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, {even} to those who believe in His name.

(John 1:11–12)

The Greek verb in verse 11 is the compound verb *paralambano*. The verb in verse 12 is the simple verb *lambano*. Their parallel usage in this context discloses their synonymous meaning when they are used to refer to the *reception* of an *oral tradition*. Therefore, we know Jesus had in mind the acceptance of an *oral tradition* in John 12:48 where He used only the simple verb *lambano*.

Just a Few Burning Embers

Having taken this quick survey of the things Jesus said about Himself as *light*—the *Living Word of God* that *dwells* in those who *believe*—let’s now turn to the things the Apostles said concerning *light*. We will find they used exactly the same *parabolic imagery* and they understood it in exactly the same way. For example, they saw themselves just as Jesus saw Himself, as a source of *light* that made salvation possible for those who believed what they had preached:

And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For thus the Lord has commanded us,

‘I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU SHOULD BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.’”

(Acts 13:46–47)

The Book of Acts contains the Apostle Paul’s own description of the occasion on which Jesus Christ called him to preach the Gospel. He says Jesus described his calling in terms of *light* and *darkness*.

“And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ And I said, ‘Who art Thou, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; delivering you from the {Jewish} people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheri-

tance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' Consequently, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but {kept} declaring both to those of Damascus first, and {also} at Jerusalem and {then} throughout all the region of Judea, and {even} to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. For this reason {some} Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death. And so, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that **the Christ was to suffer, {and} that by reason of {His} resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both to the {Jewish} people and to the Gentiles.**" (Acts 26:14–23)

Did you notice what Jesus said? He described the new birth as "opening their eyes." That makes sense, doesn't it? The darkness isn't just darkness around us, it is also darkness within us. Before we were born again, we were blind! Ah! Now we can understand! That's why Jesus talked about the importance of our "eye" being "clear" so that the light within us not be darkness (Matt. 6:23; Luke 11:35). He said that because blind people have cloudy eyes. And, just for the sake of you True Believers, I remind you there will be many in the Last Days who claim to "see" what you and I "see" yet they have nothing but darkness within them. Beware especially of those:

And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and {yet} walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we

have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.
(1 John 1:5–10)

Did you understand all that? He has just said that those who say they believe yet don't show evidence of their belief are liars. That's why he mentions *light* and *darkness* as well as "walking in the light." You need to keep that in mind. The only way we can ever do what God requires is if we have "the truth" dwelling "in us." If we say we believe yet don't "walk in the light," "His Word is not in us"—that is, we don't really believe. John returns to the same imagery later in his epistle:

Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. The one who says he is in the light and {yet} hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.
(1 John 2:7–11)

John's mention of blindness reminds us again of what Jesus said to Paul when He called him. Paul said he was called to go to the Gentiles and "open their eyes" (Acts 26:18). In that same passage, however, Paul also said that Jesus would "proclaim light both to the {Jewish} people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:23). That not only confirms the light was the spoken message of *The Apostolic Teaching*, it also explains what Paul was getting at in the Book of Romans:

But if you bear the name "Jew," and rely upon the Law, and boast in God, and know {His} will, and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, and are confident that you

yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?
(Romans 2:17–21a)

In this passage Paul mentions not only the *darkness* all around us but also the need that we have, as blind people, for someone to *lead us to the light*. He uses that same *parabolic imagery* in writing to the Corinthians, where he tells us the "blindness" is a blindness of our mind and the *light* is one that "has shone in our heart"—that is, in our mind:

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.
(2 Corinthians 4:3–6)

Now Paul has told us specifically what the *light* is. It is "the light of the gospel," "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Fools will automatically assume they understand what Paul has said here, not realizing that "the glory of God" refers back to the *parabolic imagery* of *The Teaching of Moses*. Since I am not going to delve into that in this article, it is enough to know that *light* is a *parabolic image* that depicts a characteristic of *knowledge*. Specifically, it is a characteristic of the *knowledge* of the things that are explained in the *Gospel*—that is, in *The Apostolic Teaching*.

Now we know exactly what the *light* is. It is *knowledge of the Truth*. So it makes sense that *darkness* is *lack of a knowledge of that Truth*. That's where belief comes in. *What we believe is what we know*. It is impossible to know something without first believing it. I realize there

are more than a few idiots who would argue against that, but what do they know? They refuse to believe much of anything they didn't come up with themselves.

Armed with an understanding of what *light* is, we can understand why Paul used the *parabolic image* of light and darkness when he talked about the need to beware of false *teaching* that would lead Believers back into *darkness*:

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light {consists} in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. **And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.** For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you." Therefore **be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.** (Ephesians 5:6–16)

Have you noticed how many times in the passages where we have seen *light* mentioned we have also seen an allusion to the Hebrew idiom "walk in *The Way*"? (For an explanation of the idiom, see *The Way, The Truth, The Life* seminar tape series.) That's because the two—image and idiom—are intricately related in *The Teaching of Moses*. Jesus and the Apostles repeatedly talk in terms of "walking in *light*" and "walking in *darkness*" because they were thinking in terms of that *parabolic imagery*. That explains why Paul alludes to the idiom "walk in *The Way*" in the following passage:

This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the fu-

tility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in {the likeness of} God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH, EACH ONE {of you}, WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. (Ephesians 4:17–25)

Paul is speaking *parabolically* about Jesus Christ as the *Living Word of God* that *dwells* in the Believer. He is emphasizing the need for Believers to allow the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* to *renew their mind* so that they view this life from an entirely different perspective—so that they "walk in *The Way*."

What Paul has said here is nothing complicated. He has merely told us that those who don't know the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* are ignorant. The notion of *ignorance*, however, brings up the issue of the fool—that is, the person who is firmly convinced he knows something worthwhile when he knows nothing at all. You may not have noticed that Paul mentioned *foolishness* in the passage from Romans quoted above (Rom. 2:20). It was on his mind because *darkness, ignorance* and *foolishness* are all the same thing.

Getting back to the issue of false teaching, Paul understood the True Believer is engaged in a constant battle with the forces of *darkness*. That is, he/she faces the ever-present danger of being lured out of the *light of The Apostolic Teaching* and into believing something that isn't true. That's why he uses the same *parabolic imagery* when he refers to the battle that goes on between the forces of *light* and the forces of *darkness*:

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual {forces} of wickedness in the heavenly {places}. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. (Ephesians 6:10–13)

Paul is talking about "standing firm" in the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching*. Unfortunately, the Early Church failed to "stand firm." Consequently, before very long, they lost *The Apostolic Teaching*. Can you guess how that happened? It happened because agents of Satan infiltrated the Church, introducing lies into *The Apostolic Teaching*. The Apostles knew that would happen in spite of their best efforts because, when Satan wants something done, he sometimes does it himself:

As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows {I do}! But what I am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds. (2 Corinthians 11:10–15)

It is too bad the Early Christians lost *The Apostolic Teaching*. If they hadn't, True Believers today wouldn't be clinging to scattered bits and pieces of the Truth. They would instead be "walking" in the full *light* of day. But who knows what God has planned for His Own in these Last Days?

I have already told you God called me to *restore The Apostolic Teaching*. (See “Protestants All Agree on This: Somebody Laid an Egg!” *The Voice of Elijah*, January 1994.) To be quite honest about it, I don’t really care whether you believe that or not. It’s your loss if you don’t. Besides, it doesn’t matter what I claim concerning my calling because “the proof is in the pudding.” Yet, if what I say is true, there are going to be more than a few in these Last Days who will be “walking in the *light*” when Jesus Christ returns for His Own.

Now, we all know the Scriptures say Jesus will come suddenly, “like a thief in the night,” without warning (Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:39; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15). Yet it’s clear from what Paul says in the following passage that he believed those who understood the Truth of *The Apostolic Teaching* in that Day would know full well what was going to happen:

Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything

to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of {the} day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.
(1 Thessalonians 5:1–10)

That “peace and safety” garbage sounds a lot like what the Pretenders are preaching in the Church today, doesn’t it? What could be more peaceful and safe than to be in the comforting arms of an all-forgiving god of love? Unfortunately, that god doesn’t exist. He’s just a figment of their foolish imagination.

On the other hand, the God of wrath does exist. He’ll be coming along shortly in the Person of Jesus Christ, filled with an awesome burning rage, fully intent on destroying those who stubbornly refuse to believe the Truth (2 Thess. 2:10; Rev. 6:16–17). But why should we *talk about* that? It might disturb the Pretenders’ sense of security. We sure wouldn’t want that now, would we?

What a shame! Millions are headed for “destruction” just because fools are preaching “peace and safety” instead of keeping their mouths shut. That’s the trouble with fools. They always want to “show what they know.” They do, too. Trouble is, they know nothing at all. ■

Where Did That Come From?

- ❖ How did the novel notion that God loves everybody find its way into fundamentalist beliefs?
- ❖ Where did Dispensationalism originate?
- ❖ How did it come to be a part of fundamental doctrine?
- ❖ How did Fundamentalism become identified with ignorance and narrow-mindedness?
- ❖ What did William Jennings Bryan, former Democratic Party leader, presidential candidate, and Secretary of State for Woodrow Wilson, contribute to the Fundamentalist image?



Do you consider yourself a Christian Fundamentalist? Have you ever wondered where some of the Fundamentalist doctrines came from? Are you starting to think some of what you’ve been taught needs to be validated? If so, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925* by George Marsden will answer many of the questions you might have about the roots of your beliefs.

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Why Not?

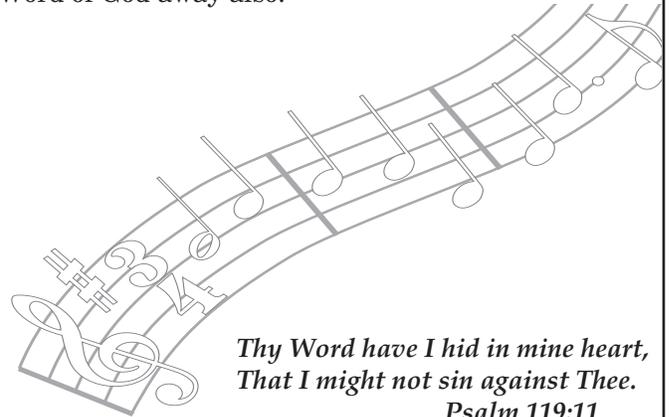
If you find *The Voice of Elijah* beneficial to you in your own walk with the Lord, won't you please join with us and make this ministry your own? Everybody can do something. Some can do more than others. Please do what you can:

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- ☛ **Tell others.**
- ☛ **Give a gift subscription to a friend.**
- ☛ **Give *Not All Israel Is Israel* to a friend.**
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Time is short. Much remains to be done. Please stand with us in this ministry. Contributions are tax-deductible. 100% of all contributions go to outreach. No salaries are paid.

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*Thy Word have I hid in mine heart,
That I might not sin against Thee.
Psalm 119:11*

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What You Don't Know Can Sometimes Hurt You!

Did you know that for over one hundred and fifty years all the leaders of the Early Church understood there was but one correct understanding of the message of the Old Testament? Were you also aware that all Christians in the Early Church respected and recognized their leaders as having the God-given authority to teach the correct understanding of God's Word to His People? Can you believe none of these men interpreted Scripture for themselves?

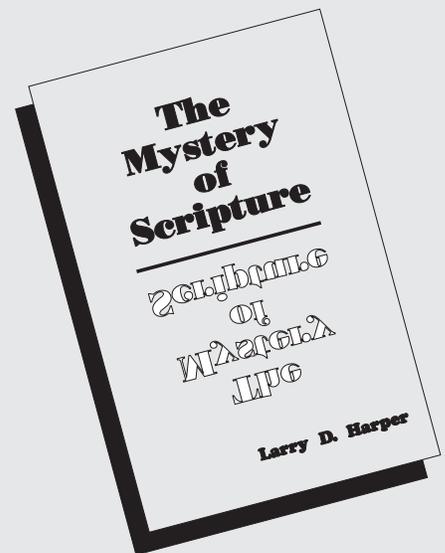
Obviously, that doesn't describe the Church today. With a church on every corner preaching a different interpretation of Scripture and believers picking and choosing as they deem fit, it doesn't seem possible it could have ever been otherwise, does it? Yet it was a reality in the Early Church for well over a century. So, what happened?

If you thrive on the constant bickering and fighting found in the Church of today, that question isn't even relevant. Obviously, you believe you can go right on arguing your way to the Truth. But some of us don't.

- **If you look around you in the Church today, and things just don't seem quite right, this book is for you.**
- **And if you believe the Scriptures should have but one clear message, this book is for you.**
- **And if you believe it only makes sense that the Church took a wrong turn somewhere along the way, this book is for you.**

Things aren't right in the Church today. And there is but one simple message to be found in the Bible. And the Church did take a wrong turn quite some time back.

Around A.D. 200, the Church did exactly what the Old Testament tells us Israel did before: It turned away from *The Apostolic Teaching*. So, if you want to know the Truth, this book is for you. Order your copy now. Why should *The Mystery of Scripture* remain a mystery any longer?



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Today, the nation of Israel—the Jews living in the land occupied by biblical Israel—claim to be Israel, heirs to *the promises* God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But are they really?



What if all Israel was "cut off?"

John the Baptist warned it could happen. (Matt. 3:10)
The Apostle Paul said it did happen. (Rom. 11:11–24)

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