

Book Three
IK
IRON
KINGDOM
Series

THE
APOSTATE
~~APOSTOLIC~~
FATHERS

John D. Clark, Sr.

The Apostate Fathers
(The Iron Kingdom Series, Book Three)
© 2008 John David Clark, Sr.

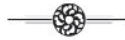
ISBN-13: 978-1-934782-07-1

First printing, 1998
Second printing, 2009
Third printing, 2023

cover design by Donna Nelson

Author's Notes

- In English, there is no difference in the singular and plural forms of “you”. However, in biblical Hebrew and Greek, the difference is obvious. To more accurately convey the biblical writers’ messages in verses where the word “you” appears, I have italicized the “y” of all plural forms, such as *you*, *your*, *yours*, *yourselves*.
- Translations of Old and New Testament scriptures are my own. Following standard practice, when a word is added to the translation for clarification, it is italicized.
- Punctuation appears inside quotation marks only when that punctuation is part of what is quoted. To include all periods and commas within quotation marks, as many grammarians demand, leaves too much room, in my opinion, for misrepresentation of the quoted material.



For information, write to the following address:

Books – The Apostate Fathers
PO Box 99
Burlington, NC 27216-0099

You can also visit us at these websites:

www.PastorJohnsHouse.com
www.GoingtoJesus.com
www.Isaiah58.com

For video sermons, songs, testimonies, and Bible lessons:
www.youtube.com/TheSpiritIsTheWitness

For encouraging music all day long, go to:
www.SongsofRest.com

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE AND THEIR ABBREVIATIONS

Old Testament Books

Genesis	Gen.	Ecclesiastes	Eccl.
Exodus	Ex.	Song of Solomon	Song
Leviticus	Lev.	Isaiah	Isa.
Numbers	Num.	Jeremiah	Jer.
Deuteronomy	Dt.	Lamentations	Lam.
Joshua	Josh.	Ezekiel	Ezek.
Judges	Judg.	Daniel	Dan.
Ruth	Ruth	Hosea	Hos.
1Samuel	1Sam.	Joel	Joel
2Samuel	2Sam.	Amos	Amos
1Kings	1Kgs.	Obadiah	Obad.
2Kings	2Kgs.	Jonah	Jon.
1Chronicles	1Chron.	Micah	Mic.
2Chronicles	2Chron.	Nahum	Nah.
Ezra	Ezra	Habakkuk	Hab.
Nehemiah	Neh.	Zephaniah	Zeph.
Esther	Esth.	Haggai	Hag.
Job	Job	Zechariah	Zech.
Psalms	Ps.	Malachi	Mal.
Proverbs	Prov.		

New Testament Books

Matthew	Mt.	1Timothy	1Tim.
Mark	Mk.	2Timothy	2Tim.
Luke	Lk.	Titus	Tit.
John	Jn.	Philemon	Phlm.
Acts	Acts	Hebrews	Heb.
Romans	Rom.	James	Jas.
1Corinthians	1Cor.	1Peter	1Pet.
2Corinthians	2Cor.	2Peter	2Pet.
Galatians	Gal.	1John	1Jn.
Ephesians	Eph.	2John	2Jn.
Philippians	Phip.	3John	3Jn.
Colossians	Col.	Jude	Jude
1Thessalonians	1Thess.	Revelation	Rev.
2Thessalonians	2Thess.		

The Apostate Fathers

1. INTRODUCTION	xiii
2. CLEMENT	5
Epistle to the Corinthians	
3. MATHETES	13
Epistle to Diognetus	
4. POLYCARP	19
Epistle to the Philippians	
5. THE EPISTLE OF THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA	25
The Martyrdom of the Holy Polycarp	
6. IGNATIUS	29
Epistle to the Ephesians, Shorter and Longer Versions (Ephs.)	
Epistle to the Magnesians (Mag.)	
Epistle to the Trallians (Trall.)	
Epistle to the Romans (Roms.)	
Epistle to the Philadelphians (Phila.)	
Epistle to the Smyrnaeans (Smyr.)	
Epistle to Polycarp (Poly.)	
Syriac Versions of Three Epistles (Poly. sv.; Ephs. sv.; The 3 rd Epistle, sv.)	
Spurious Epistles	
Martyrdom of Ignatius (Mart. Ig.)	
7. BARNABAS	47
Epistle	
8. FRAGMENTS OF PAPIAS	55
Fragments	
9. JUSTIN MARTYR	61
The First Apology (1Ap.)	
The Second Apology (2Ap.)	
Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew (Dial.)	
The Discourse to the Greeks (Disc.)	
Hortatory Address to the Greeks (Hort.)	
On the Sole Government of God (G.G.)	
On the Resurrection, Fragments (On the Res.)	
Other Fragments (Frag. Just.)	
Martyrdom (Mart. Just.)	
10. IRENAEUS	89
Against Heresies (five books: AH1, AH2, etc.)	
Fragments (Frag. Ire.)	
11. CONCLUSION	111
12. APPENDIX	115

Foreword

Over the years, ministers and friends of mine had, from time to time, referred to the writings of a group of men called the “Apostolic Fathers of Christianity”. They held these men (such as Clement, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, etc.) in very high esteem and obviously expected me to do the same. I, however, had no knowledge of these men and had no resource that I trusted to show me what they taught. Of course, there have been many books written about these men, but I just did not know where to go to learn who they really were.

I was excited to read Pastor John’s book, *The Apostate Fathers*, because the extensive research had been done for me. These influential men’s most important doctrinal positions had been extracted and condensed, and the material was organized in such a way that I could examine for myself what these “fathers” of Christianity taught.

I was surprised to learn that these men really are the “fathers” of the religion of Christianity, but that their teachings could *never* lead me to the knowledge of Christ. I saw clearly that there is an irreconcilable difference between the way of Christianity and the way of Christ. This book will make that difference very clear for you, too.

I am thankful for this book, and I know it will be a blessing to every hungry child of God who is after truth.

Gary Savelli
May 2009

INTRODUCTION: WHO WERE THESE MEN?

The prophet Amos said that God will do nothing without first revealing it to His prophets (Amos 3:7). God loves His people so much that He prepares them for the dangers they will face, including the coming of false teachers and false prophets. After the days of the apostles, and even before the apostles had all died, such men rose up among God's people, but Jesus and the apostles had already warned the saints that those men were coming. Here is one example of the many warnings that the saints received: "There were false prophets among the [Old Testament] people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will introduce opinions that lead to damnation, even denying the Lord who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction" (2Pet. 2:1).

Peter was describing men who minister among the saints, men teaching doctrines that even "deny the Lord who had bought them". That last phrase tells us that those men belonged to Jesus, for without any contradiction, those who are purchased by Christ are his. After being purchased, however, they went astray and became false teachers. It is the intent of this book to demonstrate that Christianity's "apostolic fathers" were such men.

The "apostolic fathers" are thought to have lived shortly after the time of the apostles. In spite of that nearness, though, many of their doctrines blatantly contradicted what the apostles taught. The depth and breadth of their spiritual blindness, coming on the heels of the time of Christ's apostles, shows that Peter told the truth when he said "swift destruction" would come upon them. They were "swiftly destroyed" while they yet lived by being turned over by God to their own opinions, and their opinions, in turn, helped destroy the faith of very many others, just as the apostle Paul observed in 2Timothy 3:13: "Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

Paul lamented the fact, revealed to him by God, that God's people would follow the false teachers when they came. Paul knew, just as Moses knew before he died (Dt. 31:29), that after his departure, God's people would forsake the truth God had freely given them. In a letter to Timothy, his beloved "son in the faith", Paul described what he saw com-

ing: “The time will come when they will not put up with sound doctrine, but will heap up for themselves teachers according to their own lusts, having itching ears, and they will turn away from hearing the truth, and they will be turned over to myths” (2Tim. 4:3–4).

The “apostolic fathers” are among the false teachers who were swiftly “turned over to myths”. This is why I have re-christened them, “apostate fathers”. They are *apostate* instead of *apostolic* because their doctrines were false. They really are “fathers” because they are the founders of the religious system that calls itself “Christianity”. And because so many are on the wide road that these men laid, the narrow way of truth is still “evil spoken of”, just as Peter said: “Many will follow them in licentious ways, because of whom the way of truth will be spoken evil of” (2Pet. 2:2).

Jesus and the apostles told us it would happen, and it did.

JOHN

The apostle John also warned the family of God: “They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they were of us, they would have remained among us. But they went out so that they might be manifested that they all are not of us” (1Jn. 2:19). Notice the two things John said about these teachers. First, he said, “They went out from us”. That is to say, they originally belonged to the body of Christ to which John belonged. Secondly, John said, “They were not of us”. That means that the apostles and elders in Jerusalem did not send those teachers out to teach what they were teaching.

The most well-known example of this is recorded in Acts 15. There, men from the Assembly of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem traveled north to Antioch, where they told the Gentiles who believed in Jesus that they would be damned unless they were circumcised as the law of Moses taught. These men were talking to believers, telling them that what Jesus had done for them was not enough to save them because they were not observing the ceremonies of the Mosaic law! These were the men of whom John spoke when he said, “They went out from us, but they were not of us”.

Unfortunately, John’s warning did no more to save believers from false teachers than did the warnings of Jesus, Paul, and Peter. So, although the warnings did not prevent a great apostasy from the gospel, it has helped faithful saints through the centuries to understand (1) what happened to the once-pure body of Christ and (2) where the abomination that calls itself Christianity came from. God knew that we would benefit from knowing that He saw it coming, just as Jesus repeatedly told his dis-

principles, “I have told you now, before it happens, so that when it happens, you might believe” (e.g., Jn. 14:29).

PAUL: EPHEBUS

In Acts 20, Paul was on his way to Jerusalem for the last time, from where he would be carried in chains to Rome. On his way to Jerusalem, he stopped at the port of Ephesus and called for the elders of that Assembly. When he told them that they would never see him again, they wept because they loved him. But then, Paul told them this: “I know this, that after my departure, vicious wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Even from among your own selves shall men rise up, speaking perverse things in order to draw away disciples after themselves” (Acts 20:29–30). It was going to happen no matter what Paul said, but he said it for the sake of the few among those elders who would be faithful, to prepare them for what they would soon face. A great apostasy was coming, and it would not be confined to one city; it would spread into every place where God’s people were.

PAUL: GALATIA

By receiving the doctrine of false teachers and adding ceremonies to their faith in Jesus, the Galatians were embracing what Paul sarcastically called “another gospel” (Gal. 1:6). In response, Paul wrote, “I am afraid for you, that I may have labored among you in vain. . . . You know that through weakness of the flesh, I preached the gospel to you at the beginning, and my trial which was in my flesh, you did not despise nor reject; no, you embraced me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. So, who was the *source* of your blessedness? For I bear you witness that if possible, you would have dug out your eyes and given them to me” (Gal. 4:11–15).

Paul was trying to stir up the Galatians’ memory of their former high regard for him. He was not claiming that he was someone great in God’s kingdom; he was reminding them of their former feelings about him, and he wanted them to consider why they had changed. It used to be that if Paul told them anything, they believed it, and that if he gave a commandment, they obeyed it. Now, he is saying, “Think about why you have changed!” He continued: “Have I now become your enemy because I tell you the truth? They [the false teachers] make much of you, but not for good; they want to exclude you [from the circumcised believers’ religion] so that you will make much of them” (Gal. 4:16–17).

Paul was exposing the real motive of the false teachers. They “excluded” the Galatians by telling them they weren’t what they should be in Christ and were not safe from God’s wrath because they were not yet circumcised in the flesh. Of course, they would compliment the Galatians for having faith in Jesus, but they would teach them their faith needed to be perfected by receiving such things as water baptism “in Jesus’ name” and physical circumcision.

Paul, in great tenderness, pleaded with them, “My little children, for whom I am suffering labor pains again until Christ be formed within you, I desire to be with you now and to change my tone, for I am unsettled about you” (Gal. 4:19–20).

PAUL: CORINTH

False teachers were also working among the believers in Corinth, and Paul earnestly warned them, too: “Such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan transforms himself into a messenger of light” (2Cor. 11:13–14).

It is astonishing how much success false teachers had in stealing the hearts of saints who previously dearly loved and greatly respected Paul as an apostle of God. In this same letter, Paul, for the sake of the Corinthian saints, actually debased himself to boast of his apostleship in order to remind the Corinthians of who he was: “I consider myself to be in no way inferior to those super-apostles. And even if I am unskilled in speech, I am not in knowledge. . . . Let no one consider me foolish; and yet, if so, then receive me as foolish, so that I may boast a little more. . . . Since many are boasting according to the flesh, I, too, will boast. . . . I have done foolishly in boasting, but you compelled me. For my recommendation ought to come from you, for in nothing am I inferior to these super-apostles, although I am nothing. With all patience, the signs of a true apostle were performed among you, with miracles, wonders, and works of power” (2Cor. 11:5–6a, 16, 18; 12:11–12).

Once in Paul’s travels, he stayed for eighteen months in Corinth, nurturing these new converts. Paul knew that particularly persuasive false teachers would come to them, and so, he determined to demonstrate his selfless devotion to the Corinthians by refusing to receive any money from them at all. By doing that, Paul admitted later, he had to “rob other Assemblies” to minister to the Corinthians (2Cor. 11:8), but doing that, he was able later to call on those false teachers to prove their love for the Corinthian saints by not taking any money from them, either. He knew

they would not agree to that, of course, and that, he hoped, would show the Corinthians who truly loved them.

His plan didn't work, for once an evil spirit blinds a heart, it doesn't matter what the facts are. A deluded soul can only judge matters as he has been told to judge them. All that Paul could do was warn the Corinthians, and when the false teachers came, he pleaded with the Corinthians, as he had pleaded with the Galatians, to think about what he had done for them: "In what way were you less privileged than the rest of the Assemblies, except that I was not burdensome [financially] to you? Forgive me this wrong. Behold, I am ready to come to you a third time, and I will not be a burden to you, for I do not seek yours, but you. Besides, children ought not to lay up treasure for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I most gladly will spend and be spent for your souls. Although the more I love you, the less I am loved. Well, so be it; I have not been a burden to you" (2Cor. 12:13–16).

Paul loved these saints, and he did everything he could do to protect them. But in the end, he could only watch as the awful prophecies of apostasy came true.

PAUL TO TIMOTHY IN EPHEBUS

In Ephesus, across the Aegean Sea from Corinth, things ended no better. Paul thought that some of the Ephesian Assembly could be salvaged, and so, he left Timothy there to try to save them: "As I urged you to remain in Ephesus when I went to Macedonia, so do, that you might command certain ones not to teach another doctrine" (1Tim. 1:3).

Timothy was young. He did not want to be left at Ephesus by his beloved mentor, but he was obedient. Paul wrote to him from the places he went and exhorted Timothy to "endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2Tim. 2:3). With that exhortation, however, Paul added some fatherly counsel to young Timothy: "Let no one despise your youth; on the contrary, be an example for believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Until I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy, with the laying on of the elders' hands" (1Tim. 4:12–14).

Timothy was willing to do as Paul requested, but he would much rather have continued traveling with Paul, as he had done since the first time Paul met him (cf. Acts 16:1–3). But Paul left him at Ephesus with a difficult work to do, and the young Timothy labored there to save as many of the Ephesian saints from apostasy as he could. At the close of his

second letter, however, Paul at last told his “son in the faith” that he could leave Ephesus and come to him. Apparently, there was no more that Timothy could do, for Paul plainly admitted defeat, realizing that he had failed to save the believers in that area, the Roman province of Asia, from the apostasy that was sweeping through the vineyard of God: “You know this, that all they in Asia have forsaken me” (2Tim. 1:15).

In the fourth chapter of 2Timothy, Paul revealed that it was time for him to die. This was no doubt another reason he wanted Timothy to come to him. He told Timothy to commit the responsibility for the congregation of Ephesus to the few faithful men who remained there, and come to him (2Tim. 2:2; 4:9).

And so, Paul died, having won his personal war against false teachers, but having lost the battle to save his beloved Gentile converts from them. They all had forsaken him, persuaded by ministers who were deceived, and who passed that deception on to others.

PAUL AT THE END

When Paul said, “All they in Asia have forsaken me,” he was talking about people who, geographically, were at a distance from him but who, personally, were very dear to his heart. Some of those saints had traveled and labored with him in the Lord, and in the past had been a blessing to him. Demas was one of them. He had been with Paul in prison when the apostle wrote to the saints at Colossae (Col. 4:14) and when Paul wrote his friend, Philemon. Paul told Philemon that Demas was his “fellow-worker” (vs. 24). Paul was also talking about Titus, whom Paul once called “my true son in the commonly held faith” (Titus 1:4) and “my partner and fellow-worker” (2Cor. 8:23a). Paul trusted Titus to take care of the saints on the island of Crete (Titus 1:4–5) as well as to handle some important affairs for the Corinthian Assembly (2Cor. 8:6). Paul even said that God had put the same concern for God’s children in Titus’ heart as He had put into Paul’s (2Cor. 8:16, 23), calling Titus “an apostle of the Assemblies, the glory of Christ” (2Cor. 8:23). Titus was a great comfort to Paul early in his ministry because Paul felt that he could safely trust him (2Cor. 7:6). To the Corinthians, Paul said that he and Titus “walked in the same spirit” and “walked in the same steps” (2Cor. 12:18).

At the end, when Paul had to stand before Caesar with his life on the line, those dear brothers went the way of “all they of Asia” and forsook that great man of God. Paul wrote Timothy and asked him to come quickly to Rome, “For Demas has forsaken me,” he said, “having loved this present world, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to

Dalmatia” (2Tim. 4:10). Paul added that when he stood before Caesar, having been abandoned, “No one stood with me; everyone forsook me. May it not be held against them” (2Tim. 4:16).

So, when Paul said, “All they in Asia have forsaken me,” it was a very painful experience for the elderly apostle, for he was talking about some of the most precious souls on earth to his heart.

APOSTASY MADE OFFICIAL

At least three of the men whose works are examined in this book hailed from the Roman province of Asia, where everyone had forsaken Paul. It was just north of Asia, in AD 321, in a city called Nicea, that the great apostasy was made official. There, the Roman emperor Constantine summoned Christian bishops throughout his empire for a meeting that has become known as “The First Ecumenical Council”. One result of the council was that the doctrine of the Trinity was established as the official doctrine of the Empire, and those who taught differently were condemned as heretics and, thereafter, persecuted.

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

Irenaeus, one of the earliest of the apostate fathers, perceptively observed, “Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced [to be] more true than the truth itself.” This is true. If Satan does have ministers plying their trade among the saints, as Paul said (2Cor. 11:13–15), then we should expect them to mix their poison with the pure water of the Word rather than to speak nothing but lies. Otherwise, they would deceive no one.

Some truth can be found in the writings of Christianity’s “fathers”, as we will see, but that is only to be expected. For during the second century, the spiritual condition of the body of Christ had not deteriorated to the point of complete darkness. Some bright sparks remained of the Light who came into the world in the person of Jesus Christ and which also shone brilliantly through his earliest saints. The Church fathers would never have succeeded without employing some elements of the truths Jesus and his apostles taught. What we find in their writings, along with some truth, is the tell-tale evidence of “wolves in sheep’s clothing”, namely, doctrines that contradict the truth. As Irenaeus suggested, the distinguishing mark of a true man of God is not merely that he speaks truth but that he speaks *only* the truth (Jn. 3:34), and that is the measure by

which many of the teachings of the fathers of the Church stand condemned – not for minor errors in phraseology or matters of opinion, but for their distortion of the foundations of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

The text used for this study is from *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, The Apostolic Fathers*, reprinted by Hendrickson Publishers in 1994. They are among the very earliest Christian documents, but it should be noted that some of them have been altered by later Christian writers in order to make it appear that these men taught what the Roman Catholic Church later taught. That topic, however, we will not discuss in detail in this work; nor will we pursue the matter of dates. We will deal only with the texts and dates as they are presented to us in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. I have categorized what these writers taught so that we may compare their doctrines with the truth of Christ and his apostles. The eight categories below are the ones used to organize this comparison:

Anti-Semitism
Ceremony
Politics/Violence
Heresy/Perversion of the Scriptures
Salvation
Spiritual Gifts and Power
Superstition
Trinitarian Issues

Please note that we cannot know with certainty which New Testament books were available to each of these writers. We know that they all were familiar with at least some scriptures from the Old and the New Testaments. However, that is not a critical issue, for true men of God, even without the Bible available to them, will still teach the truth. Therefore, whether or not these apostolic fathers had all of the Bible available to them is irrelevant to this study.

TWO ADDITIONAL NOTES

“Christian”

In the extant works of Christianity’s fathers, the word *Christian* is regularly used by the writers in reference to themselves. It is unknown when believers began calling themselves Christians, as opposed to what it was originally – a sarcastic term for them invented by unbelievers (Acts

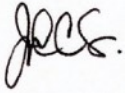
11:26). For more on the origin and original meaning of the word *Christian*, please see the Appendix.

“Church”

The Greek word for “church” (*kuriakon*) is not found anywhere in the New Testament, though that word had been in use among the Greeks for many centuries before Christ. For the Greeks, the word “church” designated a building dedicated to a god, any god, never to the worshippers themselves. The apostles never called a congregation of believers a church; nor did they write about the Greeks’ religious buildings. That is why “church” is not in the New Testament books, and no perfect translation of the New Testament has the word “church” in it.

Exactly when Christians began replacing the word for God’s people that is used in the New Testament (*ekklesia*, which means “assembly” or “congregation”) with “church”, and who first did so, would be an interesting topic of research.

May God bless your hearts with understanding.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JDCS.", is centered below the text.

Pastor John David Clark, Sr.
2023

Book Three
IK
IRON
KINGDOM
Series

THE
APOSTATE
~~APOSTOLIC~~
FATHERS

John D. Clark, Sr.

The Apostate Fathers



These are the “apostolic fathers” whose works are examined in this book:

Clement
Mathetes
Polycarp
Ignatius
Barnabas
Papias
Justin Martyr
Irenaeus

≡ CLEMENT ≡

(c. 35–99)

The Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians

Introduction

Irenaeus, whose work we will study later, says in his book, *Against Heresies*, that Clement was the third Bishop of the Church in Rome (AH3, III.3), that is to say, the third Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. Christians have attributed the Epistle to the Corinthians to Clement, but in the letter itself, the author's name is not given. The date of its writing is also uncertain, but two suggestions are about AD 68, after the persecution of believers by the Roman emperor Nero, or about AD 97, following the persecution of believers by the emperor Domitian. Chapters are referred to in Roman numerals.

Anti-Semitism *No Information*

Ceremony

Clement's Statement: Clement states that the Lord commanded the saints to bring offerings "at their appointed times and hours" and that only the offerings offered at those appointed times are acceptable to God (XL).

The Truth: This is false. Jesus gave no such commandment. In fact, such commandments are contrary to the Spirit of the New Testament. Paul was dismayed when his Gentile converts began to "observe days, and months, and seasons, and years," as God's Old Testament people did (Gal. 4:10).

Note: It is possible for elders of any Assembly of believers, without doing wrong, to require that group of saints, for a while, to bring their tithes and offerings at appointed times. God's ministers have authority to give such commandments when circumstances make it necessary. But for Clement to teach that Jesus commanded this as a statute for the body of Christ is false. Clement writes, "Let every believer who has love in Christ, keep the commandments of Christ" (XLIX). One of the commandments, which Clement did not keep, was that believers should not add to the words of Christ (Rev. 22:18–19).

Politics/Violence

Clement's Statement: Clement lists a strange hierarchy of leadership among believers: both a high priest (on earth) and lower priests, he insists, are according to the commandment of Christ Jesus, along with Levites, and then, laymen (XL).

The Truth: This is false. There is no hint of such teaching in any of Jesus' words, nor yet in the writings of the apostles. According to the apostles, even though there are various functions and gifts belonging to individual believers, all believers are priests and kings with Christ (Rev. 1:6). The term *laymen* is not biblical, and there are certainly no Levites ordained by God in this New Covenant.

Clement's Statement: Clement states that a congregation of believers has authority from God both to grant to a man a position of leadership and to expel a man from the ministry (XLIV). Moreover, majority rule is touted

by Clement as a valid method of settling disputes within the family of God (LIV).

The Truth: This suggests that the congregation to which Clement was writing had no anointed leader and that no one among them was wise enough to make judgments or had enough spiritual authority to enforce righteous judgments. Voting, that is, rule by the majority, is a worldly method of government, a “carnal weapon” which comes from and promotes disunion. It can never accomplish the will of God for the saints. The kingdom of God is not a democracy; it is a kingdom.

Heresy/Perversion of the Scriptures

No Information

Salvation

Clement’s Statement: Clement looks forward to the elect of God receiving salvation in the future (II). Also, Clement states that the saints will be justified by their works, not merely by their words (XXX).

He also teaches that “the greater the knowledge that has been vouchsafed to us, the greater also is the danger to which we are exposed.” Why? Because we are dealing with holy things, and “those who do anything beyond what is agreeable to His will are punished with death” (XLI).

The Truth: This is all true.

Clement uses the word “saved” as Jesus and the apostles did (e.g., Mt. 24:13; Rom. 13:11), not as “converted”, but as “rescued” from sin and its ultimate consequences (VI; IX). Clement’s teaching that the saints will be justified by their works agrees with the teachings of James (Jas. 2:24), Paul (Rom. 2:5–10), and Jesus (Mt. 7:21), as well as the rest of the New Testament. So, in the main, what Clement teaches on the subject of salvation is true.

While Clement is correct when he agrees with Jesus’ saying, “to whom much is given, much will be required” (Lk. 12:48), he goes too far when he says that believers will be destroyed who “do anything disagreeable with God’s will”. The apostle John taught that there is “a sin that does not call for death” (1Jn. 5:16), that is, some errors are not so bad that death is the divine penalty for them. Many of God’s children do things that are “disagreeable to His will”, but they may still be saved in the end (cf. 1Cor. 3:10–16; 11:29–32).

Note: Clement seems to contradict his own teaching on the subject of salvation when he writes, “All we, too [as with the Old Testament faithful], . . . are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart, but by that faith through which, from the beginning, God has justified all men” (XXXII). He never explains to the readers why, in this place, he denies that “works wrought in holiness of heart” are required for salvation when in every other place he teaches the opposite. It may have been simply that he wanted to emphasize here man’s complete dependence upon God to inspire and enable us to do good, which is true. Or it may be that another, later hand added that sentence.

Spiritual Gifts and Power

No Information

Superstition

Clement’s Statement: The mythological story of Judith (details below) is given historical credence by Clement, and Judith herself is lauded by Clement as a blessed servant of God, alongside Esther (LV).

The Truth: The apocryphal book of Judith (included in the Catholic Bible) is worse than a pagan myth, for not only is the story itself invented, but it also routinely contradicts historical facts found in Scripture and in secular histories. Here are some examples:

1. The author of Judith calls Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, the king of the Assyrians (Judith 1:1). Later, Judith seems to think that Nebuchadnezzar’s army was composed of Medes and Persians (16:10).
2. Events in the book of Judith are said to have begun in the twelfth through the eighteenth years of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, when the Israelites “had lately returned from exile” (Judith 4:3). This is a historical impossibility. The Israelites did not even go into captivity until the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign (2Kgs. 25:8), and they remained in Babylonian captivity seventy years, which was long after Nebuchadnezzar died (Jer. 25:11–12; Dan. 9:2). When they returned from captivity, the Babylonian Empire had been replaced by the Medo-Persian Empire.
3. In Judith, the Moabites are referred to as Canaanites (Judith 5:2–3). The truth is that they descended from Lot, Abraham’s nephew (Gen. 19), not from Canaan.

4. In one of Judith's prayers, she praises God for "putting the sword" into the hand of her ancestor, the patriarch Simeon, when he and his brother Levi murdered an entire city of helpless men who were about to enter into covenant with God (Judith 9:2–4; cp. Gen. 34). But for that treacherous, wicked deed, both Simeon and Levi were cursed by their righteous father Jacob (Gen. 49:5–7). According to Judith, however, their deed was a glorious, exemplary accomplishment. Jacob called the weapons of Simeon and Levi "instruments of cruelty" (Gen. 49:5), but Judith called Simeon and Levi "favored sons, who burned with zeal for [God]" (Judith 9:4).

Clement's Statement: Clement offers as proof of the reality of resurrection the example of the phoenix. Think about it. Clement, a father of Christianity and the third Pope, presents to the world as concrete evidence of the reality of Christ's resurrection the bi-millennial resurrection of this mythological bird (XXV), believing it to be fact! Here is the story as he tells it:

"Let us consider that wonderful sign [of the resurrection] which takes place in the Eastern lands, that is, in Arabia and the countries round about. There is a certain bird which is called a phoenix. This is the only one of its kind, and it lives five hundred years. And when the time of its dissolution draws near that it must die, it builds itself a nest of frankincense, and myrrh, and other spices, into which, when the time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But as the flesh decays a certain kind of worm is produced, which, being nourished by the juices of the dead bird, brings forth feathers. Then, when it has acquired strength, it takes up that nest in which are the bones of its parent, and bearing these it passes from the land of Arabia into Egypt, to the city called Heliopolis. And, in open day, flying in the sight of all men, it places them on the altar of the sun, and having done this, hastens back to its former abode. The priests then inspect the registers of the dates, and find that it has returned exactly as the five hundredth year was completed."

The Truth: Clement brings disgrace upon the holy name of Jesus and upon his resurrection by employing myth in proclaiming the gospel. No myth proves anything about the resurrection of Christ, and to use a myth as confirmation of the gospel of Christ profanes holy history. Peter said that in preaching the gospel, he had "not followed cunningly fabricated

myths” (2Pet. 1:16). Can Pope Clement or the other Christian fathers who believed the phoenix myth truthfully make that claim?

Clement’s Statement: Clement also places confidence in the apocryphal Book of Wisdom, quoting it at least three times, though the book is a Christian forgery, claiming to have been written by Solomon. Along with the expected magnifying of God for His power and wisdom, with which praise even an infidel might agree, the Book of Wisdom contains several blatant doctrinal errors.

First, the Book of Wisdom makes the incredible statement that God did not create death (1:13). Of course, this provokes the obvious question, “Who did?”

Second, the author declares that death entered into the world through Satan’s envy (2:24). Paul taught that death entered into the world through man’s transgression (Rom. 5). Had man not sinned, Satan’s envy would have had no effect on mankind at all.

Third, the Book of Wisdom contradicts the truth concerning the marital relationship. Hebrews 13 states that the marriage bed is “undefiled”. The Book of Wisdom calls the marriage bed a “transgression” (3:13).

The Truth: Clement’s confidence in false statements found in the apocryphal books belongs under the heading of Superstition because that is what faith in anything other than what is of God is. Clement reveals his lack of sound spiritual judgment by trusting writings which contradict God’s plainly revealed truth. Of course, there are many examples of pious statements to be found in the Book of Wisdom, as well as in other apocryphal books, but as Irenaeus mentioned earlier, false teachers must tell *some* truth or no one will listen to them. The apocryphal books, like the writings of the Church’s fathers, are an ungodly mixture of truth and lies.

Trinitarian Issues

Clement’s Statement: Clement sees the Son as submissive to and dependent upon the Father. The Father raised the Son from the dead (XXIV), the Son preached the gospel as he received it from the Father (XLII), and just as the apostles were ordained and sent by Christ, so Jesus was ordained and sent by God (XLII).

The Truth: This is true. These statements by Clement are in accord with the doc-trine of Jesus and the apostles. The Father did raise Jesus from the dead (Eph. 1:19–20), the Son did preach only what the Father told him to preach (Jn. 8:28), and just as the apostles were sanctified and sent by

Jesus, so Jesus was sanctified and sent by God (Jn. 10:36; 6:57). Jesus has absolute authority over the people of God, being their head (Eph. 1:22–23), and the Father has absolute authority over Jesus, being his head (1Cor. 11:3). There is no suggestion of Trinitarianism in the apostles' teaching, nor in Clement's.

≡ MATHETES ≡

(c. 130)

The Epistle of Mathetes To Diognetus

Introduction

The author is unknown, but he calls himself a disciple (Greek: *mathetes*), that is, a disciple of the apostles, not of Jesus himself (XI). There is no scripture quoted in this letter, though the author does use phrases similar to certain scriptures.

Anti-Semitism

Mathetes' Statement: This writer mocks the Jews' continued observance of the ceremonies of the law of Moses after their Messiah had come. In fact, he ridicules the whole concept of animal sacrifice, saying that animal sacrifice is an indication of insanity on the part of the Gentiles, adding that the Jews sacrificed animals because they believed, as many Gentiles did, that God is in need of the flesh and blood of the dead beasts (III). He further states that the Jews observed the sacred Old Testament months and days because they were "waiting on the stars and the moon" to do something (IV). He calls such observance "a manifestation of folly" (IV).

The Truth: This is nonsense. Mathetes denies Paul's doctrine that "the law is indeed holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12).

Mathetes forcefully shows the foolishness of both the Gentiles' worship of idols as well as the Jews' persistence in methods of worship which Christ's sacrifice changed (III). However, he misunderstands and misrepresents important elements of the Old Testament and the motivation of the Jews in worshipping God as they did. Another Christian father, Irenaeus, would point to Jesus' quoting the law during his Temptation and would ask, "If the law is due to ignorance and defect, how could the statements contained therein bring to nought the ignorance of the Devil, and conquer the 'strong man'?" (AH5, XXII.1). That is a question someone should have asked Mathetes.

The law of Moses and the ceremonies contained in it were of God. The Jews did not observe holy days and months because they were waiting for the stars to do something, as Mathetes slanderously asserts; they were obeying God's commandments, and they knew it. That is the very reason that the Jews in Mathetes' time still worshipped the way Moses prescribed. They knew that the law was not of man.

The Jews were locked into a continued adherence to the works of the law because, in addition to their knowledge of its divine origin, (1) no one but God could set them free from their obligation to the law, and (2) in rejecting Jesus, they had rejected the one ordained by God to do that. No one but Jesus was anointed to free the human conscience from the law's ceremonies (Heb. 9:14), and since they rejected him, the Jews were imprisoned by their respect for the law. Before he came to earth, God's Son prayed for this imprisonment for Jews who would reject him, saying through David, "Let the things they are content with become a trap" (Ps.

69:22). And so it was that the law, originally intended as a blessing for the Jews, became their prison.

In his exaltation of the Christian's place in the world, Mathetes states that it is an illustrious position to which "God has assigned them" and "which it were unlawful for them to forsake" (VI). He fails to grant, however, that it was the same self-understanding as being the chosen people of God which prevented the Jews from forsaking the ceremonies of the law.

Mathetes rightly challenges Diognetus, his unbelieving Gentile reader, to abandon the Gentiles' perception of God and not to be attracted to the Jews' error. He is also correct in pointing out the enormous pride to which the Jews had fallen victim concerning their God-given observances, but he falls victim to the same spirit of self-exaltation which ruined them and foolishly boasts himself against the Jews, God's fallen people. The apostle Paul sternly warned the saints not to do that (Rom. 11:18–22).

Ceremony *No Information*

Politics/Violence

Mathetes' Statement: The writer discusses how that Jesus came to persuade men, not to compel them to obey God, "for violence has no place in the character of God" (VII).

The Truth: Mathetes is correct in emphasizing the gentleness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, but that will hold true only until Christ returns to rule the earth "with a rod of iron" (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 12:5; 19:15). In the Old Testament, God showed Himself quite capable of war, and at the end of this age, He will show Himself to be an entirely violent God toward those who have rebelled against the gospel of His Son Jesus. Violence does have a place in God's nature, just not at this time in history.

Mathetes' Statement: Mathetes declares that "if you love God, you will be an imitator of His kindness" (X). And he adds this exhortation: "It is not by ruling over his neighbors, or by seeking to hold the supremacy over those who are weaker, or by being rich, and showing violence towards those that are inferior, that happiness is found; nor can anyone by these things become an imitator of God. . . . On the contrary, he who takes upon himself the burden of his neighbor; he who, in whatsoever respect he may be superior, is ready to benefit another who is deficient; he who, whatsoever things he has received from God, by distributing those to the needy,

becomes a god to those who receive [his benefits]: he is an imitator of God” (X).

The Truth: This is true. So, what would Mathetes have thought about Christians warring against one another, or their crusades against the Muslims? His work is listed among the writings of the Christian Church fathers, but would Mathetes have called the Christian judges in the Middle Ages his sons, who routinely sentenced innocent souls to torture and death?

Heresy/Perversion of the Scriptures
Salvation
Spiritual Gifts and Power
Superstition
No Information

Trinitarian Issues

Mathetes’ Statement: The writer knows nothing of an equality of Father and Son. He sees the Son as the emissary of God (VII; X).

The Truth: This is true. As with most of the earliest fathers of Christianity, the doctrine of the Trinity was completely unknown to this man, as his statements concerning the relationship of the Father and the Son show.

Note: The word “Christian” is very important to this man. To persuade Diognetus to become a Christian, or to at least acknowledge that the Christian concept of God is superior to that of both Jews and Gentiles, he writes, “As the soul is to the body, that are Christians to the world” (VI).

≡ POLYCARP ≡

(c. 69–155)

The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians

Introduction

According to Christian tradition, Polycarp was Bishop of Smyrna and had been conversant with John, the apostle of the Lord. It is also claimed that he was martyred by being burned alive at the age of eighty-seven.

Anti-Semitism
Ceremony
Politics/Violence
No Information

Heresy/Perversion of the Scriptures

Polycarp's Statement: Polycarp misunderstands 1John 4:3 and, consequently, misquotes it. He writes, "For *whosoever* does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is antichrist" (VII).

The Truth: Polycarp assumes that John was condemning people who do not confess that Jesus lived in a fleshly body while on earth, and so, he altered John's words to convey that message. But the difference between what John wrote and how Polycarp interpreted what he wrote is enormous, and very important.

In context, this is what John actually wrote: "By this, the Spirit of God is known: every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ when he has come into a person is of God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus Christ when he has come into a person is not of God. And this is that [spirit] of the anti-Christ" (1Jn. 4:2–3). So, John was not talking about what *people* do; instead, he was reminding the saints of how the real Spirit of God is known. And this is the standard: "every spirit [not person] that confesses Jesus Christ when he has come into a person is of God" (1Jn. 4:2). In other words, the real Spirit of God speaks (through a person in tongues) when it comes in, just as it moved John and the others on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4), and just as Jesus told Nicodemus it would do every time a person is born of God (Jn. 3:8).

Ironically, Polycarp immediately proceeds from his misquote of John's words to condemn anyone who would "pervert the oracles of the Lord", adding an exhortation for believers to "return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning" (VII). Polycarp could have provided a good example for believers by following his own advice and correctly quoting John, thus preserving the original meaning of the apostle's words.

Salvation

Polycarp's Statement: Polycarp teaches that salvation will be received only at the end of a life of faithful service to God. We will be raised from the dead into eternal glory only "if we do [God's] will, and walk in His commandments, and love what He loved, keeping ourselves from all un-

righteousness” (II). “If we please Him in this present world, we shall receive also the future world, according as He has promised to us that He will raise us again from the dead, and that if we live worthily of Him, we shall also reign together with Him” (V). In reference to a man whom Polycarp considers to be apostate, he states that such a believer who departs from the faith and is again defiled by covetousness and idolatry “shall be judged as one of the heathen” (XI).

The Truth: This is true. Polycarp here is teaching the same thing that the prophets of Israel, Jesus, and the apostles taught, which is that only those who do the will of God will be saved in the end (e.g., Mt. 7:21; Rom. 2:5–10). There is no hint in Polycarp’s writings of the doctrine of many fundamentalist Christians, to wit, they are already saved and their eternal salvation is assured even if they live contrary to the will of God.

Spiritual Gifts and Power *No Information*

Superstition

Polycarp’s Statement: Polycarp quotes from the apocryphal book of Tobit, using it as an authoritative source of divine truth (X).

The Truth: In the book of Tobit, the righteous man Tobit is blinded by bird droppings which fell on his eyes while he slept by a wall, causing him to develop cataracts. Later, Raphael, an angel from heaven, tells Tobit’s son, Tobiah, what will heal Tobit’s eyes. He says, “As for the gall [of the fish Tobiah had caught], if you rub it on the eyes of a man who has cataracts, blowing into his eyes right on the cataracts, his sight will be restored” (Tobit 6:9).

Sarah, the young woman whom Tobiah will marry, had already been married seven times, according to this tale, but a “wicked demon” named Asmodeus killed each of her husbands on the hapless bride’s wedding night, before the marriages could be consummated (Tobit 3:7–9). Raphael instructs Tobiah how to use other parts of the dead fish to exorcise the demon from the young woman’s bedroom. “As regards the fish’s heart and liver, if you burn them so that the smoke surrounds a man or a woman who is afflicted by a demon or evil spirit, the affliction will leave him completely, and no demons will return to him again” (Tobit 6:8). After the wedding, Tobiah remembered the angel’s instructions when he entered the bridal chamber. He “took the fish’s liver and heart from the bag which he had with him, and placed them on the embers [to make] incense. The de-

mon, repelled by the odor of the fish, fled into Upper Egypt. Raphael pursued him there and bound him hand and foot” (Tobit 8:2–3).

The mythological character of the book of Tobit is obvious. No true man of God would ever have trusted such a document.

Trinitarian Issues

Polycarp’s Statement: Polycarp mentions “God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ himself” (XII). According to Polycarp, the Father raised up the Son from the dead (II), and the reader is exhorted to “believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in his Father who ‘raised him from the dead’” (XII).

The Truth: There is nothing false here. Polycarp says nothing in his epistle that could be used in support of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Note: The word *Christian* is not found in Polycarp’s epistle.

**THE ENCYCLICAL
EPISTLE
OF THE CHURCH AT
= SMYRNA =
(Date Unknown)**

Concerning the Martyrdom
of the
Holy Polycarp

Introduction

The author of this letter is unknown. It claims to have originated in the city of Smyrna, where Polycarp was Bishop. It is addressed to “the Holy and Catholic Church in every place,” but it was supposedly sent first to the Church in a city called Philomenium, located in the territory of Phrygia. The high number of wildly superstitious and heretical statements found in this letter is disproportionate to its size. If this letter was in its present form when it was first written, it should have been trashed by believers before the end of its first reading.

Anti-Semitism

Epistle Statement: Anti-Semitism burns throughout this letter. Several times, Jews are depicted as inciting the Roman rulers against Christians. They are, in fact, said to be the ones who advised the Roman governor to burn Polycarp so completely that there would be no flesh left for the Christians to claim (XVII).

The Truth: Some Jews may in fact have incited the Romans against Christians. We cannot know, at this distance, the truth of that accusation. If, however, they advised the Romans to finish burning Polycarp's dead body so that nothing remained for Christians to salvage and venerate, then they were doing Christians a great favor.

Ceremony Politics/Violence No Information

Heresy/Perversion of the Scriptures

Epistle Statement: The author(s) of this epistle teaches that believers become angels when they die (II).

The Truth: This is false. Angels are a different species of creature altogether. No angel will ever become human, and no human will ever become an angel. In the world to come, said Paul, the saints will rule over angels, not become angels (1Cor. 6:3).

Salvation Spiritual Gifts and Power *No Information*

Superstition

Epistle Statement: According to this letter, the Christians watching Polycarp's execution zealously desired to become "possessors of his holy flesh" but were disappointed by the Romans' decision to burn his body completely (XVII). Not to be outdone, however, the Christians did sift through the ashes to gather Polycarp's charred bones, "as being more precious than the most exquisite jewels, and more purified than gold" (XVIII).

The Truth: This is sick.

Relics (as possessing miracle-working abilities) were a powerful tool of evangelism for early Christians. Without the cult of relics to impress the deeply superstitious barbarians, the spread of Christianity into northern and western Europe would have taken much longer. But to what were those barbarians converted by receiving the cult of relics? Certainly not to the Faith of Christ.

Epistle Statement: The last editor of this epistle calls himself Pionius, and he claims that “the blessed Polycarp” visited him and, through a revelation, aided him in the writing of this account of his martyrdom (XXII).

The Truth: Either Pionius was deceived by a demon claiming to be Polycarp, or he outright lied.

Concerning the events in life on earth after their death, “the dead know nothing,” wrote Solomon (Eccl. 9:5). Polycarp, therefore, did not return from the dead in a vision to aid the author of this epistle.

Trinitarian Issues

Epistle Statement: An attitude of worship of God’s holy Spirit is seen in several statements in which the author offers praise not only to the Father and the Son but also to the Spirit (e.g., XIV, XXII).

The Truth: It is heresy to teach men to worship the holy Spirit or to speak to it as if it is a person. That the holy Spirit is a person is an essential element of Christianity’s Trinitarian doctrine, a doctrine that was invented later than the time in which this letter was supposed to have been written. So, that this epistle has been tampered with, or forged altogether, is obvious.

≡ IGNATIUS ≡

(?–108 or 140)

Works cited:

- Epistle to the Ephesians, Shorter and Longer Versions (Ephs.)
- Epistle to the Magnesians (Mag.)
- Epistle to the Trallians (Trall.)
- Epistle to the Romans (Roms.)
- Epistle to the Philadelphians (Phila.)
- Epistle to the Smyrnaeans (Smyr.)
- Epistle to Polycarp (Poly.)

For three of the above Epistles, “sv” designates the Syriac Versions (Poly. sv.; Ephs. sv.; the 3rd Epistle, sv.).

Spurious Epistles:

- Epistle to the Antiochians (Antio.)
- Epistle to the Hero (Hero)
- Epistle to the Philippians (Phip.)
- Epistle of Maria to Ignatius (not used)
- Epistle to Mary at Neapolis (Mary at N.)
- Epistle to St. John the Apostle (not used)
- Second Epistle to St. John the Apostle (not used)
- Epistle to the Virgin Mary (not used)
- Martyrdom of Ignatius (Mart. Ig.)

Introduction

Ignatius is thought by some scholars to have been born during Jesus’ earthly lifetime. He appears to be the earliest Christian writer from whom more than one work has survived, but at least eight of the letters attributed to him are generally regarded as Christian forgeries. Possibly all have been tampered with, but then, the same might be said of many other writings of the fathers of Christianity. I have chosen to treat all the letters of Ignatius together, not only because it is convenient, but also because it is inconsequential, so far as this book is concerned, whether or not a man named Ignatius penned them all, for they are all a part of Christian history.

Anti-Semitism

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius refers to the Jews as “Christ-killing Jews” (Mag. XI) and states that “if any one says that the Lord is a mere man, he is a Jew, a murderer of Christ” (Hero II; cp. Phip. VI).

The Truth: It is true that since they were God’s chosen people, the Jews were more guilty of the slaying of Jesus than were the Roman soldiers who carried out his execution (cf. Jn. 19:10–11). In reality, however, everyone who has ever sinned (that is, all of us) bears responsibility for Jesus’ suffering and death. Ignatius is wrong to condemn the Jews as he does, when the truth is that Jesus died for sinners, and we “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

Ceremony

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius teaches that believers are no longer to “live according to the Jewish law” (Mag. VII). “It is absurd”, he wrote, “to speak of Jesus Christ with the tongue and to cherish in the mind a Judaism which has now come to an end” (Mag. X). “For if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace” (Mag. VIII).

The Truth: This is true, and it is the same truth which Paul could not persuade his Gentile converts to hold on to, however earnestly he warned them. “You are estranged from Christ, you who are justified by a law,” he pleaded; “you have fallen from grace!” (Gal. 5:4). But it was to no avail. The Gentiles who believed were convinced by Jewish believers, en masse, to surrender the liberty from ceremonies which Christ had purchased for them. Instead, they embraced again worship in ceremonies, only this time, it was in the form of Moses’ law rather than the pagan rituals they had once practiced.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius believes that the first day of the week is to be observed as “the Lord’s Day” because Jesus rose from the dead that day (Trall. IX). He also sees the first day of the week as a “festival” which “every friend of Christ” will keep (Mag. IX).

The Truth: This is false. Ignatius never explains how Jesus’ resurrection made a holy day out of an ordinary one. The apostles never taught such a thing because they understood that holy days were a part of the law’s carnal form of worship and had no place in the kingdom of God.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius states that the first day of the week is God's replacement for the Jewish Sabbath (Mag. IX).

The Truth: This is false. Ignatius does not explain, because he cannot, why no New Testament writer said that God had replaced the seventh day Sabbath with a first day Sabbath. He does not understand that Christ died to make us free from *all* ceremonialism, not just the Old Testament form of it. For Christians to invent a new weekly Sabbath to replace the one God commanded Old Testament Israel to keep is twice as evil as continuing in the old one. At least the old one really was of God.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius encourages Christians to partake of special activities on the first day of the week, including rigorous scripture reading and study, rather than in "relaxation of the body" (Mag. IX).

The Truth: This is false. Besides inventing a new Sabbath, Ignatius promotes a false understanding of the original Sabbath by forbidding believers to rest on that day. In order that all the people, and even the animals of Israel, could relax for a day was the very purpose of God's weekly Sabbath (Ex. 20:8–10). Oppressive religious leaders erred greatly when they nullified God's day of rest by turning it into a day of worship.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius grasps, as a philosophical concept, the idea of keeping the Sabbath "after a spiritual manner" (Mag. IX).

The Truth: Ignatius demonstrates no understanding of what it means to keep the Sabbath spiritually. God's Sabbath is now in the Spirit, to be kept every day by ceasing from our own ways and walking in holiness and joy before Him. The setting apart of the day of the sun (Sunday) as being "queen and chief of all days" (Mag. IX) is not a spiritual keeping of God's new Sabbath in Christ; it is contrary to it.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius teaches that the Eucharist is improperly performed by anyone other than the bishop (Smyr. VIII).

The Truth: No ceremonial meal is properly performed by anyone under this covenant. There are no ceremonies ordained by God for this New Testament. All teachings concerning communion with God that are found in New Testament books are to be taken spiritually. Paul taught this to his converts, although he admitted that wisdom was required in order to understand it (cf. 1Cor. 10:15–17).

The largest group of disciples to forsake Jesus at one time was the group that stormed away from him after he said that they must eat his

flesh and drink his blood. Jesus tried to explain to those shocked disciples that “it is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The things that I am telling you, they are spirit, and they are life!” (Jn. 6:63). But they walked off anyway, “and walked with him no longer” (Jn. 6:66). He could not get them to understand that he was speaking spiritually.

Ignatius’ Statement:

Ignatius also maintains that baptism is improperly performed by anyone who is not a bishop (Smyr. VIII), as well as the rite of laying on of hands and the ordination of clergy (Hero III). He insists that there is no “lawful” baptism, offering, or “love-feast” without the bishop presiding over them (Smyr. VIII).

The Truth: As with ceremonial meals, no water baptism is properly performed by anyone in this covenant, for in Christ, there is but one baptism (Eph. 4:5). And Christ’s baptism is not a watery one that washes dirt from one’s body, as Peter said, but the baptism which Jesus administers from heaven, the baptism which his resurrection from the dead made possible (1Pet. 3:21).

Politics/Violence

Ignatius’ Statement: Ignatius exhorts Christians to “be humble in response to [sinners’] wrath; oppose to their blasphemies your earnest prayers; while they go astray, you stand fast in the faith. Conquer their harsh temper by gentleness; their passion by meekness” (Ephs. X). This attitude is consistently found throughout his works. “Against their error be armed with faith,” he writes (Ephs. sv. X), “but rather subdue those who are evil by gentleness” (Poly. sv. II). Further, he says, “Let us make [unbelievers] brethren by kindness” (Ephs. X). He even went so far as to exhort believers to call unbelievers brethren in order to win them (Ephs. X). He also exhorts his readers to “imitate the Lord, ‘who when he was reviled, reviled not again [and] when he suffered, he threatened not’ but prayed for his enemies” (Ephs. X).

The Truth: Except for his exhortation for believers to call sinners brothers in order to win them to Christ, all the above is true. The absence of desire to physically harm those who oppose his faith commends Ignatius. In his writings is found no encouragement to the saints to rely on political muscle, or intrigue, or military strength in order to promote or defend the gospel; indeed, there is just the opposite.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius exhorts local congregations to hold elections for its officials, at least for those of deacon and bishop (Phila. X), as well as for delegates to other churches (Smyr. XI).

The Truth: This is evil counsel. The idea of having a democratic government among the saints may seem harmless, but the bitter fruit of competition for earthly power always follows. There are no elected officials in the kingdom of God. Our King appoints (anoints) all to their offices as He wills, and He alone supplies them with whatever is required to fulfill their duties. If a body of believers possessed the wisdom to know whom to elect as their pastor, they wouldn't even need him.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius gives Polycarp instructions to assemble a "very solemn" council for the purpose of electing Church officials (Poly. VII).

The Truth: Regardless of how solemn a council is convened, majority rule is not the way of Christ. We can be very solemn and very wrong.

Ignatius' Statement: In voting for officers of the congregation, Ignatius exhorts believers to "elect one whom you greatly love" (Poly. VII).

The Truth: It is precisely because people always elect *only* the ones they greatly love that God did not institute democracy among believers. God appoints as rulers among His people those whom *He* loves, and He expects His people to love and be happy with His choices.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius goes on to say in his letter to Polycarp that a believer "has not power over himself" (Poly. VII).

The Truth: That is true. However, when Christians vote on their pastors, bishops, deacons, etc., as Ignatius tells them to do, they are exercising power over themselves. And in doing so, they are denying that God alone has the power to choose and anoint whom He will to guide His flock.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius claims that the Spirit spoke to him and said, "Do nothing without the bishop" (Phil. VII). According to Ignatius, believers are to "depend on [the bishop] as the Church does the Lord Jesus, and [as] the Lord [depends] on God and His Father" (Ephs. V; Mag. XIII).

The Truth: Ignatius exhorts believers to submit to others as well as to the bishop, including Paul and the apostles (Phil. VII), presbyters and deacons (Mag. XIII), and even to one another (Mag. XIII), as the apostles also did

(Eph. 5:21; 1Pet 5:5). However, Ignatius takes the demand for submission to the bishop to new heights, or depths, depending on one's point of view.

Christ Jesus confessed that he was completely dependent upon his Father, and the saints are completely dependent on Christ, for as Christ received life from the Father (Jn. 5:26), we receive life from him (Jn. 6:57). But by overly stressing the dependence of believers on the bishop, Ignatius borders on teaching that the saints have no life unless the bishop is present to impart it to them. And in time, that idea became all too real in the Roman Catholic Church.

Ignatius' Statement: According to Ignatius, there is no elect Church, no congregation of holy people, and no assembly of saints without bishops (Trall. III).

The Truth: Jesus said that where two or three were gathered together in his name, he was in the midst of them (Mt. 18:20). It is the presence of Jesus, not the presence of a Christian bishop, that validates a gathering of the saints.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius went so far as to say that whoever "does anything without the knowledge of the bishop serves the Devil" (Smyr. IX) and that whoever becomes well known "apart from the bishop has destroyed himself" (Poly. sv. V).

The Truth: Ignatius is contriving a completely new standard by which to judge the life of a believer, a standard which contradicts such simple statements as this from Paul: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

Ignatius' Statement: While acknowledging that God's power is still greater, Ignatius stresses that the bishop "beyond all others possesses all power and authority" (Trall. VII). Ignatius apparently understands the office of bishop to be the highest rank attainable by man on earth, whether secular or ecclesiastic (Phila. IV).

The Truth: No earthly bishop possesses all power and authority. Jesus pointedly warned his disciples not even to think that way. He said, "The kings of the Gentiles act like lords over them, . . . but you are not to be like that. On the contrary, he who is greatest among you must be as the youngest, and he who rules, like one who serves" (Lk. 22:25–26). Peter, likewise, exhorted the elders to "shepherd the flock of God that is with you, exercising oversight not under compulsion but willingly, neither for

sordid gain, but eagerly, nor as lording it over those assigned to you, but by being examples for the flock” (1Pet. 5:2–3).

Ignatius’ Statement: Disobedience to the bishop is tantamount to disobedience to God (Ephs. V), and it is a mockery of Him (Mag. III).

The Truth: This is true only if the bishop is a bishop in God’s sight and has given a commandment that is in the will of God. A man who possesses the title of bishop because a religious body has elected him to that office or he has been granted the title by another man is the one who mocks God, not the saints who refuse to obey him.

Ignatius’ Statement: Ignatius says that God will give heed only to those who give heed to the bishop (Poly. VI), and forgiveness of sins is granted only to those who in repentance come both to God and “to communion with the bishop” (Phila. VIII).

The Truth: It is not true that God will hear the prayers only of those who submit to Christian bishops. Neither is it true that only if a Christian bishop for-gives, will God forgive. History has abundantly demonstrated that Christian bishops can be as perverse as anyone, that their forgiveness can be bought, and that to submit to them can be to submit to wickedness.

Ignatius’ Statement: Ignatius teaches that believers must avoid all accusations against Church leaders, just as they would avoid being burned by fire (Trall. II), for the elders of the Christian Church, he says, are the “Sanhedrine of God” (Trall. III), even if the bishops are young men (Poly. VI). Using Old Testament rebels as examples, he warns that all who rebel against leaders of the Christian Church are in danger of losing their souls (Mag. III).

The Truth: Ignatius assumes that Church leaders are anointed by God to be leaders of His people, which has never been the case. So, the standard which Paul established concerning accusations against an elder does not even apply to Church officials.

Paul’s standard was that believers should not hear accusations against an elder if the accusations are made in secret (1Tim. 5:19). It is perfectly acceptable to hear accusations against an elder if the accusations are made before witnesses. Secret accusations are sin.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius says the relationship between Christian bishops and the ordinary believer is that “they are priests, and you [the believer] are a servant of the priests” (Hero III).

The Truth: Paul thought of those who helped him as his *fellow*-servants, not his servants. Ignatius' teaching is reminiscent of Pope Clement's description of the Church's hierarchy: a high priest, other priests, Levites, and laymen. For almost two thousand years, except for the position of Levites, such a hierarchy has endured in the religion of Christianity.

Ignatius' Statement: The bishop in Rome is referred to as “father” in the “Epistle to Mary at Neapolis” (IV), one of the letters written by an unknown Christian who lived long after Ignatius, but forged the epistle in his name.

The Truth: This is evil. Jesus said not to call any man on earth father, in a religious sense (Mt. 23:9).

Heresy/Perversion of the Scriptures

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius teaches that Jesus, now seated in heaven at the Father's right hand, still has a fleshly body (Smyr. III).

The Truth: This is false. Immediately after his resurrection, Jesus was still in his fleshly body (Lk. 24:39), but he has now been glorified with the glory he had “before the universe existed”, just as he prayed that his Father would do for him (Jn. 17:5). A description of Jesus' present, glorified body is found in Revelation 1:12–18. There are no nail prints in Jesus' glorified hands, no scar from the Roman spear is in his glorified torso, and his glorified brow shows no marks from the crown of thorns woven for him by the cruel Roman soldiers.

Additionally, the saints are promised glorified bodies like the body Jesus has now (Phip. 3:21), not like the body he had while on earth. We already have a fleshly body. The bodies promised to God's children are not earthly but heavenly (1Cor. 15:40–49). Further, the apostle Paul states explicitly that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1Cor. 15:50). That means that in order to receive our eternal inheritance, our bodies must be changed from a fleshly body to a glorified one, just as Jesus' body was glorified after he ascended into heaven. As for our natural bodies, they will be “destroyed” (Rom. 6:6) along with this entire physical universe (Mt. 24:35; 2Pet. 3:10).

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius teaches that Satan backed out of his plan to crucify Jesus at the last minute because “he perceived his own destruction was at hand.” He says that it was Satan who inspired Judas to take the money back to the priest and that it was Satan who gave Pilate’s wife a tormenting dream about killing an innocent man (Phip. IV).

The Truth: This is pure fiction that glorifies Satan, not God. Satan could not possibly have attempted to back out of his plan to crucify Jesus because to crucify Jesus was not Satan’s plan at all. It was God’s plan to give His Son for the sins of the world (Jn. 3:16), and to God alone belongs all the glory for it.

The saints glorify God by confessing that everything that Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the rulers of Israel did to Jesus was what God pre-ordained to be done to him (cf. Acts 4:27–28). Isaiah prophesied that the Father, not Satan, would “make [Jesus’] soul an offering for sin” (Isa. 53:10). And it is noteworthy that in that same verse, it is also written that “it pleased the LORD to crush him; He [not the Devil] has put him to grief.”

It was Judas’ awareness of his sure damnation to come that filled his heart with terror; it was not Satan changing his mind. By glorifying Satan as the master planner of the crucifixion of Christ Jesus, Ignatius exposes himself as a minister of Satan, giving him glory for what was the wondrous and awful salvation plan of God. God’s ministers do not glorify Satan; they glorify God.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius lists Clement along with Elijah, Melchizedek, Joshua, and John the Baptist as an example of holiness and chastity (Phila. IV).

The Truth: Ignatius approves of Clement because they are of the same perverse spirit. His faith in that false teacher whom we have already proved to be an apostate father of Christianity, is revealing of Ignatius’ character.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius says that Satan is “from the ranks of angels” (Phip. XI).

The Truth: This is false information. Satan is not an angel; he is a cherub (Ezek. 28:14). Cherubs have wings; angels do not. It is a common

Christian error taught by the Roman Catholic Church and Christian fundamentalists alike, that Satan was at first a good angel but that he fell.¹

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius says that the new name for God's people which Isaiah prophesied about (Isa. 62:2) is "Christian", citing Acts 11:26 as proof of his assertion, adding "Whosoever is called by any other name besides this, he is not of God" (Mag. X).

The Truth: This is false. Isaiah 62:2 reads, "And you [Zion] shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall give." But the mouth of the Lord never used the word "Christian"; in fact, Jesus warned us not to trust everyone who came, using his name (Mt. 24:3–5). The Lord's mouth gave the new name for his people in Matthew 16:18, when he said "upon this rock I will build my Assembly (*ekklesia*)". So, "Assembly" is the new name for the people of God, not "Christian". That word was coined by sinners as a derogatory term for God's people in Antioch (Acts 11:26).

Salvation

Ignatius' Statement: According to Ignatius, great danger exists for believers who desire to "live according to the Jewish law, and the circumcision of the flesh" (Mag. VIII).

The Truth: Paul warned believers, as Ignatius does, that to resort to the law of Moses was to put one's hope of salvation at risk (Gal. 3:1–4; 5:1–5).

Ignatius' Statement: The believer who has become dull of hearing the word of God and "sets at nought His doctrine shall go to hell" (Ephs. XVI), writes Ignatius. He is equally firm about those who follow a heretic, saying, "If any man follows him that separates from the truth, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and if any man does not stand aloof from the preacher of falsehood, he shall be condemned to hell" (Phila. III). In sum, Ignatius' doctrine concerning salvation is that "there is set before us life, upon our observance [of God's precepts], but death as the result of disobedience, and every one, according to the choice he makes, shall go to his own place" (Mag. IV).

¹ Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #391, p. 110; #414, p. 117. Billy Graham, *Angels*, 98.

The Truth: Ignatius' words could have been written by Peter or Paul, or spoken by one of the prophets. His insistence that obedience is necessary for believers to receive the promised salvation is both correct and consistent.

However, Ignatius' insistence on obedience to *Christian* leaders is to be rejected, for they are among the false teachers that Jesus said would come in his name. Moses was of God, and rebellion against him *was* sin. And Christ is of God, and rebellion against him is sin. But refusal to follow Christian ministers ordained by other Christian ministers instead of by God is no sin; it is a virtue.

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius says in one place that no man would be able to stand before God if God "should reward us according to our works" (Mag. X).

The Truth: The works to which Ignatius refers here are works that people perform *before coming to Christ*, so, he is not, in this case, contradicting himself.

Spiritual Gifts and Power

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius mentions the Spirit speaking to him (Phila. VII). Also, he is reported to have imparted spiritual gifts to those who came from Smyrna to see him on his way to Rome, including to Polycarp himself (Mart. Ig. III). No specifics are given concerning that.

The Truth: It is not unusual for these earliest Christian writers to speak of miraculous experiences as still occurring among believers. Those experiences diminished as the religion of Christianity developed, but for miracles to happen among believers is consistent with the gospel for which Jesus died.

Superstition

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius reveres the mythological Judith as a true heroine of God, as an example for Christian women to follow.

The Truth: For details on the Book of Judith, see the section on Superstition under Clement. It is a tale unworthy of the name of Jesus.

Ignatius' Statement: With respect to Satan, Ignatius teaches that Jesus tormented him by his power when he was ministering on earth (Phip. VIII).

The Truth: This is false. The time for Satan’s torment has not yet come, as even the demons themselves knew (cf. Mt. 8:29).

Ignatius’ Statement: Ignatius addresses a large portion of his letter to believers at Philippi directly to the Devil himself (V–XII).

The Truth: Ignatius does not explain why he thinks the Devil was at Philippi or why he thinks the Devil would even read his letter if he did write him. It seems unlikely that Satan would be at Philippi, since Jesus said that Satan’s seat was at Pergamon (Rev. 2:13). It is more likely that the Devil was inspiring Ignatius’ letter than waiting at Philippi to receive it.

Ignatius’ Statement: Ignatius writes, “I hope, through your prayers, that I may be devoured by beasts at Rome” (Ephs. sv. I). In another place, he prays, “Suffer me to become food for the wild beasts. . . . Let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ” (Roms. IV). And later, he writes, “I am eager to die for the sake of Christ” (Roms. VII).

To spare the saints the burden of a burial, he exhorted them to “provoke greatly the wild beasts, that they may be for me a grave, and may leave nothing of my body. . . . Then shall I in truth be a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world sees not even my body” (3rd Epistle, sv. IV). According to the anonymous account of his martyrdom, it was with “great alacrity and joy through his desire to suffer” that Ignatius departed from Antioch on his journey toward Rome (Mart. Ig. III).

The Truth: The apostle Paul proved many times that he was willing to suffer for the Lord Jesus, if need be. Likewise, the apostle Peter, after he was beaten by servants of the council of Jewish elders, thanked God that he was counted worthy by God to suffer for Christ’s sake (Acts 5:41). But neither of these men, nor any other man of God, nor yet any sane sinner, actually *desired* to suffer as Ignatius desired it.

Nor did they believe that suffering was proof positive that a man was righteous. Paul plainly taught that one could surrender all his earthly possessions and surrender his body to be burned, and yet it be a worthless exercise of the flesh (1Cor. 13:3). Ignatius says that he will at last be a true disciple of Christ when the world “sees not even my body.” This is certainly not a reliable way to determine who is a true disciple of Christ, for there have been many wicked men slain in such a way as to leave no trace of their bodies.

Ironically, Ignatius, who wanted to be eaten by the wild beasts at Rome, exhorts believers to avoid false teachers “as you would wild beasts” (Ephs. VII). As it turned out, it was precisely because they did avoid false teachers the way Ignatius avoided wild beasts that believers were deceived.

Ignatius’ Statement: Having joyfully and excitedly reached Rome, the author of the *Martyrdom of Ignatius* tells us that Ignatius was brought to the amphitheater, where “he was cast to the wild beasts, so that by them the desire of the holy martyr Ignatius should be fulfilled, according to that which is written, ‘The desire of the righteous is acceptable [to God]’” (Mart. Ig. VI).

The author’s words show that he felt Ignatius had a godly attitude toward torture and death, and he assures us that God approved of Ignatius’ morbid longing for torture.

The Truth: This is an instance of what we find in Psalm 50:21, where God quietly watches the wicked for a while, then tells them, “You thought that I was altogether such a one as yourself.”

Jesus certainly did not long to be tortured and crucified. In the Garden of Gethsemene, he begged his Father “with strong crying and tears” to find some other way to redeem man.

Ignatius’ Statement: For the enjoyment of Ignatius’ followers, the wild beasts left a few of “the harder portions of his holy remains . . . which were conveyed to Antioch and wrapped in linen, as an inestimable treasure left to the holy Church by the grace which was in the Martyr” (Mart. Ig. VI).

The Truth: This is sick.

Ignatius’ Statement: The writer of the account of Ignatius’ execution asks the readers to believe that within twenty-four hours after Ignatius’ suffering, the departed bishop appeared to him and to a few other discouraged souls who were gathered in earnest prayer. The author claims that Ignatius embraced him, while others saw Ignatius praying for them, and still others saw Ignatius standing beside Jesus, “dropping with sweat, as if he had just come from his great labor” (Mart. Ig. VII).

The Truth: None of this is true, unless a demon appeared to these people in the guise of Ignatius. And it is doubtful that people in heaven sweat, even if they were working hard before they died.

Ignatius' Statement: In his epistle to the Magnesians (III), Ignatius repeats as an historical fact the Apocrypha's fictional account of Daniel as a twelve-year-old sage, opposing some wicked old judges and rescuing innocent Susannah from execution (Dan. 13, Apocrypha).

The Truth: This is false. At twelve, Daniel was not a highly esteemed wise man in Babylon.

In the Apocrypha, two chapters are added to the twelve original chapters of the book of Daniel. The story of Susannah is in the first additional chapter, and the second contains the mythological story of Bel and the Dragon. In that chapter, Daniel exposes the vanity of worshipping Bel, is given permission by the king to destroy Bel's priests and temple in Babylon, and slays a dragon by feeding him cakes made of pitch, hair, and fat. In that phony fourteenth chapter of the apocryphal book of Daniel, wise Daniel survives seven days in the den of lions because the prophet Habakkuk miraculously is transported from Judah to Babylon with a bowl of stew for Daniel's lunch. Habakkuk had prepared the food for some field workers, says this unknown writer, but an angel hijacked him by the hair of the head as he took it to them and carried him to Babylon for Daniel's sake.

Both those added chapters of the apocryphal version of the book of Daniel are uninspired forgeries, and only an uninspired man could fail to see that.

Trinitarian Issues

Ignatius' Statement: Ignatius teaches that as the Church is dependent upon Jesus, so Jesus is dependent upon the Father (Ephs. V).

The Truth: The latter half of that statement is true. Jesus said he lived by the Father (Jn. 6:57). The relationship of Jesus to the Father is consistently described by Ignatius in terms which agree with the teachings of Jesus and the apostles and contradict the doctrine of the Trinity which later Christians concocted.

The first part of Ignatius' statement, however, is false. The body of Christ is dependent on Jesus, but the Church, that is, the religion of Christianity, has never been dependent on Jesus. It has gone its own way from its inception, inventing its own ceremonies, ordaining its own ministers, and formulating its own doctrines.

Ignatius' Statement: In his farewell to the Church in Antioch, Ignatius writes, "May He who alone is unbegotten, keep you steadfast both in the

Spirit and in the flesh, through Him who was begotten before time began!” (Mart. Ig. XIV). It is Ignatius’ consistent position that Jesus was “begotten by the Father before the beginning of time” (e.g., Mag. VI).

The Truth: This is true. Among the early Christian fathers, the Father is often distinguished from the Son by calling Him the “unbegotten God”, while Jesus is called “the begotten of God”. With Ignatius, as with the other Church fathers, there was never an issue concerning whether the Son was begotten, or by whom. Without exception, they used the phrase, “begotten of the Father” as a reference to the Son’s creation before the world began. In their eyes, the Son could not possibly be “co-equal” and “co-eternal” with the Father, as the doctrine of the Trinity later would hold.

The Greek word for “only-begotten” appears in the New Testament nine times. Four times it refers to a human’s only child, either a girl (Lk. 8:42) or a boy (Lk. 7:12; 9:38), including Isaac (Heb. 11:17). The other five times, it refers to Christ as the only begotten Son of God (Jn. 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1Jn. 4:9). The last reference holds that God’s Son was begotten in heaven before the birth of Jesus on earth, and I did not find any of the Apostate Fathers who taught differently.

Ignatius’ Statement: Ignatius affirmed that the Son of God was created (Tars. VI). He understands the words of David in Proverbs 8:22–25 as referring to Christ: “The LORD created me the beginning of His way, the first of His works. I was formed before eternity, before the beginning, before earth existed. I was brought forth when there were no depths of *the sea*, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth.”

The Truth: This is true. And it is an unmistakable contradiction of the Trinity confession. Ignatius’ confession of Christ’s being created must have presented a challenge to fourth-century Christian bishops as they labored with the emperor Constantine at Nicea to formulate a Trinitarian confession while maintaining the appearance of harmony with these earlier Christians, who knew nothing of a Trinity.

Ignatius’ Statement: Ignatius rejects the view of Christ as being equal with the Father. He condemns those who “suppose Christ to be unbegotten”, ridiculing those who taught that “the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are but the same person” (Trall. VI). He warns the Church against those who “introduce a multiplicity of gods” or who “deny Christ under the pretense of [maintaining] the unity of God” (Antio. I), which is exactly what the

Christian bishops did who gathered at the Nicene Council and formulated a trinitarian doctrine.

Ignatius affirms that it is Satan who holds that “the unbegotten was begotten”, that is, that the Son and the Father are one God, and that this one God became man (Phip. VII). “Whosoever declares that there is one God, only so as to deny the divinity of Christ, is a Devil, and an enemy of all righteousness” (Antio. V). Ignatius vehemently condemns as Satanic the notion that Christ is “God over all, the Almighty” (Phip. VII). Writes Ignatius: “[In order to show] that he himself is not God over all and the Father, but His Son, [Jesus said], ‘I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.’ And again, ‘When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall he also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all’” (Jn. 20:17; 1Cor. 15:28. Quotes from Tars. V).

The Truth: This is all true. Later Christian leaders would have banished Ignatius, or worse, for teaching such truth.

Ignatius’ Statement: Ignatius teaches that Jesus, the begotten Son of God, is the “High Priest of the unbegotten God” (Mag. VII). Jesus is seated at the right hand of “the one and only true God, his Father,” who sent him into the world (Mag. XI). “There is one unbegotten Being,” writes Ignatius, “God, even the Father; and one only-begotten Son, God, the Word and man; and one Comforter, the Spirit of Truth; and also one preaching, and one faith, and one baptism, and one [body]” (Phila. IV; cp. Hero VII, IX).

The Truth: This is the right view of the relationship of the Father and the Son, also taught by Paul (Eph. 4:4–6).

Ignatius’ Statement: Ignatius states that the believer has “obtained the inseparable Spirit, who is Jesus Christ” (Mag. XV).

The Truth: This is reminiscent of Paul’s comment in 1Corinthians 15:45: “The last Adam [Christ Jesus] became a life-giving spirit.” However, neither Ignatius’ statement nor the verse from Paul suggests a Trinity of persons, except to one who has been instructed to see it there.

Ignatius’ Statement: In opposition to some of his time who taught that spiritual beings have no shape (Roms. III), Ignatius teaches that Jesus still has a body.

The Truth: This is true. Jesus has a body of his own, apart from the Father's body, and that simple truth alone exposes the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as false. Two bodies means two persons, whether those bodies are spiritual or fleshly.

Ignatius' Statement: In statements referring to the Father and the Son, the spurious Epistle to the Philippians is of a different tenor from other epistles of Ignatius. For example, consider this confused statement: "There is then one God and Father, not two or three, one who is; and there is none other besides Him, the only true God. . . . And there is only one Son, God the Word. For 'the only-begotten Son', says the scripture, 'who is in the bosom of the Father.' . . . And in another place, 'What is His name, or what is His Son's name, that we may know?' And there is only one Paraclete. There are not then either three Fathers, or three Sons, or three Paracletes, but one Father, and one Son, and one Paraclete . . . not one having three names, nor three who became incarnate, but three possessed of equal honor" (Phip. II).

The Truth: This forged epistle makes Ignatius appear to be as confused about the Father and the Son as were bishops of a later time, and in fact, may have been written by one of them.

≡ BARNABAS ≡

(?)

The Epistle of Barnabas

Introduction

The original author of this epistle may have been the Barnabas who traveled with Paul, but that Barnabas certainly did not write the letter as it now stands. The Barnabas who traveled with Paul knew the Scriptures better than the author of this letter knew them, and he understood the gospel Paul preached better than the author of sections of this letter understood it. The exact date of the letter, as with all these earliest Christian writings, can only be guessed at.

Anti-Semitism

Barnabas' Statement: Barnabas tells his readers that “the wretched Jews, wandering in error, trusted not in God Himself, but in the temple, as being the house of God” (XVI).

The Truth: It is true that many Israelites made the tragic mistake of trusting in the things God had given them rather than in God Himself. They trusted the snake which Moses lifted up in the wilderness, making an idol of it after God finished using it (2Kgs. 18:4). They trusted the ark of the covenant instead of God to save them from the Philistines (1Sam. 4:3). And, as Barnabas rightly points out, they trusted in the temple to save them when God was determined to destroy the holy city (Jer. 7:1–7). But at least we can say that the things the Israelites trusted had really been ordained by God!

Ceremony

Barnabas' Statement: Barnabas believes that honoring the eighth day of the week as a holy day will contribute to one's salvation (XV).

The Truth: Barnabas cannot point to any scripture to show that God sanctified an eighth day as He sanctified the seventh. Indeed, Barnabas cannot even prove that there *is* an eighth day of the week. After the seventh day, God started counting over again. The very definition of a “week” is seven days!

Barnabas' Statement: God spoke through Isaiah, telling Israel that because of their immorality, their “new moon, and Sabbaths, and the calling of a convocation, I cannot bear” (Isa. 1:13). Barnabas claims that there was a hidden meaning in those words. According to him, God was actually saying that He despised the seventh-day Sabbath because He had decided to set apart the eighth day, Sunday, as the New Testament Sabbath day (XV). “Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day on which Jesus rose again from the dead” (XV).

The Truth: This is false. God did not despise the laws that He gave to Israel. What He despised was worship by people who were keeping the ceremonial laws while disobeying His moral commandments.

Jewish believers who in Paul's day continued to observe holy days that God gave to Israel were called “weak” (Rom. 14:1–2), but spiritual weakness is not the spiritual condition of men such as Ignatius and Barnabas. They went beyond merely keeping God's Old Covenant

Sabbath; they went the extra mile and invented a new holy day for believers to keep. That is not weakness; it is wickedness.

Barnabas' Statement: Barnabas points out that the New Testament form of sacrifice is no longer a sacrifice of animals but “a human oblation” (II). He proceeds to show from the Scriptures that the kind of fast which is acceptable to the Lord is not a spartan show of harshness to one’s body, but the keeping of such moral directives as are listed in Isaiah 58:6–14.

The Truth: This is true. It is in accord with the spiritual nature of the New Testament, and it agrees as well with God’s detailed description of the true way of fasting in Isaiah 58.

Barnabas' Statement: Barnabas warns the saints to avoid the life of a hermit, which became extremely popular among Christians in the second and third centuries. Says Barnabas, “Let us flee from vanity, let us utterly hate the works of the way of wickedness. Do not, by retiring apart, live a solitary life, . . . for the scripture says, ‘Woe to them who are wise to themselves, and prudent in their own sight!’” (IV).

The Truth: This is sound advice.

Barnabas' Statement: Barnabas trusts Christianity’s water baptism to wash sins away (XI). Quoting a verse from the first Psalm, which mentions a tree planted by the water, Barnabas writes, “Mark how [the Psalmist] has described at once both the water and the cross. For these words [a tree planted by the water] imply, ‘Blessed are they who, placing their trust in the cross, have gone down into the water,’” adding, “We indeed descend into the water full of sins and defilement, but come up, bearing fruit in our heart” (XI).

The Truth: This is false. Water baptism has never washed away anyone’s sins because it cannot touch the heart of man, where sin is.

One must wonder, if Barnabas knew that true fasting is a matter of moral virtue, not self-starvation, and if he knew that New Testament sacrifices are spiritual, not carnal, and if he knew that the New Testament form of separation from the world is not physical seclusion, but sinlessness, then why would he not have understood that true baptism is in spirit and not in water? How could the man who explained those other spiritual truths so well be so blind concerning true baptism? The only rational answer is that a man who knew the truth wrote the original document, and

an unknown Christian of a later time, who did not know the truth, added Christian doctrine to it.

Note: Paul said that Jewish brothers who could not in good conscience depart from Moses' law were to be excused for their weakness, and shown love (Rom. 14:3–6, 13, 15). These Apostate Fathers, on the other hand, burdened God's people with ceremonies that never were from God. They taught that God made a change from one holy day to another, but He did not. Instead, He did away with holy days completely, changing the Sabbath from a weekly ritual to a spiritual resting from sin. In this New Covenant, holiness is entirely a matter of the heart, not of proper form or correct time and place.

God's rest is now in the Spirit. When we cease from our own ways and thoughts, and walk in the Spirit instead, we keep the Sabbath of God.

Politics/Violence

No Information

Heresy/Perversion of the Scriptures

The Day of Atonement

Biblical Background:

On the Day of Atonement, the most holy of Israel's holy days, two goats were to be brought by the Israelites to the high priest. The high priest then was commanded to do this:

Take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And [the high priest] shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for Azazel.² And [the high priest] shall bring the goat upon which the lot for the LORD fell, and he shall offer it as a sin offering. And the goat upon which the lot for Azazel fell shall be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement with it, that it may be driven away into the wilderness. . . . [The high priest] shall lay his two hands on the head of the live goat and confess all the iniquities of the children of Israel over it . . . and he shall put them on the head of the goat. And then he shall send it away by the hand of a ready man into the wilderness. . . . And he that drove away the goat for

² The meaning of the word *Azazel* is uncertain.

Azazel shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and after this, he may come into the camp (excerpts, Leviticus 16).

Barnabas' Statement: According to Barnabas, Christ spoke through Moses and commanded the priests to eat the inner parts of the goat that was sacrificed “unwashed with vinegar.” Why? He says that Christ explained, “Because to Me, who am to offer my flesh for the sins of My new people, you are to give gall with vinegar to drink” (VII).

The Truth: Fortunately for Christians, this attempt by Barnabas to make the drink used in the Eucharist to be “gall with vinegar” failed.

Barnabas' Statement: Barnabas also says that in the Old Testament, God gave this commandment to the Jews for the Day of Atonement ceremony: “All of you spit upon it [the scapegoat], and pierce it, and encircle its head with scarlet wool, and thus let it be driven into the wilderness” (VII).

Afterwards, Barnabas claims that the man who drove the scapegoat into the wilderness was required by God to find a certain kind of desert shrub, probably a thorny one, and then place the wool from the goat's head onto it (VII). Of course, a somewhat complicated explanation follows, telling how this deed foreshadowed Jesus' crown of thorns.

The Truth: This is all false. The law's uncomplicated Day of Atonement ceremony is so distorted by Barnabas that it is hardly recognizable. Barnabas' version of the rites of Moses' law must have lent credence to the many anti-Semitic statements found in the writings of Christianity's fathers.

Barnabas misquoted and misrepresented many Old Testament scriptures which we will not take the time to mention. But the above portion of the law and the one following demonstrate how ignorant this author was of the rites commanded by God in the law.

The Red Heifer

Biblical Background:

Here are the relevant portions of Scripture concerning another ceremony, as they appear in the Bible (excerpts, Numbers 19):

The LORD commands saying, Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring to you [the high priest] a red heifer without defect. . . . And you shall give her unto Eleazar the priest [who was next in line to be high priest], and he shall take it outside the camp. And one shall slaughter it before him. And Eleazar the priest shall take

some of her blood with his finger and sprinkle of her blood at the front of the tent of meeting seven times. And one shall burn up the heifer in his sight. Her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung shall he burn up. And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and bright scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning heifer. [Then the priest and the man who burned the heifer were required to bathe, wash their clothes, and remain outside the camp until evening.] And a man who is clean shall gather the ashes of the heifer and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and they shall be kept for the water of impurity for the congregation of the children of Israel; it is for purification of sin.

Barnabas' Statement: According to Barnabas' version of this ceremony, God commanded "men of the greatest wickedness" to make the offering of the heifer (VIII), and after these men had slain and burned the heifer, "[three] boys should take the ashes, and put these into vessels, and bind round a stick purple wool along with hyssop; then, the boys should sprinkle the people, one by one, in order that they might be purified from their sins" (VIII). "And why are there three boys that sprinkle?" asks Barnabas. "To correspond to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob" (VIII).

Carrying out the ceremony, according to Barnabas, made the wicked men innocent of all evil, and they were "no longer regarded as sinners" (VIII).

The Truth: This is false. Wicked men were absolutely forbidden to perform the rites of the law, and God was incensed when wicked men did so (cf. Isa. 1:10–17). Moreover, boys were never allowed by God to perform the holy ceremonies of Israel. Even the helpers of the priests, the Levites, were required to be at least thirty years old before they could carry out the holy works of the law (1Chron. 23:3). And Numbers 8:24 suggests that they first had to undergo a five-year apprenticeship.

Lastly, the ashes of a red heifer were not sprinkled on all the people, as Barnabas says. Those ashes were reserved for use at specific times, when certain unclean persons needed to be sprinkled with them.

Barnabas' Statement: Barnabas states flatly that Jesus "is not the Son of man, but the Son of God" (XII).

The Truth: Jesus called himself the Son of man thirty-two times in the book of Matthew alone.

Salvation

Barnabas' Statement: Barnabas does not consider himself, or any believer, to have already obtained salvation. He writes, "We take earnest heed in these last days; for the whole past time of your faith will profit you nothing, unless now in this wicked time we also withstand coming sources of danger, as becomes sons of God" (IV). Barnabas teaches that the man will perish who, after having a knowledge of "the way of righteousness, rushes off into the way of darkness" (V).

The Truth: This is true. His last statement is very similar to Peter's language in 2Peter 2:20–21: "If after escaping the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled, and overcome, their last state is worse than the first. It would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them."

Spiritual Gifts and Power
Superstition
Trinitarian Issues
No Information

FRAGMENTS OF
≡ PAPIAS ≡
(c. 60–130)

Introduction

Almost nothing is known about this bishop of the Church at Hieropolis, a city of Phrygia. He is said to have heard John the apostle and to have known many who had personally been acquainted with the Lord and his apostles. Nothing remains of his writings except a few fragments attributed to him in the writings of other Christian Church fathers and writers.

Anti-Semitism
Ceremony
Politics/Violence
No Information

Heresy/Perversion of the Scriptures

Papias' Statement: Medieval Christian clerics suggest that Papias taught that “Judas walked about in this world a sad example of piety; for his body having swollen to such an extent that he could not pass where a chariot could pass easily, he was crushed by the chariot, so that his bowels gushed out. Theophylact, an eleventh-century cleric, possibly using Papias as his source (cf. ANF01, 153, footnote 11), says that Judas’ eyes were so swollen that he could not see, and they were so sunk into his head that his eyes could not be seen, even with the aid of a physician’s optical instruments, and that the rest of his body was covered with runnings and worms, and that the place in Palestine where he died still stank badly (Frag. III).

The Truth: This is pure fiction. Judas hanged himself (Mt. 27:5), apparently on the side of a steep hill, for when the rope which Judas used broke (or perhaps when the tree limb from which he hanged snapped), Judas fell headlong, and his body burst open upon the rocks below (Acts 1:18).

Papias' Statement: According to Eusebius’ *Church History* (III.39.15), Papias said that “Mark [author of the Gospel that bears his name] having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied him” (Frag. VI). As for the Gospel of Matthew, Papias says that Matthew recorded “the oracles [of the Lord] in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as best he could” (Frag. VI).

The Truth: This may or may not be the case; it is impossible to know.

Salvation

Papias' Statement: Papias teaches that those who are saved in the end will be divided into three groups, depending on their rewards: the first group will live in heaven, the second will live in paradise, and the third in “the city”, that is, New Jerusalem (Frag. VI).

The Truth: This is false. The writer correctly uses the word “saved” as a reference to “the end of your faith”, as Peter said (1Pet. 1:9), and he is right that there will be degrees of rewards for the saved. Jesus made that clear many times. But those who are saved will not be separated in the manner described by Papias. The eternal dwelling place of the saved will not be heaven, as Papias teaches; rather, Jesus said it will be the New Earth: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (Mt. 5:5).

Spiritual Gifts and Power

Papias’ Statement: Papias states that the “living and abiding voice” of the holy Spirit is more accurate and dependable than the books which had been written about Jesus and his disciples (Frag. I).

The Truth: This is true. Jesus did not promise that he would have a book written which would guide us into all truth; he said he would send the holy Spirit to do that (Jn. 16:13). And Paul taught, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14), not “As many as are led by the Bible are the sons of God.”

To those who look to the Bible instead of the Spirit to guide them into eternal life, the warning Jesus gave the Pharisees still applies: “You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, but they are they which testify of me, and you do not want to come to me, that you might have life” (Jn. 5:39–40).

Superstition

Papias’ Statement: According to a genealogy invented by Papias (Frag. X), several of Jesus’ disciples were his cousins, including James, John, and James the Less. Other men listed as Jesus’ cousins were named Joseph and Judas, but it is unclear from this fragment of Papias whether or not this Judas was the Judas who betrayed Christ.

The Truth: None of this is biblical.

Trinitarian Issues

Papias’ Statement: Papias teaches that, in the end, the Son will submit his kingdom to the Father, who gave to the Son all the authority that he now possesses (Frag. V).

The Truth: This is true. Paul says the same thing in 1Corinthians 15:28: “And when all things are subdued under him, then will the Son himself

submit to Him who subdued all things under him, that God might be all things to all people.” Like Paul, Papias offers no help to those who seek support for the Trinitarian faith.

≡ JUSTIN MARTYR ≡

(c. 100–165)

The First Apology (1Ap.)
The Second Apology (2Ap.)
Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew (Dial.)
The Discourse to the Greeks (Disc.)
Hortatory Address to the Greeks (Hort.)
On the Sole Government of God (Gov.)
On the Resurrection, Fragments (On the Res.)
Other Fragments (Frag. Just.)
Martyrdom (Mart. Just.)

Introduction

According to his own words, Justin's first Apology was written one hundred fifty years after Jesus' birth (1Ap. XLVI). For those unfamiliar with the term, an "apology" is a defense. Justin was not *apologizing* for his faith to the Roman emperor; he was offering a *defense* of it.

Justin is called "Justin Martyr" because (if we are to trust the story related in *The Martyrdom of Justin*) he was beheaded for his faith. He possessed a great intellect and was well acquainted with the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as with the Bible. He was, first of all, a philosopher, and he repeatedly asserted that some of the poets, writers, and philosophers of ancient classical cultures possessed a knowledge of the true God and, therefore, deserved to be called Christians (Hort. XXVI-II).

Interestingly, Justin accuses the eminent ancient philosopher Plato of rank cowardice, maintaining that on a visit to Egypt, Plato learned of Moses and of the Mosaic law's revelation of the true God but that, fearing

a fate such as befell his teacher, Socrates, Plato disguised his confession of the truth in ambiguous, contradictory language (Hort. XXV).

Anti-Semitism

Justin's Statement: Justin calls the Jews “senseless” because they were inspired, he says, by demons to persecute Jesus (1Ap. LXIII).

The Truth: The Jews were no more senseless than the Gentiles, who participated in the unjust execution of Jesus.

Justin's Statement: Justin states that the works of the law (holy days, sacrifices, etc.) were given to Israel because of their great wickedness (Dial. XX; XXI).

The Truth: This is false. Circumcision, which became an essential ceremonial work of the law, was first given to God's friend, Abraham, as “a seal of the righteousness of the faith that he had” (Rom. 4:11). God did not give circumcision to Abraham, nor did He accept Abraham's sacrifices, because Abraham was wicked, as Justin would have us to think. There was a loving, holy purpose in all the ceremonial works God gave to His chosen people. “The law was our guardian”, wrote Paul, “until Christ” (Gal. 3:24).

It is true, as Paul said, that “[the law] was added because of transgressions” (Gal. 3:19), but there is no indication that the law was added because Israel's transgressions were especially bad. “The whole world”, wrote the apostle John, “lies in wickedness” (1Jn. 5:19), and Paul wrote, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). So, even though the Jews were guilty before God, so were the Gentiles, and Justin has no reason to boast himself against them (cf. Rom. 11:17–24).

Justin's Statement: Justin suggests that Jews in general, not just those to whom he was speaking, have “a love of contention” (Dial. CXVII).

The Truth: God's prophets, without hypocrisy, could call Israel such things as foolish, hard-hearted, or “wise only to do evil”, but Justin cannot do it without being a hypocrite. In several matters of faith, as will be shortly demonstrated, Justin shows himself to be, just as he condemns the Jews for being, “utterly incompetent to know the hidden counsel of God” (Dial. CXXIII).

Ceremony

Justin's Statement: Justin insists that the sacrifices required of Israel by the law of Moses had not even been necessary for them to perform (Dial. XXII).

The Truth: This is false. Every word of the law was of God; therefore, it was necessary that every precept be obeyed. As Paul wrote, “I testify again to every man who is circumcised that he is obligated to keep the entire law” (Gal. 5:3). God Himself told Israel that whoever kept those commandments would live (Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5).

Justin’s Statement: Justin holds that Jews who believed in Christ would probably be saved in the end if they did not attempt to persuade Gentiles to “be circumcised like themselves, or to keep the Sabbath, or to observe any other such ceremony” as the Jews did (Dial. XLVII).

The Truth: This is true. Paul exhorted each Jewish and Gentile believer to “remain in the calling in which he was called” (1Cor. 7:20). He wrote, “Is any man called being circumcised? His circumcision is not to be reversed. Is any man called being uncircumcised? He is not to be circumcised” (1Cor. 7:18).

Note: The question must be asked: if the Jews were not to pressure Gentile believers to submit to the God-given ceremonial works of the law or “any other such ceremony”, as Justin rightly insists, then by what authority do Justin and the other Christian fathers demand that believers observe *their* ceremonies, which were never given by God to anyone?

Justin’s Statement: Justin suggests that the Israelites performed the law’s ceremonies through ignorance, adding that he and the Christian community have learned that “the Maker of this universe . . . has no need of streams of blood and libations and incense” and that men ought not to “consume by fire what He has brought into being for our sustenance” (1Ap. XIII).

The Truth: The Jews performed the law’s ceremonies because God commanded them to do so. Jesus himself observed every precept of the law, and he neither felt nor taught the contempt for the law of God that Justin does. Jesus gladly did so because the law came from his Father, and he exhorted everyone around him to obey it as he did. “Do not think”, he said, “that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets. I didn’t come to destroy, but to fulfill” (Mt. 5:17).

Note: The law was not the offspring of the superstition of ignorant men, as Justin insinuates. Out of pure love for mankind, God gave the law, that men might prepare to receive His Son. Without the law, man would have had nothing by which to grasp the meaning and the majesty of

Christ Jesus' saving work. Paul, though teaching Gentiles that they were not to perform the ceremonial works of the law, insisted that "the law is indeed holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12).

Christian Baptism

Justin's Statement: When Justin first mentions baptism, his reference is to a baptism in water (1Ap. LXI). "[Those who have fasted and sought God for forgive-ness of sin] are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we ourselves were regenerated." He also describes what probably was the baptismal formula used by the baptizer: "In the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water." He calls this baptism "the water of remission of sins already committed" (1Ap. LXI). So, Justin holds that by Christianity's water baptism, sins are washed away, and by that baptism, repentant sinners are "born again". "This washing is also called illumination", wrote Justin, "because these things are illuminated in their understanding."

The Truth: This is false. We are born of God when we are baptized with the holy Spirit, not with water (1Cor. 12:13; Tit. 3:5).

Justin's Statement: In speaking to a group of Jews concerning Jesus' baptism with the Spirit, Justin confesses, "We have believed, and testify that that very baptism which he announced is alone able to purify those who have repented; and this is the water of life. . . . For what is the use of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and body alone?" (Dial. XIV). He goes on to scold the Jews because "you have understood [the works of the law] in a carnal sense, and you suppose it to be piety if you do such things" (Dial. XIV). "We do not receive that useless baptism of cisterns," he tells the Jews, "for it has nothing to do with this baptism of life" (Dial. XIX). Again, he testifies, "What need have I of that other baptism, who have been baptized with the holy Spirit?" (Dial. XXIX).

The Truth: Amen! That is excellent, and it is the same doctrine of baptism that Paul taught the Gentiles. But this truth does not agree in any respect with Justin's previous teaching on the necessity and sin-cleansing power of water baptism.

Note: The irreconcilable dichotomy between this doctrine and Justin's other one concerning baptism is evidence of a Christian forger, adding to the original document at a later time.

Justin’s Statement: Justin explains the spiritual significance of the baptism of the holy Spirit in relation to circumcision (Dial. XLIII): “We, who have approached God through [Christ], have received not carnal but spiritual circumcision. . . . And we have received it through baptism.”

The Truth: This is true. The baptism which administers this circumcision of the heart cannot be a fleshly, watery baptism. But whether or not Justin would agree with that comment would depend upon which Justin responded to it: the Justin who taught that water baptism regenerates and gives light to men’s souls, or the Justin who didn’t need the “useless” baptism of water because Jesus had baptized him with the holy Ghost.

Christian Communion

Justin’s Statement: The Justin who believes in Christian baptism states that after baptizing in water one “who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching”, Christians led him to the place where they assembled. There they prayed, saluted the brothers with “a holy kiss”, and then partook of a ceremonial meal, “bread and a cup of wine mixed with water” (1Ap. LXV).

This bread and diluted wine was typically served to Christian congregations by deacons after another prayer was offered to God “at considerable length” by the “president” of the meeting (1Ap. LXV). A portion of the meal was also sent to the homes of those believers who were unable to attend the meeting.

The title Christians gave to this meal was the *Eucharist* (literally, *thanksgiving*), “of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined” (1Ap. LXVI).

The Truth: This is precisely the “such ceremony” as Justin condemned the Jews for teaching the Gentiles to observe. In becoming “the end of righteousness by the law” (Rom. 10:4), Christ became the end of righteousness by ceremonial form.

Justin’s Statement: Justin says further that the Eucharist is not received by the faithful as common bread and wine, but as the flesh and blood of Jesus (1Ap. LXVI).

The Truth: This is nonsense. The real communion of Christ is indeed his true blood and his true flesh; Jesus himself said that (Jn. 6:53–55). But he was speaking spiritually, not naturally (Jn. 6:63). The bread and wine

consumed during the Christian ceremonial meal is nothing but common bread and wine. A certain medieval man, an Italian shoemaker disgusted with Christianity's bizarre communion doctrine, is quoted as having said that the sacramental wafer is just "a bit of food which one puts in one's mouth and comes out his arse." That was the truth, but, needless to say, his comment was reported to the clergy, and he was summoned before the Papal inquisitors for that forbidden display of common sense.

Justin's Statement: Justin teaches emphatically, even indignantly, that "wicked demons" produced among men an imitation of the Christian Eucharist, naming specifically the initiation meals of Mithraism, a popular religion of that time. The priests of Mithras served their ceremonial meal with an incantation, as Christians served theirs with prayers (1Ap. LXVI).

The Truth: Since heathen ceremonial meals existed before Christians invented theirs, it is more likely that Christians copied the heathen, not vice-versa. But even more importantly, the Eucharist ritual is a mockery of the true communion with God which Jesus suffered and died for. The only communion acceptable with God is the communion which Jesus ministers to believers from heaven, which is fellowship with the Father and the Son, and with one another.

Justin's Statement: Justin states that Jesus enjoined the Church to offer the "sacrifice" of "the Eucharist of the bread and the cup . . . which are presented by Christians in all places throughout the world" (Dial. CXVII).

The Truth: Jesus taught no such thing.

Justin's Statement: Justin adds that this "solid and liquid food" brings to mind the suffering of Jesus.

The Truth: That is not what Jesus meant when he handed out the bread and wine and said to his disciples, "This do in remembrance of me" (Lk. 22:19). Jesus' word "this" referred to what *he* was doing, which was being a servant to others, not to what the disciples were doing, which was eating and drinking. His point was that we have true communion with Christ when we humbly minister to others.

Justin's Statement: Just a few paragraphs after the "sacrifice" of "solid and liquid food" is taught, Justin teaches that the "true and spiritual praises" of believers are God's replacement for the carnal "blood and libations" of the Old Testament (Dial. CXVIII).

The Truth: This is true.

Holy Days

Justin’s Statement: “The eighth day”, wrote Justin, “possessed a certain mysterious import, which the seventh day did not possess, and which was promulgated by God through [certain rites of the law]” (Dial. XXIV). One of those rites which accentuated the eighth day was circumcision, he says, which had to be performed on males eight days after birth (Dial. XXVII; Gen. 17). Another of Justin’s justifications for honoring the “eighth day of the week” was that “it is the first on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world, and [on that day] Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead” (1Ap. LXVII). Finally, another justification offered by Justin for revering the eighth day is the fact that there were eight souls saved in Noah’s ark (Dial. CXXXVIII).

The Truth: This is shallow, school-yard philosophy. As we pointed out concerning the Epistle of Barnabas, there is no eighth day of the week.

Justin admits that Christians substituted the “day of the Sun” for the biblical Sabbath day, that they instituted a form of water baptism instead of washing at the laver of the temple, and that they partake of ceremonial meals instead of Israel’s feasts. In all these things, however, it is obvious that Christian worship is as carnal as was the Jews’ worship. At the same time, there was a singular, fundamental difference, which we have also pointed out: God ordained the ceremonies of the law for the Israelites, but Christians simply invented their ceremonies and then claimed that God did it.

Justin’s Statement: Justin tells Trypho that the “new law” in Christ requires men to keep a “perpetual Sabbath” and that this new Sabbath is observed by walking in the Spirit of holiness (Dial. XII; XVIII).

The Truth: This is true.

Note: The larger issue remains, to wit, there are no ceremonies or holy days ordained by God in the New Testament. Whence, then, came the Christian tradition of keeping holy a non-existent eighth day of the week? The Old Testament scriptures contain the only ceremonies and holy days God has ever ordained, and they served only as shadows of the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ (Col. 2:16–17). And when he fulfilled them, their purpose was finished, and the requirement to observe them was ended.

Circumcision

Justin’s Statement: Justin teaches that physical circumcision was required only of the Jews and that the Gentiles, having received the circumcision of the Spirit in their hearts, did not need the physical circumcision God required of the Jews under the law (Dial. XVIII; XIX; XCII, et al.).

The Truth: This is true. The apostle Paul could have written this explanation of circumcision and the covenants of God (cf. Rom. 2:28–29). It shows that Justin possessed an insight into the differing natures of the two testaments that few people share, namely, the first covenant was in the flesh, and the second covenant is in spirit.

Justin’s Statement: Justin condemns Trypho the Jew for trusting in fleshly circumcision, resting on the Sabbath day, and eating unleavened bread at the times appointed by the law. He tells him, “The Lord our God does not take pleasure in such observances” (Dial. XII; XVIII).

The Truth: Justin is correct to say that “the Lord our God does not take pleasure in such observances”; however, it should not be forgotten that during the time of the Old Testament, God *did* take pleasure in those observances when performed by righteous men. It is only after Jesus’ sacrificial death that God began taking no pleasure in the works of the law.

Note: In the earliest Christian centuries, there was a transformation of Jesus of Nazareth – not in reality, but in the minds of Christians. They redefined the New Testament and concocted a new Messiah to go along with it. The apostle Paul warned the saints not to receive “another Jesus”, or “a different Spirit”, or “a different gospel” (2Cor. 11:4). Unfortunately, Paul’s warning went unheeded, and the result was the religion of Christianity.

In the minds of Christians, there was a combining of Jesus with the persona of Sol, the sun-god. Sol was thought to drive a chariot from east to west daily across the sky, taking the sun with him, thus providing light to the world and chasing night away. Sol was also distinguished by a halo, with radiant beams springing from it. This latter feature provided the inspiration for the glowing halo which Christian artists drew around the head of their Jesus/Sol figure. In a Christian mausoleum in Rome, from about Justin’s time, a picture of Christianity’s Jesus/Sol riding a chariot with a glowing halo surrounding his head has been discovered:



Book name: Heritage of the First Christians/Tracing Early Christianity in Europe Author: Carsten Peter Thiede Copyright: 1992 R. Brockhaus Verlag That picture: p. 126 - Christ as sun god. Writeup on it: "Christ as sun god. Mosaic on the ceiling of a mausoleum in the Vatican necropolis. It was first discovered and described by Tiberio Alfarano in 1574."

Many Christians would actually bow toward the east in honor of the sun before entering the church for their weekly Sun-day meeting. In light of their reverence for the sun, it is not surprising that Christians esteemed "the day which is called 'the sun'" above other days of the week.

If forced by God to make a choice, a reasonable man would choose to observe the Jewish Sabbath rather than the Christian Sunday. He would prefer Jewish feast days to Christian communion meals, and the baptism of John to Christian baptism, for at least it could be said that God ordained the Jewish rites. God did ordain the Jewish Sabbath as a holy day, whereas the Day of the Sun (Sun-day) was never ordained by God. He ordained John's baptism for the Jews, but He never ordained Christianity's water baptisms. And Jesus broke the bread and served the wine at what he called his *last* supper, not his first.

Justin rightly states that if Christians had not understood the law of Moses, then they would be observing the ceremonial works of the law

(Dial. XVIII). But it is precisely because Justin himself did not understand the law of Moses, or the Christ who fulfilled them, that he and other Christians observed special days, wore special clothes for worship, baptized in water, offered the eucharistic “sacrifice”, burned incense, and performed a host of other carnal ceremonies.

What God abandons, the Devil uses. When God abandoned the high places where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob worshipped, Satan used the fact that God had once accepted Abraham’s worship in high places to confuse and deceive Israel (cf. Amos 8:7–8). When the ceremonial forms of the Old Testament were fulfilled by Christ and abandoned by God, Satan successfully used those ceremonial forms as a snare for the earliest saints, despite all that Paul tried to do to prevent it. “Are you so foolish?” he pleaded with a congregation that had begun to participate in ceremonies, “Having begun in the Spirit, are you now perfected by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:3).

Justin said that he and other Christians “do continually beseech God by Jesus Christ to preserve us from the demons which are hostile to the worship of God”, but by partaking of ceremonial works, he had fallen right into their hands.

Politics/Violence

Justin’s Statement: Justin states unequivocally that he and other Christians do not look for a “human kingdom”; rather, they look for a kingdom which is with God. And for that reason, he and other Christians are not afraid to face death (1Ap. XI). Justin also states that Jesus taught us to pay our due taxes and to submit to earthly authorities, but to worship none but God (1Ap. XVII).

The Truth: This is true.

Justin’s Statement: Justin demands that the emperor of Rome punish all who claim to be Christians but who live ungodly lives (1Ap. XVI), and he tells the emperor that he should “exterminate from your realm” all prostitutes and other perverse people (1Ap. XXVII).

The Truth: This is evil. Justin had no commission from God to demand that the Emperor of Rome do anything, much less to demand that he put people to death for being sinners. By looking to the government to punish or correct sinners, Justin embraced vanity. Man’s kind of righteousness may be forced upon other men, but God’s righteousness in Christ cannot be forced upon anyone. And by demanding that the government act ac-

ording to his directives, Justin entered into the realm of politics, which is an authority that Christ has not given to believers in this New Testament.

Note: While it is none of the saints' business to advise governors of earth, it *is* Christianity's business to do so because Christianity is a religion of this world. Over time, false teachers such as Justin brought about a blending of the community of faith and the Roman Empire, which resulted in the development of the religion of Christianity.

One may ask, if it is wrong for saints now to be involved with political action, then why were many of the righteous characters in the Bible deeply involved in earthly politics? The answer is that all of the biblical characters who were entangled with the political, social, or military affairs of this life were Old Testament figures. Before Christ came, God anointed many of His servants to go to war against evil men and nations, including Abraham, the father of all the faithful (Gen. 14), because Israel was an earthly kingdom and had earthly responsibilities. To protect the nation from being corrupted, God commanded the judges of Israel to kill witches (Ex. 22:18) and to execute grossly immoral people (e.g., Ex. 22:19). He even commanded the rulers to stone to death any young man who would not obey his parents, but had given himself to rebelliousness and self-indulgence (Dt. 21:18–21). But the body of Christ has received no such commandment from God.

Jesus told Pontius Pilate that his followers would engage in earthly conflict if his kingdom was an earthly one (Jn. 18:36), and they would fight not only with guns and knives but with any other earthly weapons available to them, including military might, civil authority, or social activism. Believers would, if Christ's kingdom was of this world, be required to "mind earthly things"; instead, according to Paul, doing that makes them the enemies of God (Phip. 3:18–19).

Heresy/Perversion of the Scriptures

Justin's Statement: The Christian father Irenaeus (whose writings follow) quotes a non-existent scripture which he on one occasion says is from Isaiah (AH3, XX.4) and on another occasion says is from Jeremiah (AH4, XXII.1): "The holy Lord remembered His dead Israel, who slept in the land of sepulture; and He descended to them to make known to them His salvation, that they might be saved." Justin also quotes this verse.

The Truth: We allow for errors in Scripture quotations from the "fathers" because reliable texts may have been wanting to them. However, Justin not only quotes this Scripture, along with other equally unknown verses,

but he also condemns the Jews for having removed them from the Bible (Dial. LXXII). But there is no evidence at all that this or any other scripture was purposefully deleted by the Jews.

Justin's Statement: Justin is adamant that in the resurrection, both the righteous and the wicked will possess the same fleshly bodies in which they walked on earth (1Ap. VIII; On the Res. II). "The flesh will rise perfect and entire," he taught (On the Res. IV).

The Truth: This is false. While it is true that Jesus was raised from the dead with the same physical body with which he lived on earth, afterward he was glorified by the Father with the glory that was his before the foundation of the world (Jn. 17:5). It is a glorified body such as Jesus now has that the saints are waiting to receive (Phip. 3:20–21).

Justin's Statement: Justin holds that the physical body of a sinner, "with its head, hands, feet, and skin," are taken into hell so as to make torment possible (Hort. XXVII).

The Truth: This is false. No fleshly human body has ever been in hell, nor will one ever be. The Bible is very clear about the fact that, after death, the human corpse returns to dust (Gen. 3:19).

Justin's Statement: Concerning the promise of the resurrection given to believers, Justin writes, "[God] gives the promise to the flesh" (On the Res. VIII).

The Truth: This is false. Justin misunderstands Jesus' resurrection in a fleshly body to be an example of how the saints will rise (On the Res. IX), apparently ignorant of Paul's words from 1Corinthians 15:42–44 concerning the resurrection from the dead: "It [the body] is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a physical body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a physical body, and there is a spiritual body."

Justin's Statement: Justin states that God "is called by no proper name" (1Ap. X; 2Ap. VI; Hort. XXI). He refers to the Father as "the nameless God" (1Ap. LXIII; Hort. XXI).

The Truth: This is false. God revealed His name to Moses in Exodus 3:14–15 and 6:2–3. Later, because the Jews superstitiously feared to pronounce His name wherever it appeared in Scripture, its pronunciation was

forgotten and lost to history. But that does not negate the fact that God has a name, that He revealed it to Moses, and that generations of Jews and non-Jews once knew what it was and referred to it often.

Justin’s Statement: Justin states that God created all things out of “unformed matter” (1Ap. X).

The Truth: This is false. If that were true, we would then have to ask, who created the unformed matter? It seems clear from the Scriptures that God created all things from nothing. David sang, “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, and all their host, by the breath of His mouth” (Ps. 33:6). There is no mention of God rearranging pre-existent matter there. In creation, God’s commandment was, “Let it be!”, not “Let it be rearranged” (Gen. 1:3, 6, 14).

The Christian father Irenaeus condemned the heretics of his time for teaching that “the Creator formed the world out of previously existing matter” (AH2, XIV.4). What would he have said of Justin?

Justin’s Statement: Justin teaches that “all who, by human law, are twice married, are in the eye of our Master sinners” (1Ap. XV).

The Truth: This is false. Justin errs, as many Christian ministers still do, in his understanding of Jesus’ teaching on marriage and divorce because he applies to everyone the strict standard that applies only to God’s people.

Jesus was sent from the Father to minister to no one but Jews, God’s covenant people (Mt. 15:24; Rom. 15:8). When a man and a woman marry who are both in covenant with God, remarriage during the lifetime of the first spouse is forbidden (with an exception made for infidelity). Jesus did not speak to any other group of people concerning marriage and divorce.

When Paul taught on the subject of marriage, he, too, allowed married believers to separate; at the same time, and like Jesus, he forbade separated believers to remarry so long as the first spouse lived (1Cor. 7:10–11). However, contrary to what Justin and many of his theological descendants hold, Paul did allow for remarriage if the departed spouse was an unbeliever (1Cor. 7:15).

Justin’s Statement: Justin believes, as many of his Christian descendants do, that the twelve apostles of Jesus “went out into the world” and “proclaimed to every race of men that they were sent by Christ to teach to all the word of God” (1Ap. XXXIX; XLIX).

The Truth: This is false. The gospel that Peter and the earliest apostles taught was for the Jews only, while Paul's gospel, which came later, was for the Gentiles (Gal. 2:7–9). Paul and his fellow workers, not Jesus' twelve apostles, went out into the world and carried the gospel to the Gentiles.

Salvation

Justin's Statement: Justin uses the word *saved* in reference to being received into Paradise at the Final Judgment. Justin understands, as most of Christianity's fathers did, that "each man goes to everlasting punishment or salvation according to the value of his actions" (1Ap. XII). "Not those who make profession," says Justin, "but those who do the works, shall be saved, according to his word" (1Ap. XVI; also LXV).

The Truth: This is true. Salvation will be given only to believers in Christ who do good works. Jesus said so (Mt. 7:21), as did all the prophets and apostles.

Justin's Statement: Justin says that "by [the blood of Christ], those persons who were at one time harlots and unrighteous persons out of all nations are saved" (Dial. CXI), but he is not using the word "saved" as modern Christians do (as a synonym for *conversion*). Rather, he is saying that by the blood of Christ, sinners are delivered from the power of sin so that they sin no more and, so, are prepared to receive salvation when Christ returns. He teaches that once-vile sinners are saved by "receiving remission of sins, and continuing no longer in sin."

The Truth: This is true. It is in harmony with Jesus' and the apostles' doctrine, that only those who are converted and afterward are obedient to Christ will be saved from the wrath of God (Mt. 7:21–27; Rom. 2:13; Jas. 2:24).

Spiritual Gifts and Power

Justin's Statement: Justin acknowledges the reality of prophecy, stating that God "beforehand foretold [the events which] should come to pass" (1Ap. XII) and that the coming of Jesus was predicted many times over many generations, "for in the succession of generations, prophets after prophets arose" (1Ap. XXXI). The number of references in Justin's writings to prophecy are too many to list, but of special importance is his statement that "the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present

time” (Dial. LXXXII). (Significantly, Justin calls upon the Jew, Trypho, to bear witness to the fact that since the time of Christ, prophecy had completely ceased to exist among the Jews – Dial. LXXXVII).

Justin also lists various other gifts among believers in his time (Dial. XXXIX; LXXXVII; LXXXVIII), including those who were driving out demons by the name of Jesus when non-believing exorcists could not (2Ap. VI). However, in another place, Justin acknowledges that exorcism is practiced by the heathen and by Jews as well as by believers, but he condemns the methods which non-believers use (see esp. Dial. LXXXV).

The Truth: Spiritual power continued, but was waning among believers in Justin’s time. He and the other fathers of the Church were apostate not because of the truths they still confessed or the spiritual power they still demonstrated, but because of the errors which they mixed in with those blessings from God.

Superstition

Justin’s Statement: Justin believes the myth concerning the origin of the Septuagint (1Ap. XXXI; Dial. LXXI; Hort. XIII), as did Irenaeus (whose writings we will examine).

According to Justin, Ptolemy, the king of Egypt, wanted to fill the library which he founded in Alexandria with the greatest writings available from all nations. When he requested the Jews to send him men who could translate their holy Scriptures into Greek, they sent seventy of their elders (hence, the Greek word *septuagint*, or seventy) to do it.

However, Ptolemy was suspicious that if those seventy Jewish scholars collaborated in the translation, they might intentionally conceal some truth from him; and so, he ordered his soldiers to separate them so that they could not communicate, and he then commanded them each to produce a translation of the books of the Old Testament by himself. Then, in exactly seventy days, each one had finished his translation, and they all came to the king and gave him their seventy translations. And lo and behold, the seventy translations were identical to one another, differing by not so much as a single Greek letter! As one might expect, the king was dumbstruck, and he was forced to conclude that God had inspired the translation. He then gladly added the Septuagint to his magnificent library.

After telling this story, Justin affirms, “These things are no fable, nor do we narrate fiction” (Hort. XIII).

The Truth: Those things are a fable, and Justin did narrate fiction. The manner in which the Septuagint came about is lost to history; the fanciful tale that Justin repeats simply did not happen.

We know that it is not impossible for God to have given those seventy separated scholars identical translations of the Hebrew Old Testament, for Jesus said, “With God, nothing is impossible” (Lk. 1:37). But by all accounts, the Septuagint contains translation errors. Did they all, then, working in separate places, make those identical mistakes? Who can believe that God inspired seventy Jewish translators, working independently of one another, to produce the same wrong translation?

It may be true that Ptolemy commissioned a translation of the Old Testament into Greek and that there were seventy Jewish scholars who worked on the translation. It may also be true that the translation may have been undertaken so that a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures could be placed in the great library in Alexandria, Egypt. But no reasonable person can believe that seventy men, working alone in seventy different places for seventy days made precisely the same mistakes.

Justin’s Statement: There was a story repeated among some early Christians that when Jesus stepped into the Jordan River to be baptized by John, a fire was ignited in the Jordan River. Justin gives credence to this story (Dial. LXXXVIII).

The Truth: This is false. No fire was ignited in the Jordan River when Jesus was baptized.

The Afterlife

Justin’s Statement: In his classic three-part poem, *The Divine Comedy*, the Italian poet Dante (AD 1265–1321) modeled his depiction of hell on Virgil’s ancient epic, *The Aeneid*. In both of these representations of the afterlife, some of the wicked dead are described as being tormented by evil creatures. Justin is a bridge between those two poets, teaching that when we die, God is able to prevent “every shameless evil angel from taking our souls,” and that when Jesus prayed for deliverance from “the sword, and the lion’s mouth, and from the power of the dog,” he was praying that no one but God would take his soul when he died (Dial. CV, with reference to Psalm 22:20–21).

The Truth: This is false. The wicked in hell are not being tormented by evil angels, or demons. There are no demons in hell. In the prayer of Christ in Psalm 22, the Son of God was not praying that demons wouldn’t

harm him, but to be delivered from cruel and wicked men. Jesus did not, and does not fear demons. Quite the contrary, demons fear him (cf. Mt. 8:29; Jas. 2:19).

Justin's Statement: Justin says that because Jesus prayed to his Father, his soul would not be taken away by demons when he died, "God by His Son teaches us . . . to pray that our souls may not fall into the hands of any such power" (Dial. CV).

The Truth: This is false. Jesus feared God, not the Devil (Heb. 5:7).

By teaching the doctrine Justin teaches, not only has he followed after Virgil's lie but also after the Greek philosopher Plato's doctrine of the fate of the wicked (Hort. XXVII). And by doing so, Justin betrays an idolatrous spirit within himself. Jesus, not Satan, "has the keys of death and of hell" (Rev. 1:18), and the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God, not fear of demons or the Devil.

By portraying Satan as the dreaded god of the underworld (like the Greek god, Hades), in charge of tormenting the souls of the damned, and especially by teaching that even Jesus feared being turned over to demons, Justin promotes the fear of the Devil rather than the fear of God. It is much more dreadful to fall into the hands of God than to fall into the hands of Satan, who himself trembles at the thought of God's wrath.

Justin's teaching on this subject is an ancient lie, and his promotion of Satan's power is an indication of whose spirit has the primary influence over Justin's heart.

Trinitarian Issues

Justin's Statement: According to Justin, Christians hold Jesus "in the second place" after "God Himself", and hold the "prophetic Spirit" in the third place (1Ap. XIII). Quoting Plato as well as Moses in support of his doctrine, Justin continues along this philosophic line to teach that there is a "power next to the first God", and a third power besides (1Ap. LIX).

The Truth: Here, Justin speaks the truth concerning the existence of a "power next to the first God". The Father is the Creator of the Son and is superior to him in every way. However, the Spirit cannot be in a "third place", for the Spirit is not a person; it is God's life, just as our spirit is our life. And God's life, His holy Spirit, is within His body, just as our spirit is within our body.

Justin's Statement: Justin states that God the Father “conversed with some one who was numerically distinct from Himself, and also a rational being” (Dial. LXII).

The Truth: This is true, and the rational being who is numerically distinct from God is the Son, who was revealed in the man, Jesus of Nazareth.

Justin's Statement: Justin condemns some for teaching that the Son is the Father Himself (1Ap. LXIII). To Trypho, he said, “I will attempt to persuade you of what I say, that there is, and that there is said [by the Old Testament Scriptures] to be, another God and Lord subject to the Maker of all things” (Dial. LVI). This second person, says Justin, “is distinct from Him who made all things – numerically, I mean, not [distinct] in will. For I affirm that he has never at any time done anything which He who made the world . . . has not wished him to do” (Dial. LVI).

This second person is called at various times “the Glory of the Lord, now the Son, again Wisdom, again an Angel, then God, and then Lord and Logos” (Dial. LXI). However, as lofty as all these titles are, Justin maintains that it must be kept in mind that whatever titles the Son bears, he received them from one greater than he, that is, the Father (Dial. LXXXVI).

The Truth: This is all true.

Justin does not see Jesus as “co-equal” and “co-eternal” with the Father, as Trinitarians would later teach. He understands that the Son is a person separate from the Father, and that “there were two in number: One upon earth [Jesus]. . . . Another in heaven [the Father], who also is Lord of the Lord on earth” (Dial. CXXIX). Justin disparages the philosophical notion of Plato that there are “three first principles”, preferring Aristotle’s view that there were only two (Hort. VI).

Note: In his writings, Justin teaches that there are, and then again that there are not, three “places” in heaven. The contradictions in his writings make it difficult to avoid the conclusion that Justin’s original works were tampered with.

Justin's Statement: Without explanation, Justin mentions worshipping the holy Spirit (1Ap. VI).

The Truth: Worship of the Spirit of God is foreign to the Scriptures. This is either an addition by a later Christian Trinitarian editor, promoting the idea that the Spirit of God is a person, or Justin wrote something here which he neither explains nor elaborates upon, and which contradicts statements he made in other places.

Justin's Statement: Justin states that there is a power, and only one, who is greater than the Word of God, namely, God Himself who brought forth the Word (1Ap. XII).

The Truth: This is true. Jesus said that the Father is greater than he (Jn. 14:28).

Justin's Statement: Justin calls Jesus the "Apostle of God" (1Ap. XII), the "first-born of God" (1Ap. XXI), and the "only proper Son who has been begotten by God" (1Ap. XXI; Dial. LXI).

The Truth: This is true. Like Ignatius and others, Justin distinguishes the Father from the Son by calling the Father the "unbegotten God" (1Ap. XXV; XLIX).

Justin's Statement: Justin holds that the God of the Old Testament is the Son, not the Father (Dial. LX). It is the Son, says Justin, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, not the Father (Dial. LX).

The Truth: This is false. This doctrine is impossible to defend, in the light of such scriptures as Psalm 110:1, in which the Father (the name revealed to Moses) speaks to His Son. Jesus referred to this scripture as well (Mt. 22:41–45) as an example of his Father speaking to him.

Justin's Statement: Justin says, "Wherever [the Scriptures say], 'God went up from Abraham', or, 'The Lord spoke to Moses', and 'The Lord came down to behold the tower which the sons of men had built', or when 'God shut Noah in the ark', you must not imagine that the unbegotten God Himself came down or went up from any place. For the ineffable Father and Lord of all neither has come to any place, nor walks, nor sleeps, nor rises up, but remains in His own place, wherever that is, quick to behold and quick to hear, *having neither eyes nor ears* [emphasis mine], but being of indescribable might; and He sees all things, and knows all things, and none of us escapes His observation; and He is not moved or confined to one spot in the whole world, for He existed before the world was made. How, then, could He talk with anyone, or be seen by anyone, or appear on the smallest portion of the world, when the people at Sinai were not able to look even on the glory of [Moses] who was sent from Him?" (Dial. CXXVII).

The Truth: This is false. The reason for Justin's insistence that the Father is not the one who descended upon Mount Sinai, nor the one who communicated with Abraham, nor yet that He did many other deeds which

Jehovah is said to have done in the Old Testament, remains a mystery until near the end of his Dialogue with Trypho. There, Justin betrays his excessively philosophical idea of *what* God is, as opposed to the truth revealed in the Scriptures concerning *who* God is. Justin's supreme God is so much unlike man, whom God created in His image, that He never so much as moves or speaks! This is senseless, ruinous philosophy.

In Justin's philosophical mind, God is more a thing than a Being, something to be speculated upon. Justin's God can never be the kind, humble, and loving Being revealed in the Bible, who condescends to communicate with and to care for man. Justin's *thinging* of God is a precursor of Christianity's Trinity doctrine, which later would bring the *thinging* of God to its perfection.

Remarkably, Justin commits this crime, though he condemns Plato for doing the same. Justin points out that while "Moses said, 'He who is'; Plato [said], 'That which is'" (Hort. XXII). But Justin's philosophical description of the heavenly Father certainly would not lead his readers to think of God as "He". But again, Justin's original document may have been tampered with.

Note: The fact that God the Father has a body (separate from Jesus' body) is incontrovertible if the integrity of the Scriptures is to be maintained. The biblical information on this is plenteous.³ Our bodies were created in the image of His body (Gen. 1, 2), and His Son, being made a man, was a reflection not only of God's character but also of His form.

When Justin denies the bodily form of the Father, he opens a philosophical door through which later Christians entered to formulate more philosophical tripe about the Father and the Son. His re-invention of the Father as a philosophical idea leads Justin to discuss how it is that the Son differs from the Father, which then leads him to resort to inscrutable language, speaking of "the essence of God". What in heaven's name does that mean? And who cares to pretend to know? But such is the ostentatious language of men who consider themselves wise, but who have become fools (cf. Rom. 1:22). But the idea caught on, and Justin's concept of God's "essence" was built upon by fools of later generations.

The Childhood of Jesus

Justin's Statement: During his conversation with the Jew Trypho, Justin makes the comment that at the time of Jesus' birth, "he was in possession of his power" (Dial. LXXXVIII).

³ See Appendix, God's Body.

The Truth: This is false. Jesus did say, “All power in heaven and in earth is given to me” (Mt. 28:18), but it was not given to him as a baby. It was only after his baptism and his Temptation that Jesus was anointed by God with power to do good and to heal all that were oppressed by the Devil (Acts 10:37–38). Jesus did not have that power before then. The apostle John said that the miracle which Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee was the beginning of his miracles (Jn. 2:11).

Justin’s Statement: Justin maintains that since Jesus possessed all power from his infancy, he had no need to receive the holy Spirit (Dial. LXXXVIII).

The Truth: This is false. Jesus received the Spirit of God when he was baptized by John in the Jordan River.

Note: The Bible offers very little information about Jesus’ childhood, and so, apostate believers filled in the void by inventing myths about that time of his life. In the second chapter of *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, the boy Jesus makes pools in a muddy creek, miraculously makes the water pure, mixes it with clay, and makes twelve clay sparrows. When a passerby complains to Joseph because this was done on the Sabbath, Joseph rebukes Jesus, and Jesus claps his hands and commands the clay birds to come alive and fly away, which they do. In the third chapter, because Annas the high priest destroys the pools of pure water Jesus had made, Jesus curses Annas’ son, who then withers up and dies. In the fourth chapter, someone bumps into Jesus as he and Joseph walked along the road, and Jesus curses him, and he dies. Such myths continue throughout this forged gospel.

Similar myths are found in other Christian documents. In *The Arabic Infancy Gospel of the Savior* (42), the boy Jesus, sitting as a king and encircled with boy servants, commands a viper to suck the poison back out of a boy that it had bitten. Then Jesus curses the serpent and it explodes and dies. In a forged gospel which claims to be written by Matthew, the boy Jesus amazes the people by entering into a cave to play with a dangerous lioness and her cubs, and then divides the Jordan River, à la the prophet Elijah, and crosses it with them (*The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, 35–36).

None of the above myths were adopted by the Apostates into their Christian tradition, but others were, such as the myth of the “Immaculate

Conception”⁴ and the myth that Mary remained a virgin perpetually and other than Jesus, bore no children.⁵

Justin’s Statement: The perceptive Trypho raises a question concerning one of Isaiah’s prophecies of the Christ, “The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him” (11:2). How can it be, he asks, that the Spirit of God will “rest upon” Jesus, as though he was without it, if Jesus already had it?

Justin’s reply is that Trypho does not understand the meaning of “rest upon”. By “rest upon him”, Justin maintains, Isaiah meant only that the Spirit and its gifts would henceforth spring from Jesus alone. In other words, spiritual power and gifts *rest* in Jesus now, and only through him does any man partake of them.

The Truth: Justin’s definition of “rest upon” is a clever attempt to avoid admitting to error. Only after Jesus was baptized did the Spirit come upon him, which, despite Justin’s denial, is the clear meaning of “rest upon” in Isaiah 11:2, and in John 1:32.

Note: An old saying goes, “Oh, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.” Justin provides a perfect example of this practice. Claiming that Jesus possessed all power from the womb, Justin is forced to invent a second false teaching, a false definition of “rest upon”, in order to cover for his first one. But as the Apostate father Irenaeus would later write, “One ignorance cannot be done away with by means of another ignorance” (AH5, XXII.1). Justin should have confessed his mistake when Trypho pointed it out to him, rather than try to argue his way past it.

Jesus’ Occupation

Justin’s Statement: Justin holds that Jesus’ occupation before his baptism was that of a carpenter (Dial. LXXXVIII).

⁴ The “Immaculate Conception” is a Christian doctrine which holds that Jesus’ mother, Mary, was born sinless and remained that way throughout her life. It became official dogma in the Roman Catholic Church only in 1854.

⁵ A number of early Church fathers taught that Mary remained a virgin forever. Among them are Hippolytus in the early third century (*Against Beron and Helix*: Fragment VIII), Athanasius in the mid-fourth century (*Discourses Against the Arians*, 2:70), and Jerome in the late fourth century (*Against Helvidius: The Perpetual Virginité of Mary* 19). As do many modern scholars, Origen in the mid-third century (*Commentary on Matthew*, 2:17) claimed that this doctrine was first revealed in the apocryphal Gospel of James, but there is nothing in that book which supports the notion of Mary’s perpetual virginity except its claim that Jesus’ brothers were actually his half-brothers, sons of Joseph by a previous marriage.

The Truth: The Bible is not perfectly clear on this point. Some of Jesus' contemporaries called Jesus a carpenter (Mk. 6:3), but this may have only been because he was the son of a carpenter, which is also what they called him (Mt. 13:55). The only biblical statement concerning Jesus' occupation prior to being anointed by God comes from the prophet Zechariah (13:5–6): "But he will declare, 'I am no prophet; I am one who works the ground, for a man sold me when I was young.' And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds in your hands?' And he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'"

Apparently, then, Jesus worked in the fields before he went to be baptized by John.

Greek Mythology

Justin's Statement: Justin repeatedly says that ancient pagan poets and philosophers learned much from Moses and from Israel's prophets, but that they were inspired by demons to twist the truth and to fashion myths which glorified those demons, giving certain characters appealing names and making them out to be gods and goddesses (1Ap. XLIV). He wrote, "[The Greek myths] have been uttered by the influence of wicked demons, to deceive and lead astray the human race. For having heard it proclaimed by the prophets that the Christ was to come . . . they put forward many to be called sons of Jupiter, under the impression that they would be able to produce in men the idea that the things which were said with regard to Christ were mere marvelous tales" (1Ap. LIV).

The Truth: This is true, and Justin's characterization of the gods of ancient Greece and Rome as demons in disguise is bold, considering his times.

Justin's Statement: "It is not", Justin writes, "that we [believers] hold the same opinion as others [the heathen], but that all speak in imitation of ours" (1Ap. LIX).

The Truth: This is true of many Classical myths. Justin gives specific examples from the Bible which served as springboards for certain myths (1Ap. LIV), including Noah, whom the Greeks renamed Deucalion (2Ap. VII).

The Leaven of Philosophy

Justin's Statement: Justin sees himself as a philosopher, as is evidenced by his wearing the distinctive pallium of philosophers (Dial. I), and he calls the gospel of Christ a philosophy (XX).

The Truth: Justin suggests that God’s power is the difference between the gospel and ancient heathen errors, but he relies only upon refined philosophical arguments rather than the power of God to make his case, and he ridicules those who would ask for more than that (*Fragments of the Lost Work of Justin on the Resurrection*, 1).

Justin’s Statement: To fully appreciate Justin’s concept of the gospel, one must hear his own words: “[Christ] is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived reasonably are Christians . . . as among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus and men like them; and among the barbarians, Abraham, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, and Elijah, and many others” (1Ap. XLVI).

The Truth: The foundation of Justin’s philosophy is that all people, from any culture at any time, who lived according to reason were, in fact, Christians. That may be true, since the religion of Christianity is a religion of man, not of God. But Justin’s philosophy has nothing whatsoever to do with Christ.

Justin’s Statement: Justin’s faith in philosophy is exemplified by his quote from the Greek philosopher Plato: “Unless both rulers and ruled philosophize, it is impossible to make states blessed” (1Ap. III).

The Truth: This is false. Philosophy does not make any nation blessed; God alone determines whether nations prosper.

Justin’s Statement: Justin says that Plato’s trust in Homer’s theology is a sure indication that Plato was perverse (Hort. V). But then, Justin denies that the teachings of Plato are different from those of Christ, saying only that they are not in all ways similar (2Ap. XIII).

The Truth: There is no connection between the teachings of Christ and any human, whether a philosopher or not. Through the Spirit that Jesus purchased for us with his blood, God revealed an entirely new way of life, an entirely new revelation of His power, wisdom, and goodness. It was of that new revelation that God was speaking when He said through Isaiah, “Behold, I do a new thing!” (Isa. 43:19). And of this covenant, He said, “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not the kind of covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt” (Jer. 31:31–32a). This is a new kind of covenant; no one has ever had such thoughts as are revealed by the Spirit of God, as the prophet Isaiah said, “From the beginning of time, no one has heard, no ear has perceived, nor eye seen, O God,

but you, what He will do for him who earnestly looks for Him” (Isa. 64:4).

Justin’s Statement: Justin sees Jesus as the ultimate philosopher, despite his disclaimer that Jesus is not “the mere instrument of human reason” (2Ap. X). He classifies the things Jesus taught as “divine philosophy” (2Ap. XII), “more lofty than all human philosophy” (2Ap. XIV).

The Truth: That is false. Human intelligence has nothing to do with Christ, so it is misleading even to say that Jesus is the greatest philosopher of all. Justin does admit that Jesus was not “a sophist” and that “his word was the power of God” (1Ap. XIV); however, Jesus’ miracle-working power is not what Justin has in mind. Rather, Justin’s power is the power of persuasion through the use of logic and reason.

Justin’s Statement: Justin’s confession before Rome’s emperor was that “on some points we [Christian teachers] teach the same things as the poets and philosophers whom you honor, and on other points are fuller and more divine in our teaching” (1Ap. XX).

The Truth: This is true, but Christian teaching has nothing to do with Christ, other than what Christian teachers claim. The religion of Christianity is a philosophy, but the gospel of Christ is not.

Justin’s Statement: Justin defends the ancient philosopher Socrates as being a man guided by the Word of God and as “partially knowing Christ” (2Ap. X).

The Truth: This is false. Socrates and the other philosophers that Justin admires were not led by the same Spirit of holiness which led God’s servants. At his trial before the men of Athens, Socrates adamantly insisted that he *did* believe in the Greek gods. In Socrates’ vigorous cross-examination of Meletus, one of his accusers, he successfully proved that Meletus had falsely charged him of not believing in the Greek gods. Indeed, Socrates’ dying request was that his friend Crito would offer a sacrifice to the god Asclepius (*Phaedo*, 118).

Justin’s Statement: Justin held that “every race of men” was a partaker of the Word of God (1Ap. XLVI), for “a part of the Word” was “diffused [among men]” (2Ap. VIII) and “is in every man” (2Ap. X).

The Truth: It is true, of course, that God has blessed, in many ways, all people everywhere (Mt. 5:45). God is the Provider for all mankind, and the Giver of “every good and perfect gift”. But Justin stretches that truth

too far, leaving the impression that God spoke through Homer as well as the prophets.

Justin's Statement: "Whatever things were rightly said among all men are the property of Christians," wrote Justin (2Ap. XIII).

The Truth: This is false. Whatever things that have ever been rightly done or said among all men belong to Christ.

Justin's Statement: Justin's Word of God is "Reason Himself, who took shape, and became man, and was called Jesus Christ" (1Ap. V).

The Truth: Paul's Word of God is described in somewhat similar terms, actually. To him, the Word was "Christ, the Power of God and the Wisdom of God" (1Cor. 1:24).

Justin's Statement: Justin teaches that "philosophy is the greatest possession, and most honorable before God . . . and these are truly holy men who have bestowed attention on philosophy" (Dial. II).

The Truth: This is false. Philosophy is not a greater possession, and more honorable, than the holy Spirit of God. And philosophy has never made anyone holy.

Paul wrote, "When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with lofty speech or wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. . . . And my message and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, so that your faith might not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1Cor. 2:1–5). In contrast, at the conclusion of Justin's work, there is nothing for his hearers to rest upon except his impressive intellect and erudition.

According to Paul, relying upon philosophy would ruin the faith of the saints (Col. 2:8), and thanks to men like Justin, it eventually did.

≡ IRENAEUS ≡

(c. 130–202)

Against Heresies (Five Books: AH1, AH2, etc.)
Fragments (Frag. Ire.)

Introduction

Irenaeus claims that as a young child, he saw the aged Polycarp. If the dates assigned to Polycarp are correct, then Irenaeus was a boy in the late first or early second century. Irenaeus resided and ministered in the territory of ancient Gaul (modern France), in the city of Lyons, where he and a number of other Christians are reported to have been martyred in 202.

In January, 2022, Irenaeus was officially declared to be a “Doctor of the Church” by Pope Francis, thus becoming the thirty-seventh member of that group of theologians recognized by the Roman Church. Irenaeus’ writings have been characterized as “monuments of fidelity to Christ, and to the charges of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Jude.”⁶ And of his principal work, *Against Heresies*, the same scholar wrote, “*Against Heresies* is one of the most precious remains of Christian antiquity.”⁷ Let’s examine his work now and see how precious his writings really are.

⁶ Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, p. 309.

⁷ Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, p. 311.

Anti-Semitism *No Information*

Ceremony

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus teaches that the incense which rises from believers to God is not physical, but is the prayers of saints (AH4, XVII.6, on Rev. 5:8), and he suggests that there is no ritual of incense-burning ordained in the New Testament as there was in the Old Testament (Ex. 30:1).

The Truth: That is true.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus says that the using of earthly material in the celebration of the Eucharist is a spiritual act (Frag. Ire. XXXVIII).

The Truth: This is false. Using earthly materials, or “elements” as Paul called them (Gal. 4:3, 9), in ceremonial worship is manifestly not spiritual, but carnal. It is, as Paul would say, “worship in the flesh”.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus says that Jesus and the apostles handed down the tradition of performing the Eucharist as a sacrifice (AH4, XVI.5; XVIII.1; Frag. Ire. XXXVII).

The Truth: This is false. Neither Jesus nor his apostles handed down any such tradition.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus teaches that by partaking of the bread and wine of Christian communion, human bodies are “nourished with the body of the Lord and with his blood” and “are no longer corruptible” (AH4, XVIII.5). The Christian Eucharist, says Irenaeus, has power to give human bodies immortality (AH5, II.2, 3).

The Truth: This is false. The elements of the Christian communion ritual do nothing out of the ordinary for the communicants' bodies. All human bodies will die and decay, Christian and non-Christian alike.

Irenaeus' Statement: The flesh's participation in Christian communion, says Irenaeus, is proof that the flesh will be raised incorruptible from the grave (AH5, II.3).

The Truth: This is false. Paul said the bodies of resurrected saints will no longer be fleshly (1Cor. 15:35–44).

Mary Was in a Hurry

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus says that when Mary told Jesus there was no more wine at the wedding feast (Jn. 2:3), her real purpose was to persuade him to change the water into wine so that she could partake of the Eucharist ritual. Her crime, says Irenaeus, was impatience, and “the Lord, checking her untimely haste, said ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour [to initiate the Eucharist ceremony] has not yet come’” (AH3, XVI.7).

The Truth: This is silly. When Mary told Jesus that the wine was gone, she had no motive but to tell him that the wine was gone. That Mary had a desire for Jesus to inaugurate the eucharistic ceremony is pure fiction. Jesus never ordained a eucharistic ceremony, either then or later, and Mary never wanted it, either then or later.

Christian Baptism

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus states that infants who are put through the water baptism ritual are born again to God (AH2, XXII. 4).

The Truth: This is false. There is no holy water on this earth, and no water baptism has ever washed sins away. It is impossible for anything other than the blood of Christ to do that.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus points to Naaman’s “baptism” in the Jordan River, and his healing, as a symbol of how the “sacred water” of Christian baptism cleanses the repentant person from sin (Frag. Ire. XXXIV).

The Truth: This is false. Naaman was not baptized. He washed himself in the Jordan River seven times, as Elisha had told him to do (2Kgs. 5:9–14).

Irenaeus' Statement: Concerning the baptism of the Spirit and the baptism of water, Irenaeus teaches that “both are necessary, since both contribute towards the life of God” (AH3, XVII.2).

The Truth: That was true of Peter’s gospel for the Jews, but it is contrary to the truth Paul preached among the Gentiles. Paul taught them that “there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5), and he exhorted his Gentile converts not to practice ceremonial works, including water baptism, for such works have nothing to do with Christ (Eph. 2:8–9). Paul

said, “Christ did not send me to baptize [in water]” (1Cor. 1:17), for the baptism of the Spirit is the only baptism God ordained for the Gentiles.

Not Bowing the Knee

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus declares that from the days of the apostles, the Church was forbidden to bow the knee on the day of Pentecost, as “a symbol of the resurrection” (Frag. Ire. VI).

The Truth: No one on earth with good sense believes this.

Politics/Violence

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus declares that Paul and Peter “founded and organized” the “universally known Church at Rome” (AH3, III.2).

The Truth: This is a Christian myth. Believers were established in Rome long before Paul ever set foot there (Rom. 1:8–10), much less Peter. There is no biblical evidence to support Christians’ claim that Peter ever went to Rome. However, even if Peter did go to Rome in his old age, it certainly was not to “found and organize the Church.”

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus appears to embrace the notion that “succession of bishops” from the apostles, from Peter especially, carries with it great spiritual authority (AH3, III.2; AH4, XXVI.2).

The Truth: God’s ordination is not bestowed by succession. God’s method of bestowing spiritual authority is by the anointing of the Spirit, and that alone.

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus says that Jesus accomplished his work “not by violent means . . . but by means of persuasion, as became a God of counsel, who does not use violent means to obtain what He desires” (AH5, I.1).

The Truth: Later generations of Christians, who fought against, abused, tortured, and killed their enemies, and sometimes each other, should have listened to Irenaeus in this matter. Righteousness cannot be imposed upon anyone.

Heresy/Perversion of the Scriptures

Jesus' Age

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus holds that Jesus lived to be an old man (AH2, XXII.4–6), saying that men who had known the apostles reported that the apostles themselves taught that Jesus lived to be old (AH2, XXII.5).

The Truth: This is false. Irenaeus, opposing the heretics' position that Jesus lived only one year after his baptism (AH1, III.3), goes too far in the opposite direction in order to prove them wrong.

Jesus' Lineage

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus says that Jesus was a descendent of both Levi and Judah (Frag. Ire. XVII).

The Truth: Jesus came from the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14). The only evidence which might suggest that the blood of Levi also ran in Jesus' veins is the fact that Mary was a kinswoman to Elizabeth (Lk. 1:36). But that proves nothing. Neither the prophets nor the apostles say anything about the Messiah coming from Levi.

The Birth of John the Baptist

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus says that the cry of John at his birth loosened his father's tongue so that he could speak (Frag. Ire. XLVII).

The Truth: This is false. The baby's birth cry took place eight days before Zacharias' tongue was loosed. It was only after Zacharias wrote on a tablet, "John is his name", that the Lord loosened his tongue (Lk. 1:57–64).

Jesus' Breath

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus taught that when Jesus breathed on his disciples in John 20:22, they received the holy Spirit (Frag. Ire. XXI; LII).

The Truth: This is false, but it is a doctrine still propagated by many Christians. The disciples received the Spirit when Jesus told them they would, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4–5; 2:4; 15:8).

The Resurrection

Irenaeus' Statement: Along with many other early Christians, Irenaeus believes that resurrected bodies will be made of flesh (AH5, VII.1), “for as the flesh is capable of corruption, so is it also of incorruption” (AH5, XII.1). He writes, “the new flesh which rises again is the same which also received the new cup [of the Christian Eucharist]” (AH5, XXXIII.1). He says, “It is not one thing which dies and another which is brought to life” (AH5, XII.3).

The Truth: This is false. Paul plainly taught that the believer’s resurrected body will not be made of flesh, but would be spiritual in nature. He compared the burying of a dead saint’s body with the planting of a seed: “That which you sow, you do not sow the body that shall be,” adding that “it is sown a physical body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a physical body, and there is a spiritual body” (1Cor. 15:37, 44). And to the saints at Philippi, Paul said that Jesus “will transform our lowly body into the likeness of his glorious body” (Phip. 3:21).

When Jesus rose from the dead, he was in his natural, fleshly body, the one that was crucified, because he had not yet been glorified. He even showed his disciples the crucifixion scars (Lk. 24:40). Terrified at his sudden appearance into the room, they thought they were seeing a ghost; but Jesus comforted them by saying, “Touch me and see! A ghost doesn’t have flesh and bones the way you see I have” (Lk. 24:39). But after his ascension into heaven, he received the glorified body which he now has. John saw that body in Revelation 1, and it shone like the sun. There are no crucifixion marks in Jesus’ glorified hands, no gash from the spear in his side. A glorified body cannot be harmed by earthly weapons. That is the kind of body Jesus has now and will give to his saints, not a fleshly body, as Irenaeus teaches (e.g., AH2, XXIX.2).

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus so strongly believes that resurrected bodies will be made of flesh that he puts that doctrine on a par with the doctrine of redemption by the blood of Jesus (AH5, II.2), saying that it is “the utmost blasphemy” to deny it. He even dares to say, “If God does not vivify what is mortal, and does not bring back the corruptible to incorruption, He is not a God of power” (AH5, III.2).

The Truth: This is wrong. It is foolish for Irenaeus to condemn God if the Almighty does not agree with his doctrine.

Note: Some saints in Corinth had doubts about the resurrection because they could not understand how natural bodies could arise from the dead, seeing that, after death, those bodies decay and return to the earth. Paul explained to them that we *must* have new bodies, for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1Cor. 15:50). He assured them that “as we have borne the likeness of the earthly [Adam], we shall also bear the likeness of the heavenly [the glorified Christ]” (1Cor. 15:49).

The bodies we have now are not in heaven, but the bodies we will receive in the resurrection *are* now in heaven, and we are waiting to receive them. Peter refers to the new bodies as the inheritance “reserved in heaven for you” (1Pet. 1:4). Paul earnestly longed for his “house that is from heaven” (2Cor. 5:2), knowing that “if our earthly home be taken down, we have a building from God, a house not made by hand, eternal in the heavens” (2Cor. 5:1).

Irenaeus’ Statement: Paul, in speaking of the difference between our physical bodies and the spiritual ones we will receive in the resurrection, said, “As we have borne the likeness of the earthly [body of Adam], we shall also bear the likeness of the heavenly [body of Christ]” (1Cor. 15:49). Irenaeus asks, “When did we bear the image of him who is of the earth? Doubtless it was when those actions spoken of as ‘works of the flesh’ used to be wrought in us. And then again, when [do we bear] the image of the heavenly? Doubtless when he says, ‘Ye have been washed,’ believing in the name of the Lord, and receiving his Spirit” (AH5, XI.2).

The Truth: This is a perversion of Paul’s teaching. By the phrase, “the image of the earthly”, Paul was not describing the deeds we have done, but the fleshly bodies we possess now. And with his phrase, “the image of the heavenly”, Paul was describing the spiritual bodies we will receive from God that are like Jesus’ glorified body.

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus says that Paul’s phrase, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” does not mean that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Instead, he teaches that it means a man who is *merely* flesh and blood (does not have the holy Spirit) cannot inherit the kingdom (AH5, IX.4). Without the Spirit, says Irenaeus, a man is merely flesh and blood (AH5, IX.1). “The flesh, therefore, when destitute of the Spirit of God . . . cannot possess the kingdom of God” (AH5, IX.3). His point is that man’s body of flesh *will* inherit the kingdom of God if the Spirit of God is in that body.

The Truth: That is not what Paul was teaching.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus teaches that when the Spirit enters our bodies, it inherits the flesh of the saints. The “various parts of the man”, claims Irenaeus, “are inherited by the Spirit when they are translated into the kingdom of God” (AH5, IX.4). Justin also seems to have taught something like this (Frag. Just. V).

The Truth: What a lousy inheritance for the Spirit – worthless flesh! That is a useless inheritance because this entire physical creation, including all flesh, will be destroyed (2Pet. 3:10–12). From his original denial that bodies of the faithful will be changed from fleshly to spiritual bodies, Irenaeus has painted himself into the proverbial corner and makes increasingly outlandish doctrinal pronouncements in order to justify his error.

Irenaeus' Statement: If one wonders how the Spirit can inherit decomposed flesh, Irenaeus explains, “[Our] bodies also do rise again. For although they go to corruption, yet they do not perish; for the earth, receiving the remains, preserves them” (Frag. Ire. XII).

The Truth: How the earth preserves the decomposing flesh of the dead is not explained. And with that bizarre statement, Irenaeus forces the reader to choose between common sense (the indisputable fact that the earth does not preserve dead bodies) and his doctrine (human flesh is made immortal by partaking of Christian communion).

What happened to Irenaeus here is a common problem among heretics. Having begun with a false premise, and finding himself contradicted by clear evidence, as well as by common sense, Irenaeus twists the meaning of the Scriptures to support an otherwise insupportable doctrine. There are similar statements from Irenaeus which I could include, but the point has been amply made.

Irenaeus' Statement: Paul, in another letter, encourages his readers by teaching that if our earthly bodies “dissolve” and return to the earth, we need not be dismayed, for we “have a building from God, a house not made by hand, eternal in the heavens” (2Cor. 5:1–4). But Irenaeus condemns those who, like Paul, teach that the “eternal houses” which are now in heaven refer to new bodies that saints will receive. Such people, says Irenaeus, “make perverse and crooked interpretations of all the [biblical] passages, so as to overturn and alter the sense of the words” (AH5, XIII.5).

The Truth: To believe that our mortal bodies must be changed into immortal, spiritual bodies is not a “perverse and crooked interpretation” of Paul’s words. It is the truth.

Only to the Jews

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus teaches that after the apostles received the Spirit, “they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings” (AH3, I.1).

The Truth: This is false. The twelve apostles of Christ remained within the community of Israel and were never sent out into the Gentile world, even if Peter was sent by God to open the door of the kingdom to them (Acts 10). Jesus’ twelve disciples were ministers only of the circumcision (Jews), just as Jesus was while he was here on earth. Paul was the apostle whom God sent to the Gentiles (cf. Gal. 2:7–8).

Concerning Adam and Eve

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus insists that Adam repented of his sin in the garden, was forgiven by God, and, at the end, was saved by Christ. “It was necessary”, he says, that it should be so (AH3, XXIII.1).

The Truth: There is nothing in the Bible concerning Adam’s salvation or damnation. Being an unresolvable mystery, the matter of Adam’s eternal judgment is nothing for us to be concerned with, and I would have omitted mention of it, as I did other questionable opinions of Irenaeus, except that Irenaeus insists that all who doubt what he says about Adam “shut themselves out from life for ever” (AH3, XXIII.8). Irenaeus thus sets a standard for obtaining eternal life that God has not set.

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus says that if Adam was not pardoned and saved, then God Himself was conquered by the Devil (AH4, XXIII.1).

The Truth: This is nonsense. God said, “I will show mercy to whomever I show mercy” (Ex. 33:19; Rom. 9:15). If God refused to grant repentance to Adam, then God refused to grant repentance to Adam, and He has not been, and never will be, defeated by the Devil or anyone else.

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus teaches that Adam and Eve were created not as adults but as children and had to grow up before they could procreate (AH3, XXII.4).

The Truth: God called Adam a man from the moment of his creation (Gen. 1:26), and Eve was called a “woman” from the moment of hers (Gen. 2:22). Further, if Adam and Eve were created as children, Irenaeus could not have been telling the truth when in another place he taught that Adam sinned on the day that he was created (AH5, XXIII.2). Does Irenaeus think that Adam sinned as a little boy by receiving the forbidden fruit from the little girl Eve, and then eating it?

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus says that Satan’s promise that Adam and Eve “would become as gods” (Gen. 3:5) “was in no way possible” for them (AH3, XXIII.1).

The Truth: This is false. After eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God said that Adam had “become like one of us” (Gen. 3:22). So, Irenaeus teaches that what God said happened did not happen.

The Devil

Irenaeus’ Statement: As most Christians do, Irenaeus calls the Devil a fallen, or “apostate”, angel (AH4, XL.3; AH5, XXI.3).

The Truth: This is false. The Devil is not an angel; he is a cherub (Ezek. 28:14), which is a species of heavenly creatures completely different from angels. One major difference is that cherubs have wings, while angels do not.

The Antichrist

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus teaches that the coming of the Antichrist is a future event (AH5, XXV.1; XXVIII.2; XXIX.2, etc.). He also teaches that the Beast, the evil world ruler described in the book of Revelation, is the Antichrist (AH5, XXV.3, 4).

The Truth: This is false. Long before Irenaeus, many antichrists had come, a fact to which the apostle John referred as a fulfillment of the prophecy that the Antichrist(s) should come (1Jn. 2:18; 4:3). This is the reason the word *antichrist* is not found in the book of Revelation. When John wrote Revelation, he had already seen antichrists multiplying all around him. The Beast of John’s Revelation is not the Antichrist.

Neither did Paul teach that the Antichrist (the “man of sin”) would come in the future, but only that he would *be revealed* in the future: “Let no one deceive you by any means. That day [the coming of the Lord] will not come, except the Apostasy come first and the man of lawlessness be

revealed, the son of damnation, who opposes and exalts himself above everything called God or that is worshipped” (2Thess. 2:3–4a).

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus says that the Antichrist shall (in the future) sit in the temple of God (AH5, XXV.2).

The Truth: Paul said that the Antichrist was already sitting there. The only earthly temple of God on earth is the body of Christ, as Paul said to the saints in Corinth, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1Cor. 3:16; cf. 2Cor. 6:16). It grieved Paul to see the Antichrist already sitting in those people’s temples, that is, in their hearts.⁸

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus not only teaches that the Antichrist would in the future sit in the temple of God but also that the temple would be a physical building that will someday be built in Jerusalem (AH5, XXV.2).

The Truth: This is false. The only temple of God that exists on earth is the body of Christ. “You yourselves are the temple of the living God”, wrote Paul to the saints (2Cor. 6:16). So, even if someone in the future builds a building for worship in Jerusalem and calls it the temple of God, it will not be the temple of God. What men call a thing is irrelevant; God is not confused by our delusions. Nothing can be the temple of God if God does not dwell there, and He “does not dwell in temples made with hands” (Acts 7:48), but He does dwell in the hearts of His saints (1Cor. 3:16; cf. Jn. 14:23).

Being Spiritual

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus quotes Paul’s words, “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect”, and he says that Paul was referring to everyone who has received the Spirit, “who through the Spirit of God do speak with all languages, as he himself also used to speak” (AH5, VI.1).

The Truth: This is false. In writing to “those who are perfect”, Paul was not speaking to everyone who had received the Spirit and spoken in tongues. He was speaking to those who had matured in Christ after receiving the Spirit, for they alone are the “spiritual” among God’s children (cf. 1Cor. 3:1–3).

⁸ For more on this, see my online gospel tract, “The Anti-Christ” at GoingtoJesus.com.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus later amends his definition of a perfect person in Christ as one who has “had the Spirit of God remaining in him, and has preserved his soul and body blameless, holding fast the faith of God . . . and [has maintained his] righteous dealings with respect to his neighbors” (AH5, VI.1). And again, he says that spiritual people are those “who possess the earnest of the Spirit, and who are not enslaved by the lust of the flesh, but are subject to the Spirit, and who in all things walk according to the light of reason” (AH5, VIII.2).

The Truth: This is true, and it is an improvement over Irenaeus' earlier statements concerning what it means to be spiritual.

Irenaeus' Statement: As opposed to spiritual people, Irenaeus defines carnal people as people who “have no thought of anything else but carnal things” (AH5, VIII.2).

The Truth: This is an inadequate definition. Carnally minded people may ponder a great deal on spiritual things, as Irenaeus himself did. They are carnally minded, not because they think of nothing but earthly things, but because what they think is not led by the holy Spirit.

Joshua's Face

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus teaches that Joshua's face glowed brightly, though not as brightly as Moses' face did, when Moses laid his hands on Joshua's head (Frag. Ire. XX).

The Truth: This did not happen.

Salvation

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus teaches that “without the Spirit of God, we cannot be saved” (AH5, IX.3; Frag. Ire. XXVI). He also says that it is the communion of the Spirit by which we are saved (AH5, XI.1), and again, that it is by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God that we are saved (AH5, XI.1).

The Truth: All these statements are true. They indicate that Irenaeus understands that salvation is wrought in the lives of God's people by His Spirit and that without the Spirit of God, one has no hope of salvation. Paul taught the same: “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him,” and, “If you live after the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom. 8:9, 13).

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus condemns some heretics for teaching that they will be saved by virtue of their being “spiritual”, rather than on the basis of their conduct (AH1, VI.2).

The Truth: If those heretics were teaching that how one lives will not matter in the Final Judgment as long as he has the Spirit, Irenaeus is right to condemn them. One’s conduct will determine whether or not he is saved in the end; the Bible never wavers from that truth. But because the conduct of a spiritual person is always godly, being spiritual will save the soul, contrary to what Irenaeus says here.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus uses “to save” with the meaning of “to rescue” numerous times (AH2, VI.2; AH4, XXVIII.3).

The Truth: This is true. “To rescue” is one of the biblical meanings for the phrase, “to save”. For example, the Bible says that Jesus “saved” Peter from drowning (Mt. 14:30–31).

Irenaeus' Statement: At least twice, Irenaeus appears to use the term *saved* as modern Christian fundamentalists use it (AH5, VI.1), that is, as a synonym for conversion. However, a few sentences later, he clarifies what he thinks, which is that “salvation” refers to the eternal inheritance of the righteous (AH5, VI.1).

The Truth: *Converted* is never a proper meaning for the word *saved*, and Irenaeus only appears to use it so, as a careful reading of his works shows. He is right to see salvation as God’s future and final reward for the faithful.

Spiritual Gifts and Power

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus states that the gifts of the Spirit are still being exercised in his day (AH2, XXX.8), as well as miracles being wrought (AH2, XXXII.4). He says that the gift of prophecy comes upon “those to whom God sends His grace from above” (AH1, XIII.4), and he tells of the dead being brought back to life by an Assembly of believers “directing its prayers to the Lord” (AH2, XXXI.2, 5) and that those who were brought back to life “remained among us for many years” (AH2, XXXII.4). “Others have foreknowledge of things to come; they see visions and utter prophetic expressions” (AH2, XXXII.4). Others healed the sick “by laying their hands upon them,” while some cast out demons by the power of the Spirit (AH2, XXXII.4). In fact, he states that miracles were “frequently done in the brotherhood” (AH2, XXXI.2), so that the

saints had grown “accustomed to work miracles” (AH2, XXXII.5). Irenaeus says that “the name of our Lord Jesus Christ even now confers benefits [upon men], and cures thoroughly and effectively all who anywhere believe on him” (AH2, XXXII.5).

The Truth: Irenaeus’ testimony is believable. He is like other early Church fathers, in that the miraculous was still a part of their faith. Irenaeus seems to employ Paul’s euphemism for the Spirit speaking when someone is baptized with it when he says that Paul wrote to those “who had received the Spirit of God, ‘by which we cry, Abba, Father’” (Rom. 8:15; AH5, VIII.1).

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus claims that certain Jews of his time were still exorcising demons by calling upon the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (AH2, VI.2).

The Truth: This is interesting, but doubtful. The only biblical example of Jews without Christ attempting to exorcise demons is found in Acts 19, and in that case, the Jewish exorcists failed miserably.

Superstition

The Myth of John’s Fear

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus describes the apostle John as cutting short his visit to a bath house in Ephesus when he discovered Cerinthus, a heretic, bathing there. He says that the apostle fled in terror, saying, “Let us fly, lest even the bath house fall down because Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is within” (AH3, III.4).

The Truth: This is Christian mythology at its worst, misrepresenting God’s justice and depicting His apostles as superstitious cowards. John knew God better than to fear that He would cause a building to collapse on top of him because a heretic was in it. And no apostle ever fled in terror from a heretic. This story, which Irenaeus tells with utmost seriousness, is a silly myth.

The Septuagint

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus adheres to the mythological origin of the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint (AH3, XXI.2; AH4, XXI.2), as the Reader has seen that Justin did.

The Truth: Irenaeus should not have repeated as true the “cunningly devised fable” of the Septuagint’s origin. No one who places faith in such myths can know the difference between the truth and a lie.

Trinitarian Issues

The Word

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus teaches that the Word of the Father descended to earth and “is the same also that ascended.” This Word, he says, is “the Only-begotten Son of the only God . . . our Lord Jesus Christ” (AH1, IX.3). He also teaches that the Word was God’s agent in creation (AH1, XXII.1).

The Truth: This is all true. At no time does Irenaeus embrace the later Christian contention that the Bible itself is the Word of God. Whenever Irenaeus uses the phrase, “Word of God”, he uses it rightly, either as a reference to what the Father says or as a reference to the person of the Son.

Note: To further the appeal of his religion, Satan raises up religious teachers who are transparently false. Examples in the late 20th century in the United States were the cult leaders Jim Jones and David Koresh. Satan’s purpose for inspiring such men is to give his Christian ministers someone at which to point a disapproving finger. By that, his ministers appear to be defenders of the Faith; however, both the transparent heretics and the disguised ones work for the same master. The first are Satan’s expendables, despised by him, but useful for his purposes. The latter are Satan’s pride and joy, for whom he sacrifices the other.

Satan used Irenaeus this way. Having inspired some to proclaim obvious and even outlandish falsehoods, he offered Irenaeus and other of his ministers a target at which to aim his invective, thus turning believers’ attention away from Irenaeus’ false doctrines to the false doctrines of others.

There has never been a danger of obvious heretics “deceiving, if it were possible, the very elect” of God. The danger lies in giving ear to the disguised heretics, such as Irenaeus. The apostle Paul saw his Gentile converts heading toward that pitfall, and he earnestly warned them not to be taken in by the false teachers who were trying to win them: “Such men are false-apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan transforms himself into a messenger of light. So, it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves to be like ministers of righteousness” (2Cor. 11:13–15a).

Irenaeus' Statement: After commenting upon a verse in Psalms concerning creation, Irenaeus says, “He [the Father] commanded, and they were created.” Then Irenaeus asks, “Whom, therefore, did He command? The Word, no doubt, by whom the heavens were established” (AH3, VIII.3).

Irenaeus teaches that the Father is “God, the only Creator”, and “of His own free will, He created all things” (AH2, I.1). At the same time, he acknowledges that the Father created all things *through* His Son: “The rule of truth which we hold is that there is one God Almighty, who made all things by His Word” (AH1, XXII.1). “The Word”, of course, is the Son of God, and accordingly, Irenaeus states that “the Father made all things by him” (AH1, XXII.1).

“Just as regards success in war, which is ascribed to the king because the king, even though not personally in the battle, commanded the battle to take place, so the Father is credited with being the Creator of all, though the Son actually performed the creation act, because the Father willed and empowered him to do it” (AH2, II.3). “Wherefore, we do not say that it was the axe which cut the wood, or the saw which divided it; but one would very properly say that the *man* cut and divided it” (AH2, II.3).

The Truth: This is all true.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus acknowledges that the Son was blessed by the Father with “dominion over all creation” (AH3, VI.1).

The Truth: This is true.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus observes that because the Son (the Word) was empowered by the Father to fulfill His will in creation, the Son and the Father both may rightly be called God and Lord (AH3, VIII.3).

The Truth: This is true. Jesus is referred to as God in many places in the Bible, such as Hebrews 1:8–9, which Irenaeus understands (AH3, VIII.3).

Note: God Himself called Moses a god in Exodus 7:1, and the judges and prophets among God’s people are also called gods (Ex. 22:28; Ps. 82:6 with Jn. 10:34–35). So, the use of the term *god* with reference to someone other than the Father is biblical, and especially is this true when speaking of the Son, God’s agent in creation.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus says that the Scriptures never refer to any other but the Father as God (AH2, XXVIII.4).

The Truth: This is obviously false, and it contradicts what Irenaeus taught in other places. But since Irenaeus understands that the Father is God over all, even over Jesus (e.g., AH5, XXII.1), that may have been his point in making that statement. Still, his choice of words could have been better.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus says that “neither the prophets, nor the apostles, nor the Lord Christ in his own person, acknowledged any other Lord or God, but the God and Lord supreme” (AH3, IX.1). The apostles and prophets, he adds, confessed both the Father and the Son, but the Son confessed only that the Father was God (AH3, IX.1; also AH3, VIII.1).

The Truth: This is true. Jesus never claimed to be God. A few of his statements have been interpreted that way by Christian theologians in order to justify their Trinitarian faith, but that is not how Jesus meant them.

Irenaeus' Statement: In an attempt to prove his theological position against the heretics, Irenaeus condemns the notion that God the Father *needed* any other being to help in creating all things (AH2, II.4–5).

The Truth: It is true, of course, that God needed no help in creation, but that is not the critical issue. The issue is whether or not the Father *chose* to use an-other in creating all things. A foundational revelation of the New Testament is that God did use another, His Son, to create all things.

In trying to disprove heretical doctrines here, Irenaeus shoots himself in the foot by downplaying in the extreme the Son's part in creation (e.g., AH2, XXXV.4). That is contrary to the Scriptures and to Irenaeus' own statements in other places.

Irenaeus' Statement: Of Jesus, Irenaeus writes, “The Lord, receiving [the Spirit] as a gift from his Father, does himself also confer it upon those who are partakers of himself, sending the holy Spirit upon all the earth” (AH3, XVII.2).

The Truth: This is true, and this truth emphasizes the Son's dependence upon the Father for his own life and power. Jesus said, “As the Father has life in Himself, so He has also given to the Son to have life in himself, and He has also given him authority to execute judgment” (Jn. 5:26–27; see also Jn. 15:26).

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus says, “Even the Lord, the very Son of God, allowed that the Father alone knows the very day and hour of judg-

ment, when he plainly declares, ‘But of that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father only’” (AH2, XXVIII.6).

The Truth: This is true. With these words, Jesus confessed that the Father possessed greater knowledge than he, and Irenaeus uses them to emphasize the Father’s superiority and authority over the Son.

Irenaeus’ Statement: Should someone ask how the Son was produced (that is, came into being in eternity past), Irenaeus says, “No man understands that production, or generation, or calling, or revelation, or by whatever name one may describe his generation, which is in fact altogether indescribable. Neither Valentinus, nor Marcion, nor Saturninus, nor Basilides [the heretics against whom Irenaeus argues], nor angels, nor archangels, nor principalities, nor powers [know how it was done], but the Father only, who begat, and the Son who was begotten” (AH2, XXVIII.6).

The Truth: Note that Irenaeus does not deny that the Son was created, that is, brought into existence by the Father.

Irenaeus’ Statement: In the act of creation, says Irenaeus, “All things which proceed from [the Father] . . . do indeed receive their own beginning of generation, and on this account are inferior to Him who formed them, inasmuch as they are not unbegotten” (AH2, XXXIV.2).

The Truth: This is true, even when applied to the Son. All that proceeds (into existence) from the Father or that is generated (into existence) by the Father is inferior to Him. Irenaeus often says that the Son was begotten by the Father and that the Father alone is the “Unbegotten God”. Thus, Irenaeus teaches that the Son had a beginning and is, therefore, inferior to the Father, as Jesus himself said (Jn. 14:28).

Irenaeus’ Statement: Irenaeus asks, “What are we to learn from the fact that Jesus said the Father alone knew all things,” except it be “that we may learn through him that the Father is above all things. ‘For the Father’, says [Jesus], ‘is greater than I’” (AH2, XXVIII.8).

The Truth: Amen.

Note: There is no real difference between saying that the Son was created by God and saying that he was produced or generated by God. However the truth is stated, it is exactly as one man who was condemned by a council of Roman Universal Churchmen famously taught: “There was

when he [the Son] was not.”⁹ And if “there was when he was not”, then the Son’s existence was granted to him by the Father, which is what Jesus himself said: “As the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in himself” (Jn. 5:26; also 6:57).

Whatever term is used, if the Son was given life by the Father, then there was [a time], when the Son did not have life. That is not philosophy; that is biblical revelation and a foundation stone of the gospel.

Irenaeus’ Statement: Laboring to refute one man who, according to Irenaeus, taught that there was a second God besides the Father, Irenaeus declares that “there is only one God . . . He is Father, He is God, He the Founder, He the Maker, He the Creator who made [all] things by Himself, that is, through His Word and Wisdom.” (AH2, XXX.9).

The Truth: Here we see an example of those times when, in his passion to defeat others in theological battle, Irenaeus shifts a little from the truth he in other places confesses. Note especially the next statement, which follows this one by only a few sentences and which would become a tenet of the Trinitarian faith.

Irenaeus’ Statement: Refuting those who imagined deities other than the Father, Irenaeus says that the Son “eternally co-existed with the Father” (AH2, XXX.9).

The Truth: This is false. This statement so contradicts Irenaeus’ other teachings that one suspects that it was inserted into the text by a Churchman of a later time in order to make it appear that Irenaeus taught the Church’s doctrine.

The Son cannot have existed eternally with the Father if the Father gave life to the Son, which Irenaeus admits. Moreover, if the Son were eternally co-existent with the Father, then the Father could not be the only Unbegotten God, as Irenaeus frequently maintains.

Irenaeus’ Statement: A central focus of Irenaeus’ and Justin’s teachings about God is the Word. Irenaeus believes that the Word “always co-existed” with God (AH2, XXV.3).

The Truth: This is true only if *Word* is defined as God’s ability to reason and to speak. God has always been able to do that. But the Son of God,

⁹ This is one of the few surviving sayings of Arius, according to several ancient Christian sources. E.g., Athanasius, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, I.iv.12.

who is also called the Word of God, was created by the Father and, therefore, cannot have always co-existed with Him.

The Personhood of the Spirit

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus employs the enigmatic phrase, “character of the holy Spirit” (AH1, XXIII.1).

The Truth: Along with the idea that the Son is co-equal with the Father, a foundation stone of Trinitarianism is that the Spirit of God is a person. And even though Irenaeus uses the phrase, “the character of the holy Spirit”, he does not teach that the Spirit is a person. Quite the contrary, he condemns some because they taught that the Spirit was a person.

According to Irenaeus, such heretics taught that the Spirit of God is “the first woman” (AH1, XXX.1), with whom both the Father and the Son had intercourse, producing a third man, who was the Christ (AH1, XXX.1–2). Those false teachers were transparently wrong. However, Irenaeus opposed them with some errors of his own, which are not so easily discerned.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus holds that the Son was always with the Father, but then adds that the Spirit was always with Him, too, as if there were a third being present (AH4, XX.3). A similar statement soon follows: “Thus God was revealed; for God the Father is shown forth through all these [operations], the Spirit indeed working, and the Son ministering, while the Father was approving” (AH4, XX.6).

The Truth: Naturally, the Spirit of God was always with God, just as your spirit has always been with you. God’s Spirit is God’s life. But that does not mean that the Spirit of God is a person.

This contradicts so many other statements from Irenaeus about the relationship of the Father and the Son that one must wonder again who actually penned these words, Irenaeus or a later Roman Universal Church editor.

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus makes other statements which seem to personalize the Spirit. For example, “For with Him [i.e., the Father] were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom He also speaks, saying, ‘Let us make man in our image’” (AH4, XX.1; AH5, I.3; cf. AH5, VI.1).

The Truth: This is false. First, if the Father spoke to the Spirit, as Irenaeus says He did, then the Spirit would have to have ears so that it can hear what the Father says to it. Secondly, the Spirit of God has no body; the Spirit is only God's Spirit, His life, that is inside His body, just as your spirit, your life, is inside yours. God would not have said to the Spirit, "Let us make man in our image" because the Spirit has no body that man could be made in the image of. The Father was speaking only to His Son when He said that.

"They All Have Forsaken Me"

Irenaeus' Statement: Irenaeus seeks to legitimize his doctrines by saying, "To these things all the Asiatic churches testify" (AH3, III.4).

The Truth: This may be true. The aged apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: "All they in Asia have forsaken me" (2Tim. 1:15). All the Assemblies of Asia may have approved of Irenaeus and his words, but if so, it was only because they had fallen away from the Faith, as Paul said they had done. No believer who was faithful to the truth Paul taught would have approved of Irenaeus.

Incidentally, Smyrna was one of those congregations in the province of Asia that forsook Paul and his gospel. If Polycarp really was the bishop of Smyrna, as Christians claim, then Irenaeus' admiration of him is understandable. They were united in their heretical beliefs.

CONCLUSION

A Developing Tradition

The Christian tradition of Christmas is still in its formative stage, and the opportunity exists for someone to still have a hand in shaping that tradition for future generations. Consequently, on television, in movies, and in children's books, new and imaginative myths concerning the origin and meaning of Christmas, and even the origins of old Santa Claus himself, are constantly being offered to the public. The originators of these new ideas hope that theirs will capture the public's imagination and become an integral part of the ongoing development of the Christmas tradition. One successful example of this is the nineteenth century poem, "The Night Before Christmas". There can never again be a credible myth about Christmas unless allowance is made for the "jolly old elf" who comes down the chimney. Another such success is the song, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer". It was offered to the public in the early twentieth century, was warmly received, and subsequently became a permanent part of the Christmas tradition. Every future addition to the Christmas tradition must now accommodate Rudolph.

This is the kind of thing that was happening during the time of the early fathers of Christianity. They seemed to sense that something big was developing in the world and, so, were rushing to offer their versions of the gospel to believers in hope of being among those whose doctrines would be incorporated into the developing tradition. Those whose offerings were successful are those whom Christians revere as their fathers. Those whose ideas flopped are either unknown to history or are condemned as heretics in the history books written by the victors. The prize for those whose doctrines were incorporated into the growing tradition of Christianity was enormous; it was that for which all flesh longs: fame. Therefore, the competition was fierce and, at times, bloody.

There were, during those first centuries, believers who were not a part of the competition to develop the burgeoning Christian tradition, members

of the family of faith who were considered heretical by Christians because they were faithful to the truth. They would have been small groups, scattered throughout the Empire, who clung resolutely to the truth Paul had taught the Gentiles. They would have watched and grieved as these apostates called fathers of Christianity stole the show and won the hearts of the majority of the saints, just as the elderly Paul had grieved as he witnessed the beginnings of that great apostasy. In time, with the military might of the Christianized Roman Empire enforcing their version of the gospel, the Roman Universal Church quenched the light of truth. And while doing so, they sang, as the crafty Whore of John's vision sang upon her bed, "I sit as a queen, and I am not a widow, and I will never know sorrow" (Rev. 18:7).

Since those days, that gaudy Whore has sung her siren song to millions, and has brought nothing to them but vain promises and eternal death. Those who have seen through her painted countenance to behold the blackness of her heart and renounced her have been condemned, ridiculed, and persecuted by the Whore and her ministers. The masses have fallen for the great Whore's seductive ceremonies, her phony humility, and her cunningly devised doctrines. She has seemed to be right; however, wise Solomon remarked that although the one who is first to argue his case always *seems* right, his neighbor may come afterward and reveal the truth of the matter.

Christianity, your neighbor has arrived.

Appendix

God's Body

BODY PARTS	SCRIPTURES
head & hair	Dan. 7:9
eyes	Prov. 15:3; Dt. 11:12; Ps. 34:15
eyelids	Ps. 11:4
ears	Ps. 17:6; 34:15
nose	Lev. 26:31; Phip. 4:18
nostrils	Ex. 15:8; Job 4:9; Ps. 18:8, 15
mouth	Dt. 8:3
tongue	Isa. 30:27
lips	Job 11:5; 23:12; Isa. 30:27
breath	Job 33:4; Ps. 33:6
voice	Gen. 3:8; Dt. 4:12; Isa. 6:8; 30:30
face\ countenance	Ex. 33:20; Ps. 13:1; Num. 6:26; Ps. 4:6
arm	Dt. 33:27; Isa. 51:5
hands	Gen. 49:24; Ex. 15:17; Isa. 5:12
finger	Ex. 8:19; 31:18; Lk. 11:20; Ps. 8:3
back	Ex. 33:23
feet	Ex. 24:10; 2Sam. 22:10; Isa. 60:13; Nah. 1:3
a general bodily form; an "image"	Num. 12:8; Jas. 3:9; Rev. 4:3; Gen. 1:27; 5:1
heart	Gen. 6:6; Hos. 11:8
spirit	Gen. 1:2; 1Cor. 2:11
soul	Isa. 1:14; 42:1; Jer. 5:9, 29

Note 1: The Scriptures also mention God riding, walking, sitting, standing, feeling, speaking, and thinking. Yes, we are made in His image!

Concerning the Term “Christian”

All of us who were brought up in Western society have grown up in a culture in which the term *Christian* commands respect. It has a pleasant ring in the ears of Westerners. But when the evidence is carefully examined, it becomes clear that the term *Christian* is a title which was given to the saints by the world in Acts 11, as we will show.

The fact that in writing the book of Acts, Luke felt the need to inform his reader(s) of the origin of the title *Christian* tells us that the term had already become popular as a term for believers. But if believers had invented the term for themselves, they would certainly have known its origin and Luke would have felt no need to mention it.

So, the real issue is not *whether* it had become popular by the time Luke wrote Acts, but *with whom* it had become popular. And the evidence is clear that it had become popular among sinners, not God’s saints. Jesus’ disciples would hardly have felt worthy to refer to themselves by any form of the sacred title of Christ. For them to have invented that word for themselves would have required a pride that they simply did not possess.

The evidence tells us that the term *Christian*, after its invention in Acts 11, caught on quickly among sinners who scorned faith in Christ. In about AD 110, Pliny the Younger referred to believers as Christians and called their religion “nothing but a degenerate cult taken to extravagant lengths.”¹⁰ Pliny’s friend Tacitus did the same, calling the gospel “a pernicious superstition.”¹¹ And a few decades later, Suetonius, in a list of the mad emperor Nero’s *positive* accomplishments, remarked rather casually, “Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition.”¹² Most significant, however, is the observation by Tacitus that believers were “called Christians *by the populace*.”¹³ He did not say that believers called themselves Christians.

There are but three places in the Bible where the word *Christian* appears: Acts 11:26 and 26:28; and 1Peter 4:16. We will examine each one.

¹⁰ Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, X.96.

¹¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, XV.xliv.

¹² Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, VI.xvi.2.

¹³ Tacitus, *Annals*, XV.xliv.

Acts 11:26

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

Please note that the verb in that sentence is passive; the fact that Luke says the followers of Jesus *were called Christians* by others strongly suggests that the saints did not invent the title for themselves. This fact is acknowledged in Gerhard Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, a scholarly work used by biblical scholars of every ilk, wherever New Testament Greek is seriously studied. In Volume IX, page 537, the author states that “it is likely that the term [Christian] was first used by non-Christians.”¹⁴

That being so, we should ask ourselves *why* unbelieving people in Antioch would call Jesus’ followers Christians.¹⁵ The first reason must involve the type of city Antioch was. It was a cosmopolitan, sophisticated city, a crossroads of culture from Asia, Africa, and Europe. It was one of the three or four most popular and celebrated cities of the era. Many of its citizens were well educated and wealthy, and it is not surprising that the witty citizens of Antioch were the ones to have coined *Christian* as a term of scorn for believers.

The second reason that *Christian* was the term which Antiochans invented for God’s people is that believers claimed to have found the Christ, or Messiah, of Israel. To call believers “Christ-ians”, or “Messiah-ers”, is something that only sarcastic unbelievers would do. If they had been sincere, they would have been admitting that Jesus was the Christ. But the term *Christian* was not meant as a compliment. In it was no confession from the Antiochans of faith in Israel’s Messiah. It was a belittling title, foisted upon humble followers of Christ Jesus by a smug, unbelieving world.

¹⁴ How this scholar could possibly justify his earlier statement that *Christian* is “obviously the term which the original believers used for themselves” (p. 536) is beyond me.

¹⁵ It is possible, as Kittel’s dictionary also proposes (IX, 484), that the Antiochans misunderstood the word *Christ* to be someone’s name. There were similar names used by people in those times, such as *Chrestus* (male), or *Chraystes* (female). So, unbelievers might have been simply calling the disciples after what they thought was the name of their leader (Christ).

The weakness of this explanation is that it requires that the Antiochans were ignorant of the Jewish hope for the Messiah (Greek: Christ), but there was a very large and prosperous Jewish community in Antioch, many of them believers, and those Jews were conversant with Gentiles. So, the sophisticated Antiochans would not have been ignorant of Jewish traditions and hopes. In fact, it was in Antioch that Gentiles in significant numbers began to believe the gospel which Jewish believers preached. In sum, it is unlikely that the Gentiles in Antioch misunderstood the term *Christ* to be a proper name. The reason they chose *Christian* for the disciples is better explained as a witty, sarcastic term.

In sum, the proud and sophisticated Antiochans called the disciples Christians in reaction to the claim of believers in Antioch that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, or Christ, of God.

Acts 26:28

Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time,
you are persuading me to be a Christian.”

The second time we find the word *Christian* is while Paul, as a Roman prisoner, was testifying powerfully before King Agrippa concerning his conversion and the truth of Christ. So impressed was the king that he interrupted Paul and said, “In a short time, you are persuading me to be a Christian.” But it is important to note that he did not become one. The king’s remark shows us that he considered Paul to be one of those whom people called Christians, and it strongly suggests that the term *Christian* was a term of reproach, a reproach which the king was unwilling to bear.

The king was actually paying Paul a high compliment. He was telling Paul that his preaching and his reasoning from the Scriptures was so convincing that he, the great King Agrippa, was almost persuaded to embrace the gospel, lose his social standing, and be branded as a Christian himself. Paul did not quibble with the king over using the derogatory term *Christian* in reference to him when the king was actually using it to show how powerfully Paul had confessed Christ.

1Peter 4:15–16

Let no one among you suffer as a murderer, or a thief,
or an evildoer, or as a busybody, but if as a “Christian”,
let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that.

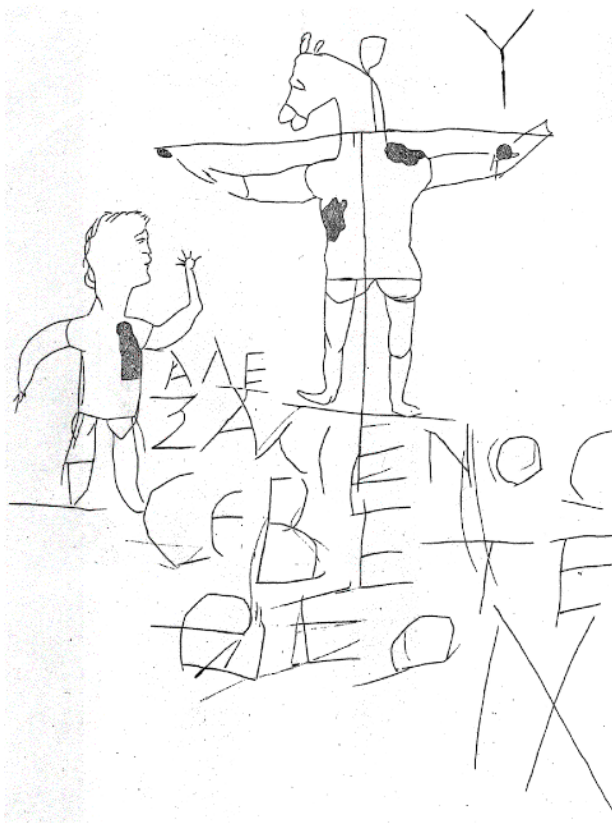
Peter is the only apostle ever to use the word *Christian* in reference to the saints. He wrote, “If [any man suffer] as a Christian . . . let him glorify God in that.” Peter wrote this letter to the saints in what is today northern Turkey, which is a long way from Antioch, where the term was first used. Clearly, by the time Peter wrote to these saints, the term *Christian* was in widespread use as a title for those who believed that Jesus was the Christ. There is no indication, however, that *Christian* was in widespread use among the saints, for as I said, this is the only case in the Bible where a believer uses the word.

It is important to note that Peter is not himself calling believers Christians. To understand Peter as his original readers understood him, we need only to substitute the word *Christian* with a modern equivalent.

We could use “cult member”, or “jackass”, or “fool”, or any such term, because when ancient unbelievers called a believer a Christian, that is the sort of thing they meant.

Actually, of all modern equivalents, “jackass” may be the best choice. There was actually a rumor occurrent in the ancient Roman world that those who were called Christians worshipped a jackass. There is a well-known and widely published sketch that was found scratched on an ancient wall in Rome which shows a believer looking toward a man, crucified on a cross, who has the head of a jackass, with graffiti that mockingly says of the believer, “Alexamenos worships God.”

Here is a picture of that ancient graffiti:



So, if we substitute the modern, derisive term *jackass* for *Christian* in the three scriptures in the New Testament where *Christian* is found, we will discover what was really being communicated at that time, when God's children were being called Christians by those who invented the term.

Acts 11:26

“The disciples were first called jackasses in Antioch.”

Acts 26:28

“Agrippa said to Paul, . . . you are persuading me to be a ‘jackass’.”

1Peter 4:16

“But if as a ‘jackass’, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that.”

Reading these verses as they were originally meant to be read makes it clear that ungodly men, not Jesus or the Father, invented that term for His people.



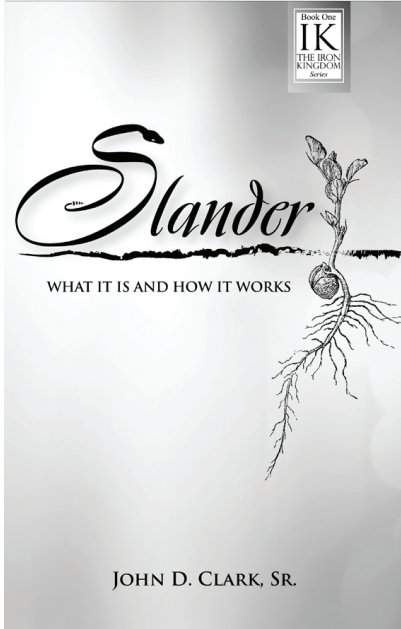
Afterword

It is impossible to believe that if a sincere child of God knew the origins and history of Christianity, he would want to be in that religion. This examination of the teachings of the earliest “fathers” of Christianity reveals how far from the truth of Christ believers had drifted in less than a century after the apostles lived. Paul foresaw the apostasy into which believers would fall after they rejected him and his revelation from Jesus (cf. Gal. 1:11–12). He told Timothy, “The time will come when they will not put up with sound doctrine, but will heap up teachers for themselves according to their own lusts, having itching ears, and they will turn away from hearing the truth, and be turned over to myths” (2Tim. 4:3–4). The mythology to which God turned over the apostate believers is the vain way of worship known as Christianity. As I said in a previous book in this Series, “Paul could have quoted some of Moses’ last words to Israel (Dt. 31:29): ‘I know that after my death, you will utterly corrupt yourselves and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you and that evil will befall you in the latter days because you will have done evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger by the work of your hands.’”

So it was that believers disobeyed God’s command to worship Him in spirit and in truth until their worship was as ceremonial as the world’s. It was inevitable, having made that choice, that the apostate body of Christ would attract the favorable attention of the world’s master, Rome, and blend with it to become the Iron Kingdom prophesied by the prophet Daniel. That kingdom, said Daniel, “will be different from all kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth, and it will tread it down and break it to pieces” (7:23). It is principally through this Iron Kingdom called Christianity that Satan has “deceived the whole world” (Rev. 12:9) into thinking that Christianity represents Christ. It does not. And no better evidence of that exists than the teachings of the men called “Apostolic Fathers”. That is why I call them Apostate Fathers instead.

The apostate believers’ blending with the Roman Empire in the early fourth century, the synthesis of which produced the Iron Kingdom, Christianity, will be more fully explained as we continue this Iron Kingdom Series. I encourage the Reader to pursue knowledge of the gospel preached by Paul and the great apostasy from it which followed.

What Is Slander and How Does It Work?



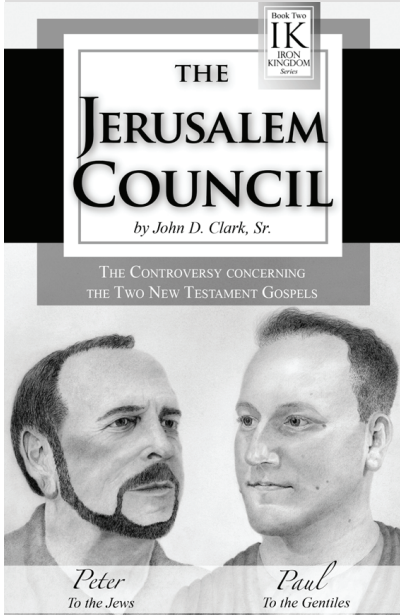
“He who hides hatred with lying lips, and he who utters slander, is a fool.”

The writers of the Bible understood slander in ways that modern dictionaries do not capture. A dictionary will tell you that to slander means “to make a false spoken statement that damages a person’s reputation.”

Biblical stories of slander reveal that slander can be verbal or non-verbal and that slander often uses truth to accomplish its purpose. Slander, as found in Scripture, is a most effective tool of unclean spirits; it has a very high success rate both in the world and in the body of Christ.

Slander, book one in The Iron Kingdom series, lays the foundation needed to understand slander in its most perfect form: the religious system called Christianity.

Jesus Alone Can Save.

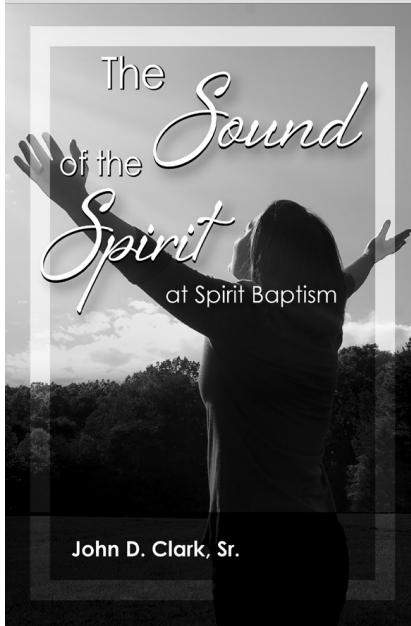


The aged apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “All they in Asia have forsaken me.” And such was the case in the Assemblies of God everywhere, for before the apostles died, the body of Christ fell into apostasy. Today, the body of Christ remains confused and divided, and the confusion and division can be traced back to the issues debated in the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. Few perceive what was at stake when the leaders of the Assembly in Jerusalem convened this special Council.

This book takes the reader through the likely arguments that were made at the Council and explains why both sides

were desperate to win the day. It also reveals that while Paul’s argument was accepted by the leaders of the Council, the body of Christ as a whole eventually rejected Paul and his gospel.

Who told you that you were born again?

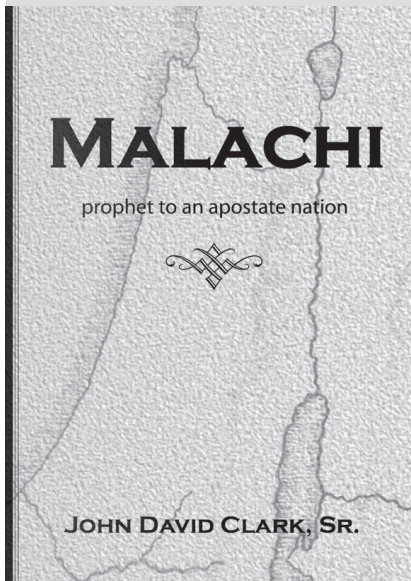


We need to know who has received the Spirit of God and who has not. Otherwise, we are lost in a world of religious confusion as to who really is born of God and who is not. This is the condition that exists among believers today.

The Sound of the Spirit at Spirit Baptism presents an accurate and consistent biblical explanation for the sound of the Spirit being the sign that one has been baptized by Christ with the holy Spirit. If true, this belief radically alters the commonly accepted picture of the body of Christ, for since the baptism of the Spirit is the only means of entering the body of Christ

(1Cor. 12:13) then the body of Christ would be composed only of those who have received that baptism, with the audible evidence Jesus said would accompany that blessing.

Prophet to an Apostate Nation



Malachi was a prophet who labored in a very dark time in Israel's history, and his answer to the darkness was the law of Moses - God's law. He pleaded with Israel to repent and live by that holy law, but the Israelites were indignant at Malachi's warnings. Ours is just such a dark time. The true word of God is rarely spoken, and when it is, it is often scorned. As the book *Malachi* amply shows, Jesus' comment concerning the path to eternal life, "few there be who find it," applied to ancient Israel as it does to us.

To persuade transgressors to repent and to exhort the faithful to be steadfast

has been the task of God's servants throughout human history, whether they be the prophets of ancient Israel or God's ministers today. The true prophets in Israel were sent to point God's people to the way of His law, and God's true ministers today are sent to point His people to the way of His Spirit.

Books by John D. Clark, Sr.



Spiritual Light

Suffering and the Saints

The Sound of the Spirit at Spirit Baptism

What the Bible Really Says About Hell

Holy Bible - Is It the Word of God?

Marriage and Divorce

Solomon's Wisdom

God Had a Son before Mary Did

Tithes and Offerings

Malachi

After Jesus Died

Revelation

The Iron Kingdom Book Series:

Book 1: Slander

Book 2: The Jerusalem Council



For free book downloads visit us at:

www.GoingtoJesus.com

