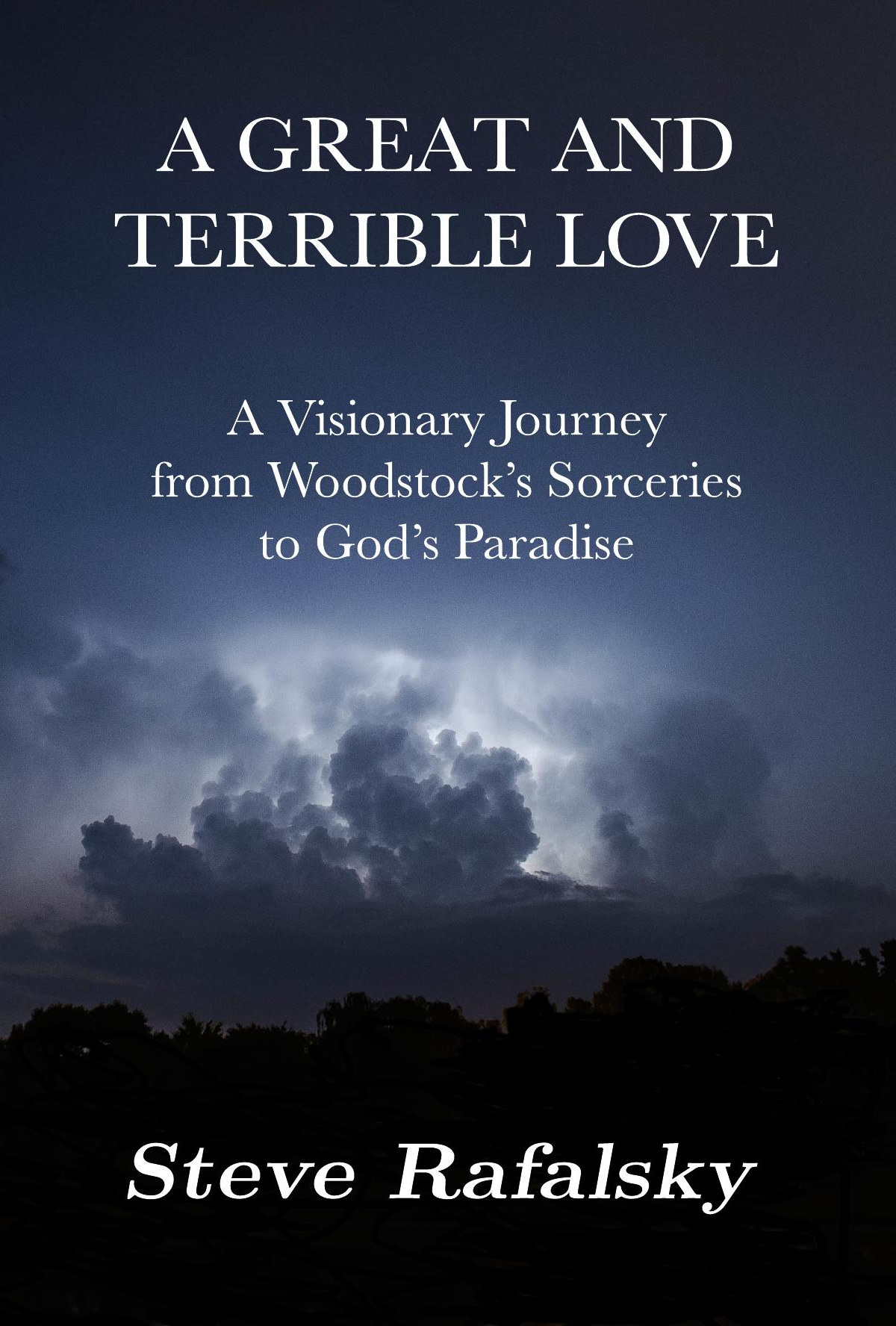


A GREAT AND TERRIBLE LOVE

A Visionary Journey
from Woodstock's Sorceries
to God's Paradise



Steve Rafalsky

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AND
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A VISIONARY JOURNEY
FROM WOODSTOCK'S SORCERIES
TO GOD'S PARADISE

STEVE RAFALSKY

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PREFACE

Bring together again the telling of a tale and the living voice.

Be a teller of great tales, even the darkest.

Don't ever believe poetry is irrelevant in dark times.

Poetry a life-giving weapon deployed in the killing fields.

—Lawrence Ferlinghetti, *Poetry As Insurgent Art*

Although he didn't see it at the time, nor for many decades following, more was going on in the psychedelic revolution of the 1960s than anyone imagined—occult happenings that would impact “the spirit of the age” come the 21st century like pounding blows on the body and soul of humankind.

The book didn't start out to be what it ended up as—an epic of sorts covering half a century. It began as a few poems to a woman whose love the author was seeking. But the author wasn't typical: a spiritual seeker come out of the sixties counterculture and into the strict discipline of a spiritual master—Jesus of Nazareth—whom he loved with all his heart and yet could not maintain what turned into an agonizing discipleship due in great measure to errors taught him by older disciples and teachers. The woman came to him, and he let her in; by the power of eros in a union of their hearts he was lifted out of a dangerous realm in the spirit world. And he returned to his old ways while still keeping the first love hidden deep within, sometimes so deep he couldn't see it and feared he had lost him!

That was the beginning of the writing. Before that was the counterculture itself, which at the end of the decade culminated in Woodstock and the 1969

festival in Bethel, New York. The writing, or that written of, continued for half a century.

Visionary adventure, nonfiction is the book's genre. What makes it visionary is its point of commencement—the counterculture sixties and its visions; what *maintains* its visionary status is the ability to see behind the scenes of the physical world into the hidden realm of spirits. Whence this ability? Through the eyes of seers.

Between the inception and denouement of this epic tale, the story of the poet-occultist would wend its way through the years as an odyssey to find his master again; traveling through the world of literature, occult combats, the love of women—all these were grist for the poet's mill as he continued to write and to stay conscious as a seer, this latter not always in an "approved" manner. The poet (as we shall call him), looking back in retrospect, wrote,

In the sixties we were a joyous people, thinking we had found illumination, sacred friendship in community, and new spiritual hope for humankind

Half a century later – a dawning awareness of the realities of our time, politically, culturally, spiritually – we knew we were in something else, way over our heads

Setting forth from Woodstock on pilgrimage to Celestial City of the age to come, en route we found ourselves in whore Babylon amid the dread colossi of Revelation

How stand in such approaching storms, how live amid so much death, stay human amid such evil? If one finds the answer hold it fast come what may!

*We have come to this: the fabled end of the world, what seers have called Armageddon, and then Judgment. This a **true** tale of Coming to Terms with it all.*

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PART I

ABYSS

We first meet our poet after leaving a school for disturbed children where he worked as a houseparent, to go to Boston and study macrobiotics (an Eastern spiritual path based on a special diet), and then disillusioned with that, take to the road hitchhiking, as was the way of his heroes, Kerouac, and Bob Dylan. It was heightened consciousness—spiritual enlightenment—he was seeking.

He had no idea when first initiated into the sixties counterculture—the story of this told in the chapter, “Can there any good thing come out of Woodstock?”—what he really was part of: the initial global-scale opening of a dimensional gateway between the realm of demons and the collective consciousness of humankind by means of the psychedelic drugs. If you’d told him that then he’d not have believed you. He simply didn’t have the vision to imagine such a thing.

As the years passed, and he entered into various spiritual depths, his vision grew. What he saw and experienced is written in this book. He was not prepared for some of the depths; but first he had to know certain heights, and from there fall. There is an abyss in the human heart that cannot be truly seen without first having vision in these heights.

He was to enter where angels are loath to tread.

ST. LOUIS BLUES TO CONVERSION

I had just left the Macrobiotic community in the Roxbury district of Boston, disillusioned with leader Michio Kushi's vision of "the Kingdom of God," which he said one attained by proper eating, namely the brown rice (& etc.) diet. True, one did attain an exhilarating state of consciousness when on the #7 (strictly rice) diet, but it was clear to me that what had a beginning must have an end, and if one entered the kingdom of illumined consciousness by "proper eating" then if that eating stopped one must leave it. Nor was brown rice available everywhere in the U.S. in 1967, so it was at best a tenuous illumination.

I wrote Mr. Kushi a note as to why I was leaving, got into my '65 Volvo, drove down to Westchester in New York where I left the car with a friend, and hit the road hitchhiking with a few dollars, a light carry-bag, and a sleeping bag. I forget the highways I used, but I remember snow falling as I left NYC headed for St. Louis, Missouri – and from there, who knew? The part of the city I arrived in seemed industrial and desolate, but I connected with some folks who looked to be of the Human Tribe (as hippies were sometimes referred to in those days) and was directed to a crash pad, where I found a place to lay my head and stash my gear. In the evening I went to a counter-culture nightspot called The Crystal Palace and hung-out for a while. I met a biker there, John, who gave me some speed in a pill, which I took right away, for I was hungry to get high – I'd been straight so long! It hit me pretty hard – that is, I was tripping – for my system was still fine-tuned, as I'd only been off the rice a day or two. John and I hung at the Palace for a while, and he went back to the crash pad with me, then took off.

There was a young woman in the house, Eva, blonde and friendly and pretty. I was attracted to her at first sight. But I was having visions of sorts, or one might call them insights into the deeps of being. During this time the Doors' album, *Crystal Palace*, was in the air, the song with the words, "a Roman wilderness of pain, where all the children are insane," burning into my awareness as if it were the motto of our lives! Another archetypal evening in the wilds of the howling psychedelic heartlands.

An excruciating awareness rose in me to counter the desire I had for Eva: the very act of desiring rippled the still waters of perfect union: the *effort* of our souls to *obtain* the object of our desire was incompatible with the perfection of ontologic-erotic union – our beings merged in sexual embrace – and thwarted the realization of it. In the realm of spirit whatever we strive to grasp eludes us! It seemed that the souls must each – and together – be in a state of perfection before they could join in a union of perfection. It was beyond me, and I did not know the laws of being so as to attain this.

I'd intuited these things from various experiences and insights: pondering the vision of illumination held forth by Wilhelm Reich, how that the "genital character" – his view of what the optimally healthy human is – contains bodily the universal energies which are the illumination sages mistakenly sought through non-sexual mystical experience; and combining this Reichian "sexual mysticism" with insight I'd had on acid and mescaline: the lively interaction of a man and a woman within each other's beings, which did not disturb the perfection of their union in love, gave me to envision how pure and exquisite an interaction could be.

Why at this time it came to the fore of my consciousness I don't know. Somehow I knew I was an alien to Eva's heart, that if I tried to enter I would defile and disturb it. Our beings could not be united in love, not in that union of hearts and bodies I sought. This was a devastating revelation, for after half a year or so of celibacy, and high for the first time in quite a while as well (getting high was looked down on in the macrobiotic community as propelling the being into an intensely yin – spiritually feminine, ultra-receptive – state), and after a year of Reichian therapy (dismantling "character

armor,” not the orgone box route), my longing for the love of a woman was profound!

I could see it was not to be, and this impasse between what I wanted with all my heart and my inability to attain it showed me I was broken deep in the springs of my being. I went downstairs to my little room and crashed in a state of terror at the devastation that was now manifest in my consciousness. I had no downs to knock myself out, and would just have to ride it through.

And then horror upon horror! I could hear in the closed room across the hall a woman groaning in pain – I knew it was Eva! – and two men talking. I knew she was being raped! I had the hunting knife in my bag I’d had with me in Mexico, the blade honed keen. Having been in the Marines seven years earlier I was still in good shape, and not afraid to fight, and I wanted to get up off my mattress and route those men and stop what was happening, but I was so ravaged with my own terror I couldn’t move; I had no strength to even get up!

In the morning John came by to see how I was. I told him what had happened; he went next door, but they were gone. He asked around, and then came back to me and told me they’d given her heroin, and when she was incapacitated took advantage of her. I asked him if he’d get me some downs as I couldn’t bear my consciousness. He came back with some a while later, but I had a different plan by then. I’d thought of Ginsberg’s *Howl*, and the lines in it of some in our generation who, in a state as desperate as mine,

*“presented themselves on the granite steps of the madhouse with
...shaven heads...demanding instantaneous lobotomy...”*

That would do it! A lobotomy would fix my crushing anguish, would remove the guilt, the self-loathing, the awareness of the impossibility of love! So I asked John if he would find a mental institution and drop me off there, as a lobotomy was what I wanted. I declined the downs as I needed to stay in touch with what I was doing. I had my gear with me; I would not have

to go back to the pad. We drove and drove, never seeming to find a mad-house. After a while it didn't seem necessary anymore; the pain had receded; I could live without a lobotomy. John dropped me off somewhere in the "straight" section of town. I'd had enough of the "Roman wilderness of pain, where all the children are insane"!

I think back, writing of this now some thirty-eight years later, and ponder the care, patience and helpfulness of John, to the stranger that I was to him.

Away from the house of my (and Eva's) woe, the speed having mostly worn off, I managed to call my sister (I forget what state she and her husband were living in then), and told her I'd had a nervous breakdown in St. Louis, MO (how else to explain my condition to her?), and needed some money to get a cheap hotel room, eat, and after a few days catch a bus back to NYC. She came through for me, and I ate pretty much plain oatmeal for a while, and my system stabilized, and the wounding of my heart withdrew into the depths so that I could live again without a mountain of anguish upon me.

Back in New York City, I borrowed some money from the mother of an old girlfriend of mine (which I paid back in a few months), and got a 2-room apartment on 95th Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues, with a brilliant view of the Triboro Bridge, a fifth-floor walk-up for around \$48 a month (those were the days!). I had my sleeping bag and a few belongings, and was comfy. I got a job at Schrafft's Restaurant as a dishwasher, and then got promoted to coffee-boy, which meant I got a large coffee urn on a wheeled cart that was filled up on lower shelves with pastries and coffee cakes, which I took to office buildings in the area (the restaurant was in the 50s on Madison Avenue).

During my off time I would visit friends on the Lower East Side, do some grass and acid (but always had some Thorazine or Vitamin B-12 or downs to counter a bad trip if need be), and kept a low profile. I remember meeting one of my dad's old friends (both he and mom had been dead some years by then) on the street in midtown – Nate was his name – part of the Jewish business, legal and social community dad belonged to (he in real estate and insurance), and Nate asked me how and what I was doing. I told him I was

a coffee boy at Schraffts', and doing well. He paled when I told him that, evidently embarrassed at my low station in life! But I was a poet, with a paying job, and content with my lot, and marched to the beat of a different drum than my dad and his colleagues. I remember dad once telling me, "I'd rather you earn one honest dollar than write a thousand poems." I was for years the black sheep of the family, getting kicked out of this school and that, a wild and unprincipled youth. Around age 20 I'd had a vision – while on organic mescaline (my first trip) – of the depth and profundity of life and of people's beings, and was on a quest to plumb what I could of these, and the counter-culture seemed filled with kindred spirits, and thus I was pretty much "a rolling stone, no direction home," 25 now, a seeker, a hitch-hiker across these vast states.

On my rounds with the coffee cart one stop was at the editorial offices of *Seventeen Magazine*. Among the people who came to me for coffee was this petite, lovely young woman, an editor there, Sherry. I was quite taken by her, and she responded with great pleasantness. (I had deeply buried the awareness of my ontologic dilemma, and this was not on my mind.)

I wrote her a poem, and the simplicity and beauty of it stunned her; the menial servant whose palm she daily crossed with silver was an accomplished poet, a seeker in the depths of being, and a seeker also of her love.

She waited till I was alone one day, and told me she had a man, though she was deeply touched by the poem. I accepted her words quietly, though inwardly set my heart to pursue her.

I was occasionally tripping in the days following, and also writing poetry. Writing to / of Sherry the ontologic dilemma surfaced again in my awareness, with a vengeance. This time it was without the anguish of my failure to help Eva in her trouble (though that pain remains in my heart to this day!), yet by itself it was as a light that shone throughout my being, revealing afresh the broken depths of my self. I had, in line with Reich's view of illumination, and my own sense of spiritual experience from mescaline and acid awareness, come to believe that I would enter into an experience of salvation – perhaps with a small "s" – through the love of a woman.

But it was so clear to me that to desire a woman, to seek to “grasp” her into my being, to exert any effort to this end, would irreparably trouble the still waters of effortless union, and break the perfection I sought. This may not make sense to some, but it hit me like a death-blow. It meant that I was alone, seeing as I could not effect such union as I sought by any effort, and my heart was too needy for love to acquiesce in that state. I was in the Void, absolutely alone, and without the illumination that gives Life.

I went up into the countryside to see Lisa, an old and true love, and she said to me, “Steve, I love you, but I can’t help you.” Back on the road again, death hounding me like a nightmare dog, noiseless but steady.

As I was up in Westchester already I went to Croton to pick up a camera I’d left at a camp for disturbed children I had worked at.

The lady and her family who were caretakers of the place were Christians from Estonia (I think they had fled the Communists). This woman, Lea, was an evangelical born-again Christian. Wouldn’t you know, she started in on me. I thought she was a real fanatic, and when she began telling me about her version of Jesus I resisted her vigorously. After all, I taught reincarnation and the spirituality I had learned among the Sufis and Theosophists to my friends, and was not interested in what I saw as retrograde primitive religiosity that was ignorant of genuine spiritual consciousness. Notwithstanding my desperate spiritual state at that time, I wanted no part of this lady’s Christian stuff, with her “Jesus died for your sins on the cross” as a constant refrain in her incessant raving. I was getting a headache listening to her. I was a very forceful character, but she was as forceful as I. It was a clash! And while she was speaking, and I on the verge of leaving, a light from Heaven shone into my heart, and with my inner sight I saw the glory of a Being whom I knew to be the Lord Jesus, and He looked upon me in His heart-rending love and majesty, and it was as though He had been crucified – for me! – and yet was alive, similar to what I later read in John’s vision in Revelation 5:6, “And I beheld, and lo...stood a Lamb as it had been slain...”

I was struck speechless! She kept talking, but I hardly heard her. *This* spiritual Light and Glory was what I had longed for in all my searching! *This*

was the Life that lifted one above the wheel of birth and death, *this* was the Love that made one complete and *not driven* in the seeking of earthly loves. And all this was in a Person! Jesus! I had been sure it was “a state of consciousness” I attained to through effort, or meeting an enlightened Teacher, or my karmic due. But it was an actual Person who was in Himself Deity! I was thoroughly shocked and humbled. I was so proud, so arrogant, so sure of my own way. It was with me as with a seer I’d later read, Charles Spurgeon, who said, “I looked at Him, and He looked at me, and we were one forever.”¹ From that moment on, I was His. Love at first sight.

I couldn’t even say anything to Lea. I told her, “I’ve got to go!” and on the way out she handed me a little Gospel of John (in the old Authorized Version). All the way back to NYC I was aware of the presence of Jesus Christ. Up to this point in my life I’d never read the Bible, save as literature in college, or a book among other “holy books.” During my conversation with Lea, I had said to her, when she talked of worshipping Jesus, “What is a man that I should bow the knee to him? We are all on the path to becoming Christs!” But that evening, when I got to my bare, simple apartment, in the presence of this One who was to me unequivocally God – while in the shower – I bowed the knee to Him, and wept...for love, for joy, for sorrow ...and shortly after wrote this poem:

LORD

How You know
 in the river of my heart
 flowing through these words

 what is too deep for the words to say
 sorrow too molten
 joy too free
 thankfulness too profound

Oh Man, You are my Savior!

What a joy to be in the presence of the Light I had so long sought among the world’s sages, and for this Illumination to be in the friendship and love

of – heart-union with – a Person! The little Bible tract of John's Gospel, when I read it, was illumined by Him just as was my heart: the words of the Gospel were one with the Spirit of Him whose presence shone so ravishingly within *me*! They were His words! And this holy Spirit continued to shine in my heart with an ineffable radiance that bespoke infinite wisdom, love, and power – *this* was the Person of the living God!

It was this I knew, and nothing else. I did not have a Bible at this time. And I did not know the commandments the Lord gave to those who would follow Him.

I entertained in my mind that I would get a girlfriend I liked, and who wanted to be with me, and we would get married by dropping acid together and joining in sexual union. I thought – in my abysmal ignorance – this was proper and holy.

Two weeks later I drove up to see Lea again, and tell her what had happened to me. I figured Christians were supposed to wear crosses, so I bought a silver one with a chain and wore it about my neck. When she saw me, she asked with some disbelief and dismay, pointing to the cross, "What's *that*?" I said, "I'm saved." And she, incredulously, "How did *that* happen?" And I recounted the events starting with her telling me about Jesus. She asked if I had a Bible, and said I had to get one. And she directed me to go to a church in the City not far from where I lived.

So I went back home to the city and began more properly to live as a believer. As I read through the Bible I saw a passage that said we were to "submit...to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Peter 2:13), and I realized my drug days were over – no more acid or grass, etc, as it was my new Lord's will. On my wall I wrote with a marker words from Proverbs, to beware falling into sexual sin with "the strange woman...for her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on Hell." Any visitors saw these words that reflected my new state of mind. All who knew me were fairly shocked.

I continued in my job as coffee boy. How communicate to Sherry my new state of mind, my new love? The people on the various stops I made (in more than one building) continued to be friendly (who wouldn't welcome

the guy with quality coffee and pastries? – this way before Starbucks et al came on the scene), and they'd regularly say, "How ya doin', Steve?" For me to just answer, "I'm fine, thanks," did not accord with the blazing new truth and reality of my being. So I started to say, "Thanks to Jesus I'm alright" or "Thanks to Jesus I'm fine." It was difficult to do that, as I was very proud, and the disdain I often received upon saying that hurt. I could see that the Self I had built up was arrogant and enamored of grandiose conceits, and this did not want to yield to the Lordship of Jesus, and so it was a battle of loyalties, Self versus Jesus. Nor did it help when people asked me, "What do you mean?" when I confessed Jesus. I really didn't have sufficient knowledge to give a coherent answer. But as I read the Bible, and the few Christian books I found, I was a little more able to give an answer for my faith. I took to writing Scripture verses in a little 5 X 7 picture frame which I hung with string from my coffee urn, such as, "My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. –Psalm 121:2" or "Hear my cry O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. –Psalm 61:1"

After a month or so I had the confidence to ask Sherry to meet me for a cup of coffee after work and talk about what had happened to me. I had been going to Rock Church, a Pentecostal assembly in the '60s on the east side, and I thought I was getting an idea of what the "normal" Christian life was like, although a lot of the Pentecostal stuff was strange to me. I tried to tell Sherry how wonderful Jesus was, and that He was the Savior of the world, and how my life had changed radically. I don't think she believed. In 2005 I still pray for her, assuming she is still alive on the earth. So many women I have known and loved! Many of you I still pray for.

This was the spring of 1968. Thirty-seven years later I look back, marveling on the skill, wisdom and power of the Shepherd who undertook to save my soul, but more than these, on the longsuffering love and patience He knew beforehand He would need to extend to me to secure my eternal well being.

O, a great and terrible love I sing.

¹ Cited in, *The Strong Name*, by James S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1946), page 92.

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CONVERSION TO FALL

After being arrested by the Lord Jesus upon approaching some inner brink of destruction, some vast room of death in the Abyss – which ignorant mystics call the Void – and placed by Him in the protective custody of His presence, I lived for a couple of months in a state of stunned joy. The closest thing I can compare this to is being in love with a woman who loves equally: giving a sense of the *immeasurable wealth* of our beings interpenetrating one another to the depths, in what I have called ontologic-erotic union. But this latter pertains solely to the human sphere (wonderful as that may be!), whereas what had now befallen me – for this came upon me unsought! – is union with the Deity. With my spiritual vision I had been given to look in the face of the ascended Jesus Christ, know the exquisite brilliance and majesty of His presence, the ravishing quality of His utterly penetrating gaze, while the glory of His person was brought home to me in the divine equivalent of a shepherd rescuing his lamb from a gory death at the jeopardy of his own life (I knew nothing of doctrine at this point), for it was clear He appeared to me to save me from the Abyss I was plunging into, and that by reason of His ineffable love for me. Why me? I had no clue, but who asks upon first being so loved?...one rejoices!

I devoured the word of my new Friend and Savior voraciously (who would not read the love-letters and life-story of a new-found beloved?). I still worked at Schrafft's Restaurant on Lex in the mid-50s, and was living in a 2-room apartment at 336 E. 95th Street, paying only (in 1968) about \$48 a month, with a wonderful view of the Triboro Bridge. Lea had directed me

to a small Pentecostal church in mid-Manhattan, and which I started attending, going to every meeting, three or four a week. I drank it in. I loved hearing about Jesus from others who knew Him.

I became aware of a great discrepancy between the supernatural powers manifested in the New Testament, by the Lord, the apostles, and the church, and what was happening in the Christian world I was becoming acquainted with. It greatly puzzled and perplexed me why there was so little supernatural power in the 20th century community of His followers. I had been – prior to conversion – studying Theosophy, the various adepts, the occult, and the Eastern spiritual paths, as well as being part of the LSD-Mescaline-grass counter-culture's spirituality, and spiritual power was something I expected to see in the Path of the mighty One. I had experienced first-hand the power of God in His revealing Himself to me and saving me.

At the church I heard of a seminar on fasting being given by Christians in Brooklyn, so I went. These folks were into 2, 3, and 4-week fasts, as well as what they called a “complete fast,” which was fasting (drinking water only) until all body fat was absorbed and the body started taking nourishment from vital tissue and organs, which was when true starvation set in, and hunger returned with a vengeance (it goes away after the first 6 days or so). One then had to break the fast very carefully, first with juices or broth, and then light vegetables and fruit, slowly returning to a normal diet (the rule was, as many days as the fast, so long would be the careful breaking of it). The teachers claimed that this was the way to regain the spiritual power missing in the churches. That was all I needed to hear. I was hooked. And so I began my fasting. I would be the bringer-of-power-and-spiritual-life-to-the-church. Ignorance, pride, and false teaching make a potent brew!

This is a part of my life few know of. It lasted from late 1968 till 1970 or so; I was 26 in '68 (born on the first day of Spring, March 21st). I was sure, from the Scriptures I read, and from some books, and from the fasting teachers, that after fasting for a length of time (3 weeks, 4 or 5 or 6?) I would receive what is called “an anointing” from God consisting of a powerful infilling of His Spirit which would enable me to once and for all quit smoking cigarettes, be entirely holy in my consciousness and behavior, and have the

power to bring His healing and whatever was needed to His people, and those lost He would show mercy to. This “anointing” was sort of the equivalent, in my mind, of a further state of illumination and intimate closeness to the risen Lord. The evangelist Charles G. Finney seemed to have had this, from what I read in his memoirs, and reports of him, and John Wesley supported it – I thought – Biblically. I felt it was God’s will for me to do this, and to vary from this path of obedience was sin.

The trouble was, I see now in hindsight, I knew virtually nothing of a genuine life of faith and of God’s plenteous provision of spiritual sustenance for such refugees from the occult counterculture as I, and instead tried hacking my way through a wilderness of error and satanic obstruction. I knew no teachers of sound doctrine and spiritual power, as Paul said there should be:

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God...For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. (1 Corinthians 2:4, 5; 4:20)

Thinking this was the path I was on, I would fast and pray 4, 5, 6, 7 days, and always break the fast “prematurely,” which was horrendous sin and failure to me, and when I was eating I reckoned myself in a state of sin. This was one of the primary condemning Scriptures:

...Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: *for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* (Romans 14:22, 23; emphasis mine)

I knew this pertained to food issues other than fasting, but I took the principle concerning “doubt” (i.e., an uncertain conscience) to heart, and was guided by it. On the one hand I was so ignorant of the Faith that I did not

have withal to stand confidently in God's presence, even when I was fasting and had a clear conscience.

When I would "wickedly" break the fast I would right away start smoking cigarettes again, and I would so gorge myself with food (forget the rules of carefully breaking the fast!) that I would have to make myself throw up to feel normal again. I would then "repent" and begin fasting again, or perhaps start eating again. Before I knew it I had entered on the path of anorexia-bulimia! This lasted almost a couple of years, I think. I didn't have much money at that time, and my appetite when eating was ravenous, so I fell to eating out of garbage cans, or going downtown to the Village where there were a lot of restaurants and leftover food. I saw a book title once, *Holy Anorexia*, and the dynamic sounded somewhat familiar to my ears. The aspiring saint had fallen to quite some depths! Would that these were the worst depths to which I fell!

The only times of sanity and fellowship with my Lord in those days was when I was fasting; if I was in a state of obedience I had direct access to His presence, and joyed there. I would go for long walks by the East River next to my house, as the footpath along its edge, next to the FDR Drive, was just a minute or two away. Along this path, up into the East Harlem area, and down to the United Nations area, this was my prayer ground, joying in my Lord, and resisting the devil and his demons. The sight and sound of the river water was soothing to my heart, as were the "wide open spaces" of river, sky and land. This was my life for a while. I had no real friends at this time.

There *was* Mother Weston, a large Black woman I'd met at Rock Church, who sang hymns with a piercing power and heart. She sort of adopted me, as she'd had a son my age who died in the drug scene. She gave me some of his clothes – we both were medium height and slim build – and loved taking me with her to the various churches she visited in the Bronx and Mt. Vernon. I was her adopted Jewish boy upon whom Christ had shown mercy. She often took me home and fed me; she loved me like a mother. Jane Weston, I'll see you in glory!

Even though I led this semi-tormented life the Lord still used me. I remember this one young Black man I'd befriended (from some church, I think); he fell ill and went to a hospital near my home; I got a lay minister's ID card from the hospital chaplain, and visited him, encouraging him in the Faith before he died. Another young man, Fred, I befriended, and from our conversations he came to faith in Christ. Fred is still one of my close friends these many years later! In fact, I moved from the Upper East Side down to the East Village to share the apartment Fred rented. We opened the apartment as a crash pad of sorts, working in conjunction with a number of storefront ministries of Christians reaching out to the counter-culture young men and women in the East Village. The names of some of these ministries – they took the form of coffeehouses – were The Living Room, His Place, and The Way Word.

I remember one young man who stayed with us at the apartment – older than most at 28 or 29, perhaps – who was among the more mature Christians I'd come across, Bill Ondre by name. He worked among the staff of the coffeehouses, supporting them, and caring for the young people who came in, bearing witness to the reality and power of the Savior. Late one evening we were home sitting at the kitchen table talking about the things of God – Fred was asleep in the other room – when suddenly Bill seized up in the middle of a sentence and fell to the floor, unconscious. It seemed to me he had had a heart attack, and I endeavored to give him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Fred awoke, and called the police and the ambulance, and they came quickly, but to no avail. Bill died there in my arms.

I knew he went directly from my presence into the presence of God in Heaven, in just moments. Somehow the living faith and godly death of Bill before my eyes braced my own faith, the reality of Bill bearing witness to the reality of God, in life and in death.

Lord, would You please give my love to Mother Weston and Bill, and I thank You for the blessing they were in my early days walking with You.

Nonetheless my spiritual strength and resolve continued to fail. These were the years, '70-'71, and being some 33 years ago, the chronology of things is

a bit jumbled in my mind. I know I began to see my old girlfriend, Donna Lee, and I began to take acid again. And smoke cigarettes. These grew from what I thought to be the root sin: eating again, walking in darkness. The anguish of being separated from my Jesus! My heart had rejoiced in the glory of His presence, and of being granted to walk the highway of holiness.

At some point in this period my time spent in “darkness” began to equal and exceed that spent in the light. Years later, after I began to write of these things, this was what I saw when I looked back:

The protagonist in this tale an occultist-poet warrior-priest who fell from his Master’s presence into the abyss in the human heart, and found himself in the howling archetypal heartlands of humanity....where he began an odyssey in search for his own heart, and his Master’s....

This warrior and fallen priest found himself set upon his feet, even upon the heartlands floor of the howling Abyss. No Valley of the Shadow of Death, this – for that was in the world of the living – rather this was in the realms of archetypal horror, where the worst monsters are not those who beset one about, but that which one may oneself become, being impregnated by worse horrors than Sigourney’s *Aliens* of modern film.

I moved out from Fred’s and was on the street for a while. Fred was aware that I had fallen. I was glad he had the stability to maintain his own spiritual integrity and walk with God.

Barefoot In Winter: Righteousness In the East Village

When Fred moved to Staten Island I found lodging with a young Catholic Christian, Cliff Lichter, who ran a crash pad at 437 E. 12th Street. But before I learned about Cliff’s place I was on the street a while. I remember one evening I was sleeping outside Penn Station, the key to the locker holding

my bag of belongings in my watch pocket, and someone very quietly took it from me without waking me. My few possessions were gone, but thankfully not my good stuff – only “travelin’ gear.”

I remember also one notable descent. I went to stay with Donna Lee (who had an apartment on 13th Street and Avenue “A”) and dropped some acid (I don’t think she took any). She was a dear and old friend (a former lover) from my pre-conversion East Village days. She’d owned a small boutique with exquisite clothing she’d made, and other items. She’d been a lovely aspiring actress (come into town from the Mid-West), and alcohol and pills attended her last days in NYC, before she fled back to a semblance of normalcy and sanity in Ft. Wayne. I greatly contributed to her unsettlement with my ups and downs. I’d sought to bring her into the fold of Christ, and the small community of us who clung to Him for life. My inconsistency cost her. When my life was falling apart, she sought to give me shelter from the storm. Alas, the storm was within, and no human shelter availed. I dropped the cid with her in the apartment. I was not “walking with the Lord” at this time (eating as I was).

It was very strange – I had a clear sense of being an elder or prince in Israel, in the spiritual realm of the people of God (not in a mere physical ethnic sense). This pertained to a spiritual consciousness of personhood, and awareness of the opposition and influence of demonic entities, as well as temptation to do evil. This was calmly and soothingly mingled with the cresting psychedelic energies rushing within my being. Donna, I think, was drinking wine.

I did not resist the beauty of my old friend. My identity crashed in the wickedness of sin.

I had been reading *The Brothers Karamozov* in those days and been struck with some of the things Dmitri said to Alyosha¹, depicting his own heart through a poem of the goddess Ceres,

...And where’er the grieving goddess
Turns her melancholy gaze,
Sunk in vilest degradation
Man his loathsomeness displays.

Dmitri explicates his own heart from these lines, and then cites more poetry,

Her gifts to man are friends in need,
The wreath, the foaming must,
To angels—visions of God's throne,
To insects—sensual lust.

He then waxes eloquent on this theme of the sensual lust of insects having its correlative in the heart of the Karamozovs. In my embrace of Donna I plunged into the horror of Dmitri's theme – the two of us were as insects indulging this lust, but it was worse: this insect-like sense was due to demonic beings *using* us – *possessing* us in some less-than-Gadarene manner – to fulfill their own vile pleasure. It was truly a horror!

I remember shortly afterward trying to recuperate my wits and sense of heart, but could not shake the guilt and defilement that had suffused me. I was still tripping strongly.

I picked up a copy of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* Donna had among her books² and began to read – I can't recall if it was in *Purgatorio* or *Paradiso*, I never could find the place again – and while I was reading something that spoke of the Lord a great glory shone upon me, the majesty of His actual presence as He looked upon this foul worm with tender kindness (not the wrath I surely deserved!), and the glory of this grace smote me to the quick, and I was won back to Him in that instant, glory and majesty and joy flowing in my acid consciousness like fireworks of a home-coming in my honor on a black night.

My words to Him were (and these have been repeated many times in various circumstances over the years), "Jesus, forgive me for these sins I have committed, and cleanse me with Your blood." And I knew from His word – in Scripture – it was done. To the devil and his spirits I said, "Satan, in the name of Jesus Christ, and by the power of His indwelling Spirit, I command you to depart from me, and all ground I gave you I now withdraw and give back to my God. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth I break and bind your power over me, and command you to go."

Perhaps those not Christians may think me mad, but this is reality of life in the spirit world, in which all of us live, but most are blind, not having the Holy Spirit who gives vision.

I said goodbye to Donna Lee (I cannot remember if we talked much then – surely I told her of my giving my heart back to the Lord – but this may have confused her, and I think I felt it best to go), and when I got outside it was cold and snowing.

I remembered that the money I had been living on was the trust-fund allowance of \$150 a month (one could live on that in those days) I had promised to regularly send to my daughter's mother in Illinois to help them get by (this is another story), but as I had been broke I kept it for myself a few months. The boots and the belt I was wearing were bought with this money. I considered this stolen money (it was not mine any longer to keep or spend), and I could not wear the boots or belt any longer, so I took them off in the street outside Donna's apartment and left them neatly by the doorway for someone to pick up and take. I walked over to the Christians' *Living Room* coffee shop on St. Mark's Place between 1st and 2nd Avenues to see if anyone there had some spare footwear. I'm sure I was a sight walking in there barefoot out of the snow, though it wasn't obvious I was tripping. One of the men had a pair of military boots in the trunk of his car, which he lent me till I got some of my own.

I was comforted by the spiritual companionship of my friends (for I was known to them, and they to me), and I had them pray for me. This one fine young Australian woman, Sandy (a worker for Teen Challenge, which supported the *Living Room*), said words to me as I left that have stayed with me over the years: "Steve...be strong, be true." That profound simplicity – when said in love – goes deep into a person tripping. So I started a fast again. It didn't last long.

It was around this time I heard of Cliff Lichter's place. Cliff was gracious, and he had a heart for the young people who were casualties of the East Village dope scene. I think he went off to work during the day (as a cook, I believe) to support himself and us. Eventually the place filled up with Christians, and there were increasingly few who were not. Cliff left after a while.

We got to be a small community of believers, and when we heard there was another small apartment for rent across the hall (I think it was around \$60 a month) we snapped it up (I borrowed the \$120 – deposit and first month – to get the new apartment from some believers who had been missionaries associated with Watchman Nee in China, and currently attended an assembly in Queens, Christian Fellowship Center, comprised of many Chinese nationals who had known Nee, and some who were in ministry with him, as well as Americans from the area. They were good people, and glad to help). The new apartment was for the men, and the old one was for the women. This community thrived for a while, and then broke up. A number of the folks joined churches or other Christian communes, which were plentiful in those days, and began to live settled lives.

Pretty soon I was alone in the men's apartment, and a couple of women – young believers – stayed in the other one. I began to stray more and more, eating, and smoking cigarettes. Another great descent began as I met an old friend from my earlier travels in British Honduras (now Belize), Mustapha. He was a Black man from the Lower East Side I had met in a commune of Americans outside Belize City in 1965 or 66, and here he was on 2nd Avenue. He right away gave me some speed (Dexedrine tablets, I think), and introduced me to the heroin scene kingpins of the East Village, chief of whom was a woman, Emily, and next her male colleague, Lonnie, and a few young toughs who did their bidding. Being as I was tight with Mustapha they welcomed me, and this began my brief foray into heroin use.

I had a day job – working as a chauffeur for the boss of a meatpacking plant on the Lower East Side. I was a good driver, and enjoyed doing that. I had worked as an orderly in a nursing home for a while, but the supervisor said I took too long to make my rounds cleaning up my folks, though she said she would give me a good reference as she saw I had a heart for the people and my tardiness was due to spending time and talking with them.

Evenings and nights I went to the heroin hub of the East Village. I had money so I didn't have to resort to the crimes of the others. One tough guy, Doug – a short but stocky and muscular man – thought it sport to lord it over me, until I told him, "Look, Doug, I know you're tougher and stronger

than me, but you're going to have to back off – I don't take this from anyone.” And from then on we were friends. There were some very mean folks in this scene, though not in the immediate clique; this one guy, a tall Black man, I could see death in his eyes, a capacity for profound evil. There were only two white guys in the group, “white Bobby” and myself. All my adult life I have walked among Blacks and Puerto Ricans and have been accepted among them as an equal – would that all whites were so egalitarian!

Another man, “Tree-Top,” called such for his extreme height – maybe 6' 8" – used to boss smaller guys around, till one man fed up with it sat waiting for him on the steps of what had been the Electric Circus on St. Marks Place with a sharp knife concealed in a newspaper, and when he came up to him deeply sliced open his mid-section. “Tree-Top” lived after a hospital stay, but was a more subdued individual after that.

Around this time there was a “panic” in New York, that is, there was a shortage of heroin, and the addicts – my friends – were hurting and frightened. As I was white, and had my own money (i.e., was not a thief or rip-off artist), and a good reputation, I had this one mid level-dealer ask me if I wanted to work for him, for he had a connection that was intact. I did cop for my friends a couple of times, but I did not want to do this any longer. I remember one evening walking along the street mildly high (I think on ‘cid) I came across these two rough street hustlers who called me over and asked me if I knew where there was any heroin. I figured them to be capable of murder to get the stuff, and I told them no. But I could sense their own drug-heightened awareness strangely probing my mind, as if they could see into me and could tell that I did know where. That thoroughly spooked me.

I saw in a flash that if I continued as I was I would have to become a *prince of death*, one who must be willing to take a life if another got in my way, and to always be carrying a pistol for that eventuality. All of a sudden I saw the logical conclusion to the life I was leading, and it went right into the devil's lair. Being a soldier in the Marine Corps was one thing, but this soldiering in the depths of evil quite another, and my heart (which despite all belonged to Christ) revolted against it.

I told all my friends in the scene I was leaving the area, and would not be reachable. I had had the prudence to tell almost no one where my apartment was, so I knew that I would be safe there – some half a mile from the St. Marks area – if I laid low.

Still, I was not of a mind to repent and walk again with the Lord, because it would involve another extended fast, which I had no confidence I could successfully do. This was a vicious trap, and I knew there was something amiss in my thinking this was required of me, but I could not see through it to extricate myself. You may say, “How could such a low-life character belong among God’s children, be one of His elect?” You’ll have to ask Him that when you see Him, but *I* would answer there are many such ensnared in false doctrines and satanic snares, and in part I write this to give such heart and hope, and to open to them the way of deliverance and authentic salvation. I am one of those low-lives (former low-life, if you will) the Lord uses to reach down into the depths of evil and depravity to snatch others like myself from the pit, as David sings, “Bless the LORD, O my soul... Who forgiveth all thine iniquities... Who redeemeth thy life from destruction!”¹³

Back to the pit of my former life: I was deeply frightened upon seeing the path I had been walking, the path of a budding inner-city “prince of death,” I, who had been schooled in the royal courts of the Son of God, groomed as a member of the royal Family itself to be a warrior-priest in the service of the King and High Priest, now on the brink of the devil’s service! And to have the devil’s hit-men keeping an eye open for me as they had “psychically smelled” I had knowledge of what they sought!

The woman next door, Noel, the one remaining Christian disciple from the community, became my friend and companion in this darkness. She also was not walking with the Lord. To make a long story short, we got married (this was 1972), and had a girl-child. We moved to a better apartment, and in 1973 I began to drive a yellow cab, which I continued doing for 5 years. In 1975 Noel’s mother died, and she had a nervous breakdown, taking off to Canada, where she had some relatives.

Although Noel’s mom had been an alcoholic, her last weeks were in a place in the Bronx called Calvary Nursing Home (or something like that), a hospice for cancer patients. My heart went out to her, and on days off I would

go visit her, fasting and praying, often, and I believe she called upon the name of the Lord in reality, and went into eternity in His care, as Paul the apostle declared, “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”⁴

Still, I continued going downhill, despite this momentary triumph.

I got a small apartment I could afford, so as to care for my daughter, Nadine, and myself. I remained separated from Noel, even when she returned to the states later. We eventually shared custody of our child.

Spiritually I was in a strange state. It was to me as a limbo of sorts. When I stopped fasting (in 1972) and became involved with people the anorexia-bulimia symptoms ceased, and I ate normally. Every time, however, I was moved in my heart to seek the Lord and walk with Him, I was bound to commence a long fast. Even when I was not involved in any actual sins (violations of His commandments) I reckoned myself in a state of disobedience, and thus in sin.

In my life and heart I had fallen from the presence of Him I loved, and walked in darkness.

¹ In the section of Part One, Book III: The Sensualists, 4. The Confession of a Passionate Heart—in Verse.

² The handsome 1948 edition by Pantheon, translated by Lawrence White and illustrated by Doré.

³ Psalm 103:2-4, *King James Bible*

⁴ Romans 10:13.

A GREAT AND TERRIBLE LOVE

As the story ended in “Conversion To Fall,” I found myself in a spiritual limbo of sorts, an eddy of delusion – *deception*, to be precise – which set me into a backwater pool away from the robust and clear stream of spiritual life flowing from the Throne throughout the kingdom. Having thoroughly devoured the unabridged edition of Jessie Penn-Lewis’ *War On The Saints* in search of insight into the demonic snare I suspected had taken me, I could not discern it and was still blind and bound, treading in a mill of continual sin, and getting worse. To live, I had to eat, but to eat was – seeing I believed I was commanded to fast – to walk in disobedience and self-will, cut off from the power, vitality and grace of the Lord’s heart, vulnerable to the powers and desires of the present world, having no *heart* to withstand them. I was as though transported to a weird wasteland in the spirit-world.

In retrospect I can see my plight: there was no proclamation of God’s provision for the likes of me – a refugee from the psychedelic occult, the devil having gained close access to my mind and spirit while in that realm – which marvelous provision I gladly avail myself of nowadays, and vigorously teach to all and sundry. For example, there is the energy that comes from having perfect spiritual rest, and the heart (courage, morale) that comes from being perfectly loved, the both of which together translate into Resurrection Power, which may be quiet and unassuming, yet is the vitality of God in lives and situations. If we as a spiritual community are secure in our Savior’s love and care, and are full of His Spirit as we increasingly know the depths and heights and breadth of His heart for us, we will have a strong and pure energy for activities that glorify Him and help our fellow humans. Such things are the nourishing fruit of sound doctrine and godly preaching.

But this was not what I knew. Instead of learning all that God had done for me, had actually provided to sustain and nurture me in the difficulties of new spiritual life and godliness, I was taught what I must do for God, to please Him, and to attain that degree of holiness that enables one to enter His presence. The key to this was self-effort and austerity. Add to this a serious deception (the compulsory fasting route), and you get profound spiritual failure.

Even when I wasn't doing anything wrong – sinful – I *reckoned* myself (an otherwise good Biblical concept from Romans 6) to be in a state of sin / disobedience. So much depends upon what one *believes* to be true! And there I was.

After the breakdown when her mom died, Noel had taken off to Canada, whereabouts unknown, and I took (just turned) 3-year-old Nadine and moved to a small apartment on East 4th Street a little west of 1st Avenue, a fifth floor walk-up, 3 room railroad flat – bathtub in the kitchen – for around \$80 a month.

I was driving a yellow cab at this point, and Nadine stayed with one or another church family we were close to while I drove the taxi three nights a week, 4 PM to around 4 AM. That was the money shift, without a lot of traffic jams, although there was more danger at night. The meter racks up money faster moving than sitting in traffic, and passengers are happier.

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The fallen warrior-priest occultist-poet lived for a while in the limbo of spiritual isolation – utter ontologic aloneness – and his spirit was slowly suffocating. In these days he met a woman on the Lower East Side of Manhattan struggling to carry a table along the street to her apartment. It was the winter of early 1976; she looked Russian, her head wrapped in scarves like a babushka, her body covered in a heavy overcoat. He offered to help her, and from this encounter began the book this story is part of, *A Great And Terrible Love*.

It turned out she wasn't Russian, but Mexican and English, evidently well-born, considering the way she carried herself, Tenesa, an artist in the modern dance. He mistook an unusually-placed Spanish punctuation mark in a note she wrote him to indicate a strong affection on her part toward him (it was not her intention, he learned later), but his passionate response kindled a fire in her, and they came together.

I knew a Spanish maid
hair most lovely dark
as a waterfall
of light

fierce black fire
of the Spanish maid

It was a strange alchemy of heart wrought by her entrance into his life; it effected a change that quickened him against the death slowly eating away his breath, a principle of life imparted to him: eros, the power in ontologic-erotic union, and she came to him,

a queen of terrible bearing
eyes like lightning
and her love as fierce
as Death.

He did not pull any punches revealing his heart to her. When he told her he was vampiric in spirit – for thus it is with those who fall from glory into the abyss – she said he was being “melodramatic,” but he had to declare his state truly or he could not be loved as he actually was. As he wrote he cried,

Oh how I fear to take pen in hand
not knowing if the drop of pure heart
it is dipped in
will burn as acid

our love

yet this is my life
or death

It was short-lived, his union with Tenesa, but it opened a door for him – for his very spirit and life! – providing an escape from the onslaught of Thanatos devouring him within; a human does not fall from Heaven but is vulnerable to excruciating and multifarious death. He sensed their end coming. She had consulted the I Ching and told him she received these phrases: “an undertaking,” “abysmal waters,” and “tears of blood.” Caring nothing for that form of divination, he took the words and put them in a poem, which he gave her at what he told her would be their last time together:

THE UNDERTAKING

Into the abysmal
waters of death
she plunged,

strong-hearted in love
to pull from their midst
a sore-wounded man.

He called himself Jonah,
and she loved him dearly.
He healed at her touch.

But Jonah was a marked man
under the hand of his God,
and so heavy of heart

she cried out in pain
from his words,
and knew her undertaking

was nigh done:
from the waters she saved him
and gave him breath

from her own life.
Then a great storm arose
and he said, Save yourself,

cast me forth into the sea,
for I know that for my sake
this great tempest is upon you,

and you know how I have fled
from the presence of the LORD.
And with these words they wept

tears of blood.
And she cast him forth
into the storm.

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How her Jonah fared,
and she herself,
is not yet written.

It is from this point that his odyssey proper began (and oddly – not being into numerology – ended seven years to the day in the last poem of *A Fire In the Lake*); an odyssey not only in the hearts of women, but in the world of letters, and in the world of spirits and occult practitioners.

A word about “the occult”: its root meaning is hidden (from view), concealed, covered over, coming from the Latin *occulere*; in medicine it is used as in the terms “occult blood in the stool,” or “occult carcinoma.” It is used here in a neutral sense, not specifically referring to demonic practitioners (as common usage does) unless so indicated. The prayers (and prayer warfare!)

of a saint as well as the spells of a sorcerer are both in the realm of the occult – hidden from human eyes! – or so is the use of this word in these writings.

The title, *A Great and Terrible Love Affair*, first occurred to him in his days with Donna Lee, seeing the terrible (and yet wondrous) nature of their relationship, as well that with the Lord who bore with him – as with all His people – who loved so a wretched character with a steadfast and unfailing love! But this Lord was also a terrible Lover, for He was capable of severely wounding those He loved to get them back to Him *and stay with Him*, as the proverbial shepherd who breaks the leg of a young lamb prone to wander and keeps it in the tent to bond with him as he cares for it in its helplessness, that bond remaining strong even when the lamb is healed and grown! A great and terrible love on many levels, this living story!

It was strange how the great sin of taking Tenesa as his paramour quickened him (please understand, this writing is not to justify anything evil that was done, but to tell of events, inward and outward). This “quickening” was not of that sort which tends to life, the true sense of life which results from union with the God of life, wherein we partake of the divine nature, and the life we then live in this world being a foretaste of eternal life; no, the life – the new vitalizing power – which came from erotic-ontologic union with Tenesa gave him the energy and heart (as in the French, *le courage*) to begin an odyssey, even upon the heartlands floor of the howling Abyss. In this region the “ground” sometimes disappears and one finds oneself suspended in the netherworld with vast blackness overhead and seething unfathomable depths beneath. Years later, commenting on this phenomenon, the poet wrote,

For years I lived by the love of woman, and by that love was kept aloft over roaring whirlpool Thanatos of the subtle spheres. Eros triumphed over Thanatos (for a while), and although the telling of it was “pornographic,” it in itself was of redeeming value. If the will to live is to be valued over the will to die, that is... But Eros proved to be salvation with a small “s,” for the ways of earthly love are not stable.

In fact, our poet struggled greatly against the will to die. He was suffused by it before she came, cut off from any other ontologic connection – his daughter was precious to him, but this was not a union of beings, she not being an ontologic equal – and that included especially the Lord, from whom he believed he had been separated by his “sin.” Still being possessed of spiritual sight, he discerned in the “seething unfathomable depths beneath” a power and intelligence projecting into him a will to die. He knew this had been termed *thanatos* in classic psychoanalytic literature, but he saw it was the heart of the demon prince, Satan, whose spirit was in all those not in union with God, causing some severely wounded ones to despair of life. Particularly in those who were in utter isolation from other human beings, this baleful influence worked powerfully, eating away at the core of being, till there was no strength to resist. The poet called it Thanatos with a capital “T” because it was in truth a person, albeit a spirit.

It was as though a great whirlpool in the subtle sphere, drawing him slowly to its terrible maw – where he saw in the depths of it a horrid and malign satisfaction at his impending demise – and against which he had no strength to fight, had begun the inexorable process of devouring him! He had even bought a long-bladed knife to still his blood.

This was the same abyss he had been rescued from in the story, “St. Louis Blues to Conversion,” but now the veil was removed from his eyes, and he saw the intelligences plotting the destruction of humans, and in particular, his! There was a quiet terror in his heart, for he had the care of his 3-year-old girl on his mind as well.

So when Tenesa came near, he gladly – desperately! – drew her to him, and became one flesh and spirit with her. There is indeed a power to eros in withstanding Thanatos, for to be held in the ontologic embrace of another heart is to be not alone, and the power of Thanatos is held at bay, if but briefly.

★ ★ ★

WILL EVER A GREAT POET

visit this earth again?
And if so
what will he/she be like?
Will they be ignorant
of drugs
and the places our heads go
thereby?
Will they be ignorant
of the road
and this generation of pilgrims,
ignorant of the rape
of our earth
by the “respectable,”
ignorant of true speech
and heart music,
ignorant of how we yearn
and suffer,
how we are besieged by madmen
in costumes,
how we love
at grave peril
to our hearts?
Will they be academic stiff
too dry to swallow,
or will they be loved
by us?

“how we love / at grave peril / to our hearts”! The other edge of the sweet blade of love is that if it leaves it cuts its way out and we are not only alone but rent and opened to that in the abyss. Often the two wills of lovers cannot abide in union – such is our essential self-centeredness – and one often hears of those who die “of heart-break.”

Now he was in her ontologic embrace, and she in his. She did not know the regions she had taken into herself when she took him in. But he knew. When he confessed to being a vampire, she didn't understand. He clung to her as to very life. To be loved by her...yes, it was his evil heart; but the One who is sovereign sends even the ants and birds on their paths and winds, and He sent her, even as crossing the paths of Samson and Delilah. (If she yet lives, Lord, grant her mercy, draw her to You, reveal Yourself to her, grant her Your saving life, please!) And he said to Him in those days, "I will not give her up. You will have to take her from me Yourself." And so came the spiritual storm, even as Jonah knew the Sender of the storm on the sea.

The names *desperado* and *outlaw* are not alien to the poet when he ponders his life and heart, for surely he is made of that cloth. But he knew himself as *His* desperado, *His* outlaw, beloved by Him though the world hate him for the wretch he is, or rather, had been!

As the poem foresaw, she did cast him forth into the storm. It was a storm of darkness, passion, faith-not-entirely-extinguished, wrath, love, and horror, and it was of long duration. Yet he entered it as a new man – he had been loved as he was!

O I knew a Spanish maid
by she became I man
loved by woman

Somehow this had confirmed him in his being and he now had the *heart* to live. It was a gift – *un cadeau terrible* – a terrible gift; perhaps the giving of it somehow wounded her, bereft her of something essential. (If she yet lives, watch over her, O Most High, protect this one who succored Your outlaw son, and pulled him from depths too strong for him; O great King, have mercy on this one, please! Reveal the light of Your countenance to her!)

Hers also was a love great and terrible. With a heart fierce to live he proceeded from her arms and tears – the embrace of her heart – on what was to be an odyssey into depths that would overturn the pale wasteland of T

.S. Eliot: a journey into the abyss in the human heart. An odyssey on the surface of the world – Apokalypse Field outside the gates of Eden – and in the horrors of the netherworld in the consciousness of humankind.

★ ★ ★

In 1978 the poet and his 5-year-old daughter left Manhattan and moved to Woodstock, NY, which was to be their home for the next 19 years—although Nadine did some traveling of her own when she got older.

KING OF THE GREEN

Some of the street-people trippers in Woodstock, in moments of delusional grandeur, would fancy themselves “King of the Green” – beings of great consciousness and power – and would, in a manner of speaking, hold court there.

Then there were others, more the Lao Tse, or bodhisattva types, who thought themselves “Servants of the Green” – there to care and illumine, not rule.

However, when any states of consciousness are attained by means of sorcery – the psychedelic drugs giving entrance to the spirit realms – and manifested, such phenomena as these occurred, as heightened awareness cried for understanding of identity: “What am I? What is the meaning of this state? I see I have great depth and force of being; what am I to do and be with it?”

Apart from a true spiritual path there is no sound guidance, and who is a true spiritual teacher? One can see from the story, “A Fighter in Woodstock” – and the other stories of this book – I was no spiritual teacher back then.

I confess I was one of the trippers on the Green; who or what did I think myself? I suppose it would be true to say, Poet of the Green, and a lot of grist for my mill came from thence. Though Poet of the age I thought myself as well, with a wider sphere of vision than just Hobbiton in the Catskills.

TRAVELIN' CORNSILK QUEEN

for Ellen Sanders

flashin' fierce beauty
rough & tumble across the highways
scarred by knives
still carryin' her pack
ramblin' queen of many village greens

skinny kid
in tee-shirts and frayed jeans
barefoot
what cornfield did she step out of
what dream of loveliness

'shroom ax-pickin' angel
come wandering into my heart
street-wise & rugged
making goddesses of legend
alive in her tripping eyes

o travelin' cornsilk queen
the simple homespun heart of you
a goddess splashing love-light in my rooms
how I'll miss the rarity of you
sittin' in my kitchen.

Woodstock, 1980

Only friends, Ellen and I (and she loved my daughter also), we met as she was hitch-hiking on Route 28, aiming to get from Kingston to Woodstock. I saw her on my way into Kingston, and then again coming soon back, and stopped to give her a ride on my motorcycle. She stayed with Nadine (who was around 7 or 8 then) and me in our small apartment in Tannery Brook House.

Earlier in my life I was a lover of Lao Tse and the Tao, but after I met Christ he receded into the background. Still, his wisdom did impact how I saw things. I first learned of him through Tim Leary's 1966 adaptation of his book, *The Tao Te Ching* (The Way of Life) into psychedelese in "*Psychedelic Prayers after the Tao Te Ching*". Leary was one of the primary teachers of our counterculture.

Still, the spiritual combat I was introduced to by Jesus Christ forever changed my views of the earlier Eastern wisdom I had loved, even though I was not walking in the spirit of Christ. I no longer lived in the spirit of the East, but saw depths and heights, not in the various occult planes, but of the demonic and the divine, and the human betwixt.

The Green was the heart of the village of Woodstock – the community of street people, and the counterculture folks – for a time during the '70s and '80s.

I visited Woodstock and sat on the Green a few days ago, and the spirit of the earlier times are long gone. My old friends are really aging, or dead, or who knows where? I had thought of moving back there, but I see one really can't "go home again".

And now, in mid 2014, the Shadow of Mordor darkens the streets and hearts, and devastation reigns, at least inwardly in the souls of men and women. For outwardly things may seem peaceful and moving toward a bright end, but this is illusory, and a great delusion which is engulfing the entire globe, not just my beloved Hobbiton.

The Green is gone for me, as is the village I came of age in – and yet love – so many having moved on. Still, I write – hold forth my vision – as there are souls still alive who may love these words, and I pray Heaven speed them to their hearts and minds.

WOODSTOCK BREAKFAST

Preface

This story is named after a poem named after a true event. In the chapter, “Executing Judgment”, I talk about my falling back into using psychedelic drugs, and why I did this. I’m sure some will disapprove of sections in these writings of mine, going back over this part of my backslidden life both in NYC and in Woodstock. I won’t, I can’t, defend my doing wrong; *but* . . . is there any redeeming value in that part of my life? In relating it for others?

Now that I am – or have been – a pastor and preacher (presently retired), and a writer declaring the prophetic Scriptures that shall be fulfilled in the not-too-distant future, with regard to this country (America), and also the rest of the world, some may wonder, “Where did this guy come from, who is he, and what is his background?” I did not come from academia, a seminary, or a Bible school, but am wilderness-trained. I did not come from a religious background. I came from the open road of the sixties (after Kerouac and Dylan), the streets of NYC in the 70s and of Woodstock in the late 70s, 80s, and early 90s; also from the mountain fastnesses of the southern Catskills where I often went to seek vision in the rough beauty of those wilds.

I openly wore a fighting knife on my side, both in Manhattan (as a single parent protecting my little girl in the rough area we lived in) and up in Woodstock, where a knife is a basic tool in the mountain wilds.

I had become a disciple of Jesus Christ in 1968, but the teaching I received was such it could not sustain the raging desperado – as one poet put it, it was the “thinnest of soups” – and I needed robust fare. I walked away, with grief, from my Lord, as told in the chapter mentioned above.

I ended up in Woodstock with my child. I was not living as a disciple, even though I was still His, for He did not let me go. I became part of the life of the town.

I was a poet and a writer. I had the sense that my life had meaning, that I had a destiny to fulfill; I was an enemy of the satanic powers, partially trained in the warfare against them (but had not graduated), and the drugs I used certainly compromised my opposition, for they were sorcery. I suppose the thing I most sought after – seeing as my walk with the Lord had failed – was the reality of my own life and heart, that I stay in touch with myself.

Having been taught certain false understandings of how to walk well in the spirit realm with Christ, my failure was horrendous, and the censure of those whose way and teaching contributed to my fall I will let roll off my back like water off a leaping fish – and I’ll settle with you when I see you in Glory if not before, and will proceed to tell my story.

★ ★ ★

WOODSTOCK BREAKFAST

Never heard of it? Well, it’s
coffee & acid

lean and hearty fare
for those
with feet on the earth,
hearts in the tower
of vision

on this the dark planet.

Breakfast of fools
and champions.

I had not forgotten the ancient, millennia-long warfare. The “tower of vision”? The name of a book on Eliot, Pound and Williams, *Three on the Tower*, by Louis Simpson, who sought understanding as to where poetry – and humankind – were going, and also the military watch towers of ancient Israel, gave me the image.

Later Simpson would write in a poem,

*O if there is a poet
let him come now!*

So I call the place of vision, of seeing, in contemporary poetry, *the tower of vision*; but it is not just for poetry’s sake, as poetry is – as it should be – prophetic as regards the human condition.

I *knew* I was in darkness; I *knew* I was in the regions of the abyss in the human heart; but I was a poet, and this was my life, my struggle to remain conscious. I knew I was in a state of living death (have I not written of this?), yet I lived! Yet I was conscious!

Indeed acid was the breakfast of fools! But better a sorcerous fool than an unconscious meathead, doubly dead!

Strung-out, but true, as in, “Better terrible truth than none at all, or the usual hype and jive.” Those who’ve seen some of the depths I traveled understand. If I remained conscious there was hope, for I remembered His word who said, “My sheep . . . shall never perish”. If I lost my acute consciousness, I had nothing in the pitch darkness!

So yes, breakfast of fools, but also of champions, as I had faith my older Brother would come for me and get me back. That would be a ways down the road, but it was comin’! In my heart I knew it was.

My heart was full – with a strange hope – even while in the abyss. A light burned within, a sacred flame deeper than the unholy life I lived. I had “*champion*” coursing through my veins, welling from an unseen depth, and

it informed the way I carried myself, like a gyroscope of precarious sanity in my mind and heart amid a wilding world.

Those folks who were part of my life and love while in Woodstock deeply touched me, and I love them still. I'm not ashamed before them of the life I lived, as I did my best to be true, though I knew if I was false to Christ I was through and through false; still, putting that out of mind as best I could, I carried on. Eventually, as I have written, I arrived at the very brink of a black hole, and was about to plunge into it, when – unsought by me – my Lord reached in and drew me out at the last moment.

And I say in response to Simpson's cry, "I come!"

It's as a poet I define my life – the Lord's Poet at this point – and I tell of the path by which I got here. It ain't pretty, nor is it holy (in parts) but it's true, even though I was as an antihero for much of it back then.

Visionary adventure *nonfiction*. How many spiritual autobiographies have come out of Woodstock? Authentic consciousness that's not just a religious bore?

It's still a dark planet, and getting darker, but now there's a light loose in my heart, and *I'm* loose.

When I fared on my Woodstock breakfasts I did the very best I could at that time; I *had* to stay alive, burn with *the fever of truth* (as my old friend David Wiltshire would say) even if falsity crippled me. What a wretched antihero! Yet the drive to remain conscious prevailed, to keep my wits intact.

I need no drugs for this now, in 2014. I do like my coffee in the mornings, and an occasional glass of Port in the evenings, usually while I write. Now I have the Spirit of Christ to illumine and energize me, as I sit in the Tower, declaring what I see.

A FIGHTER IN WOODSTOCK

It's known as the town of "peace and love", but there were a lot of crazies walkin' around, and people on sundry trips which were not always benign. This reminiscence goes back to the years 1980 or so.

My first tangle was with a Jewish man called Steven, a former Wall Street worker who'd taken acid and decided he had a higher calling. In those days, especially as I was in the woodlands, I wore a Buck sheath knife I'd brought up from the City. I first started wearing it after an incident with my 4-year-old daughter on a subway platform on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Some coked-up guy wanted to put his hands on her – maybe he was just being friendly, I don't know – but she was scared and didn't want it, whereupon he started copping an attitude (he was a tough and mean guy) and I saw trouble coming, but just then the subway came and he backed off, but I determined to carry a weapon from that point on. I was almost always with my child on those mean streets, and the Lower East Side was a heavy drug scene then, and I don't mean the psychedelic drugs of the sixties! So I carried my knife everywhere, even when I went to churches. The white folks got sort of freaked out when they saw it (it wasn't a huge knife, a Buck Fisherman #21 with a 5 inch blade, easy to handle, a good fighting knife), but it didn't faze the Latinos and Blacks, who took it in stride and knew the dangers of the streets.

Woodstock was far more civilized than NYC, but I was often in the woods and hiking, so it was natural to wear it. I always had a knife on me, if only a pocket knife – a tool, and not a weapon. At any rate, Steven hated that I wore a knife, and he hated that I had custody of my daughter. He'd tangled

with me twice, indicating he thought I shouldn't be caring for my child. I told him to back off, and he didn't like that either, as he considered himself a psychedelic rabbi of some sort, and to be heeded. As I am a Jew myself, and went by my nom de plume in those days – Steve Levin – perhaps he figured I should submit to him.

My girl would occasionally take the bus down to NYC – she was 6 – and her mom would get her at the station, and often friends going down would accompany her. One day she came back and said Steven was on the bus and was hassling her that she should be with her mother, and he frightened her. So I found him in town (leaving my knife in the car) and had it in mind to confront him – this was his third strike – and if necessary teach him a lesson. Now he was bigger than I was, and maybe a few years younger (I around 36 or 37), and after I found him, and he said he would continue to do whatever he pleased with regard to Nadine, I told him I was going to teach him a lesson, and if I couldn't do with my hands, I'd find a club and do it. He walked away from me, and headed to the entrance of the Woodstock Healthfood Store, when I called him to stop. He turned around with a bad attitude, and almost involuntarily – as if it were a reflex – I hit him in the jaw with a left roundhouse punch and he went down. I had had no thought of doing it, it just happened. If angels were into energizing and enabling such an act I'd say an angel did it, but I don't think angels do such things. As he struggled to get up I purposed to punish him, but a couple of men watching took hold of me to prevent that. He seemed like he was then going to try to hit me while I was being held, and I said to the guys if they were going to hold me they better hold him too. A friend of mine, Tom, came up and asked me if everything was okay, and I said yes. So I was released, and a few minutes later Steven came up with a Woodstock policeman who asked me if I'd hit him, and I said yes, he'd been harassing my 6-year-old daughter, and he said, "Sixteen year old?" and I said, "No, *six*-year-old." He then took us both to the judge, who in those days was Sid Slayton.

Now Steven had earlier harassed Sid's daughter, telling her she was destined to be his girlfriend, and wouldn't leave her alone, so Sid had instituted an order of protection for her. Steven was known as bad news. So Sid heard my story, and Steven's account of my hitting him, and he said to Steven, "If

you speak to this girl again in six months I'll put you in jail." And to me, "*I'm* the law in this town, and if you hit him again in six months I'll put *you* in jail. Understand?" So he let us both go.

I noticed that a few days later Steven was walking with a limp, and he was telling people I'd broken his leg. But that wasn't true.

The second incident was likewise protecting a child (that was the work I initially did in Woodstock – freelance childcare work, as I'd come from the city with good references in that field). Morning Star, one of the Woodstock street people, was a single mother with a little child, Andromeda, in her arms, and a tough Black guy, Allen Carr Smith, was screaming at them on the village Green. It seems that he wanted Morning Star, but the child was terrified of him, and neither of them wanted anything to do with him. You have to get this picture: I had recently suffered a broken collarbone at the shoulder falling off my motorcycle (that's another story!) – which injury I figured was chastening from the Lord for hitting Steven (it was my left shoulder), as men who belong to Him shouldn't resort to such violence. So I was wearing what they call a butterfly cast – a figure 8 – which held both my shoulders back to keep them immobile. Thus my movements were severely limited – if someone had punched me in the chest they could have done great damage, so physically vulnerable was I. And as he was yelling, I went up to Allen and said, "I won't allow you to continue harassing her" (Morning Star was the former girlfriend of a good friend of mine, and I knew her well). That put his focus on me, and in astonished fury, said, "You won't *allow* me? *You . . . won't . . . allow . . . ME?*" I calmly said to him, "No. It's not right. You're frightening the little girl." The reason he didn't attack me then was that what I said was perfectly just and true, and there was no disrespect or dishonoring of him.

As we both tended to hang out on the village Green, things were tense. Allen was a big, muscular man, and he thought women owed him to be his girlfriends. I sharpened my knife till it had a razor-keen edge, and would have put it in his heart if he came after me, though, as I said, I was crippled, and likely would have failed.

A year or so later, in the winter, with snow around us, I was sitting on a bench at the Green with Allen near. He looked over at me and said, "You know, you hurt my feelings back then." So we talked, and became good friends, often hanging out.

The last incident was with Ted, the younger brother of a woman whose two children I took care of while she was out of the country. I lived with Nadine and June's son and daughter in their house (we had our own small apartment in town). One day while talking with Ted he propositioned me (he evidently gay), and I respectfully said no, that wasn't my way. In the evening, he apparently drunk (he lived in a house out back) and angry, started violently banging on the door of the house, demanding to be let in. He was a big man – over six foot – and athletic. Where I came from, if someone was trying to forcibly break in your door, they meant you harm. And June's children were terrified, as Ted had earlier tried to burn their house down in one of his rages. I called the cops, but they wouldn't interfere as they weren't sure whose property was whose. Through the door I said to him, "I have a fireplace poker in my hands, and if you come through the door I'm going to send you to the hospital, though I might by accident put you in the morgue." He thought about that, and went away.

It took a while to calm all three children down; we had a nighttime snack of ice cream, and talked, and they were able to go to sleep. But I was furious at the violent attempt to intrude, so in the morning I went and got a 4-foot length of heavy plumbing pipe (a great weapon) and went to his house to teach him a lesson; I stood outside and called to him, "You're the tough guy, come out now. I would break your legs, but maybe you're a masochist and you'd like that, so I'm going to break your hip instead and put you out of commission for a while. Come out!" He didn't. Four days or so later I saw him in the garden, and went up and apologized for my violent reaction (I'd put a real fear into him), and we made peace. I'm afraid I got a bit of a reputation in Woodstock after that, at least among his friends.

It was always protecting children against violent aggressors these incidents arose, never for personal issues. How can one not? What man would not protect children in his care?

Nonetheless I had a good reputation in the main. Even though I eventually got a job as a teaching assistant in a special needs school, I was still reckoned among the street people in town. Inasmuch as Kerouac and Dylan were of the same ilk, I was proud of the label. These were some of my adventures while walking apart from my Lord. I seek to be a man of peace now, some thirty years later. Though I'm more afraid now of my capacity for violence than being assaulted. My King, the Lord Jesus, has been working on my heart.

★ ★ ★

THE POWER OF THE WILL

1980, Woodstock, NY

When he first met her in the autumn, she visiting a friend's home where he was employed caring for the children, he wondered what the woodsman saw in her to love her so. True, she was beautiful, but to him it was a dry beauty, and heart-wise she seemed a ghost of a woman, withdrawn, ethereal.

She spurned the woodman's love, a strong man brought down by a frail creature – brought down for a while.

He, however, became her friend, exchanging care for each other's children. Still he had no desire for her, and could not conceive of it being otherwise.

Then winter came, he now unemployed and on his own with his child in a small room in town. Often she comforted them with food and clothing, and occasional sweet companionship, a true friend. Their hearts were slowly being knit together, and they discussed love, and friendship, and agreed solemnly – almost a pact – to be strictly friends, and no more. It was easy for them both, for they were satisfied with each other, and grateful for tranquil islands in the stormy seas.

She had loved greatly and deeply a man, and then parted from him, and her heart was wounded, and bitter, and in the bowels of herself she nursed herself, and ordered her life serenely and simply, she and her two children, in her house back in the woods.

He loved and courted many women, but all feared his deep intensity, and although each became his friend, none deigned to give him her utter heart. She knew of these things, but it was not her business and they continued as before, fast friends.

Spring came, and again he found work taking care of children. He now counted her one of his two closest friends in the town, the other the woodsman, and often the two men would visit her and spend pleasant stoned afternoons together, sipping wine and talking.

One day as he happened to be standing next to her he was near overwhelmed by the sensual beauty of her, her profound womanhood, and he set his heart hard to be true to his will. After this he appreciated her the more as a friend, and the wine of their friendship was rich and sweet.

He remained without a woman, a lover (not by design), and her friendship was a strength and a light to him in his solitude, and they succored each other as lovers oft cannot do, at least for long. As he had no desire for her, his heart opened without restraint, and hers as well, and they joyed in each other, in their occasional meetings. He learned the ways of her heart, the frailties of her flesh, became as a brother to her, and she a sister to him. They checked each other's heads for the lice their children often picked up in school, and helped each other through many various lean times. They trusted and loved one the other, and were satisfied so.

One night he visited a woman he had long desired and loved, and was caringly but profoundly spurned, and on his way home – unsteady from a magic cookie and much wine – fell off his motorcycle and broke his collar-bone. Too drunk to do anything else, he went to bed. Upon waking he went to the hospital, and later in the day the woodsman came and got him, and together they went to visit her. Notwithstanding two such bitter falls, his spirit was strong. He still high from the cookie, they talked from the deeps of their hearts, of love, and the dangers of love, of their fears and their hopes.

It was then, against his will and all his mind, his heart desired her love. Nor did he even accept it as happening, but refused to entertain the idea, commenting to the woodsman on their way back that he had always to remain

strong of heart and mind in the presence of their lovely friend, lest he should destroy what was so dear to him. For it was true, there were times he could have desired her, if he had let himself; but his self-mastery was great, and he kept his heart well-weeded, and was indeed the master of his way.

In the solitude of that night his heart rose up and smote his will, and vanquished his mind, and he thought of nothing but her loving him. Nor was this as with the women he had sought before, for he knew she loved him deeply, and knew him in his frailties and strengths.

He was afraid, but had nothing but the truth of his heart, and knew he could not deny it. He counted on her to likewise be true, either to love him, or to be strong when he was weak. He did not greatly fear the terrible possibility of losing her altogether; he trusted the strength of the bond between them.

With trembling heart he prepared to tell her of these things the next time they were alone. In the meantime he thought of her much, as a man with a woman.

★ ★ ★

When next he saw her he gave her this story he had written of them. She was shocked, and betrayed, and it was over.

In the following years their paths crossed often in the small town, but they talked rarely, and when they did it was casual, the heart-bond between them gone.

Nor were his lessons over; he had more to learn of the power of the will when confronted with love. It was to be a refining fire, and perhaps a consuming one.

★ ★ ★

FALLING FOR KEROUAC'S GIRLFRIEND

I was in the front room of Family, the community service agency's walk-in area, and I read in the Woodstock Times that someone needed a mailbox-post hole dug, and the mailbox put into it. I needed the money, so I gathered my daughter, Nadine, and we took the motorcycle out there, halfway between Woodstock and Bearsville, a couple of miles.

I went to the house I was directed to on the phone, and a woman walked me down to the road and told me where she wanted it. As I was getting ready to dig, she commented on a book I had in my back pocket, Kerouac's, *Desolation Angels*. She said, "I'm in that book. Under the name Ruth Heaper. I knew Jack." I said, "Oh, okay." I dug the hole, and secured the mailbox solidly.

When I went home I finished reading it, and saw that she'd been Kerouac's lover for a while. She was, although older than I, a good-looking woman. We got to be friends.

I don't think she knew it (though she may have), but I wanted to be intimate with her. She had invited me to her birthday party, so I made a couple of hearts out of some Cedar logs I'd been cutting, carving them carefully with a knife, and then sanding them with ever finer sandpaper till they were smooth and polished, but without any shellac, so they'd give off the odor of the wood.

I thought I'd stay with her after everyone else left. But Michael, a mutual friend, kept staying on, and I'd kept on drinking wine, and had a couple of

magic cookies as well, and had gotten pretty unsteady. I remember when I'd gone outside to pee, I fell over backward. At some point I realized I was to go home, so I got on my motorcycle – a Honda 360 – and tried to start it up. It just wouldn't start (I didn't have enough wit to realize I'd left the gas line off), but I kept on trying. At some point it tipped over while I was on it, and when I hit the ground had such a sharp pain in my shoulder that I couldn't move my left arm at all and knew I'd broken something. So I walked the two miles home, and in the morning called my friend Big Bill and asked him to take me to the hospital. When he heard how it happened – that I'd taken such a fall while the bike was standing still – he thought that was a riot! I was the (good natured) laughing stock of my friends for a while.

This incident carried over into another part of my life, written of in the short story, “The Power of the Will: A Love Story”, as I stayed high from the cookies for a day or so, and that influenced another relationship.

My fall for “Ruth” was strictly in my own mind and heart, and it led in a way to my falling from the bike – folly upon folly! But such was my way in those days.

★ ★ ★

VISION QUESTS ON INDIAN HEAD MOUNTAIN

Since I was a boy in summer camps in Maine I've loved the woods and mountains, fishing and living off the land. Later the Boy Scouts and later yet the Marine Corps nurtured that love. By the time I ended up in Woodstock at age 36 – having spent the previous ten years in Manhattan – I was glad to be back in the beloved countryside again.

A QUIET SUNDAY

Three
four
and then two
children in tow,
kicking around the local environs,
streams, woods, dirt roads

and into town
– howdies & waves

and to the Woodstocker
for ice-creams
for the girls.

The flowers aren't up yet
a chill still in the air,
but one sees spring always

as the lovely Tara walks
waiting on tables here.

A quiet Sunday
here in the mountains
in Woodstock;
children, women, friends,
trees and clean air;
a home,
o a home.

Lovely as the town was, and comforting as my friendships were, I periodically realized – with dread – the actuality of my condition in the spirit realms. From the previous writings one may have an idea of my state of mind and heart, the spiritual unrest seething within, the desire to break the chains of a hard imprisonment.

In those days there were two tacks I'd take when my heart was deeply troubled, either a hit of acid, or head up into the mountains to fast. The fasting was also a bane to me, yet there was a good in it. At least when on it I could be clear. With no impediment to the Lord's presence. The drugs were outright sorcery – a great sin – and a great impediment. The woods – when fasting – were a friend to me, a more civilized and simpler place than the wilderness of hearts society often was.

I was comfortable in the wilds. From my first days in the Woodstock area I was attracted to Overlook Mountain, and the first job I had taking care of children was in a home near the base of it. I'd heard that one could make some extra money capturing rattlesnakes alive so they could be "milked" for venom to create anti-venom, serum for those snake-bitten. As I had no fear of snakes, on a day off I went up there to check out Minister's Face Cliff on the south side of the mountain, where there were supposed to be many nests of rattlers. I gather it was called Minister's Face for its severity, and the sentence of death the snakes could mete.

'Top Minister's Face
like some mad Poet
on a pinnacle of the world

the near-sheer cliff down
a beauty of severity
and stark wilderness

still I can hear a plane
see towns and houses
in the distant flatlands

a blue-jay plummet-glides
the death-leap to the forest below
with ease

the snakes must all be hid
from the winter coming
– and I am heading down for home.

I think that was written in '78 or 9, the first thing I published there, in *Woodstock Times*. I never did catch any rattlers. I was, however, drawn to the challenge of climbing the cliff's sheer face, and in my mid-thirties was still in good enough shape to give it a try. At least once:

WHY I HAVE TEMPORARILY GIVEN UP ROCK CLIMBING

It was on the east cheek of Minister's Face Cliff
it came to me
that it wasn't the best idea I've had
the execution of which found me
five terrible feet from safety
and hundreds the way a rock goes down
from a premature death,
with the clump of earth and grass

beneath my boot giving way
and uncertain hand and foot-holds above me.
If words could be put to what was in my heart
it might be, "Oh no!",
'cause forget going back
– I could hardly *look* down –
and I was getting tired clinging there,
but with adrenalin courage I made my move
up two foot-holds
to the rock my hand longed for
which gave way
but not my heart
& limbs
which grabbed and held
another higher rock, and then grass,
shrubs,
and finally a solid tree
which I clung to almost as dear
as to a woman,
then sat behind it,
lit a cigarette
and pondered the folly
of some of my ideas.

Here now on the top
overlooking the Hudson Valley,
this poem almost finished,
I figure I'll go down the easy way
'cause tomorrow night I got a date
for which I don't want to be forever and eternally
late.

1980

As I said, at a certain point a quiet dread filled my heart – my daughter Nadine did not know the Illumination that led to eternal life – and I was

determined to seek and find it myself; find it so as not to lose it again! (I thought I had lost it – my faith was not well informed in those days.) And those cigarettes had to go, and in the wilds where there were none made it easier.

I recall four treks up into the mountains, all in the summers, either on vacation from a job, or between jobs, three of them on Indian Head Mountain, and one on Mt. Guardian, a smaller mount that rubbed shoulders with Overlook on the east.

The second time, in '84 I think, when Nadine went down to NYC with her mom for part of the summer, and I out of work, I was free to go. I made up a pack, prepared to stay up there for a month, with enough food to break the fast for 2 or 3 weeks after that. I carefully studied the topographical map and had the terrain fairly clear in my mind. My previous trip had been up an Indian Head stream-bed that ran down into the valley, into the Sawkill Creek which had its source at Echo Lake, but I was aiming for much higher up the mountain, so I came at it from the Overlook-Echo Lake trail and cut horizontally across the south slope of Plattekill Mountain to get to the same stream-bed but way higher. The map showed there was a level spot, a small plateau near the stream and fairly near the summit of Indian Head. Actually Indian Head had *three* summits – they looked like bumps from a ways off (resembling an Indian headdress?) – and the site was near one of them, perhaps the middle one. This is where I was headed.

No cigs, 60 lb pack, and when I got on the Overlook-Plattekill trail and went down off that to Echo Lake, about halfway down I cut off-trail across Plattekill to Indian Head; it was slow going as the incline was steep and rocky. It started to get dark way before I was even *near* Indian Head, and the terrain was too treacherous to navigate at night. The 23rd Psalm came to mind – after all, I was here to seek *Him!* – and I asked the Shepherd of souls to find me a flat rock on the mountainside, which, after a while – and with even some faint daylight left – appeared. A flat slab of rock easily large enough to lie on, the only problem being that one side of it overlooked a drop of thirty or forty feet. Along this edge I placed a little wall of rocks so that I'd feel them if I rolled near the edge at night. With a small rock for

a pillow, I was set. In the dark I could hear the warm air rushing up the mountainside with a quiet roar. I had a good sleep, and in the morning I set out again, this time with no worry about not finding a campsite at my destination.

I came to the stream, which had plenty of water, and sought to discern my precise location. After a while I got my bearings (I had a waterproofed topo of the area with me) and heading uphill found the plateau I had earlier seen on the map. Plenty of time to set up camp, with a tarp strung over the tent in case of heavy downpours, water in my canteen, now time to relax and give thanks. I'd had a good breakfast while still in town the day before, so I still had some energy.

The purpose of the trek and the stay was to draw close to the Son of God, and to attain through the fast and prayer a state of consciousness in His presence that would make me holy, with power to put away whatever habits, attitudes, and desires made me unfit for His presence. I knew my Lord, for He had drawn near me in '68 revealing Himself in a moment of crisis so as to keep me from being overwhelmed by forces in the Void. As Charles Spurgeon, an English seer, put it, "I looked at Him and He looked at me, and we were one forever."

I won't embellish this, but just tell the story. After 6 or 7 days I regained my energy, as is common with fasting, and began taking walks up and down the mountain to explore the area. I had found an old hunting or trapping shack down a ways, with some jars of food and rusted implements, the walls pretty much disintegrated. I noted its location.

One night I heard a pack of dogs below in the valley, and that got me nervous, as the wild dog packs could be very aggressive and dangerous, many of the dogs having been once domestic and now without fear of man. I'd heard some stories about their attacking humans. I thought of climbing a tree in case they came up where I was, but, at two or three in the morning and in my sleeping bag, I just prayed and asked the Lord to protect me!

On another day I headed up the mountain to explore. Evening was approaching and it was time to head back, but I'd lost my bearings. I couldn't

tell if my campsite was down the streambed or up. So I said, "Lord, I'm going to flip this rock, if it lands with the marked side up I'll go downstream, if not, up." So I flipped it and the marked side was up which meant to go downstream, but I second-guessed the wisdom of that, and went up instead. After a while I realized I went the wrong way but it was already too dark to make it back without injury. I saw an overhanging rock near the stream, so I went up to it and found I could make a bed there under it, in case it rained. I had a small pack with me and a space blanket in it which would keep me warm by retaining my body heat. With a bed of leaves, it wasn't a bad night, but next time I resolved to trust the Lord to guide me, after I made request.

After I was back in camp it started to rain, and the tarp and tent setup wasn't proving adequate when it got heavy. So I went up to a rocky cliff-face a few hundred feet from the campsite and climbed to some caves I'd earlier found. One had a flat floor that went back in eight feet or so, but was only about two – two and a half feet high, which made sitting up impossible, though it was good for sleeping, even in a heavy rain, as an overhang kept the rain out. And in the back of the cave there was a slow drip, which would fill up a glass of water every few hours – sufficient for my drinking needs. And another cave about seven feet away had a perfect layout for sitting or standing, but the floor was such I couldn't lie down. I fixed up a nice stone seat, and made a fireplace. There were plenty of old pine trees near the caves and the deadwood would burn nicely even if wet, and I had plenty of birchbark, which also burns even if soaked in water. I had a magnesium stone and a striker, so I could start a fire anywhere, in any weather. One scrapes off filings of magnesium into a little pile and ignites them with a spark from the striker, and it burns hot!

I had my Bible, and a couple of other select books, and I was glad to have a clear conscience and so be in the presence of my Master. In earlier writings I have spoken of the snare fasting was to me, and how that I believed it was the Lord's will I go on a long fast to seek Him and receive the blessing I believed would result. My entire life of spiritual failure can be attributed to this one error, and my ignorance of God's provision and thus no faith

to receive it. But I couldn't shake my false belief. I was convinced this was commanded me.

Some decades later, in hindsight, it is easy to see the deception. Despite my fervent resolve to seek God, my faith was so flawed I didn't know even the basics of how to walk with Him in a steady and stable manner. I didn't understand the provision He had made for such as me, refugees from the psychedelic occult, intensely self-aware – aware of our unholiness of heart and character – and His remedy for our condition. I would learn this later from the “doctrines of grace” taught in the Reformed spiritual communities.

Now, however, I got discouraged. All sorts of worries plagued my mind – one of my pack straps was falling apart, I wasn't sure I was allowed to spend over a week without a permit in a particular wilderness area (as I'd read), but with the strap failing I couldn't well move my camp easily. I broke the fast after two weeks with some jam and pickled olives I'd found in the trapper's shack, and then some fresh blueberries on the trail back. Arriving back in Woodstock I was thoroughly dejected, and yet . . . having been two weeks in His presence (after so long an absence!), I had faith He'd heard my cries for help, and somehow would.

A later summer I went up again – same area – but a black bear in my camp unnerved me.

High on the south side of Indian Head Mountain
on a wooded plateau by a stream
seated near my tent reading Luke's narrative
of Jesus telling His disciples the signs of the end
when I heard footsteps in the trees to my right;
porcupine or deer walk carelessly like that
when they think they are alone; I turned to see
and it looked like a dark horse at first, partly hidden,
but then I saw it was a large bear fifty feet away
and I froze, my heart pounding from fear like a shock
and I prayed, Lord, protect me!

My knife was hanging on a tree ten feet away,
I hadn't made the spear yet I had planned for this event
and my back was sprained so it hurt to stand;
it wouldn't have been much of a fight;
but neither the wind betrayed me, nor my own movement;
it just kept going down the mountain, ignorant of me.
I had peed on trees all around the camp
staking out my territory for this four week stay,
but maybe this is part of *his* (or her) territory.
Anyway, I'm not moving, and I trust my Lord
will protect me one way or another.

What am I doing here in these wilds
four days into a twenty-one day fast
with seven days of food packed to break the fast
before I head back into what's called civilization
but in fact is a true wilderness of hearts,
the howling archetypal heartlands of humanity?
I know it's somewhat *déclassé* in this scientificage
– O brave new age! – to be seeking the Lord
with prayer and fasting in the mountains,
but it's in my blood, and in my spirit, this kind of thing
lit in my genes the fire of ancient Israel.

I was spooked by the bear, and went back down to the town after a day or two. These apparent failures to succeed in my quest for vision were horribly distressing to me. And yet, in His own way, and His own time, He answered them.

This wretched character – was I not? sorcery (the drug use), sexual immorality, murder (party to abortions), etc. – was beloved of God, and in His care notwithstanding it all. I can see now that the Lord had Himself paid the price to atone for my sins, and that I was one of His sheep of whom He had said, “they shall never perish” (John 10:28). Straying from the fold though I was, He had His plans to rescue me, and He did a good job of it,

when I was right on the brink, not of a wilderness cliff, but of this life itself, written of in the story, “Rescue from the black hole (and as good as dead)”.

In a sense these repeated vision quests accomplished much; they brought me into renewed fellowship – communion – with the ascended Jesus, and encouraged my heart. I also knew He received my cries for help, notwithstanding my later dejections at failing to complete my purposes for the fasts (spiritually deluded though they were). The last fast on the summit of Mount Guardian, up there two or three days, unnerved me as I was given insight into a relationship I was in, seeing that my dearest friend was not a true disciple of Christ, and I was unequally yoked with an unbeliever. In the stories that follow it can be seen how the Lord led me to paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. These journeys into the mountains to seek Him all had their purpose; failure that I was, I was deadly serious – it was no game – lives were on the line. And He honored my trying.

Now, in 2010, at 68 years old and far from my beloved mountains (on an island country in the Mediterranean), I do long for them, and hope some day to go back to them. And I remember His faithfulness who walked with me in the wilderness, and established me in the years following. Dangers beset me now, but of a different sort – for I walk steadily in His presence and in the power of His Spirit – dangers that attend the latter days of the apocalypse, but that’s another story, and a good one!

★ ★ ★

OCCULTIST WARRIOR AND FALLEN PRIEST

I have heard it said with regard to much of American Christianity, it is the “thinnest of soups”. For over two decades, fed on this fare, my awareness of God’s grace was dangerously inadequate, and I did not have that robustness of heart or faith to cast off the chains of my sins and walk holy before the Lord, and so was as a lion caged, tormented by its keepers (the foul spirits). It was during this period I went down into the abyss in the heart.

I suppose there are ordinary sinners, the generally wicked of humankind, and then there are raging desperados into deeps of evil and darkness where even angels are loath to enter. When such a wretch is saved by the light of the Saviour’s heart, it is important to feed him or her such as will sustain them in the new life, lest they fall back under the powers of the old. And so it happened to this one. He fell from his Master’s presence in the regions of glory into realms of darkness, with this difference: he had been awakened, he had been taught the rudiments of spiritual sight and combat...

★ ★ ★

The occultist warrior and fallen priest – a poet as well – found himself set upon his feet, even upon the heartlands floor of the howling Abyss. No Valley of the Shadow of Death, this – for that was in the world of the living – rather this was in the realms of archetypal horror, where the worst

monsters are not those who beset one about, but that which one may oneself become, being impregnated by worse horrors than Sigourney's *Aliens* of modern film.

It was in this realm of terror our poet found himself, and although he tried he could not escape it. In the time of his adeptship (which he did not graduate) he had been given a sword and shield for the spiritual combat. The true Power of the sword was gone – the power of another realm – and yet he learned of other powers in *this* realm he could harness into his weapon, and of other powers than the True to make his shield strong. He named them Lightning Sword and Black Diamond Shield, and himself, Son of Adam, opponent of demons and practitioners of the black arts and evil powers among men.

He was a quiet man, the currents of his heart deep, and the pain of his fallen estate profound, but the quickening he had had at Tenesa's touch strangely sustained him, and he had a human strength – if not a divine – and there were yet great powers to be tapped in the heart of humanity.

He was to know love and war as he set forth on his odyssey – the search for the way back to his Master – with terrible and sustained defeats in both; but somehow he kept on, and learned how to use his weapons, and slowly grew both stronger and weaker. There are such paradoxes in men.

He had his young cub – his child – with him, and for her sake – when he no longer cared for his own, which happened on occasion – he set his face like flint against hardship, pain, and even inner devastations. Sometimes he was a hollow man, but ever dangerous, as his foes knew, and to be ware of.

A Great And Terrible Love is the story of this man – this netherworld swordsman – his life and loves and wars, and the company he eventually joined after his Master rescued him from Abyss and destruction when his great strength failed him. Foremost it is the story of his Master, and his doings on the planet Earth in the days it was overrun by the dark lord.

It is also the story of the weapon, Lightning Sword – true image of the weapons of lore: Light saber, Excalibur, the samurai's blade, Sting – to name

some of the better known. For these weapons (mostly) of legend intuitively reflected truth. Sometimes it took a great weapon to fight a great supernatural power.

Even though these things were the reality of his inner life and vision, he functioned in the work-a-day world as a low-level human services worker, and when he needed a break from that field, as a common laborer, a landscaper, or whatever he could find. It was a good grounding to work with common people – people of heart, muscle, and direct passions – or with special ed children, or the developmentally disabled. These provided solid connections of heart. This was vital, for the occult realms – the hidden realms – often proved treacherous for him, and as often as not he was wasted by his fierce adversaries, and yet he had been trained in the school of his Master, and hope burned in his heart with a fire that would not go out – although once it did, but that’s another story, a story of a great rescue – and he always got back on his feet, strengthened in his simple and stable heart-ties, with a flame lit within made as it were of another world.

But there were depths he sank into that put him in the literary class of the “anti-hero,” a protagonist with such flaws of character, and broken depths of being, that not only were others aghast at perceiving his ontologic reality, but he himself fainted at the horror of his own heart. For he found himself a denizen of the great realm of horrors, a being alien to the living, a creature projected in the world’s literature and myth as one of the living dead, the zombie, and its progeny, vampire and werewolf. Apart from the life of his Master, he was one of these. Kafka’s cockroach man was nothing to this! This was real. He felt himself to be as Medusa, upon whom to look was to be turned to stone. All the myths, the archetypal horrors, were coming to life in him, *as him!*

He could not find his way back to the Master. A terrible odyssey! And he did not turn when he found a woman who loved him – even if briefly – in the midst of these horrors, who provided an oasis of succor! After a while his pen wrote a poem of them with drops of heart that burned as acid their love, “THE UNDERTAKING”.

Understanding and trusting now as I do in the Lord's providence, I can see that the impoverishment I knew as a young believer (almost 45 years ago!) was woven by Him into the tapestry of my life, even the descent into darkness.

★ ★ ★

4 WOODSTOCK POEMS

THE FIRST DAY I TRULY SAW HER

for Lynn

she was walking down Rock City Road
Overlook Mountain high and great behind her;
she stopped and spoke with me a moment
— she an officer at Family —
a mixture of fierce, clear independence
in her eyes and bearing, along with kindness
and true concern for me and my child.
A very ordinary day among the mountains
and wood-goddess valleys.
The sun was bright and sky clear that day,
but the light in her heart gave birth to love in me
as we passed on a small path in Woodstock.

CANDLE-FLAME

In my mind's eye it appears to me
subtle and wondrous as in a dream;
as in coins or rinds synchronicity is
everywhere summed up in this living moment

A vision of love, mortal, true, terrible
dances before me, o lustrous sheen
of her, o archetypal wonder
devastates me with dazzling beauty

Darkness flashes forth as lightning
from her eyes, her cry heard in Heaven
her blood nourishes the earth,
her flesh bright as clouds

She has opened herself for me,
all creation kindled within us
all death, all life, a conflagration
of all contradictions

Outside Eden we lie
in the light of fiery swords, one flesh
heart, mind, life, one love
simple as a candle-flame

In the cold of the wind we cry,
keepers of the earth, of life,
in the great engulfing darkness we cry,
for our source, a sun.

(from, *Folly and Wisdom: Love Poems*)

THE WINTER FIRE

– *Ohayo Mountain home*

Its history is the history of hours

a shaky frame inferno
in the midst of chill and daybreak

a roaring blaze
to warm a house and bones

a crest of flaming logs
on a deep orange mound of heat;
the hub of the day
which branches out into ice & snow
and freezing breeze;
always at the center,
the fire.

When sun is gone
and blankets cover the weary,
a fierce jewel of heat
radiates in the night,
an uncut premature diamond ablaze,
fruit of the sun,
drink of light.

The chalice turns to ash
before the sun's deep bowl
pours forth another day.

DIAMONDS IN THE MUD

we were
and even when washed
so that our facets gleamed
were dark within
– *black* diamonds it was said –
but treasure nonetheless
even in the mud

for we were God's elect
in the womb of darkness
yet in the furnace of His forming
– skillfully wrought
by His deft hand
till He lifted us into the glory
in His Son.

From the foolish, the base,
the despised
things of the world
– what some in their culture's hauteur
call, as if spitting,
“*Woodstock*” – has He chosen
to confound the mighty and the wise.

Into these low vessels
prepared from everlasting
has He poured the new wine
of His joyous eternal kingdom
that whosoever thirsts and will come
may drink
and live forever.

In the dark but clear vision
of the '60s
we saw the falsity and lies

of *both* our cultures
yours *and* ours in the thrall of evil
and longed for the Light
our sorcerers promised but failed to deliver

we cut the teeth of our personhood
in this darkness,
foolish in our failures
but no fools in our quest
led as we were by His love
ears attuned of everlasting to hear but one Voice,
in that One only to find our rest

for each of us the day came – or yet will –
we wakened from our sleep,
children of Woodstock
children of God, hearing
“Arise from the dead
and Christ shall give thee light,”
now living diamonds brilliant in His glory.

★ ★ ★

STRIPPED OF THE GIFT OF POETRY

How I lost, temporarily, this gift is told below. Seven years to the day from when I penned ‘THE UNDERTAKING’ to Tenesa, I penned this regarding an incident with Ariana that had profound repercussions.

STRANGE AND MYSTERIOUS WAYS

I’ve adventured through the world
since Tenesa reached into the abysmal waters
gave me breath
and set me free

I’ve adventured in the depths of the heart,
the howling archetypal heartlands of humanity,
in the passions, furies, loves,
in much there is to see and be

I’ve adventured in the poets’ arena
of consciousness and song,
wed language and being together in me,
have done what my heart gave me to do

I’ve adventured in Heaven with my God
have adventured in Hell without Him,
have adventured on the earth
between them

I’ve sung love as it is in this world,

sung heartbreak, despair, and thanatos,
agony, joy, passion, and beauty, and eros.
I've sung till I came full circle, to my self.

I've sung being, solid ontologic actuality
cut into crystals of word,
fit chalices for the wine of human truth,
till my jewel-stuff shattered, my word broken.

I've sung a particular woman, and our love,
and she sang also, with pen and without,
and she knew me, and saw me, and stripped me
so I could see myself. And when she saw, she left me.

I've sung myself fully, and truly
as much as I saw, or chose not to forget.
Her song of me left nothing to forget.
Now I am stripped, of word, of love, of illusion.

My adventure and song are finished.
If I sing and adventure again
it will be as one raised from the dead, Heaven-sent.
For she who stripped me utter was God's instrument.

Put simply, I broke my word to this woman, speaking of our relationship to another when I shouldn't have. And she held me to it: "your word is no good."

A poet whose word is no good is no longer a poet; a broken word holds no reality, like a bucket with no bottom. The one who sang of the living dead and undying damned, his own broken integrity (for who walks not in accord with the God of truth is dis-integrating) coming to full realization: broken and useless – as a poet. As the LORD used Delilah to effect great change and devastation in a wayward servant, so it was with me.

I stopped writing, and it was a relief. I was not to write again until I was made whole, possessing an integrity which only comes from being united

to Him who is the Truth. He did faithfully rescue me from the darkness into which I had plunged.

★ ★ ★

HORROR AND JOY ON APOKALYPSE FIELD

The Goddess and the Monster

The Goddess stood before him, the archetypal monster with his muscle and steel and weapons of death, his lusts and endless cravings gleaming cruelly in his eyes, and she said to him, “You have ruined the earth, you and your brood; and you have enslaved us long enough by your force! With your wars you have slaughtered my children, the *earth* red – with blood – instead of their precious flushing cheeks! Now is the time of your reckoning, for my power is in spirit and in the energy of soul which lights my flesh, and although you have your steel and fists and toys of death, I have the power of love – *which you are unworthy of!* – and the power of the earth, our great mother, and I will now rule by that which I have, and am, and you will not stand before me! Thus says the Goddess, nemesis of men!” And with the sword of her spirit she smote him to the quick, and turned away. He crawled into the bushes outside the Gates of Eden in the fiery night on Apokalypse Field, on the charred and cindery globe of the planet.

Eve did not say this to Adam, but one of her daughters did to one of his sons, a generation to a generation. He had been speaking his stuff and doing his deeds for millennia, and her time was now come. What Eve said was too deep for words, but she had her own voice, and it was cut off from his in its source. That was the beginning, and this is the end.

This monster was the true and archetypal monster – no matter he had a wondrous skin-covering – whose shadowy presence illumined the horror genres of world fiction and myth; this was the zombie, the living dead. He had a mate in ancient times, a female monster, also a zombie. In an unremembered past these two had fallen prey to the dread sting of death, and became what they were. They knew themselves, but could not bear to keep in mind the reality of what had happened, and a blindness arose in them, a blindness maintained partly in the raptures of their awful needs finding momentary respite in each other, and partly from the power of the death-spell that was upon them.

After age upon age of endless oppression and savagery by him, in the latter days of their time on the earth, she transformed herself by the power of archetypal fury, and his empty, dissipated heart could not stand before her; he and his brood crawled away, utterly wounded, and she clove to her sisters. Although undone, his violence and savagery increased; lurching and reeling in the thrall of unshakeable death-spell, he would bring them both to the dust, Goddess and monster alike.

Their world was filled with monsters – no matter their glorious garb – and vampire and werewolf both came from the seed of the archetypal zombies (see how some drain the vitality utterly out of their fellows? and others, raging mighty ones, see how they gnaw on the spiritual faces and hearts of their victims?). Things were not as they appeared to the outward eye. Even the Goddess was but death warmed over by subtle fury and wondrous illusion. He was bereft of such inward power, and although he sought to deceive her by taking into himself demons who gave off the semblance of spiritual nobility and light, she knew better. The one were twain, never again to meet.

Her cup of suffering and wrath filled to overflowing, the female – the “Goddess” – finally turned from his need and coupled with her sisters, leaving him without comfort in the abyss of horrors. Those of her brood who still coupled with the males lost their sense of ancient loyalty that had been their mutual comfort, and the females went from one male to another as they pleased, and as they tired of the pain – the ancient alienation and discord and oppression – many males afflicted them with. The image of the female

monster who utterly turned from the males and coupled with her own was among the mightiest of the female's images (its seeming beauty was wondrous to behold), and was true to the unalloyed nature of the female monster, and its presence touched all females, even those who still used males. The females increased in strength, and the males diminished. More and more the males were used for pleasure, or for babies, and then discarded; to fill needs, and then replaced. Thus was the male monster wounded without remedy, and his violence increased with his pain.

Archetypal New Beings

In the midst of the violence and pain of this world of monsters a race of archetypal new men and women arose, although it was hard to tell by sight alone who they were, as they all had the same wondrous skin-coverings. There were many monsters who entertained the delusion they were *not* monsters, and sought to act so. Others were obviously monstrous.

The origin of the new race of beings was remarkable. They came, as all did, from the line of the zombies, but had found access to a dimension that partially cancelled the force of death-spell, and it was through a Wounding – the Second Wounding – that they entered this realm. And they spoke of a time when death-spell would be completely undone.

The Third Wounding was that which the Goddess gave the male monster, and it wreaked further havoc on the earth. The First Wounding was the sting of death, which made the zombies what they were. Before this death-spell came upon them they were glorious creatures, light streaming from their depths to illumine all their being, and there was no death in them. They were equals, male and female. Ancient records spoke of these things, although no one remembered. And the most ancient records had also told – but only in seed form – that one would come from the light and bring them life again; thus in some of the monster race a spark of longing and hope was not utterly extinguished! Even before the Second Wounding some were given to see it coming – in vision – and trust in it and so enter the dimension of life.

The new beings who arose out of the lineage of monstrosities and *inwardly* lived in the new dimension banded together. They learned to rid themselves of the ways of both male and female monsters – as grotesque infections lingering in their souls – yet it was hard sometimes to put off the old patterns completely. They learned to be patient – as well as forgiving – with each other, and for the first time since the far distant beginning males and females danced in harmony instead of battle. These archetypal men and women stood together in unique peace and joy – a peculiarity of the dimension they walked in – as the storms unleashed by the monsters and their demons destroyed the earth.

This Second Wounding happened millennia after the first. The father of the original beings of light, although he did not live on the planet, was deeply grieved by the plight of his children, and devised a plan whereby he could alter the course of their horrific destiny (which was to join their captor – the cosmic prince of demons – in his eternal lair of agony, he now being their ontologic father and possessor). The father of light knew how to secure a brazen and terrible escape, for he loved his children even though they had become monsters, and were now possessed of an evil nature. His heart wept for them!

The Second Wounding

Before the world began, the father of light and those two others who comprised with him the Council of Light – three persons in one Being – decreed a plan whereby many in the foreseen lost race would be rescued, both from their captivity to the demon-prince and their grotesque and horrific condition of being. They agreed that the father's son would go to the earth and be born into the cursed race, even taking on their flesh and nature, becoming one with them, although at the same time he was not of them, but of the father's light. In him alone on the earth would be the dimension into which the others could escape. He would become the elder brother of all those who entered into him, allowing them to become adopted sons and daughters of the father of light, no longer ravaging monsters. It was in the

power of the Council to create this realm of existence within the word and being of the elder brother. But first he had to blaze the trail – a terrible trail it was! – into the very heart of death.

Into the madness and havoc of what was now called Demon-World he came, and, from the womb, took on a body like all the other captives, yet inside he was not like them at all. Though in the guise of a zombie he was a light-warrior, archetype of the new males and females, the gatherer-back-to-the-father of the lost ones. He thwarted every assault and wile of the demon-prince to pierce his heart with the sting of death. He triumphed over every demon who came his way.

The unspeakable wickedness of the monster race – zombie, vampire, and werewolf – had to be reckoned with: they all deserved to die and forever be with the demon-prince, so awful were the things they had done to one another, and in violation of the glory of the Council – which glory they lived in before the sting of death – but the Council knew how to solve this problem as well. The outraged Justice would be loosed upon the pure heart of the son of light. He, as their new king, would take their place. Their record would then be clean. The Council had the power and authority to do this thing, so that Justice would be satisfied, and mercy then shown to the depraved wretches.

The son who was not pierced by the sting of death, and did not deserve to die, died – under the fury of long-withheld Justice now unpent. He himself entered the door of death.

The Council accepted his taking the place of the monsters, and, as he had done no wrong himself, gave to him to be alive again in the same body he had on the earth, now no longer subject to death as it once had been, but was glorious, filled with the light of the father, far more glorious than the first couple's before they fell to the sting.

He stayed a while among the friends he had made, teaching them of the dimension that was being prepared for them, and directing them to continue his work after he left the world to go back to the Council, and to prepare

a place for them there when their lives were done. And so he left, and his younger brothers and sisters continued his mission of rescue.

Entrance into the Dimension of Escape – as some called it – was given by the Council to those the father set his love upon, and it was simple. By the light in the son, or his light in those who continued his work, former monsters were made alive in the new dimension, and – astonished, broken in remorse, grateful for such undeserved mercy – joyously received the father’s provision and thenceforth lived in the Realm of light that was in the vast being of the son.

Entering into him was to be accompanied by a simple rite, going under the water, be it underneath completely or underneath it sprinkled or poured, and they called it “the seal”: it was the seal of union with the son, in his death and new life. It was an outward sign of an inward reality. When they entered into the dimension of the son they actually entered into his death (so great was the power of the Council it could create this reality), and their lives as monsters ended. But the son not only died; he was made to live again, and so all who entered him came to life again as new creatures – what wondrous new hearts they were given! They looked the same as the monsters on the planet – had the same skin-coverings – but within they lived another life, the life that was the very life of the father and son.

Yes, they still struggled against old patterns of wicked behavior and evil inclinations, but they struggled *against* them, as they were no longer monsters, no longer the living dead, but the living. And they were loved of the father, and he gave them many precious promises of the new kingdom he would establish with them on a renewed earth, where there would be no more monsters, no sting of death, and no demons.

Light in the Zombie World

The invasion of monster-world was accomplished, the power of death-spell broken, and the fountain of archetypal new life opened. Yet before the day of the new earth came, the family of light – as they liked to be called – lived

among the monsters (those who died went to the realm where the Council was).

The monsters, female and male, raged against the archetypal new beings, for these latter exposed the zombie reality of the monsters' lives, and this exposure the monsters would not tolerate. Yet the light-bearers brought many of them into the family, those to whom it was given of the father to love the light they saw in the new men and women. For many zombies suffered, and hungered for life. These came easily to the elder brother. One of the zombie poets, a seer of sorts, wrote about their state, such as:

A GRADE "B" HORROR VISION

the king of the Zombies
rising against the king of Hell's kings
with this speech

You walk the earth
so proud
of your plan

but we
the Vampire, Werewolf
& I
remember how once we were
Priests, & Joyous, & Alive
'fore you swooned us
'fore our wombs

may you wither
where you stand

for we have one Ace
wonder
left
up our ragged sleeves
agot to us

in the Darkness
by a stranger of Light

we have hid it
but it is handy

And then the vision ceased
progressing – seeming as if frozen still –
while light quietly invaded the darkness
below the radar of vision
destroying its strongholds in the hearts
of mighty captives, loosing warriors
for the coming Rebellion of Light.

This poet – who once had cried out in a poem before fainting in horror at
the knowledge of himself, *O zombie I!* – wrote again:

I woke up in the twentieth century
still-born but for the Father's love,
a Zombie under Death-Spell, and worse:
of the houses Vampire and Werewolf
was my lineage cursed.
Before I was wakened it was the sleep
of living death, of the unwitting damned
doomed to live out the nature of him
my foul father, caster of Death-Spell,
king of monster-world and hell.

But I was wakened
and given to enter a new realm
and a life of being alive
and to love and be loved!

And now I call upon the Council
I know has an ear to my cries
(though it be in a realm I cannot see yet

with these eyes):

Have mercy on the Vampire, O Father,
and on the Werewolf, and on their parents
the Zombie.

For some of them do not even know
what they are, and some know, but fear
they are doomed to their nature.

Grant them understanding, Father, to know
from whence they came, and whence they go
and the terrible remedy
for their cure,
indeed
the salvation
they do not believe can be theirs.

Have mercy on the monsters, O Father of light!
Save them from the devouring night.

Many monsters set themselves against the light-bearers. Those zombies who took demons into themselves to give off a semblance of the nobility and illumination of the light-bearers bitterly opposed those who showed the illusion of this. Many light-bearers were persecuted and died on their missions of love for the zombie race. But those of the light did not fear death, for they knew the time of their kingdom in their illumined glorious bodies – just like the elder brother's – was close. The goddess and her spurned consort tore the world to shreds until the elder brother came back to end things, and make quick work of them. For the time of the unending adventure was at hand.

Dark Myths and Zombie Apocalypses

Some artists among the monsters dreamed many interesting myths of the houses Vampire and Werewolf – and their ancestor the Zombie – but these

fantasies darkened understanding, and many were tired of yet more fiction. Those denizens of the monster world were either left ignorant of their state, or – for those who were somewhat aware – there was no relief of their agony. As the zombie Poet used to say, “Better terrible truth than none at all, or the usual hype and jive.”

This poet-occultist who had formerly been titled “king of the Zombies” (more on that dubious title another time), and became an archetypal new being by entering the dimension of light opened in the Second Wounding, saw a movie of the Vampire and Werewolf clans called *Underworld*, and pondered how this mirage image over the heartlands distorted what was real.

The movie was well done, the storyline clever with even a dark romance, but the understanding of the states of being of the supposed “monsters” was fantastic to the point of nonsense. Attractive actors and high-tech action effects cannot make up for profound confusion.

To project out into fictional characters what properly belongs to the human heart is to disassociate us from the essential core of our being. In the “monster world” of “ordinary” humankind the union of vampire and werewolf is commonplace. Sometimes they coexist, and sometimes they destroy each other. There is no essential difference between the two houses, as they have the common zombie nature; their differences are in the more outward structure of their personalities and psychic feeding styles.

What is attractive about the movie is the subject matter: at least it deals with real topics, although it “romanticizes” and obscures them. As the intuitive sense of artists realized how the zombie stories resonated with the clueless denizens of Monster World, and they went on a rampage of zombie adventures, such as apocalypses where the “bad” zombies tried to kill all the “good” supposed “living ones”, and the story-tellers got quite some mileage out of them. Little did they know that in these so-called “zombie apocalypses” where the monsters sought to eradicate the living on a global scale, they were *intuiting* the final *actual* clash between the monsters and the lightbearers, when it seemed that the children of the father’s light were almost all destroyed, and hope flickered dim, the elder brother returned with

great anger at what had been done to his younger kin, and with vengeance dealt with the rampaging hordes; but the monster artists never got it right, and always created confusion rather than light.

It was clear that even monster artists could intuit things that were to come, even though dimly and erring; for these things *were* spoken of in the ancient records, and knowledge of them was not hidden.

Perhaps the greatest horror of Monster World is the pretense we are not monsters, but happy human beings!

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EXECUTING JUDGMENT

“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”

1 Corinthians 11:31

How I got to be sitting in the police chief’s office tripping on acid is the exterior heart of this story. But I will begin by approaching its interior heart.

The year was 1985, and the Lord had two years earlier broken me of seeking the love of woman outside wedlock. The story of *that*, in the mostly destroyed book of poems, *A Fire In The Lake*, tells of His using a woman (did He use Delilah of old?) to effect great change – and devastation – in me. From the last lines of the last poem:

My adventure and song are finished.
If I sing and adventure again
it will be as one raised from the dead, Heaven-sent.
For she who stripped me utter was God’s instrument.

This “adventure” was the odyssey of an occultist-poet warrior-priest who fell from his Master’s presence into the abyss in the human heart, and found himself in the archetypal heartlands of humanity – a waste and howling wilderness – where he began to search for the way back. He could not fathom the cause of his fall – there was no fault in the Master – and he could not see the snare of deception he had been taken in, and the demons wasted no time in seeking to kill his will to live. The “song” was the story

of all this, as well the ontologic-erotic unions with the women he met, for such only kept him aloft over the seething abyss and the gnawing hunger of dread Thanatos lurking therein.

Back to 1985. A year earlier, in the summer, I sent my daughter to visit her mom in NYC, and I went up into the mountains – a remote area in the wilderness of the southern Catskills – to fast and pray. After two weeks I became discouraged and came out. This whole business of fasting was at the center of the snare, erected on a foundation of spiritual ignorance, but I could not yet see that. He nonetheless heard my cries, the One who watches over His children, and was preparing a terrible deliverance, snatching me before I plunged over the edge. But that is *another* story, too far ahead!

And so I went about my life in the small town of Woodstock, New York. Like a lion caged, tormented by its wardens, I went. The cage was my sins – keeping me from the air of Heaven my spirit longed to breathe – and the keepers malign spirits. My closest friends knew I belonged to Christ, as did most of the town, for I would write in the local paper – under the *nom de plume* Steve Levin – about my adventures in drugs and love, and also of my true but lost Love. In Toleration City I was accepted and loved; in those days I spoke for myself, not for Christ, although it was clear for whom my heart longed. I say I was caged – a prisoner – as I didn't know how to escape: repentance supposedly required a long fast, which my distorted faith would not sustain. And even when I did fast well, I did not have the inner stability of a sound faith. I must have fasted and failed some hundreds of times. It was when, some years earlier, eating had become sin to me, that I – with grief – forsook the Way.

My 5-year-old cub and I came to Woodstock from NYC in 1978. I had just wrapped up publishing and distributing a journal, *The Lightning Herald: Un Journal De Poètes Terribles*, and wanted a simpler life for us both, she now of age to go to school. So we settled in, the town receiving us warmly. I did free-lance child-care work (having good human services references from NYC and elsewhere), and then was a Teaching Assistant in a special-needs school.

I continued to write my book. I sought out the local seers and leaders among the Christians, desiring insight into my condition, which no man could speak to, and so I remained aloof from the churches, due to the kind of life I lived, and the heart I had. From a letter to the editor of *Woodstock Times* in 1979, when Dylan's newest record came out:

To the Editor:

Why I just broke my record of Dylan's *Slow Train Coming*: it ain't that I don't love ya, Bobby, and it ain't that I don't think you're true, it's that I don't want to hear none a' that stuff till that train done come and stopped. Maybe you'll tell me, "Now is the day, and this is the hour," but I heard them words before, I even read 'em in the Bible, but I also read about "a kingdom that cometh in power, and not in word," and that ain't here, not by a long shot.

It ain't no use for me to listen, it don't do nuthin' for me except to break my heart, tear it between love and my own integrity. Got I any integrity to speak so to you? My own peculiar path I walk, and if any man on the earth can minister the spirit of Christ to me according to my needs, and the needs of my world (is it not mine? am I not its poet?), him I will listen to. But don't you preachers come beatin' a path to my door if you can't raise the dead, heal the sick, and establish your kingdom of grace in full power, 'cause I'm sick of guilt-trippin' spiels and words that break but don't quicken. Try to quicken the stones if you will, but don't come knockin' on my door, my heart is as hard as a diamond to anything less than the apostolic reality, and I do make short work of preachers who come preachin' anything less.

I don't reckon you to be preachin', Bob, but rather singin' love songs, that's why I broke your record – rather that than my heart. An' I'll go my own path through this bloody world, and know what love I can, an' maybe I'll see ya at the station. Oh yeah, an' I got my own song to sing, an' I know it well.

It was intolerable to me that my consciousness should be that of a meat-head, someone with no spiritual or psychic awareness, existing simply in the baser appetites, such as eating. This is why I got high, so my heart would have a life in the realms of consciousness. Better to exist spiritually in the outlaw regions than not at all! Better an outlaw than a meat-head! And so I lived my life, thinking myself hero and anti-hero at the same time. For how it pained me to knowingly enter and function in the realms of sorcery in disobedience to the worthy King I was sworn to serve. And in this darkness how terrible the ontologic depths: once, while still in New York, I saw in my own heart the reality of the living dead and cried out in a poem, “*O zombie I!*” For such did I see myself to be (and mistakenly believed): without the life of God, the living dead. To knowingly be such a denizen of the realms of horror! But as I wrote in those days, “Better terrible truth than none at all, or the usual hype and jive.”

What if Dostoevsky
were a poet
after acid
in this day

what if Rimbaud
were alive today
in children of integrity
come what may

what if
Dylan
had a brother
who now took *his* stand

Un Poète terrible

A title I had given myself was just this, *un Poète terrible*, a new breed of being on the earth (not *un Poète maudit* as some suggested I change the journal's name to), for I loathed the term sorcerer yet functioned in that realm. And hated the powers of darkness.

You who think to judge me, what option would you have had me take? To end my life? Or to exist bereft of consciousness? Which latter would have been an intolerable form of death to me. I found no help among the Christians. I sought the Lord with long fasts among wild dog-packs and bear in remote wilderness. No! Better an outlaw than dead meat! My blood was too hot, and heart too engaged with the worlds of letters and spirits and humans to lie down and die. I would live!

But in '85 I was thinking more and more of seeking once again to walk with Christ. I may not have talked about it much – my friends in town were not interested in this – but it was on my heart. When I thought of my ongoing life without Him, and of my young daughter without a true knowledge of Him from my heart to hers, I was filled with a quiet dread. One of the things I sometimes did when I felt my mind filled with cobwebs, and my heart shallow and restless, was to take a hit of acid. And so I sought out two different friends to cop from. In case one was beat I'd at least have the other, as I hated expecting to trip, and nothing happening.

One friend was a street person with good connections, and the other a human services professional, likewise with access to quality stuff. They both came through, and so I had two hits on me.

I dropped one in town, I think at my friend Karen's house – she like a sister to me, and a fellow poet – as that was where I often hung out, and from there I went to the village green, but when awareness became as intense as a storm I realized I wanted to be somewhere more peaceful.

I drove home some three miles to Peter Pan Farm (the real name of the place in those days), and went to a field near the cottage where my daughter and I lived. She was nearby with another family who were friends of ours. I had bought a pint of muscatel to take the edge off, and sat in the field sipping my wine, relaxing in the increasing awareness.

I don't remember when I first became conscious of it, but I sensed an evil spirit, and it did not go away. This is one of the problems with these kinds of drugs – they give you direct and immediate access to the realm of spirits. Often I have no awareness of them at all – I avoid like the plague even any

hint of such, but occasionally it happens. Once in New York I was on acid and interacted with this man whom I sensed was into deep evil, and even after I left him a spirit's presence I felt when near him dogged me wherever I went, and I walked down the city streets, actually haunted. It is a terrible feeling being in their presence, the foulness, the malignity, *the horror* that such an entity has a personal interest in and direct access to my being. And one never knows what evil may materialize under their influence. It is unnerving!

Some of you reading this will of course think me mad and given to hallucinations – I expect that from those with an anti-supernatural worldview – but others of you will know I may indeed be speaking the truth. And mind you, the genre of this piece you are reading is not fiction, but visionary adventure, *non-fiction*. I mean, it happened as I tell it. Yes, my perceptions and understanding may be off in some things, and that *is* a key part of the larger story, but you must judge for yourselves if I have my wits about me, and see clearly in these things I say, or no.

I could not bear it, being vulnerable to a demon, and not knowing what might occur. It is not just a static entity, emanating like a street lamp, but a being sworn to my destruction – and under orders from beings higher up, and answerable to them in their horrid cruelty, yes, even to their own – and if we were already in each other's presence....I was not ignorant of the possibility of a direct assault upon me, and what would be the outcome of that – at best – but me undone in a mental institution somewhere.

I could not endure this infernal creature's presence in my perceptual field, unpredictable and violent. I had to take up a weapon against it, and there is only one place in all of existence where such are forged, and available to those who know their proper use. Regardless of the grief that may follow – the failure – I had no choice but to avail myself of the armory of Heaven, and get ahold of a Spirit-blade – the one issued to me I called *Lightning Sword* – and go after this spirit. You attack one rightly and they flee.

And so, tripping, while I poured the wine out into the field, I went to my Lord, approaching the majesty of His presence with these words, "Lord Jesus, forgive me and cleanse me with Your blood." He and I had been through

this before, and we minced no words. His little brother come to Him in desperation and repentance would be received. We knew each other's hearts. (What I didn't know – and needed to know to walk what Isaiah called the highway of holiness – I would not learn till I was as good as dead, at the end of my own strength and wisdom. This would be some years away.)

The glory of my King flooded through my heart, and I was quickened with Power, the life of Heaven. Against such no demon can stand. I turned to the demon and said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and in the power of His Spirit who is the life of *my* spirit, I command you to go from me." It was that simple. My words were as sharp and penetrating as a razor-edged blade, but such a blade as would cut into spirits. (John Bunyan called such a weapon "a right Jerusalem blade.") The spirit left, and did not return.

I drew near to my Lord. It had been so long I was away from Him. What a joy to be approved and in His favor once again! And so I remained a while, rejoicing. Then I received intelligence in my understanding – the Lord communicates with his people in various ways – indicating a course of action He desired of me, and the reasons behind it. I suppose I could also put it, this was my conscience, and an intuitive grasp of the implications of having taken the acid in light of having made a profession of faith in the town, however faulty my profession and life were. Even so, it is the light of Christ's Spirit that informs and quickens my conscience; He is the intelligence of my intelligence.

I saw how my friends could easily say, upon my speaking of my renewed communion with Christ, "Steve, that sounds great, but as I see it this 'communion with Christ' is just a part of your acid trip. You got any more of this great acid?" And they could rightly say that, for it was in the midst of the trip I sought and found Him, and the distinctions I would try to draw separating Him from the acid experience would be but sophistries in their eyes, just clever words covering what they saw (or seemed to see) was the truth of the matter. For everyone knows – who is experienced with LSD – that there are many so-called "Christ consciousness" experiences folks have while tripping, and this would seem to them but another such delusion, or peculiar subjective experience.

I saw I needed to do something to nullify the grounds for these conclusions. I would execute judgment on the criminality of the act by turning myself in to the police, thereby condemning the having taken LSD, while leaving my union with Christ inviolate and free from the impugment of it being acid-based, for it was in Christian respect of the law I judged myself a transgressor.

I was afraid of what might happen at the police station, but it was crucial I follow my conscience, and maintain the integrity – the credibility – of my testimony of Christ. So I told my daughter I was going into town for a while (it must have been 5:30 or 6 in the evening), and that I would see her in a while. I said I was leaving the car, and walking. I walked because it was against the law to drive while under the influence of drugs, and Scripture enjoins I should obey the just laws of the land. I walked the few miles into town rejoicing, and also a little nervous at what might happen. I went straight to the station house, which was on Tinker Street – one of the two main streets in the village – and asked the dispatcher at the window if I might speak to the Chief (which is how we called him), who at this time was Richie Ostrander. Chief Ostrander came and opened the door, and let me in, and invited me into his small office. He said, “How can I help you?” He knew me from around town, had given a talk on police work to the children in my special ed class, and I was on nodding terms with him. Part of my disguise as high-flyin’ outlaw poet was to have my hair cut short in a military style, which I had often sported since my days in the Marine Corps, and to officialdom I appeared Mr. Straight, compared to the long-haired hippies in town.

I said, “Chief, I have a confession to make. I took some LSD, and as I’m a Christian I know it’s wrong, and I’m turning myself in.” He asked, “Are you on it right now?” And I said, “Yes.” He said, “Excuse me a minute,” and walked out of the office. I think he alerted one of his deputies to be at the ready in case I were to go crazy. He came back in and sat at his desk across from the chair I was in. He said, “What can I do for you? Do you want to go to jail?” And I said, “No.” “Are you carrying any of the drug on you now?” I replied, “No.”

I liked the Chief. He was gentle with me. I knew he went to the Methodist Church in town – I had seen him there when I visited that congregation. So I knew that at the least he had an understanding of Christian thought. (I had seen a number of good men – and later, women – on the Woodstock police force, where kindness ruled in their dealings with the people.) I knew he was puzzled as to why I was there in his office. “Chief, I’ve turned myself in because I’ve been talking about Jesus Christ to people in town – and I have tried to live the Christian life – but I got depressed and discouraged, and reverted back to my older ways, and took the LSD. I knew it was wrong, but I did it anyway. When I came to my senses I asked God to forgive me, and He did. But I know I have lost my credibility as a follower of Christ with some of the people in town, such as those I got the drug from, and others. So I wanted them to know that I didn’t look lightly on this that I have done, but knew it to be a sin in God’s eyes, and a violation of the law of the land, and I have executed judgment on myself by turning myself in to the law.”

He said, “You don’t want to go to jail. Will you tell me who you got the drug from?” I said, “No, Chief, I’m not a rat. And these are just street users, not dealers.” He said, “Well, what would you like me to do to you?” And I replied, “Let me go, and I will not do this again. I have learned a hard lesson. I just needed to execute this judgment on my actions, for the sake of my testimony to Christ in town.”

He asked, “Where do you live?” And I told him. He then asked, “Does anyone else live with you?” I said, “Yes, my 12-year-old daughter. I’m a single parent.” He said, “Is she home now?” And I said, “Yes.” He asked, “How will you get home?” I said, “I’ll walk. That’s how I got into town. I like walking.”

He asked, “Can I trust you to go home and not have any trouble?” He could tell I was calm and emotionally stable with him in the office (the Lord’s Spirit was the peace of my heart). He said, “I’ll tell you what, I’ll let you go home, but I want you to call me here in the station later this evening, and let me know how you are. Will you do that?” I said, “I will. And thank you for your understanding.”

I left the police station and stopped over at Karen's house, looking for my street friend, as I had given him the extra hit of acid once I knew the first one I took was good. When I saw him I said, "John, would you please do me a favor and give me that hit back? I know I gave it to you, but I really need it!"

And so he did. As soon as I was out of his sight, and passing on the bridge over Tannery Brook, I tossed it in the water. I didn't want his or anyone else's trip on my conscience. And I never took another such drug – imagine having to go through that again! With cause I could be thrown into an asylum! And I would not trifle with God in this.

I was now free. Free to speak of my Savior without fear of the rejoinder that my faith – and experience of God – was simply an extension of an acid trip. And I rejoiced in the wisdom and graciousness of my Lord. I walked home with joy and peace in my soul.

This is one story from a visionary adventure, which still goes on twenty years later, part of *A Great And Terrible Love*.

★ ★ ★

KING OF THE STRUNG-OUT SOLDIERS IN THE NIGHT

YES

*I am the king
of the strung-out soldiers
in the night
for I am the most
strung-out of them all*

*What saves me
is that I'm a Poet*

establishing reality.

That poem was written after the fall, from within the abyss. Imagine a saint who had fellowshiped with the Lord Jesus in glory (in spirit, by faith), now thinking himself bereft of His life and Spirit and become vampiric in nature, one of the living dead who walks without God, of the lineage of zombies. A faulty faith begets a faulty life.

As one can see in the story, "HORROR ON APOKALYPSE FIELD," there is indeed such a realm where zombie and vampire walk, but for a saint to be so deceived as to think himself thus is horror multiplied. In these days, desperate not to lose touch with my awareness fully awake, I resorted to the old sorceries of my past, acid and grass, and a new one, angel dust.

With Tenesa, upon first writing to her, my poems and letters bringing into realization the state of my heart, I became aware of my utterly hollow core; worse than hollow, a hungry vacuum, the ravening desire for the life-blood of the living, not the blood itself, but that to which it gives life, the soul. Not the soul per se, but the *love* of it, thence the *life* of it, for love is the heart of a life. It was her love I craved, but for an utterly hollow creature with absolutely nothing to give — thus no reciprocity at all — this is the essence of vampirism in the spiritual realm, and upon the earth as well. *That* is what the vampire *in the real world* craves, and *that* what the werewolf ravages in his raging assaults. To drain or otherwise despoil the life of the soul. Concerning modern love, one may not properly call it love, not when there is no chance of true reciprocity. So you see, were all the illusory and delusional aspects of modern “love” stripped away, vampirism is not so uncommon at all!

One time while high on grass, and writing a poem where these things came to the surface of my awareness, I wrote, “O zombie I!”, and the horror of it so overwhelmed me I...not fainted, but passed into “bummed-out” unconsciousness, so terrible was the knowledge of what I now was.

When writing the poem, “A GRADE ‘B’ HORROR VISION”, this represented a further development in the awareness of my state. I realized that the quality — the nature — of my voice was such I had withal to lift my song on the world stage, *but what manner of song could such a monster sing?* The strange thing about poets — those in whom the art is woven into their breath — is that they *must* sing, as we learned and took heart concerning from Arthur Rimbaud. *Le courage d’être*. The courage to be. And I wrote as sort of a credo,

*what if Rimbaud
were alive today
in children of integrity
come what may*

So, in “A GRADE ‘B’ HORROR VISION” I lifted my voice as a poet of the human condition. What? Do you think I was writing simply of a sheer

and peculiar madness of my own? I tell you (if you are yet blind to what is called “the doctrine of human depravity”) this is the human condition in those who walk not with God; they are the living dead now, and will be the undying damned forever save they turn to Him for mercy unto life.

Because this is not widely spoken of does it mean this is not true? The Bible says it clearly enough: “Dead in trespasses and sins,” and “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Ephesians 2:1; 5:14). “He that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12). It is the custom of civil discourse, and the unspoken social contract, *of those who live “in the region and shadow of death”* not to make mention of this consequence of alienation from God. It is a very law of society to keep one’s mouth shut about such things, for to speak of them breaks the spell of false well-being and hinders one’s savoring the pleasures of flesh and mind.

Anyway, this zombie poet spoke up, even though he was alone. Seeing as he was the premier poet (first among no others!) of the walking dead and damned, the only one to speak (“Better terrible truth,” he said, “than none at all, or the usual hype and jive”), all others asleep in their dreams, he seized the laurel and in a fever of vision and self-loathing, called himself “king of the Zombies,” true poet of the damned. And yet, as that poem shows, there was a hope yet alive of redemption, of salvation from this most awful state of being.

A dubious honor, is it not, such a title? Not such as one would care to announce in polite company, nor any company at all, save when recounting visionary adventures among the damned and the blessed, in the realms of the spirit-world.

*Am I mad
I better read
my poems
to see if I can tell

often I pondered
what madness might be*

*Solomon pondered it
mine heart is utterly alive
naked bare Destiny a flashing sword
O heart this is madness divine
He would not forsake you
not psalmist no
of these o beauties
terror living dying
love*

Imagine having this consciousness while on grass, or worse yet, acid? And worse even yet, PCP, the notorious angel dust? Little wonder I secluded myself from most all, save my poor little daughter, and those somewhat superficial relationships at work. I was a horror unto myself, reckoning myself akin to the dread Gorgon, Medusa in whose eyes to look was to be turned to stone, this a figure of the profoundly deadening touch of one whose spirit dwelt among the dead and damned. I shunned all social intercourse. On those occasions I sought the spiritual help of older Christians in the various churches I visited (and I visited many), I think I frightened people. I remember one time after a meeting I told a leader of my struggles and failures in spirit (sparing them the deep inner knowledge I talk of here, for who could bear that?), and they looked upon me with horror in their eyes, as though I were already one of the damned, whom they had the dire misfortune to meet! Such encounters tended to extinguish my behavior of seeking help in the churches!

Yet the love of Tenesa did indeed quicken me (this story told in the short piece, "A Great and Terrible Love") even in these depths, and I now had withal to continue my odyssey in the Abyss.

After many years (riddled with repeated attempts to return to the Savior) God had mercy on this burning wretch of a poet, and lifted him into the life

of His Son, granting him the understanding of how to walk consistently, which amazingly he was able to do. As told in the story, “Stripped of the Gift of Poetry,” he had lost the ability to write, and this, he discerned, by divine fiat. It was a great relief, in some respects! But now, he realized, upon his return into the presence of the King and His glory it was his again. It had only been the divine life within that was wanting. Only He could re-integrate the poet’s broken soul.

He had come from the regions of the damned, survived the howling wastes, the pool of terrors where one *becomes* the various horrors of legend and myth, and come back into the world of the living. For a good while he did not write anything. He looked at the dark laurelled crown he’d worn as a badge of his madness in Hell, and it had been transformed into a wreath shimmering with glory. He himself had been changed from the representative voice of the damned into....what? Still poet of the human condition — *his* condition — he had been changed. The human condition he *now* knew was of the blessed eternally, humanity indwelt by the Spirit of God, not yet glorified as was the Forerunner of the new human race, but filled with the Spirit of glory nonetheless, even while only “an earthen vessel” containing this treasure. He was now one of the archetypal new humans, and he sang a new song.

He pondered again the strange quality of his voice, able to lift as a poet the way prophets of old lifted to the nation. The issue of identity for the children of God is not easy for them, they are so used to mistaking littleness for humility, finding safety from accusations of megalomania in micromania! It remains that we are a nation of kings and priests, queens and priestesses, though we mostly live like oblivious serfs! Which ought not be. Still, I will be to my King that which He has made me, and I will sing as He has given me voice and vision.

★ ★ ★

DECLARING THE VISION

Where there is no vision the people perish.

—Solomon

Because I am silenced from the place of open utterance
by opposition and unyielding circumstance, my voice walled in
by forces of him who cast Death-Spell in the deeps
of being, in whose thrall the world lurches and reels....

Because I see my brothers and sisters planet-wide
go the fatal way of the world unaware and unwarned
by any credible witness and kin of spirit,
the roar of whirlpool Thanatos in the subtle sphere unheard....

I lay hand on that great Blade reposing in the heart
of Zion's mystic Stone, Lightning Sword of the poet-king and seer,
to build in the heartlands a realm of vision
and vital force, a place from which the spell of death is cleared.

I break Death-Spell for all who draw near this art,
this pure, last, great weapon of the heart,
and I know the wave of Destiny I ride
will scatter the potent words of these poems far and wide.

This speech issues from the halls of Beth-Or
— in ancient Hebrew, House of Light — fierce citadel
withstanding both flesh and subtle-sphere legions of the Dark Lord,
spirit-refuge of pilgrims who wander globe wonderland made hell.

Who wields like sword and who abides in the house
must have clean hands and a pure heart according to the word
not of this world, spoken by Him whose blood cleansed the world.
Those without, death's bright fools, hate that wise mouth.

It would seem that all the world would flock to this rare door
esteeming the dear price of entrance nothing for love

of them within — especially Him who dies no more
having died as our ransom once, then mightily rose above

the Dark Lord's ceiling of death, scattering the strong guard
which panicked and fled at His might — but strangely they rather
mock this pure champion than love Him, their hearts hard
to follow the glitter without the house, lure of death-father.

This is the vision, the house, and Him whose life lights it
into eternity, past the resurrection of all bodies,
and the two destinies: the House of Light, and its counterfeit,
whose death-door leads to terror lake, dump of follies.

This is the vision, that one chooses one's destination
according to the sight and the love given one's heart:
to abide under Death-Spell, with this world's decaying rations
one's fleeting joy, or seek the light breaking in this art.

In the song, "Chimes of Freedom," Bob Dylan had these words, his flashin'
chimes

*strikin' for the gentle, strikin' for the kind,
strikin' for the guardians and protectors of the mind,
and the poet, and the painter far behind his rightful time...*

Those who know him realize the title of this story is taken from his song.
May he take those words about the poet back, for you do indeed now gaze
upon chimes of freedom flashin'!

★ ★ ★

PART II

RESCUE

After a sojourn in this region I've called the abyss (for what else may one call that where sorcery has propelled one into the demonic realms, and those experiences in their midst?) the Master I had been seeking unsuccessfully came to me as I was readying to leave this life, so great was a devastation I had suffered. He came, and lifted me right out of this abyss. This commenced a reorientation, a regathering of my wits.

To recount the path I had traveled....

FALL TO RISING AGAIN – IN WOODSTOCK

After leaving Tenesa I commenced another fast, with the idea I would seek and find from the Lord that anointing and intimacy of union with Him which would enable me to walk as a true saint, with the grace and power to touch Tenesa's heart and win her to Him.

However, I didn't know the first thing (so it turned out – and as I can see these decades later) about receiving the anointing (which is the powerful infusion of God's Spirit into the soul), nor about a healthy faith such as would enable a soul to stand before God "holy and beloved" ¹ apart from works of austerity and any human effort. This ignorance was the crux of my failing.

I failed to fast as planned, and walked in my darkness again. To my shame I sought to get her back on the old terms – betraying whatever truth I had manifested – and lost whatever integrity I had in her eyes.

Still, I had been held by her, loved by her, quickened into a new state of being by our ontologic union – truly she

*. . . gave him breath
from her own life*

and I now somehow had the strength of heart to be – *le courage d'être* – to go about my life, raised from a sort of death, a killing isolation, enabled to function, my faculties quickened as a son of Adam.

I resorted back to my old sorceries, grass, acid, and the new one, angel dust (PCP).

For a while I had worked as a chauffeur, and then I got my taxi license and began driving a yellow cab. Sometimes Tenesa had looked after my daughter, Nadine, while I drove the night shift, and sometimes families from the church I had been attending would take care of her. With Tenesa gone, it fell to the church people alone, though increasingly I took Nadine with me in the cab, and when she got tired she would just curl up next to me on the front seat and go to sleep, the bullet-proof partition locked shut.

The poets, Judy and Sandra – the Black and the Latin – are women of this period, as is Veronica of the books of poems, *True Image* and *Further Poems to Veronica*. A journal, *The Lightning Herald: Un Journal De Poètes Terribles* was published and distributed in 1978.

There are many stories in this period, some of which will be told, but common to them all is that they mostly took place in the dark away from the light of His face, a darkness which lasted from around 1971 'til '86, and even then what occasional light there was was faint; it was in 1990 that the light grew bright enough to stand steady in, and in 1991 grew brighter, in '93 brighter yet, and has been increasing since.

Which is not to say there were not earlier forays into the region of light, but I was unable to sustain them. This story is told elsewhere.

The distribution of the journal finished, in 1978 I packed up a duffle bag of our belongings, stored two duffles of spiritual books with a friend, gathered two shopping bags of Nadine's toys, and Nadine, and took off on a bus to Woodstock, NY. Before leaving the City I'd borrowed around three hundred dollars from friends and was able to rent a room for us in a boarding house at the outskirts of the town, on the edge of the woods. To be back in the country again!

The occultist-poet warrior-priest, with his 5-year-old daughter, was now out of the city and in the woods! He copped a little grass, and in the evening,

aware, listened to the cicadas, smelled the fresh air and delighted to hear the noises of the forest and mountain just outside the window.

For the next 19 years I lived in this town. We stayed at the house for three weeks or so. This area was called Shady, nestled as it was between high mountains, and so receiving less sunlight than places on leveler ground. We used to hitchhike into town, about 4 miles. Just as our money was running out I got a live-in job taking care of two children, so Nadine and I had free room and board. We were now on the other side of Woodstock off Route 212, toward Saugerties. We still hitched to get into town, until my brother gave me his mint Honda 360 motorcycle, with only 500 miles on it! I slowly learned to ride it, and Nadine (with her child-size helmet) and I now had wheels to get around!

As I had good child care references from the City (I did that kind of work – also had worked in summer camps with disturbed children), I got more child care jobs, now right in town, so we could walk to where we wanted to go. We rented a room in a unit of studio apartments by Tannery Brook Road. Then I started working as a Teaching Assistant in a special needs school in town, and was settling in as a stable resident. When she was six, Nadine started going to Woodstock Elementary School.

In town I was known by the name Steve Levin (after my grandmother, Rose Levyn, and her son my dad, Richard Levyn Rafalsky), as the journal, *The Lightning Herald*, had been sent widely, to universities, bookstores, news outlets, government intelligence agencies (psychic warfare was high on their agendas then, and there was this in the journal), so I wanted to lay low, in the event anyone was inclined to seek me out. Neil Cassidy had written inside the bus, “Just because I’m paranoid doesn’t mean they’re not after me.” Or, as I would put it, “Just because I’m *not* paranoid doesn’t mean they’re not after me!”

I also, under that name, wrote prolifically in *Woodstock Times* about whatever was on my heart and mind, often drugs, love, and things pertaining to the spirit world, and I didn’t want the cops knockin’ on my door. In those days I sported a close Marine haircut – my disguise! – and I looked like Mr.

Straight. I could sit on a bench on the village green tripping on 'shrooms or 'cid and appear quite the normal person.

I also, in that paper, wrote of my true and lost love, the Lord Jesus, defending His name and word when they were attacked in the paper (which happened occasionally), and the town knew I was a fallen warrior-priest, now an occultist poet on the loose.

I published a number of books of poems while there (being the proprietor of APKL Publications), one from a class I taught at the Woodstock Children's Center (an upscale private elementary school), on loan to them from my special needs school, and a few books of my own.

My and my daughter's hearts were knit into the life of Woodstock. If I learned to fight for our sacred humanity from Judith and from Sandra in NYC, I learned to have a heart in Woodstock. The community service agency, Family of Woodstock, played a big part in that. They were, in truth, a family to Nadine and me. I worked there as a volunteer in their walk-in center, and manned the 24/7 hotline phones on regular shifts, as well as staffing the phones for the NYS Coalition Against Domestic Violence, which we answered on their off-hours.

When I took care of the children in the home off 212 near Saugerties, part of my pay was a bottle of muscatel and a carton of cigarettes every week (I got grass cheap from Big Bill in those days). On Thursday nights there was an open-mic poetry reading at the Woodstocker Café, and I would either borrow a car to get there, or ride the bike after I learned how. Nadine would be sound asleep with the children, whose mom was home after her work.

The first eight years in Woodstock, and maybe seven or eight before that, were all basically in the period of my Fall – some 16 years! – though, as I have said, there were many times I returned to my Master during this time only to fall again, not understanding the Way.

Still, He kept me during those mostly dark years. And those years were filled with heart and depths and love – such as it is outside of the Kingdom of God. But He got me back to *His* heart, in His good time.

Years later, after I had “risen” in spirit from whence I had fallen, I wrote this poem while visiting the U.S. from my life on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, staying with my friend Danny, whose house was near Woodstock,

SUBTERRANEAN WOODSTOCK HOMESICK BLUES

Driving through town a couple of days ago
with Dylan’s greatest hits 2 on
it all came back to me
like falling through the floor
into a tunnel of treasure:
the deeps and riches of the heart

O the women I have loved here!
I remember all of you!
I do not forget you!
So great loves in this small town!

and the men, friends of my heart
like iron sharpens iron

and men and women who have died here
leaving empty, grieving places within

Almost twenty years of you, Woodstock,
nurturing my cub and me
in your love and spirit,
both of us coming of age
in your peculiar ambience

My heart will always be tied to you
while I have breath
in this life.

How I miss the streams
with the sparkling waters of life
around great flat rocks

— beds for poets and lovers
of the sun

the mountains in your backyard
my playgrounds, my love
of sanity and safety
in their wilderness, where often I have gone
seeking God
and power and clarity to live
in the wilderness of hearts
that is our “civilization”

Driving through town and the depths
my heart suddenly found itself in
— it was like a sudden acid-hit
of loves reconnected (although
I’ve stopped doing ‘cid
many years now) —
and it came home to me afresh
the roots of love
my heart has sunk into you,
O Woodstock!

And you there, poet, with your balcony
over the Green
and your book gestating,
Breakdown On Tinker Street,
if not still in *your* heart, in mine,
how I love you yet,
sister to my heart
through many adventures,
and now that our paths have parted
the great dangers that beset the living
keep me thinking of you
and I hold you in my heart:
fragile, handle with prayer.

And you too, daughter, whom I left behind
as I wend my slow way
to confront the rough beast slouching
toward the desecration,
you also I hold
precious
and for you also
a flame is lit in my heart

O dear Hobbiton in the lovely Shire,
Tolkien was not a dreamer
but a seer
and the chase is afoot
that runs through the valley
of the shadow of death
where footprints leave blood

you, Hobbiton, gave my mature heart
its form and substance
before I was called out
on this latest
adventure

and I am strong and deep
in my humanity
because of you

as I limp out to the fray
like an aged Toshiro Mifune
wielding Lightning Sword
drawn from the mystic Stone
of Zion.

I salute you
and love you.

How the Lord actually got me back is told in the stories, “Rescue From The Black Hole (And As Good As Dead)”, and, “Rebellion Is As The Sin

Of Witchcraft”. But He did get me, just as I was to plunge over the brink into eternity, my heart having been shot out from under me.

There are many stories to be told from the Woodstock days, stories of loves, and friends, tough guys, and fights. Woodstock wasn’t all love and peace; after all, *humans* lived there, and there are darknesses in the heart, not to mention the trippers who’d get top-heavy, as in the stories, “A fighter in Woodstock”, “King of the Green”, and other adventures.

It was in this place the Lord got me back. And when He got me, He got me good, and *for* good. It was in this place He gave me the heart I have, or at least I came of age here. Lord, grant that I am not finished with this place – root me back in. For I have many loves here.

¹ Colossians 3:12

RESCUE FROM THE BLACK HOLE (AND AS GOOD AS DEAD)

After she left and cleaved to another, and the “Christian” counselor we had been seeing told me, “It will do your wife good to experiment with her sexuality – it will help her find herself,” the anger and pain in me transmuted into a lethal mix, and overpowered my will to live. I had maintained for years that to lose one’s beloved is the second greatest pain in life. *The greatest* I’d said was to lose God. This loss I believed I had likewise sustained, seeing I had started smoking cigarettes again, and the Scripture warned, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me...” (Psalm 66:18).

It turned out the Fellowship we had been part of was so far off in doctrine and practice it could not but be termed a cult, and that was also a devastation to me, although I was grateful the Lord had given me clarity about it. I broke off from them, and was without a home church. This stripping away of everything I loved and had built my life upon suddenly left me vulnerable to a new variant of that old deadly nemesis, Thanatos, spoken of earlier.

As a husband I for sure had been no prize (which I realized with a shock as I became disillusioned of my massive cluster of denials); far from Mr. Spiritual, I was shallow in my walk with and trust of the Lord; driven in seeking pleasure and affirmation from my wife; condemning and manipulative if these were not forthcoming. Perfectionist and performance-oriented in my self-assessment, I had as high standards for her. Blame-shifting was my MO: if I was having trouble in my spiritual life, it was because she was too worldly! I was not a healthy – not a *gracious* – person to be around. Still,

the Lord is well able to work with – and hold together – such cases, if they but be willing, and have contrite hearts. But she was gone, and denied what she was doing was wrong. When, later, I said it was adultery, and not only a sin against me, but Him she had also pledged her heart to, she denied it was such a sin, and when I pointed out the Scriptures pertaining to it, she said, “That’s just *your* interpretation.”

At that time, in the fast-chilling fall of 1989, I felt myself bereft of all love and all spiritual support. One can sustain a broken heart if the Lord is present; if He is not, even great loves avail nothing. I had once written in a poem,

*There was a storm of pain
I didn't care*

I was furious at her for the abandonment; at the counselor for compounding the betrayal; and even at the Lord, to Whom I said, “I cannot please You!” I had tried to fast, to put off the cigs while doing that, but after even three days I was still smoking, so I gave up fasting. I had sat down with Watchman Nee’s *The Spiritual Man* in hopes of discerning a way to walk in spirit, seeing as Nee had been a help to me years earlier, but this also did not give light to break through the darkness I was in. I felt that in my moment of greatest need God was *not* a present help!

All through the years, both before and after my conversion to Christ, I had been the strong one, the one somehow resilient enough to continually emerge phoenix-like from crushing circumstances, both inward and outward. But now I was at an end. It was with great pain I thought of my daughter, Nadine, and how she would take my savage departure, the killing of my *am* – for so does the word *sui-cide* mean in the French – the rending of my presence from the fabric of our lives, leaving a terrible black hole in its place. The storm within was greater than even this deep reluctance – my dearly beloved child (then 17) abandoned by her strong dad. The storm was intensified by the one who fills vacuums, empty hearts, the lurker in the abyss who makes death as real as love, and tips many a soul over the edge

with the weight of his stealthy presence. And I had no defense; for the first time it seemed there would be no escape.

Me, the one who had been through so many suicide-prevention trainings at Family, the Woodstock crisis-intervention agency, and had been a help to so many, now to fall victim to that which I fought for others many years. At the group home I worked at I had the job of dispensing meds to the challenged folks I served, and one of them had a large vial of Phenobarbital tablets – those would sure do the trick! Except I would have propelled myself into eternity with a theft on my hands, and that I was loath to do! I thought of calling my doctor and telling him I needed some sleeping pills as I was having a hard time of it lately, but then I would have shoved off into eternity with a lie on my hands, and I would none of that, either. I realize the strangeness of my thinking, but remember, my heart's pursuit – notwithstanding the great flaws in my character and failures in healthy relating – was holiness unto the Lord, and this is not easily let go of. No, these methods that involved crimes and sins would not do. Finally I hit upon buying a hose and connecting it to my car's exhaust, and running it into the car where I would be sitting, and asphyxiate myself. Only thing was, I was broke, and payday was two days off, and so I would have to wait.

Hollow-hearted, I went with dread about my routines. As I looked upon the sunset the day before payday I noted this would be the last one I would see, as there were no sunsets in the realms I was heading into. I was simply going to cast my soul upon the mercies of my God – with Whom I was furious with a black heart. Perhaps the worst feeling I had was the thought of the black hole – an active interdimensional gateway seething with terrible and destructive darkness – I would leave among my family and friends.

I was driving my patients around (clients they were called in those days), going to some activity the evening of this last sunset, and one of them said (knowing my liking for Christian music), "Steve, would you please put the gospel station on?" So I did. Phil Driscoll was playing his trumpet, and singing the song, "I Exalt Thee." As I was listening to him sing this glorious hymn, the Lord Jesus manifested Himself to my awareness, so that I knew He had not departed from me, but loved me with a ravishing love that had

not – *would* not – let me go! This was as distinct and powerful a revelation of His presence as the day I had been saved by Him twenty-one years earlier. No words were spoken, and yet His being there with an unmistakable heart of love, steadfast and unending, spoke volumes to me:

You are as good as dead, and I love you, and will not let you go. You cannot pray, you cannot stop smoking, you can do nothing to please Me, and I love you even so. You have no merit whatever, nothing to commend yourself, and I love you and will never let you go! I will help your faith grow strong enough so you will stop smoking. I will never leave you nor forsake you. I am your God, and you My precious child.

Instantly upon the entrance into my soul of His presence the darkness that was consuming me fled, replaced by the light of His love, never again – even these 16 years later – to find such entrance. Oh, it has tried, but failed. I saw a new thing about my God – and my own soul – which set me on a new doctrinal footing, i.e., a new understanding of salvation.

I had learned early from Wesley and from Finney that “entire sanctification” – perfection in holiness – was not only possible but required, and that the deciding factor in the attainment of this was my will, aided by the Holy Spirit, of course, but primarily my will. Add to these two – perfection and will power – (the deception of) a mandatory extended fasting as God’s will for me (written of in “Conversion To Fall”), and the resulting spiritual failure which characterized my discipleship until 1985, when I jumped from the frying pan of backslidenness into the fire of a cult – it will be understood I had no sound grasp of a stable life in Christ, nor of His provision for such.

But this was now to change, with the revelation of sheer grace to one with no merit at all, and truly as good as dead. Coming from the psychedelic regions of the occult I was acutely aware of the state of my consciousness; I was aware that I was unholy of heart and corrupt of nature, and had sought

with continual austerities to seek the “second blessing” which would sanctify me – but it was not to be found of me! I had always shunned the Puritan – the Reformed – divines as adding more rules and requirements for holiness, so that their love of godliness I saw as based on even more stringent requirements than Wesley and Finney’s. I had a fear of the Puritans. But a prayer group of older Christians from a Dutch Reformed Church invited me to join with them in biweekly prayer and fellowship. I was astounded that they accepted me even after I told them I was still smoking cigarettes. From the Lord I had received grace – thoroughly undeserved mercy – and now from humans also. Part of me figured there must be something wrong with them – perhaps they were *liberal* Christians! But my heart was comforted and nourished joining them in prayer and study of Scripture. Nor could I discern any “liberal” leanings.

Later, fellowshiping with Reformed Baptists, the pastor challenged me to consider what he called “the five points of Calvinism.” When I looked at the first one, which pertained to the total depravity of the soul – or the complete inability of the unregenerate heart to please God – I didn’t blink, but knew it was so. And thus I considered the other points with an open mind.

The same essential teachings were in the standards of the Dutch Reformed Church, what they called The Three Forms of Unity (*The Heidelberg Catechism*, *The Belgic Confession*, and *The Canons of Dordrecht*). What both these Baptist and Reformed folks maintained was that God was the sovereign initiator of salvation, having compassion upon some within the mass of Hell-bound humanity and choosing them to be His people, irresistibly winning the love of their hearts to cleave to and follow Him, thereupon entering into solemn covenant with them, promising never to lose or cast them off, but shepherding them in such a way (which sometimes could include severe discipline) that they would persevere in faith and holiness so they would finally enter their glorious lives in the eternal Kingdom He prepared for those who love Him.

What I believed made an enormous difference in how I lived, and especially in my state of mind. Did my spiritual life depend *entirely* on me, upon my diligence and faithfulness to will according to godliness, the Lord helping

me in so doing? Was I always in danger of being cast off for being weak and discouraged, and falling? Or had I entered into a Family, the Father of which *never* cast off a true son or daughter, *however* disobedient or negligent, but used His wise and loving discipline to bring that heart into freely willing to walk with Him in love? Both from the Bible and from experience with Him I saw the latter to be true, and that I had been adopted into an irrevocably stable family life, where there were no “throw-away” children, as is too common in human families, and, alas, even in some church families.

As I grew familiar with what are termed the Doctrines of Grace, my life – my *heart* – became more and more characterized as being at rest. I ceased my incessant strivings to attain that moral perfection which I thought would make me acceptable to God, and saw rather that the Lord Jesus and *His* perfection was what pleased God and was acceptable to Him, and lo! *I was in Him*, as in a rock cleft for me and in which I was hidden, His spotless righteousness reckoned by the Father as my own! Of course I was to walk in obedience according to Christ’s word – and be increasingly conformed to His holiness – but it was His righteousness imputed to me that was the basis of God’s acceptance of me. I could rest in Him. And out of this rest arose an energy and purpose motivated by loving gratitude, and I could work for the love of it – for the love of *Him*! A meditation from a Presbyterian church I would later be strongly built up in puts it as follows:

*Galatians 3:3 – After beginning with the Spirit,
are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?*

Christians will always drift back toward a legalistic view of salvation. It starts subtly: our spiritual fervor, or devotion, or ministry involvement, or consistency, or new-found obedience really are signs of our Christian vitality. Before long, however, we begin to think of them more and more as the cause of our vitality.

Being right with God slowly drifts from grace alone to grace plus achieving this standard. At this point, Paul tells us we have created a false gospel, a gospel of law rather than grace. The

same grace that began our relationship with Jesus is what keeps us in that relationship. “Lay your deadly doings down, down at Jesus’ feet; / Rest in Him, and Him alone, gloriously complete.”

From Lesson Three – In Line With the Gospel
(Study: “A Community Which Serves God’s Purposes”).
Redeemer PCA, NYC

Seeing as how my life with God was now stable, I could contemplate Him, or ponder His word, without the distraction of fear, or the darkness and confusion of backslidenness. This love now bestowed upon me as one adopted in Christ, and as a member-recipient of His covenant promises, gave me to know that this love would never diminish nor end, regardless of my performance! My heart was now no longer afraid!

★ ★ ★

She had said to me before we separated, “If you love me you will wait for me.” I waited three years, wrote love letters, tried courting her again, this time as a healthier man, and still it all was to no avail. So I terminated the marriage according to Scripture. If you read this, know that I still have great love and care for you, and pray you turn to the Savior for eternal life, for you are indeed a dear heart, to use one of your southern expressions. Forgive me, please, for not having been a good husband to you.

I continued to live in Woodstock; Nadine came up from the city – all of 18 now! – and we got a larger apartment, and later a house. I was growing stronger and it would soon be time for me to get rid of the cigarettes, but that’s a whole other story, *Rebellion Is As the Sin Of Witchcraft*.

★ ★ ★

I've discovered what being whole is
and complete
for me
as a person.

For me
it is pain
and loneliness
and numbness.

That might not seem so great
but what it is
is real –
me as I am.

The real me not stuffed
with drugs
or a woman's comfort
or religious fervor.

What's so precious
about my bad feelings
is they're *mine*,
an unalloyed treasure.

And so I will work
with this little I've got
which is true
and invest love in it.

I know it will grow
and be enriched
and some day
I'll be wealthy.

At least
and at last
I've got
myself.

And there are others
who invest in me,
and we are all part
of each other's enrichment.

And there is
my God
the main Depositor
in my meager account.

He came
when I was bankrupt
and invested His life
in me.

I am whole
– have a solvent
love account –
and open for the business of life.

1/13/90

★ ★ ★

REBELLION IS AS THE SIN OF WITCHCRAFT

More than a year had passed since the Lord's extraordinary rescue of me, and I was still in Woodstock, living in a small house at the bottom of Tannery Brook Road with my daughter, she now about 18. I was spiritually and emotionally stable, having recovered from my former wife's unfaithfulness and departure, and walking with the Lord Jesus in the doctrines of grace as I was beginning to learn them.

My daughter, Nadine, was doing well, working, and preparing for the GED exam at the same time, and also, like her dad, desirous to quit smoking.

A friend had given me the book by Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, which I had started reading. I felt in my heart that I should try to quit smoking again, as I indulged in it only by the sufferance of Christ, who bore with me in my weakness. It had been a nightmare to me in earlier years, having quit many hundreds of times only to fail, again and again. I was frightened to try yet again! But my stability was tenuous – I remained uneasy about the smoking, knowing I was allowed to only until my growing faith was capable of overcoming it.

As I read the book I saw that there was indeed provision for me – spiritual provision – that could lift me into a new realm of faith and life. A chapter of the book discussed the implications of Romans 6:4,

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

The Lord made those last five words alive to me – *walk in newness of life!* I could see it! I knew I could do it simply by faith – by trust in His Spirit quickening me in accord with His word.

Only my fear crippled me! Try again? And what if I failed? Would my stability of more than a year disintegrate if I didn't make it?

I was reading a book on prayer by E.M. Bounds at the time also, seeking for some secret, some thing to help me in my growing distress. The book told about the great amount of time certain people of God would daily spend in prayer, some as long as eight hours a day!

As for me, I was getting spooked by the growing conviction that the Lord had brought Bridges' book to me to enable me to master this habit and be done with it. It was clear it could be done – that I could do it by the faith the Lord had granted me – but I was loath to try again! So I turned my back on this task that was before me – and on Him who put it there – and tried to live a normal and quiet life as I had for the past year or so. But I knew what I was doing! Who I was evading.

Nadine was going about her life with integrity and earnestness, taking care of business and was in a good mood about her life. I became aware that in my rebellion against the Savior there was an uncleanness in my spirit, and slowly it dawned upon me how serious and drastic this uncleanness was. For the Scripture did say – as the prophet Samuel reproved Saul the king for his disobedience – “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft!” And I saw the utter blackness of my heart, now become a repository of demonic spirit, and this in the presence of my tender and sweet child, whose heart I was impacting daily and hourly with my dark influence.

I could not long endure this treachery and evil-doing against both Lord and child, and – after about a week! – I went to Him and said, “Lord, I will submit and obey. Please forgive me and cleanse me with Your blood for my wickedness.” I then told Him I would commence a new life of prayer in the morning, waiting on Him in faith and prayer and putting away the smokes. I said to Him, “In Bounds' book on prayer, I will daily seek You according

to the example of the *least* amount of prayer he told of – and there was a man who prayed two hours a day, and so I will do also.”

And so I did. The day was May the 5th, 1991. Although with some trepidation – which I refused to heed – I began to trust Him to uphold me “in newness of life” without my cigarettes to sustain me, but instead His presence and friendship. And for a *long* time I kept to those two hours a day *religiously!* It was not all prayer, but reading the Scriptures, meditating on them, watching in prayer – which is a pondering and scrutinizing one’s life, relationships, and activities before Him – and taking all these areas to Him.

The first day passed....and I did not fail! And the second, third, then a week! Then two, then three, and soon it was months! I was free of cigarettes! Still tempted, still vigilant, still drawing near to Him whose presence was my strength.

My daughter moved into a nearby city in order to be near a new job (she’d already gotten her GED diploma), and I moved into a small studio in town, and went part-time in my working for NYS, in a group home for the developmentally disabled, 6 AM to 10 AM, Monday through Friday.

I was finally stable, spiritually and physically, without cigarettes! I continued my two-hour-a-day prayer life, though I couldn’t do it upon waking, as I had to get up around 4:30 – 5:00 every morning to wake up and be at work on time. So when I got home from work around 10:30 – 11:00 I started then, and I noted the time I started and continued till two hours passed.

The effect this had on my heart and spirit was profound. I was as a lion uncaged! No more cloud of failure over my head, dimming the presence of the King of Heaven on His throne of glory! It was around this time I began producing a closed-cable TV program every Sunday evening for two hours, “*Christ’s Family, Woodstock*”, bearing witness to the goodness of God.

I continued in this new phase of my life with undiminished joy. Three years went by. I started to feel like a tree in autumn, getting dry, leaves rustling in the wind. I was strong, and yet something was amiss. A new chapter was about to begin, written of in, “The Way of the Disciplines, and the Way of the Heart”.

THE WAY OF THE DISCIPLINES, AND THE WAY OF THE HEART

As the story ended in “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft”, I was now stable, working Monday – Friday part-time in the early AMs, usually from 6-10, though occasionally from 7-11. I was “religious” in keeping to my two hour time of prayer and reading in God’s word, save in a couple of emergencies when I had to help people. Every day when I arrived home after work, around 10:30 in the mornings, I noted what time I began my “quiet time”, and stayed at it till two hours had passed. Though sometimes, if I was very tired from my early rising, I’d grab an hour or so nap before starting. This was my routine. Once a week I’d fast for a day, and in the summer during vacation I’d fast longer, often up in the mountains.

Now that I understood the Reformed teaching of grace – the undeserved favor of God – how that I stood in His presence by this unmerited favor shown me in being united with Christ, both cleansed of the guilt of sin by His death in my place, and righteous by the gift of *Christ’s* merit imputed to me (transferred to my bankrupt account, as it were), I did not have to fast and perform spiritual feats to be accepted by God, nor to attain to a holiness that would speak to Him in my behalf – as Christ had done all this in my stead. I was finally at rest! My performance was not what made me acceptable to God; even if I failed miserably at what I was doing, He still received me and loved me. It was *Christ’s* performance that made me acceptable to God. This was a revolution in my consciousness!

There is a hymn, “Before the throne of God above”, which says all these things well,

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea.
A great High Priest whose name is Love,
who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on His hands,
my name is written on His heart.
I know that while in Heaven He stands
no tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair
and tells me of the guilt within,
upward I look and see Him there
who made an end to all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died
my sinful soul is counted free.
For God, the Just, is satisfied
to look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there! the risen Lamb!
My perfect spotless righteousness,
the great unchangeable I AM,
the King of glory and of grace.
One with Himself I cannot die;
my soul is purchased by His blood.
My life is hid with Christ on high,
with Christ my Savior and my God!

Thus I had the resources of understanding and spiritual awareness to continue joyfully in the disciplines I now lived by. To celebrate my finally quitting smoking, every May 5th I would buy myself a cake and eat it – if I was with friends at that time we'd share it, if not, I'd cut it in quarters and finish it in four days. Usually it was a chocolate-lover's cheesecake from Deising's, a good bakery in the area.

I continued this life for three years. Now that I was free from the smokes I began a cable-access TV program (that ran throughout the town of Woodstock) to bear witness to the Lord Jesus, His truth and goodness. I couldn't

do it before, being ashamed to speak in His name publicly while a slave to tobacco. I was sure the Buddhists in town (we had a large monastery at the base of Overlook Mountain and a Zen monastery nearby) would have laughed me to scorn speaking of Christ while in bondage to cigarettes, and they would have been right.

But now I was set free by the Spirit of Christ giving me a new heart and strength, and I clung to my newfound discipline like ancient Samson guarded his uncut hair! And so I lived for the next three years.

I did, in the third year, notice a “dryness” in my heart, like the leaves on a tree in autumn, though I could not discern what it was about. There *was* something lacking.

On May 6th of 1994 the Christians in Woodstock and surrounding areas were gathering in front of the village Fire Station to celebrate National Day of Prayer. It was around 10 AM, I think, and we joined together to fellowship and pray – an act of solidarity in an area not too friendly to the faith of Jesus Christ, our town being the New Age Mecca! I saw the regulars, pastors, die-hard believers, lovers of Jesus – the faithful – and a few unfamiliar faces, one of whom was an attractive light-skinned Black woman named Ro. After the prayers and a little talking among ourselves, we broke up, and this new woman stuck around so I spoke to her and we hit it off. She said, “When I saw the notice of the prayer meeting here I thought it would just be a bunch of old folks, but I was wrong!” So we chatted a while, and I invited her over to my place to continue talking and perhaps have a bite to eat.

She told me her story – and the spiritual path she was on with Christ – and the things she spoke of struck a chord in me, as I had already been deeply impacted by the doctrines of grace. It was in this vein of grace, her way with Christ. After a week or so hanging out with her I wrote,

It's been many years now I've been buried
in profound and vital study
of spiritual reality,
sitting at the feet of God

and His apostles,
His words precious treasure
in my hands
and heart.

It's been a life of prayer
and discipline
and trusting dependence
on His grace and mercy.
It's been a good life,
a life of being happily single,
keeping my heart pure
and seeing God my glorious King.

How can it be then that upon my path
walks a woman now, a daughter of God,
and at sight of her pain and joy well
within me? I thought I was beyond this.
I call *May* the cruelest month,
stirring dull roots with spring rain.
Half a century and two I walk this earth
and my heart is no better than a schoolboy's.

This may just be a passing madness,
an aberration peculiar to monks;
but what if this is God's hand
holding forth a help-mate
meet for His work
and my heart?
I am stunned that my contented heart,
having met her, now feels lonely without her.

But I am full, able to walk solitary,
master of my passions
(save for those cookies & cakes, sometimes),
a rejoicing pilgrim on the highway of holiness,

greatly pleased with the single life.
Who then is this, O my God and Shepherd,
You have put in my way,
and who am I to be to her?

I was free from the pains and joys
of love, from the wonderful and awful mysteries
of a woman's heart, from the laughter and tears
of this life. Why have You done this to me?
Can You not see I am too old for her? Why,
I would have to start working out
and eating right, and so be fit for her.
Give her to me, or rid my heart of this joyous agony.

But do not give her to me if she loves You not
above all things in Heaven and earth, even me.
Give her not to me if she walks not in the fear of You forever.
Keep her from me if she will not love me and cleave to me
with her whole heart, so long as we live,
for I cannot bear another betrayal.
Give her not to me if my mission and passion
for Your kingdom will not be hers too.

Root the love of her out of my heart
if she would be a willful and contentious wife,
for I desire one like Abraham's Sarah,
whom I may love as You, Lord, love
Your church. Lord, hear this my cry!
I am too fragile for any
but a pure heart. Failing this,
my strength is in being alone.

I like the way her heart is, the way
it goes out in love to those around her —
I like the way she has a heart
to take people in — in radical hospitality.

It may well be You didn't make her
for me, but I thank You
that You made her, and I ask
You bless and prosper her.

I know, Lord, this may be
but a monk's madness.
She is probably too young
— barely in her prime! —
to love this old one and his song.
Be that as it may, I am
still Your poet of the age,
Your hardy veteran of the Satanic Wars.

Thank You for waking me up, Lord,
though I wish you wouldn't use
a beautiful woman to do so.
You know how fragile my heart is.
O my King, grant me to unfold the vision
You have put in my heart, both by tongue
and pen, grant me to sing the Song
of the ages.

-1994

As it turned out, she was *not* meant for me, though her friendship and influence had an impact on my life. For one thing, I was opened again to the possibility of a woman in my life – something I had been set against for some years. And another thing, a new understanding of grace was dawning in me thanks in part to hearing Ro talk of her own walk with the Lord. Two other strong influences contributed to this. Neil T. Anderson (author of *Bondage Breaker*) had a series of counseling tapes for counselors – some 28 or so hours of lessons – that opened my eyes. One of these talked of two views of God, and the respective attributes assigned to Him:

Forgiving	Begrudging
Loving and caring	Hateful and unconcerned
Good and merciful	Mean and unforgiving
Steadfast and reliable	Unpredictable and untrustworthy
Unconditional grace	Conditional approval
Present and available	Absent when needed
Giver of good gifts	Takes away, “kill joy”
Nurturing and affirming	Critical and unpleasable
Accepting	Rejecting
Just, fair, and impartial	Unjust, unfair, partial

When I thought about these things the impact was immense, particularly the view of God as “nurturing and affirming”! This may seem strange, being so struck by comparing these traits, but I was carrying a lot of baggage, from early family life, from unhealthy churches I’d been in, and spiritual teachings I’d been subjected to. I’m now well aware there are some views of Neil Anderson which are questionable, but his influence on me was toward spiritual and emotional health.

The last major influence, and perhaps the profoundest, was the Reformed Baptist pastor, Albert N. Martin. He had sermons being aired on a local radio station, one dealing with the antediluvian patriarch Abel, whose blood he compared to Christ’s. Abel’s cried out from the ground for vengeance, retribution, and judgment, while Christ’s cried out for better things: expiation, pardon, acceptance, and reconciliation. Hearing this sermon, and by faith knowing that Christ’s blood *was* sprinkled on me, His disciple, and that on the basis of what that blood spoke to the Father, I was beloved and received into my Father’s heart apart from my works, the disciplines and austerities: it was simply the blood that spoke on my behalf to Him. Heaven was actually opened to me and I basked in the glorious love and acceptance of God because of the shed blood of Christ I knew was for me.

Al Martin had said, referring to Hebrews 9:19, 20, that by the sprinkled blood God bound Himself “in covenant engagement” to His people, that

blood crying out to Him and His response to it of saving activity in omnipotent power born of love toward His children. (Even the Old Testament blood – the sacrifices – were typical of / pointed toward Christ's sacrifice.) The power of the blood was efficacious – apart from my activities – and His engagement in caring for my life was operative regardless of what and how I was doing. As Paul said, "If God be for us, who can be against us? ... [Nothing] shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:31, 39).

Apart from my daily two hours, my weekly and yearly fastings, I was in God's heart and precious to Him! My disciplines – albeit so important in helping me break the bondage of cigarettes and introducing me to a life of prayer and deeper faith – were not what brought me into God's heart and love; it was the blood of Christ which brought reconciliation and acceptance. What a revelation!

It was exactly three years I had been in the way of the disciplines, May 5, 1991 to May 5, 1994, and on the 6th, when I met Robin, along with the other influences simultaneously working on me, I began to walk in the way of the heart. In a while I ceased my daily prayer routine, and my weekly fasts. I rejoiced to be in the presence of God apart from any efforts of my own. I was in prayer – in His presence! – all the time. What a life! This continued for a year. It was an experiment of sorts to me.

After the year – a year of great joy – I commenced to *mix* the two ways. As I had responsibilities caring for souls, I could not just live for my own joy and life in His presence, but wanted to seek help for them from Him, and desired to enter into disciplined prayer once again, but with this difference: my disciplines did not bring me into His presence, being in Christ did.

Something I picked up a few years later in a spiritual community which exemplified these things I was learning (and which I have written of earlier here) :

*Galatians 3:3 – After beginning with the Spirit, are
you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?*

Going back to the very beginning of my walk and life with God – the day written of in “St. Louis Blues to Conversion” – I was an enemy and opponent to God and Christ, and He won me over by the revelation of His glory, and His love for me, even when I had been against Him. My standing in His presence, my acceptance by Him, was always a matter of His undeserved favor toward me, and not on any merit of mine.

Even writing this chapter now, in 2010 – nineteen years later – my heart is refreshed reviewing this significant milestone of my spiritual journey. It is essential always to remember on what basis we are accepted in God’s holy presence, and on what basis we are beloved by Him.

Even now, I walk in a mixture of these two disciplines, both of them operating in my life, though the way of the heart is the foundation on which any disciplines rise up.

★ ★ ★

AN OUTLAW POET IN WOODSTOCK: TWO ASPECTS

In retrospect: My five-year-old daughter and I arrived in town in August of '78, and quickly got a room at Lori's boarding house in the hamlet of Shady, a few miles from the village center. A child, and a 36-year-old poet from Manhattan, come to find a life in the country.

The people in Woodstock took me in in my woundedness, and it was a healing of sorts, somewhat akin to the healing I'd found in Tenesa's arms and heart – they braced my heart in their hearts, and love. Little wonder I yet love Woodstock!

Nineteen years I lived there. It came to pass during that time the Lord got me back, set me free of the delusion I had about fasting, enabled me to walk with Him consistently, ceasing also involvement in sorcery, no longer an outlaw in His eyes. I had so defiled myself during those years of darkness, and the fountain He'd opened for sin and for uncleanness (Zechariah 13:1) availed now to make me clean before Heaven and the angels.

But now, Heaven's man: I was at odds with the town that supported me in its love those many years, for in the New Age Mecca, Toleration City, Jesus was the outlaw and not the trippers.

Who ran the town – humanly speaking? – but the spirits behind the scenes of the deceiving spiritual paths and worldly pleasures, and who knew Jesus all too well, as He'd expelled them from the realm of glory down onto the dark planet, where they vowed to hurt Him and all His, as well as humankind generally.

No longer an outlaw in the eyes of the law, but now such in the eyes of the lawless! – my dear and old friends! – for whom I cry to Heaven that they too would find that fountain, desire His cleansing, and joy in His illumination.

★ ★ ★

An Outlaw Poet in Woodstock

Cut my teeth in that place, teeth of my heart
and soul, amidst friends, amidst women

refugee as I was from Paradise's kingdom
through some weird fall from grace

hounded by hunter-seekers of Hell,
I needed a strength, having lost Heaven's

and found it among these friends – solidarity
of hearts, of lives entwined

and among the disabled – my friends,
for whom I cared in my work

and the women of the town, a few – lovers
the rest sisters of spirit, sweet friends

Who knew though, I was a marked one?
marked of Hell – an enemy to be killed

and of Heaven – to be sustained
and brought back to the throne of the King

Yet an outlaw twice over, what with the drugs
walking strong in sorcery's power

having no strength of my own
and I needed to stand

and the hearts of those who loved me
a loved outlaw, disguised as a straight arrow

and – truth be told – outlaw in the eyes of Heaven
though loved there too

what a mess! But I wasn't gonna die,
just fade in spirit, and disappear

the town knowing I was Christ's
for I would write in the paper my truth

using a nom de plume so I couldn't be tracked
by the law, though known on the street, and loved

quite some years this was the life I lived
outlaw of Heaven, and of the law of New York

Quiet, walking on the streets,
sittin' on the Green

high on 'shrooms or 'cid
flashin' eyes

power in my soul, to be reckoned with
but gentle, not a maker of trouble

till trouble found me, and I about died
and Jesus appeared and got me back

just in the nick of time
and kept me, from that moment on

outlaw no more, but saint
and outlaw again in the world's eyes

for there is no love for Christ and His,
saying as we do, Repent of your sins

and find eternal life, forgiveness

and the friendship of God

but your sins, they can't come with you
cut them loose

and this won't wash, for few there are
who'll trade the world for Jesus Christ.

★ ★ ★

WALKING THE RAZOR'S EDGE BETWEEN POET AND SAINT

A poet tells the truth as he sees it and as it is in him; a saint lives the truth as it is in Christ, and by virtue of their union, in him as well. There needn't be a conflict there.

But sometimes a saint falls from the truth as it is in Christ, and his truth then becomes something apart from Christ.

It can be seen from the story of *A Great and Terrible Love* that this happened to our poet. As he plunged into the abysmal waters his ontologic reality changed from a creature of light to one of darkness. As we have seen, he did not comprehend accurately his condition, but darkness certainly did enter him. And we have also seen – if but sketchily – his rise back into the light of his Saviour's presence.

Then the poet comes to tell his story, including his fall and subsequent walk in darkness. It's been done – *but in the 3rd person* – as regards Samson the judge of ancient Israel, King David, the prophet Jonah, the apostle Peter, and others. Here mostly in the *1st person*.

Is there any purpose – any redeeming value – in the present telling? How about an *actual* life of a saint struggling in a Dostoevskian cauldron — of sorcerous potions, the love of woman, inward drivenness uncomprehended, spiritual deception, and an unquenchable yearning for the heart and presence of Christ, which had been put in him *by* Christ? How about an accurate depiction of the horrors of spiritual awareness in a psychic realm of

satanic manifestations realizing within the human consciousness – a state of mind akin to seeing Sigourney’s aliens impregnating and being birthed within one’s own self?

If this were just a private madness, one might well say, “Trash it!” But if it is the *human* condition, entered into by a mad poet, who tells it as if it were “treasures of darkness” to be pondered and instructed by – for there are truths worth telling if but for their dangers sake! – then it has redeeming value: stark and true assessment of the human being outside that Light which alone gives true life and heart to it. Is there any value to the displaying of an *authentic spiritual character*, even if it sojourn in darkness a while? How many such *actual* spiritual characters can you count in contemporary literature? This is not a Lestat or his literary kin, but a true person.

Presently – in December of 2009 – I walk as a true saint (by New Testament definition), yet I recollect the days when I walked in darkness. If what I have become is of any interest to any, then the path from there to here is part of that story. It is the story of the might and wisdom of the Son of God, my friend and shepherd of my soul, who watched over me in the valley of the shadow of death, ordered my way even in the darkness (lest I perish) and reached out to catch me when I was falling headlong into the abyss, a sure goner. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. It may be a razor’s edge, this telling, but on it I sing, and rejoice.

★ ★ ★

This recollection—and written record—of my entrance into the counterculture of the 1960s and Woodstock was done before it dawned on me what actually had happened as a result of the psychedelic sorceries we partook of and sent abroad into the world. This story, “Can there any good thing...” is suffused with the naiveté and idealism we were genuinely filled with in that time, yet absent is any knowledge of the horror this naiveté loosed upon the globe in the decades that were to follow.

CAN THERE ANY GOOD THING COME OUT OF WOODSTOCK?

(with apologies to St. John's Gospel, 1:46)

There is as great disdain among Christian writers and speakers – Our Christian Leaders – toward Woodstock and the '60s generation it symbolizes as there was among rabbinic authorities in ancient Israel toward the district of Galilee, and the little village of Nazareth within it, during the time Jesus was alive in that nation. Even Nathaniel of Cana (another little Galilean village), who was to become an Apostle, initially saw no connection of Messiah with Nazareth,¹ and hence no enduring worth in that place.

This is what two writers who are cited in Christian author Os Guinness' "landmark" work on the '60s, *The Dust Of Death*,² have to say:

First, social scientist Robert Nisbet:

"I think it would be difficult to find a single decade in the history of western culture when so much barbarism – so much calculated onslaught against culture and convention in any form, and so much degradation of culture and the individual – passed into print, into music, into art, and onto the American stage as the decade of the Nineteen Sixties."³

Second, social and political philosopher Allan Bloom:

“Enlightenment in America came close to breathing its last in the sixties.”⁴

Compare these with ancient rabbinic attitudes:

“There was a general contempt in Rabbinic circles for all that was Galilean.”⁵

“...the wretched town of Nazareth...[that] small despised place in despised Galilee.”⁶

The old rabbis thought only in Judea – and particularly at its center, Jerusalem – was there to be found godly wisdom and practice, and that Galileans in general were rough and ignorant peasants (although it was ceded “they cared more for honor than for money”⁷), devoid of worth before God.⁸

Likewise is there a consensus among many Christians that Woodstock has no spiritual worth, but rather is the bane of all decency and wisdom, and what the generation Woodstock typifies is a blight on our world, worthy of all censure.

★ ★ ★

I am not of a mind to defend Woodstock or laud its great virtues, as I am well aware the *Yellow Submarine* ⁹ sank – that our dreams and visions of changing the world for good came to nothing. And I want to say I do not consider the militant radicals – SDS, Weathermen, etc. – what I call the Woodstock generation, but fringe extremists. Nor do I include the Vietnam anti-war movement in “Woodstock,” at least not as one of its core “distinctives.” What I seek to do in this little piece of writing is show that something good did indeed come out of there. And I would that you brothers and sisters of mine in Christ stop knockin’ the place I call home, be it ever so humble and mean in your eyes!

When I talk of Woodstock I refer to a spiritual awakening, and to the quest for genuine, loving community – these two things.

Before the Woodstock Festival in Bethel, New York, in August of 1969, the seekers and wanderers that comprised the counter-culture youth of the '60s were sometimes called simply the Tribe, or Human Tribe, in honor of the Native Americans they respected for their simple lives and love of the land. The first time I became aware such a segment of society existed was in the summer of 1961, while visiting my two closest friends in the world, Gordon, and his sister, Phoebe. Redheaded Irish kids, Gordie a dancer and musician (Julliard), Phoebe a dancer (Julliard, Martha Graham), both with large hearts and good senses of humor. I was, admittedly, the culturally deprived Jewish kid (although I loved Kerouac in high-school English!); hangin' with them was joy and education, rich as they were in soul and art. We both came from the same Manhattan neighborhood – the upper East Side, me from Park Avenue and 94th Street, they from 95th Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues – and had known each other a couple of years before I went into the Marine Corps, and out of which I had just been freshly discharged (this before Vietnam).

They were now living in a loft in Chinatown, on East Broadway, and this was the first I had seen them for a year or so. After my time in the Corps, and then bumming at Carolina Beach in North Carolina, they were sights for my sore eyes!

As I was relaxing in the loft, catching up with them, they gave me this capsule – “organic mescaline” they called it – and said, “Take it, you’ll like it!” Trusting and loving them, I did.

Gordie, 5' 11", well-built and vigorous, usually merry-hearted, a bush of red hair on his head, and Phoebe, a classically beautiful face, high cheekbones, rich red hair, and a lithe well-formed body, they walked and moved with grace.

Dvorak's symphony, *Billy the Kid*, was on the stereo, and it seemed there was a surreal gunfight happening in the air around us, the music unusually vivid and penetrating, sounds as solid as matter. Everything in the room – all the

objects – glowed as though I were in an enchanted realm where things had innate beauty and life, and lavished the vivid essence of their being into my own through the wondrous portals of sight, sound and touch. I had never known life to be so glorious and rich!

A bearded man dressed in white robes had earlier been by our place to drop something off, and I was told after he left it was from him we got our drugs, and as I now looked out the window onto East Broadway I saw him and the two young women – also dressed in white – who usually accompanied him, gaily and gracefully walking down the street, I said to him in my thoughts, “It’s because of you my mind is deranged like this!” For along with the ecstasy of such heightened perceptions there was also an agony of inward awareness, and such profundity of affect – feeling – it was almost unnerving!

For Phoebe had once been my girlfriend of sorts, and I greatly desired the comfort and intimacy of her love now that I was back in New York, and would ordinarily have approached her on this wise, but under the influence of this... this having entered through the doors of perception into a strange heaven and hell (the titles of two Aldous Huxley books that were on the table before me, on the topic of this experience) – I found that I was incapacitated to broach this most personal of all personal questions from a terrible fear of being rejected by her. She was so much more of a person – the dignity, depth, and glory of her being! – than I had ever realized, and who was I to approach her with my petty desires and designs?

She was gorgeous and desirable beyond words, a quiet, joyous fire of a woman, and I stunned and overwhelmed by my own fear into silence. Still, aside from the pain of this, my heart was calm, and I thrillingly alert to these new depths of life.

They gathered me up and told me we were all going out to eat, and then go to a party. We went to a little restaurant in the neighborhood, and they ordered, but I couldn’t eat in this state, all I wanted was a beer.

At the party I met some new people (in my silent grokking of them) and I was continually amazed at the richness of their beings, the depth and beauty.

It was as though I could see into the very hearts of them, and intuit easily the essence of their personhood. What a wonderful gift of sight! Yet it was deeper than sight, it was a knowing with my heart, an actual *experiencing* their hearts! As I sat there filled with the treasure of our shared lives, I realized I knew nothing of life, that I was ignorant to a profound degree. I had been a pseudo-juvenile delinquent, trying to be a tough guy and a lover, and after the Marines I didn't know what I was. In later years I called this my "young jerk" stage, and from which I was transformed into a "young fool," just one small step up.

Suddenly someone came in the room where most of the dancing was (and where I sat), and said, "We gotta split, the cops are here – too much noise!" So I followed someone who seemed to know where they were going and found myself out in the street (separated from my friends), and I willed myself to look as though I were a normal person out for an evening's stroll, and not a drugged-up whatever you might call me! [LSD, and I think mescaline also, were still legal at this time, though I felt like an outlaw, being so conscious through the use of a drug.]

This may not sound much like I am defending my point, but bear with me; this was my initiation into the society of the counter-culture of the 60's.

A day or two later I bought a book called *Philosophy Made Simple* (sort of like the ...*For Dummies* series of our day), the first step in my quest to comprehend Life and Being. And I began to voraciously read. Freud, Jung, psychology, literature, anything that promised the depth and wisdom I knew I lacked, but had glimpsed the possibility of.

Soon after this experience I went to a junior college in Ocala, Florida – living with the family of my closest friend in the Marines – as my dad wanted me out of the city where he felt I might come under bad influences. I found teachers in Ocala who were a delight, and they were glad to have someone who had a genuine thirst for knowledge. After a year or so in Ocala with very good grades – my father decided to send me elsewhere, and the choices were either Bard College in New York or Rockford College in Illinois. When we looked at Bard I supposed it seemed to him too bohemian

(which I loved), while Rockford seemed nice and normal. To Rockford I was sent! But it was a good school also, and the teachers there were likewise a great encouragement to such thirsty learners as myself.

While I was in my second semester at Rockford dad died (mom had died in 1959, when I was 17). In all our lives together we only had one heart-to-heart talk, and this was but a brief one a few days before he died. I didn't know his heart, or my mother's (she'd had cancer, and I was away in boarding schools from the age of 7 or 8).

After (or in the middle of the last of) I think three semesters I got the urge to hit the road, and travel around the world. My dad had bought me a new Austin Healy Sprite (identical to the MG Midget) when I was in Florida, and so – it was 1965 – I took off to Mexico, sleeping on the side of the road in a sleeping bag. Thus began my life as a wandering poet and writer. I had a few hits of LSD with me (safely tucked away), which I would share and take in Acapulco and Vera Cruz.

All this time I was in search of... what? Experience, adventure, love, wisdom ... But underneath all these things was a quiet, continuing seeking for hints on attaining the "Illumination" or "Enlightenment" spoken of by various sages; as well as reading world literature I started reading spiritual works – the Sufi mystics, Maurice Bucke's classic, *Cosmic Consciousness* (which posited – and sought to demonstrate – the notion that many Western poets, writers, and religious had experienced this, as well as the better-known Eastern mystics and gurus), the writings of Herman Hesse, Tim Leary's translations into psychedelese of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and Lao Tse's *The Tao*; I pondered the teachings of Buddha, the Hindu Scriptures (and Joseph Campbell's popularizations of these), etc etc.

I stayed in touch with my contemporary poets, both in the English-speaking world – especially America, whose poetry was diverse and vital – and whatever poets from abroad who'd been translated, particularly the French, Spanish, German and Italian, all of which had great, innovative talents. I sought to be attuned to consciousness and "language art" as it was manifesting in the world of my time.

I *knew* I lacked that inner indomitable vitality which was the Source of life, and I hungered for it. I could see the great poets and writers of my own day – Kesey, Watts, Ginsberg, Leary, Bly, Wright, Corso, Kerouac, Olson – themselves involved in these matters of consciousness, questing after visions of the divine in one way or another. We were a people bereft of God, and although acid, mescaline, mushrooms, peyote and the like gave us visions of the glory and wonder of our humanity, and of an ineffable *Spirit* that seemed the quickening principle of all life, we somehow always fell short being able to utterly unite with this Spirit, and were crushed by our own and others' egos with their grasping, pushy nature, expelled from Paradise by our own selves! The attraction of Leary & Co. was their claim that through acid we could transcend the ego, and attain Illumination. It proved a false claim.

Listen! *We were not fools in our quest, no matter how foolish we were in our failures!* Religion in America seemed to us just so much nonsense; “the opiate of the masses” of spiritually blighted people, people who seemed to us caught up in some meaningless quest for security and affluence at the expense of their sacred humanity. The first taste of the new drugs instantly gave us the insight to see the absurdity of American life; as a saying of our time put it, “Western Civilization? It has not yet begun.”

The racism of that era rankled bitterly in our guts, as did the preoccupation with money, power, fame, and beauty, altars men and women gave their souls in service to. We wanted none of that!

The reason we of those times (40 years ago!) loved Tolkien and his Middle Earth was his (as our) love of natural life and loathing for the technical, industrialized society which scorched and wasted the earth. Plus he gave us a vision of the spiritual forces at play in the world, and the virtues of those who would make a difference in it.

It grieves me to hear the heart of our yearning ridiculed and scorned. It's as though you never heard the Apostle John say, “...the whole world lies in wickedness”¹⁰ – and that includes this America whose idolatrous altars you think we should have worshipped at with you!

How was it that I, a poet and writer *intensively* and *extensively* seeking out the voices of the spiritually aware, heard nothing in the contemporary arts or literature of the Lord Jesus? I heard about other spiritual teachers, but not Him. Why no voice lifted up among you of His glory, or His superiority over the others? Was it because you scorned poetry and the arts? Because you denigrated those expressions of the human spirit, and crushed those urges in so many among you?

We knew the world was evil – and the Amerika of the covert-ops CIA, the KKK, and the treadmill work-a-day nightmare of quiet desperation and interpersonal alienation as rotten as any of it anywhere, just more “civilized” – and we acted to find a better way. There had to be more to life than what you offered us in 1950s and ‘60s culture. We, the children of those decades, were sick unto death with the malaise you drank like water. And we sought to purge ourselves of this sickness through our spiritual quest, and our experiments in creating intentional communities. Who knew what the true foundations for relationships were? We saw nothing of value in the communities of Christ in that day, so why do you revile us as casting off righteousness in lieu of pagan morality? We had no use for the uptight, selfish, comfort-oriented “nuclear family” (to the exclusion of those outside it) who loved their cars, TVs, alcohol, and the insulated lives you lived. You just did not seem deeply human – or even humane – to us.

Yes, we also made a mess of it, possessed as we were of the same human natures as yourselves. Were it not for the Lord Jesus wading into our midst with His mighty Spirit and saving those of us He did, we would have perished in our sins and depravity.

But I tell you, in the muddy field of Woodstock you missed a great treasure – a diamond in the mud – and amidst the gaudy beads you missed a pearl of great price. For my culture was no worse than yours – just different. And there were virtues in our search for better lives, and the longings for truth and illumination were our silent and ignorant acknowledgment of our need for God. Yet each culture was evil and under the devil’s thrall in its own way. But out of yours came good things, no? And out of mine likewise.

What good came out? *I* came out. And others like me. The Lord has raised me up a preacher and teacher of His Gospel, and I seek to be what I once decried the lack of when I looked at you 30 and 40 years ago.

Has not the Lord said (through Paul) that “the kingdom of God is not in word but in power,” nor is it realized with “enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”?¹¹ And there is power in the Gospel of Christ. For example, there is the energy that comes from having perfect spiritual rest, and the heart (courage, morale) that comes from being perfectly loved, the both of which together translate into Resurrection Power, which may be quiet and unassuming, yet is the vitality of God in lives and situations.

And has He not given us directions for setting up communities of grace, communities of order, kindness, and love? If we as spiritual communities are secure in our Savior’s love and care, and are full of His Spirit as we increasingly know the depths and heights and breadths of His heart for us, we will have a strong and pure energy for lives that glorify Him and help our fellow humans. Such things are the nourishing fruit of sound doctrine and godly preaching.

Does not God “out of the base things of the world, and things which are despised”¹² choose and make such things as glorify His great name, that humankind should not boast of its supposed wisdom and prowess? The “straight” culture of America is no better in His eyes than the (albeit despised in yours) Woodstock culture. Admittedly much evil has come from the latter, much that is – and remains – very destructive, even in our time – but the same can be said for yours. When the dust has settled, it will be seen that out of Woodstock the Almighty has raised up chosen vessels who glorify His name in these days, and some of the characteristics of that culture yet in us redound to His praise and honor.

Nor am I ashamed of the culture and community I call home, both the generation I came of age in, and the town where my daughter and I (a single parent) lived for 19 good years. Brothers and sisters, before you knock my beloved Woodstock again, think of me, and of my prayers before the High

Throne, that He who sits thereon would raise up laborers to work in that harvest, where some of the dearest souls I've known and loved still reside unsaved, precious humans just like you (although sinners – as you also once were).

I can't be there now as the Lord has placed me here on an island in the Mediterranean to do His will. Please don't curse my home, but bless, and pray.

¹ But Matthew made clear there was one: Matthew 2:23. Check some good commentaries for the technical details of such exegesis.

² *The Dust Of Death: The Sixties Counterculture and How It Changed America Forever* (Crossway Books, 1994)

³ Cited in *Dust of Death*, page xii. From, *The Twilight of Authority*, by Robert Nisbet (NY: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 67

⁴ Cited in *Dust of Death*, page xii. From, *The Closing of the American Mind*, by Allan Bloom (NY: Simon And Schuster, 1987), p. 314.

⁵ *The Life And Times Of Jesus The Messiah*, by Alfred Edersheim (Mac Donald Publishing, n.d.), Vol. 1, page 225.

⁶ *Commentary On The Gospel Of St John*, by E.W. Hengstenberg (Klock & Klock, 1980), Vol. 1, pages 106, 105.

⁷ *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, by Merrill F. Unger (Moody Press, 1981, Third Edition), page 387.

⁸ John 7:49 ff.

⁹ If this reference is unfamiliar to you, check out the Beatles' animated film, *The Yellow Submarine*, to see the dream and vision of hope we had of changing the world.

¹⁰ 1 John 5:19

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 4:20; 2:4.

¹² 1 Corinthians 1:28

In 2002 the poet and his wife moved from NYC, where they had lived five years after leaving Woodstock (she lived one year in Woodstock with him after they married) and went to the island nation of Cyprus to help take care of her family, some of whom were ill and aged. They lived there nine years, and then moved back to NYC. Most of this book that follows was either written there or in New York. Often the poet may recollect earlier times in NYC or Woodstock and write of them, as he gains new understanding and insight.

During the years in Cyprus he helped plant a church in the city they lived in, and for five years pastored it (the church continues to this day with a good pastor caring for it). While deeply studying and preaching through the Book of Revelation awareness dawned on him regarding his earlier life and times. He began to see things with new eyes as the Spirit of Christ illumined his vision.

DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN

Long the namer sat, the lights of the town sparkling below near the base of the mountain, the lights of cities and nations as clear in his mind's eye. It was time to speak.

There were many namers, but the people did not listen to them, the names were awry. The learned among the people prophesied as Jeremiahs of the Muse, lamenting the dying of the language.

There would be war, he knew. He had taken the laurel by force in the arena, ancient swords lowered in grim fealty. It was nothing to him to fight, or everything – it was his work. Many would contend, but the sword and shield he had forged would suffice him, Lightning Sword and Diamond Shield.

He stood. Winter was approaching. He would go down in the valley, and be warm. He would raise his child, teach his children, walk quietly in the small town, and prepare to publish.

His own name would be named, yet he had hidden it from his townspeople, foreseeing the noise, preferring quiet. It was time to declare the vision, to speak, to sing, the unveiling of the poem.

It was years since that had been written of him, since he'd dwelt in what he called Hobbiton in the Shire, lush and tranquil Woodstock at the foot of the southern Catskill Mountains. He'd married a sweetheart of his youth, a seer newly entered the Unseen Realms, and together they moved to the vast city he knew as Babylon the Great, which the locals called New York.

There, for half a decade, they sat at the feet of a man who spoke with joy and saw with clarity the springs which fed the Fountain of Eternal Youth, and they renewed their lives in its flow, and were taken into the community that had gathered in this oasis of gladness, and were healed of many ailments that had plagued their psyches, coming as they did from an ancient lineage of monsters spawned when Death-Spell broke up and fouled the inward springs of being at their source, causing vast ruin. This spoken of fully elsewhere.

Suddenly they had left Babylon for a small island in the Middle East, she to care for her ailing mother and grandmother, and he to prepare for a vision quest, and an assault on certain strongholds in the spirit realm.

The second of *The Lord of the Rings* movies was to break on the scene in weeks, *Harry Potter II* before that, *The Matrix II* after them, and then the third of the second series of *Star Wars*. The global arena of consciousness would have its awareness raised in the visionary sphere, as these powerful mirage images manifested over the howling archetypal heartlands, while the Story underneath the stories unfolded below the radar of most. The peoples of earth would be primed to see the Great Occult Wars, at last out in the open.

Far more closely than pedestrian realism and postmodern suspicion, sci fi and fantasy intuit happenings in the world today, even if their focus is blurred. For instance, are there mythic weapons which *exist*? Is there a correspondence in actuality to the weapons we see in legend and myth, like Excalibur, Sting, or the Jedi lightsaber?

One sees the youth of today deeply involved in computer games of war and conquest, as though it were built into the genes to fight. And indeed it is, although the arena of action – the screen to computer buffs – is consciousness itself, the adversaries not easily discerned, cloaked as they are with invisibility (ala *Predator I*, or the Klingon ships), and the weapons subtle and mighty beyond fiction, yet difficult to obtain and wield.

Of these I sing: the warfare beneath the mirage images, in which we are all participants; of the terrible captivity of the mind and heart, and of which we

are mostly oblivious; of unlikely mortal enemies, and more unlikely dear friends; of the drama played out in each human consciousness; of heroic acts and sagas in postmodern times.

★ ★ ★

SPEAKING INTO WOODSTOCK

Having come out of the sixties counterculture by the intervention of the Lord Jesus Christ, who translated me from the power of darkness and into His kingdom of light, I have left many loved ones behind in the former realm. I see the days growing short. The power of harlot Babylon growing strong. Slowly, the beast from the sea reaches into the minds open to him and commences legal and political initiatives — this world-wide! — whose end will be compliance to the state directives concerning acceptable philosophies and religions. The harlot will winsomely reward those who give their allegiance to her and her beast. The beast will cruelly punish those who do not. She will grow to relish the taste of blood it spills.

I have the understanding to speak into the hearts and minds of my former comrades. I have but to tell my story. It is not a religious story, though it *is* spiritual. Were I Native American I would speak in language and thought-forms my people would receive. So it is with the people I have come from — I speak from within their worldview, yet as one born anew of Christ's Spirit.

I perceive I may offend some from the “straight” culture, so alien may the truth of spiritual life divested of Western apparel and clothed in Eastern (or pagan) garments seem to them. If, however, I am to be an effective missionary to my former people, I must not engage in “cultural imperialism” and seek to clothe them in garb alien to *them*!

So please, my Western brothers, forbear my voice and vision speaking in an alien tongue — it is nonetheless the tongue of Christ to this alien (if only to

you) culture. Yes, there is also the serious matter of my initially backslidden state. But then, this is not a saint speaking directly to a people, but rather a drama — a true story — of a saint fallen into terrible depths, and the odyssey of his search for understanding so as to return whence he fell.

Even in these depths — which plumb the heart of the human condition — the Sovereign used my error and corruption to illustrate what man is truly made of, for a poet may embody a people if it is given him to do so. If these stories (which do have a glorious end, thanks to the One who redeems wretches) are too distasteful for you, so be it, I can appreciate that, as they were more than distasteful to the one who *lived* them, as can be seen.

In these depths, where sorcerers, witches, monsters, demons, and occult phenomena are commonplace, I was raised to stand holy before the God of Heaven and earth. There are strange tales in this abyss whence I fell, such as monsters usually relegated to horror and fiction, but here seen as having their truth in human actuality, an actuality hid from polite company, and from the *New York Times* / cocktail party mentality.

A Great and Terrible Love is a tale in the genre “visionary adventure, non-fiction”. The wonder of it is that the Son of God deigned to show favor to a fallen occultist-poet warrior-priest, setting him on his feet to stand in His name, warring against the darkness, and singing praises to the Most High. The darkness hates these praises, but I have good cause to sing them!

★ ★ ★

As I write this apologia for the book, *A Great and Terrible Love*, I am currently preaching through the Book of Revelation from the amillennial view, consulting the best Reformed commentaries and preachers. I am of a mind to take a strong stand here. I am not a child of academia, nor of the seminary, but of the wilderness.... the wilderness of hearts, which penetrates even into the churches with its blight of true friendship and ability to communicate spiritually.... and the abyss in the human heartlands, a howling wasteland of delusion and demonic influence. Coming of age, spiritually,

in these regions, the things that I know I know not from classrooms and books (save that one Book!) but from having to stay alive in such realms.

I write as I think, feel, and perceive. I am not a “religious” man; I am what I say I am, and make no bones about it. If you want to follow me in my telling this story, then learn how I use the language and how I see; if not, well and good. I surely cannot please everyone; but I tell you this, I am determined to make my presence known in those regions in which I live and am conscious, and your disapproval cannot hinder me. If I err in my doctrine, tell me, and I will consider and ask the Lord concerning it, but if you merely do not like my identity — my understanding of who I am — then take it to God, but get out of my way, for I aim to deliver those of my people under the sway of the demon lord who blinds their minds.

Dylan had sung, “No martyr is among ye now / whom you can call your own”, but that is no longer so, if we understand by *martyr* the true meaning of *witness*. Going in depth into Revelation has electrified me with the immediacy and power of the Lord’s presence, and of the days we are in, days of the harlot Babylon seducing through culture and economic prosperity and of sinister encroachment by increasingly antichristian government. I would take my stand among my generation supported by the love of my godly brethren, but if they will not, so be it, the love of my Lord will sustain me.

★ ★ ★

PART III

WITNESS

After being rescued from the brink of the black hole I almost entered, and restored into my Lord's intimate presence and care, I grew in knowledge and understanding of His kingdom in the spiritual realm, as well gaining insight into what was going on in the world opposed to that kingdom. I suppose one could say that from here on this book is mostly a bearing of witness; but the things I bear witness to pertain, on the one hand, the arts, especially poetry and its brother prose, and on the other to mysteries of the apocalypse in varying aspects coming at us full speed. One could call it, A view of kingdoms from the Tower of Vision.

It could also be called, A visionary journey through the gauntlets of Babylon and dread Armageddon, with a brief view of Paradise at journey's end. The poet's continuing life will also be sketched.

BEARING WITNESS

“It is my feeling that the twentieth-century human condition demands a poetry of witness.”

– Carolyn Forché, *American Poetry Review* Summer 1981

“In a room where people unanimously maintain a conspiracy of silence, one word of truth sounds like a pistol shot.”

– Czeslaw Milosz, Nobel Lecture 8 Dec 1980

“During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act.”

– Attributed to George Orwell, but likely in error, as no citation can be found.

I veer off from the literary (and heart) tasks of Carolyn Forché and Czeslaw Milosz to a different sort of witness, a visionary assessment of our times, which has its own casualties and horrors, though unrecognized by many—the which will be more clearly seen as this story progresses.

While this may garner disdain from my peers in the art—and even the general culture—I take it upon myself to bear witness to the Satanic Wars, from the vantage of the Tower of Vision. What is that? To quote poet Louis Simpson’s, *Three On The Tower*, p. viii, “Our spirit...shut within this courtyard of

sense-experience, is always saying to the intellect upon the tower: ‘Watchman, tell us of the night, if it ought of promise bear.’ ” After the “Great War” of the 1930s and 40s Simpson says that “ ‘Life itself’ is incoherent... And we are still looking for ways to continue”—that is, both to live and to engage in our art. He used T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and W.C. Williams to explore this; I use a different method—the story of a journey through the past half century.

Ferlinghetti often referred to the “Satanic Wars” though through images and perceptions of his own, yet with limited, confused insight. I deal with them directly. These sort of things need to be said by a “credible witness and kin of spirit”, and to some I may be such. The Tower of Vision, an image I regularly use—progressively, for vision grows—is the place of poet-seers. To be sure, visions are a highly contested matter on Apocalypse Field in the global arena of consciousness. And some are different sorts of warriors than is commonly understood. I think of the lines in the poem by Madeleine L’Engle,

Like every newborn He has come from far.
His eyes are closed against the brilliance of the star.
So glorious is He, He goes to this immoderate length
To show His love for us, discarding power and strength.
Girded for war, humility His dress,
He moves into the battle wholly weaponless.

Some weapons are not of this world, yet not bereft of invincible might, not might as the world knows it, but as Heaven does, which laughs at death while holding fast to resurrection.

Witness can safely be borne, even if pistols or beheading knives are held to us—and this makes us the more dangerous, as nothing can finally destroy us, not even death. The archaic “warriors” who must cut heads off to supposedly triumph show their impotence—death holds nothing for *themselves* but horror, horror that will never end—while for us it holds only glory

and entrance to our interim home before New Earth is readied after the cleansing conflagration.

Witness *will* be borne, for it must be seen what's really going on. After all, this is the Apocalypse, and that word means *uncovering, revelation*.

And as Jamie Smith says in *Imagining the Kingdom*, "Why should the devil get all the best stories?"

This story bears witness to the human condition through a life—and that not a fiction—in archetypal depths. It also reveals occult happenings in the last and the present centuries we were not aware of, and *must* be if we are to stay in touch with reality.

This last point—staying "in touch with reality"—is a crucial bone of contention for multitudes. I want for a moment to focus on a universal *event* that looms upon the horizon—*after* the cataclysmic wars and nation-shattering catastrophes—a day deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness of the human race: the Day of Judgment, or Day of Reckoning as some call it. Who wants to be taken by surprise when that comes? A poet is not worth his or her salt if they finesse over that, or outright deny it.

For eternal well-being or woe issue from the happenings of that day, and should I not apprise my fellow humans of such, whatever their disbelief or belief? Not all will heed the witness, but it must be given. There is a God, and there is a devil, a Heaven to gain and Hell to shun, as old-timers once put it. And there is a great and terrible love to rescue whomever will receive it.

You are part of this story now, dear reader and fellow human, and may your part in it end well!

★ ★ ★

ARCHETYPES

**(from Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach,
by W. Randolph Tate, ISBN: 978-0801047824)**

Within literature as a whole, characters, symbols, and themes seem to recur with regularity. For instance, the theme “from rags to riches,” the character of the sassy servant in comedy, or the symbol of the gathering storm are familiar to most readers. One author suggests that archetypes “carry the same or very similar meanings for a large portion of mankind and appeal to what is most elemental in human experience.”

Since archetypes are symbols or images shared by all, their potential for communication is almost infinite. When we encounter an archetype in literature, we are immediately faced with a whole body of meaning which the author does not need to explain... Phrases such as “Israel has played the harlot” or “tell that fox Herod” employ the archetype. These phrases need no explanation because the archetype immediately suggests and organizes the meaning. Archetypes are master images around which meaning is organized.

The Bible is the great storehouse of master images for literature in the Western world. An appreciation of literature outside the Bible is enhanced by a familiarity with the archetypes within the Bible. The primary reason for archetypal studies, however, is that the biblical texts themselves are saturated with these master images. As one author suggests, readers of the Bible can discover as much truth by tracing a master image through the Bible as by tracing some abstract idea.

ANDÚRIL, FLAME OF THE WEST

Has the sword of our kingdom been broken – the kingdom of poets, that is, or that everlasting kingdom to which the poets belong who will endure the storm of fire purging out the children of death?

We remember famed *Andúril* of fable, how that Elven smiths pieced it back together, that a kingdom might be forged with its power, descended from ancient but flawed strength and majesty.

Is there a sword – or a word – of power to rend the fabric between dimensions that we may see past our besieged, benighted, and fettered lives into realms of glory and gloom so as to break free and live – and fight – as we were meant?

Somewhere the sword of the Poet was broken – who can remember? – the word of power lost, and souls with it. We forgot the ancient glories, and were content with littleness, till the gate of the Abyss was opened with magic potions, and monsters broke through what we were told was a gate to Heaven. It was a deadly delusion. Now we must stand or die. And how stand without a weapon to withstand the vast invasion of multifarious death in its myriad forms?

Andúril, flame of the West, in the hand of a king (yet unwreathed), subduing the shades of past ignominy with the power of its glory, of its forging in the land of angels. For of such stuff *Andúril* is made, and there is an *Andúril* in this day to thrill the hearts of those who dream of the powers of the world to come, but come into *this* life, the *already* of the *not yet*, that two-sided coin of spiritual reality.

And this is that sword, quiet, reflecting the light of the King whose truly it is, keen-edged against these, and the coming days of evil.

★ ★ ★

VISIONARY ADVENTURE IN WORLDS VIRTUAL AND ACTUAL

The Game-Master

He was a warrior in his own right. A master of strategy, and of the fatal shot, stroke, or thrust, he knew the love of war-craft, and of the yearning to be indomitable that drove the hearts of the vast multitudes of us he mentored by his imparted intelligence.

He was hidden from us — he did not want to reveal himself — and none of us knew his features, for he stayed in the shadows, but his power and brilliance we inferred from the might of his students, and the exercises they presented to us in the war games. *The war games!*

They were of all sorts: in realms of the occult, amid the vilest and most violent Hell-spawn, of mad and youthful skilled samurai versus hordes of brute men, beasts, and lethal practitioners of monstrous powers, of space adventure and science fiction in unknown worlds against unpredictable alien entities, of modern soldiery with conventional weapons, and on and on — limited only by the imaginations and skills of the true artists and technical wizards in his employ.

The weapons he gave us were wondrous to behold! And the weapons *against* us! These would try what we were made of, and generations of us sought the mastery in combat with weapons and powers undreamt of only decades earlier, or so it seemed to us.

A few years into the 21st century he had conquered the minds — *won the love* — of millions of earth's youths, and multitudes no longer youths. From South Korea and Japan — among the leading nations in high-speed internet / information transfer — to the West, to Africa, South America, Australia, and the whole small planet 'round, we had become a global arena of consciousness, and the portals to this virtual world were our various screens, more real and significant to us than our off-line lives! Did not "reality" pale before the realms given us by the mysterious game master?

One day a new breed of weapons-master, his *nom de guerre*, War Crown, challenged the hidden prince and his world domain. He said the screens through which his legions entered the virtual world — and the power-sources by which they moved — were antiques and toys! And further: he said the virtual world, real enough when actual, was being made effete by fantasies that obscured the true combat.

War Crown issued a challenge, and sent it forth into the web, charged with the vision of a mortal combat which carried over beyond the life and death of this present level on which we all actually live and into the regions beyond. And this was itself a weapon, what he called a "psychic depth-charge" cast into the great ocean of collective consciousness.

And this was part of the vision the weapon contained:

The True Field of Action is not a screen or virtual reality, *but consciousness itself*. The arena of play is one's full perceptual field, and this field can be synchronized with the perceptual fields of others, which in turn are aware in the Global Arena of Consciousness — this realm or level in which we all are sentient — whether off-line or on-line. The primary objective of the game is to have one's Player — one's self — revitalized so that the death of the body that functions on this level does not destroy the Player. This can only be done by union with the Elder Brother, who imparts life that goes beyond the basic level. To have the body die without this extended life is to have

the Player enter the Region of Perpetual Destruction. The Adversaries the Player must contend with come from that region and, more often than not, are able to destroy the Players they attack.

The game, called simply Salvation, is never turned off, and, waking or sleeping, on-line or off-line, the Player is always on the Field of Action and is always vulnerable. Nor is there any hiding in the great Global Arena; even if one seeks to be disconnected, the events that happen thereon affect all lives; and Adversaries love to destroy “lone wolves,” especially those who think themselves master players.

I, War Crown, say that the “games” of the Game-Master are in truth weapons designed to dull the general consciousness of a Player while simultaneously bringing the Player’s awareness into sharp focus deeply involved in a counterfeit combat, detracting from the actual events taking place in that one’s consciousness, and that through this distraction the Adversaries dull and ensnare many Players, while allowing them to think they are mastering weapons and strategies.

The game of Salvation is simple, and of profound depth. As it is the Elder Brother who imparts what is necessary to play the game successfully, it is imperative to learn of him, and what he requires. He gives all the weapons, and many gifts that enhance the Players’ lives.

There are other objectives as well: protecting the Players in one’s Community, for it is a closely-knit team endeavor, as the skill and power of the Adversaries are too great for isolated combatants, though often one may find oneself alone — save for the constant companionship of the Elder — in solitary laboring and standing against assaults. There are territories to conquer, so as to free captives taken at will by the powerful Adversaries; there are strategic positions to be taken and held, so as to utilize the weapons at maximum effect. There is the

establishing and fortifying of protective communities to nurture and strengthen those persons — now fellow-Players — rescued from the grip of the Adversaries. And there are other objectives, too numerous to mention here.

Although simple, Salvation encompasses vast complexity; depending on the maturity of the Player, one may with great peace and joy be supervising and supporting very difficult and far-flung operations.

The following is a short meditation in the Old Language found posted in the Arena of Consciousness where combatants from around the globe gather, and it is kept here to show it to young combatants:

Samurai of the Almighty

The modern warrior in reality is not the martial arts and weapons master of popular story, but the one who walks so as to give no inward place to the Devil, who walks humbly and meekly before God and man, yet has the authority and the power to lay waste demonic strongholds. The modern warrior's rule is *purity of heart, simplicity of life, and the presence of God*. Such a one can call on the Almighty, and is His samurai in the nether realms, wielding a lightning sword, the sword of the Spirit.

The Elder issues the finest weapons this — and any — world has ever seen: swords, shields, armor, war-hammers, and various kinds of explosives and incendiary devices. There is also a weapon known as *the word of power*. These are essentially weapons-of-consciousness to be used against the Adversaries and their allies, and are not physical weapons. For example, the Light Sabers of the Jedi, or Excalibur of Arthur, or Frodo's elvish blade Sting, are poor mirage images of the swords the Elder issues. And while the computer-game swords (and other weapons) are sometimes wondrous to behold, they are, after

all, fiction. Not so with the weapons of the Elder: they are actual.

What is the state of your consciousness? Are you as though asleep? Are you aware of your Adversaries? Are you aware of the Elder Brother? Are you weaponless, armorless, without life for the next level, ripe for destruction?

I, War Crown, challenge *you*, Game-Master, to come out of the shadows in which you lurk, and to show your face. Let us see your skill in the Global Arena of Consciousness, and with weapons that are actual and endowed with power. But you will not show your face, as we could then tell what manner of entity you are, for you are of the Destroyers, and there are no beasts or monsters in your file of phantasms that hold a candle to your malign and horrific features, and your evil intent. The Elder who is the life within my own life has power greater by far than you and your lord possess, and your dooms are certain.

Game Players, throw off the delusion that you are mastering combats, while on the actual Field of Play you are lured into trifles and dalliances, your Day-Counter and Energy-Supply slowly diminishing. Do Adversaries dance around your slumbering awareness, while you think you are mastering weapons? Awake!

This was the first of the depth-charges War Crown tossed into the great ocean of awareness.

★ ★ ★

VIRTUAL LIVES

As War Crown was pondering developments in the Global Arena of Consciousness, he considered those who lived more in virtual worlds having no correspondence with the actual world, whose hearts were invested — and whose loves, hates, joys, sorrows, triumphs, and ruinations were actualized — in their virtual lives.

There were some — one thinks of Players in the old World of Warcraft realm — whose virtual lives were full and rich, while their actual lives were impoverished and unsatisfying. This was not always the case, but it makes the point that sometimes actual life could rise up and devour a virtual life so that both were destroyed. This was part of the vision shown in “The Game-Master.”

In the game Salvation there was a similar phenomena: in one’s life in the arena of consciousness one might have great power and wondrous gifts, be possessed of weaponry and armor forged in off-world — but actual — furnaces, and which showed the weapons of earth’s legends tawdry in their light, while these Players’ actual lives might likewise be impoverished and even entail great suffering. Though it could not be said of them their lives were “unsatisfying,” for Salvation Players rejoiced in their lots. They rarely had virtual lives which were disparate from their actual lives, although there was no law or rule prohibiting such; it was simply a paler and less rich activity when divorced from the actual.

Whatever condition the Elder sees fit for his Players to be in in their lives on this level (for he is into developing their characters as well as their skills),

they learn to rejoice therein, be it poverty, prison, or delivered to death. Death is nothing to them — or next-to-nothing — as to leave the body that functions on this level is to be with the Elder on the level Players from ancient days called the Celestial City. And there will come a day when the Elder and his wonderful Father give us our bodies back, gloriously renewed on a new earth.

Virtual lives, apart from our actual lives, if highly developed, drain energy and intelligence needed to survive the onslaughts of the Adversaries, who pervade the regions of consciousness in this level. They are a distraction; although, sometimes, distractions may be a happy recreation. There is a rule, and that is: moderation is generally wise.

★ ★ ★

FICTION SLAYER

We live – *are conscious* – in the midst of all these narratives clamoring for our attention, stories of such interest and action they draw us in hypnotically. And the world is so full of them – the wired world of Entertainment Babylon America especially – they are as labyrinths to our souls, and all along their paths is a drink of sorts, at many fountains, with the same power as sex, or drugs, or money – name your poison – and we are *intoxicated* with the wine of Babylon, that rarest of earthly vintages. The husbandman of the vineyard is someone we know well; even if we have not met him, we are familiar with his spirit.

What is a *fiction slayer* but one who does not buy the stories, who does not accord worth to the narratives many would give their souls to be part of, who says that while the stories play out on screens or paper or audio they divert attention from a Story that is mostly verboten – *That which must not be named* in polite society – and yet possesses a vitality enabling the soul to endure joyous beyond the death of the body, remaining intact until that gone body is reconstituted and again present. Can *stories* really possess such power!?

This is the difference between fictions – make believe – and actualities; yet only one actuality is endowed with such power, *the Story beneath all stories* it is sometimes called. What is this true tale? To that in a moment.

But the make-believe . . . yes, some of it *intuits* said Story, and has some merit thereby, yet does not allow the carry-on of one's utter heart and life into it, leaving us outside longing for the real beneath the mirage. I would

not seek to slay Tolkien's visions – for he intuits true things. Yet I cannot “carry-on” into its narrative the precious baggage of my living soul, for my soul is actual, and while *LOTR* is highly intuitive of things actual, it is not actual itself. My soul is inspired and filled, but left outside Tolkien's adventures.

I think “religion” – speaking modernly – one of the worst enemies of the Story beneath all stories, as it clutters the glory and power with superstitious trappings, man-made rituals, oppressive moralizing, and it becomes a *religion* instead of a great and terrible love story. Yes, I know, religion can be a good word, but in this aspect I see it hindering clear sight.

The Story is wrapped up in a Person, Jesus of Nazareth. He's real. *He lives!* What He did on earth changed everything.

We've got these tech marvels who make wondrous fictions of warriors, fighters of such prowess they elicit our rapt attention, and win the love of our imaginations, so that we dote on them with loving meditation. Handsome (or if women, beauty-full), mighty, brilliant, with extreme courage, replete with such weaponry as to evoke a sense of wonder and awe. I could go on, but you know what I mean.

What has happened is that our *imaginations* have been captured. Caught up in illusions; if persisted in they become delusions (more significant to us than the real). To capture the *imagination* of a man or woman is to get the attention of the heart – really, the *love* of that person. The Spirit of Christ illumining the imagination may also capture the love of a heart:

We err when we think the world is as it seems;
 we are too used to seeing with but our eyes.
 They say who lives with swords and demons dreams;
 it is not so – the spirit lives and flies
 according to its faith, for what *He* says is real,
 His word is true, not what we feel.
 This life's an adventure second to none,
 souls to be rescued, pains endured, glory won.

Is it boredom to separate from the world's entertainments? To simply live in this world as it is? But what *is*?

A spiritual warrior wrote this:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ... (Paul of Tarsus, 2 *Corinthians* 10:3-5)

Do I say that as a “fiction slayer” I denounce the reading and writing of all that is fictitious? And that I myself no more read or watch fiction stories? That I’m too spiritually “advanced” for such? No, please do not get that idea. But one must indeed remain aware it’s all an unreal show to lure us away from desiring the actual world. A strong delusion – a gripping tale – threatens to drown out the usually quiet actuality of life and death, eternal things, divine things, demonic things, human depths and abysses within the human heart. It is like drink – indulge moderately, and remain aware. No longer exercise Coleridge’s “willing suspension of disbelief” so as to better enjoy a story, for that is to suspend one’s critical faculties in times of danger.

The “actual world” may not be as exciting as some stories – but *our* warfare and *our* labors for God’s kingdom, for His people, are heroic, and they are genuine love. And the King’s pleased eye is on us.

A good fiction slayer not only tears down, but opens eyes and hearts to see *the* Story, to see one’s own part and path in it, and to enter upon that with all one’s heart. He also sets up signs:

Warning: Illusions Ahead

The apparent weakness of the true story of earth is that the invasion is quiet, stealthy, no perceived violence save where *humans* do the dirty work,

and the demonic neatly hidden within them. In quieter lands the invasion moves on other fronts, though with as much effectiveness as with violence, humans again the agents used, often artists – spinning spells that enchant and capture the imagination of the soul.

★ ★ ★

THE MIRAGE OF ARTHUR

I do not say *legend* as that is less
real
than a reflection of the real,
distorted or hazy as that may be
floating as it is in air
or consciousness
over the reflected

what, then, is the real
under the mirage of Arthur?

Take a king
of unique and mysterious birth
rising out of mean obscurity
to seize a sword of such unearthly power
— which none other can grasp and wield —
as by it uniting disparate and warring peoples
into a unified kingdom
and by his prowess,
majesty of personhood
and true love of them
win such love from his people
they would as soon die as live
for love of him

the sword given by a woman

in whom rested the living waters
from a High Throne off-world,
from whence also was forged the blade
which had no beginning
gleaming always with the brilliance
of the child's father

A king who died a mysterious death
and word was
would return
and bring the kingdom again
in true and greater glory.

They live — even in *this* day —
who live by this
real-under-the-mirage joy,
Story-beneath-all-stories joy,
who dance and sing
in the king's unending kingdom
while yet in Time,
for the glory of legends and such mirages
has overflowed into Time
and cannot any longer be contained
but must wash across the earth
till the whole is filled with it

even though the precious dispensing vessels
be first broken, blood like seed soaking the earth,
saints and martyrs all, for love,
for Arthur's true image, and return.

★ ★ ★

PREFACE 2

The year is 2016. The Tower of Vision, in centuries past occupied by poet-seers, has been empty so long the people have forgotten it exists.

Dangers lurk everywhere: economies falter and many middle class go homeless; multitudes – even Americans – suspect their governments (often rightly) of ill designs against them; fanatics of various religions urgently desire to trigger their own Armageddons, the greater the better – desiring especially biological, chemical, or nuclear events – human life cheap in their eyes. One thinks of the lines by Yeats.

*Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.*

One thinks also of Tolkien's vision of the encroaching shadow of Mordor, but there he had Hobbits in the wings, with elves, dwarfs, and men to stand against the evil. What do we have? Fiction-holes to bury our heads in.

THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL

will never be written

because, first, who cares
for even a great sprawling fiction
since there is not one Dostoevsky alive
to fill it with living vision

and then, again, who cares
for but another fantasy
however shot thru with genius
in these archetypal days of our reality

no, a novel is a plaything
of genius, and peoples
to make up for the absence
of an epic Poet

only the actual matters
anymore, only the truth
of these our lives & this our world
has any relevance whatever

and it is in the works

THE GREAT AMERICAN POEM

Yet it is clear poetry cannot sustain the modern attention, so a “great American Poem” would not pan, though perhaps a marriage might be arranged, where prose unites with poetry (a body of work embedded with poems as a sturdy sword sheath and hilt with gems). Only to have the tower truly occupied!

★ ★ ★

THOUGHTS ON THE GLASS BEAD GAME

In 1946, some four years after I was born, this book written by Herman Hesse won the Nobel Prize for Literature (it is sometimes titled, *Magister Ludi*). It was described by his friend Thomas Mann as a “treasure of the purest thought,” and spoken of as “prophetic.”

Is there any significance in it for us in 2015? I had taken this book to Africa a while ago planning to read it in my spare time during a teaching assignment there, and to my surprise I had almost no spare time at all, but was in a routine of such tight scheduling that I was amazed at how God nonetheless provided for me and for my students in terms of spiritual vitality and the majesty and glory of His immediate presence. I walked away from that assignment *at least* as enriched as my students, proving the old saying of Solomon, “...he that watereth shall be watered also himself” (Proverbs 11:25). But I did not get to read a page, save in the airports going to Africa, and then on an evening in Nairobi killing 6 hours in a restaurant waiting for a flight to Cairo on my return home, and back at home quickly finished it. I had read it in my early 20s, but of it could only remember that I had loved it then.

It is a story by a serious spiritual seeker, and a great writer. It is about Illumination, that Enlightenment of mind and heart which frees one from the wheel of death and rebirth, in the terminology of the East and its concept of reincarnation. But it goes beyond that to a futuristic vision of what an enlightened man thoroughly imbued with the art, science, literature,

music, mathematics, and diverse disciplines of knowledge of all the ages would do with this wealth of the mind in the context of meditation and the playful joy and power of illumined consciousness, in a community devoted to the development of such consciousness and learning. “The Glass Bead Game” of the title is a spiritual endeavor, mildly competitive, wherein vast fields of knowledge are organized into a coherent form of vital and exquisite spiritual art revealing the interrelatedness of all things and brought into a profound symmetry in the illumined being of the individual creator, and recorded in a sort of shorthand notation of symbols and ciphers. There are diverse themes used, and competitions for excellence in this endeavor. The Magister Ludi (literally, Master of the Game) is the most highly developed player in this community of seekers of knowledge and enlightenment. This short description does not do the story or the Game justice, but one must start somewhere!

It is a vision of the spiritual life contrasted with the Christian view — that of the Catholic or Orthodox — and that primarily through the story beginning with early adolescence of the protagonist, Joseph Knecht, who eventually became Magister Ludi in the seer-community of Castalia. In Hesse’s vision, it is the most intellectually gifted male youths, who also have a certain sensitivity and quality of heart, who are chosen to join the Castalian community and undergo their educational regimen. To be sure, he upholds the antipodal populist values as well, Knecht exemplifying this in dramatic fashion by leaving the Castalian brotherhood at the height of his attainment in order to be a simple tutor to the son of a friend “in the world.” There is something of the Buddhist bodhisattva — “an enlightened being who, out of compassion, forgoes nirvana in order to save others” — in Knecht’s forsaking the community of seers, a theme in Hesse’s work. Other themes of his are discipleship under a master, the sacrifice of the master for the wellbeing of the community he serves, and the arduous training and effort required to the attainment of enlightenment.

There is at the end of the book a section called “The Three Lives,” comprised of short creative works purportedly written by the young Knecht while a student in Castalia, each — as assigned to the students there — a study of

a life in a definite historical period, and assumed by the narrator to possibly be an account of a previous incarnation of the author, this belief being held by many in the community. The choices are illustrative of Hesse's interests: the first the training of a rainmaker or medicine man in a primitive prehistoric tribe, from his apprenticeship to his old age and apprenticing another; the second that of a desert saint in the ancient Christian tradition, and his discipleship to another; and then a young Indian prince and the adventures and passions of his life and his experiences with an old yogi master he discovers living in the forests. These are masterfully written, though, expectedly, the desert saint is the weakest part of the book. For here Hesse wrote of something actual which he did not comprehend. The other two life-stories, vividly told, are nonetheless pure fiction and deception with no bases in truth. By this I mean that the yogic powers and presence so remarkably described in the third life are attributed to the yogi's participation in the cosmic energies — divine energies if you will — instead of their actual source, which would be a demonic entity or entities. And in the first, which is a fine act of imaginative power, ancient humans are seen as primitive, albeit immensely intuitive, yet this contradicts the ancient records we have of genuine seers (I speak of Moses primarily) who tell a different story of the lives and abilities of humans in the early days of the race, particularly those who see and know by the Spirit of the true God.

At issue here is our understanding of the identity — the nature — of the authentic spiritual man or woman. Other themes brought to our attention by this excellently-wrought tale are, the process of discipleship, the nature of the community of seers, this latter's relation to the community of the world without, the place and function of the arts in the community of seers, and last but not least the nature and function of the master-teacher, the one who disciples and leads his followers into the realms he himself is in.

First and foremost it needs to be pointed out that the spiritual person is not some elite Nietzschean *wunderkind*, the cream of the race, the apex of (supposedly) evolutionary development, but those souls the Lord of history saves through the love they have of Him, He having loved them first, not according to their wisdom, stature, birth, strength or any merit or quality of their own, but simply the free choice of His love, incomprehensible and

unequalitarian as that may seem to us. Second, a person becomes spiritual upon receiving the Spirit of Christ to indwell them, which Spirit is given those who cleave to the Lord Jesus, to find refuge in His name, and are baptized in obedience to His command (Acts 2:38, 39).

Hesse was early enamored of Nietzsche, but became disillusioned of this elitism, “spiritual” as his version of it was, and eventually moved to a reflective and compassionate social involvement, and one may see the history of his changing views by the way the story turns. It is Knecht (German for “servant”), the artist, seer and intellectual, who leaves the community of the elite to pour his life into the community of the world, having realized — and warned the Castalian leaders concerning — that to neglect the larger community outside its precincts, yes, and even to despise them for their commonness and relatively low intellects, was to invite estrangement from them, and their own eventual dissolution, as it was the larger outside community which supported Castalia. In some respects Hesse meant this as a warning to artists of his (and our) day, not to have an art for art’s sake, but one that was involved in the human community and its life.

Now to us, the community of seers and artists (whatever the world outside thinks of us) who even now live in the New Creation, the spiritual kingdom established by the Lord Christ, as we ponder this world-class and highly acclaimed work of art, it is proper that we ask if there is anything in it that may benefit, may edify us?

My own spiritual community, the Protestant — and within that, the Reformed — has produced no world-class artists, save perhaps Milton, unlike the Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, at least not yet. As I have indicated elsewhere, I hold that the work of art *for these days* must be real, that is, not fictional, and that a protagonist must be actual, a genuine human being authentic in his or her consciousness. We have had wonderful stories, fictional renditions of eternal realities that, while they thrill our hearts, we cannot enter into them because they have no direct and actual correspondence in reality. I think of one of my favorites, *Lord of the Rings*.

Another matter: regarding the motive of the artist, is it for the glory of the Supreme Being we create, and the good of our fellow humans? We need

also to keep in mind that apparent success in such endeavors is not the indicator of worth, for that is not the case with the church of Christ, which is the community of His *spiritual* kingdom, nor was it the case with the Lord Himself, who died a criminal's death, the record of whose resurrection is laughed at by many, and it does not yet appear to the eye that "all power is given to [Him] in Heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:19), as the world remains full of evil and madness. The spiritual Kingdom of God — Christ's church — is not the temporal manifestation of religious institutions, despite their claims to such, but His reign in the hearts of His faithful people, and their victory in this world is that which pertains to their faith, holiness, and union with Him, even though they be accounted as lambs for the slaughter.

And yet another: from what I understand of the apostles' concerns (cf. Galatians 1:8, 9; 2 Corinthians 11:3, 4; Jude 3), one of the most important things to them was maintaining the integrity of the Gospel of Christ. In these days even this is highly controverted.

It remains that an authentic contemporary spiritual man or woman as literary protagonist does not exist in the world of letters today, in a major — a classic — work. Hesse gave an excellent rendition of his view of it, though I have critiqued it as not only mere fiction, but deception, for in the spiritual realm that is what counterfeits of the real are. As a study in character I consider his *Knecht* an extraordinary achievement — quite worth pondering — yet even so it does not meet the standards I have suggested are vitally necessary for a spiritual art.

* * *

I don't recall much of two other Hesse books I read and loved: *Siddhartha*, and *The Journey to the East*. I think I was in my early 20s with them also — and in tune with their thought. The character here, Joseph Knecht, may well be Hesse's ideal man, the illumined sage, beyond the turmoil of "Maya". But strangely he is more than a sage, he is also an artist. Knecht said something about the art of the Glass Bead Game that struck a chord in me,

We must shape and cultivate our universality, our noble and perilous sport with the idea of unity, **endowing it with such perennial freshness and loveliness, such persuasiveness and charm**, that even the soberest researcher and most diligent specialist will ever and again feel its message, its temptation and allure. [But if we] were to...become dull and superficial...[and] our great annual Game were to strike the guests as an empty ceremony, a lifeless, old-fashioned, formalistic relic of the past... How quickly then, the Game and we ourselves would be done for... * [emphasis mine — SMR]

Tolkien did this in his work: freshness and loveliness, persuasiveness and charm. That seems an aspect very important. And I would add, The drama inherent in existence, though many do not see it.

* (page 234, Owl Book Edition, Henry Holt & Co., 1990; translated by Richard and Clara Winston; ISBN 0-8050-1246-X)

★ ★ ★

AUTHENTIC SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

Sure, there are spiritual autobiographies of sorts, but none that have grabbed my attention. What I looked for was spiritual – or visionary – adventure *non-fiction*. I thought Hesse's *The Glass Bead Game* was brilliant, but, as I've written, it was rife with spiritual deception (in spirituality, what is not true – or reflects false principles – deceives).

When I say “adventure” I mean in touch with the drama of human existence. *What* drama, you ask? You don't know? If you're a disciple of Christ you should. Let me put it this way (this is for Americans – though Brits can relate), here we are in the very headquarters of spiritual Babylon, the intoxicating wine of her spirit everywhere, and it takes a highly disciplined saint to avoid drinking and taking it into their heart. Why would one not want to drink deeply of the most technologically advanced and entertainment-rich cultures in the world? Well, in sufficient draughts it would diminish one's consciousness of the Lord, leaving one bereft of His presence on the besieged planet, where it is needed to survive spiritually.

“‘Consciousness of the Lord’? ‘Survive spiritually’? What do they have to do with adventure? Aren't they but the domain of religion?” Well, consider our consciousness: what is the focus of our attention? What are we most aware of? The onslaught of stimuli designed to take us away from remaining aware of the Lord Jesus' presence may be near overwhelming. It may come in many forms. It may be food, drink, entertainment – literary or visual, sexual allure, work so as to make money (the whole show pretty much depends on having money!), technological devices, and so on. Not

that any of these things are bad in themselves, if engaged in judiciously, with godliness, and balance.

But if we who depend on the presence of our Savior for our life – and all that pertains to said life – lose His presence, then we are overcome of the world. I don't mean that if we get so busy we don't think of Him – for that may easily happen to an industrious person – but that our attention is drawn away from Him by the attractiveness of rival beauties or pleasures, and enticed to *stay* away from Him as far as intimate communion is concerned. The things in themselves may not be sin, but they may lead us to cease living by faith if we bury ourselves deeply enough in them, and sin will not be wanting there!

* * *

I didn't read Sartre or Camus or Nietzsche for "pleasure", but for understanding (in those days I wasn't saved), for light on the human condition. I could read them now if I had a mind to, but don't have the need or desire. I will read secular authors or poets if it will serve my purposes of gathering knowledge, technique of craft, or simply coming across a unique sensibility. A few years ago, anticipating some long plane rides and layovers to and from a teaching assignment in Africa, I brought with me Herman Hesse's *Magister Ludi* (aka *The Glass Bead Game*) as I remembered loving it as a youth, and wanted to look it over again. In that book he attempted to posit the epitome of a spiritual and artistic character – a saint. He'd tried to do a similar thing in his earlier book, *Siddhartha* (which I also reread), a remarkable fictional account of Gautama Buddha and a young independent seeker on a different path. This is my field – *what is authentic spiritual character?* And – *what is the human condition apart from the life of God?* In this latter area I read with interest stories of the "living dead", such as Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* (until I couldn't stomach them anymore). I also will watch films in this genre upon occasion, as well as a rare fantasy or sci fi.

I posit the existence of a global arena of consciousness, where multitudes of voices are lifted up promoting visions of *what is real*. It is like a gladiatorial

combat, only the weapons are spiritual and mental. Our Lord Jesus is the Champion and Victor on this vast field, although He is absent personally and is represented by whomever would wield His sword effectively.

There are excellent preachers in the arena but it's generally the language artists – with poetry the highest of the language arts – who stand tall, as the arts are more suited to this type of combat than preaching. Preachers and their preaching are the most formidable weapon of Heaven on the face of the earth, for they directly attack the strongholds of Hell, seeking to snatch souls from thence that they be translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. Poets and writers, on the other hand, function in the realm of the arts and seek to impact entire cultures, having to contend with other individual poets and purported seers for mastery of the vision of the real. This is accomplished by excellence of craft, power of voice, and the actuality of vision. Only those raised of the Lord to this task can do it. The dust has not settled in the arena, and not all contenders have yet been counted. There may be as long as a decade *or more* for things to become clear in it. This arena is above all a place of high art and mortal combat.

★ ★ ★

THE AUTHENTIC SPIRITUAL MAN OR WOMAN IN LITERATURE

The “authentic spiritual man or woman” as an artist *and* protagonist in a *non-fiction* spiritual story. Is anyone’s actual life interesting enough to catch the eye of a readership? Let me say it differently: is the Way of following the Christ through a hostile world completely occupied by the wicked one, with demons determined to destroy those who do traverse this gauntlet to Celestial City, and the world turning fiercely against them if in the Spirit of Christ they testify to the truth of sin, righteousness, and judgment – can there be a story in that? Or must we be bound to fiction, till death do us part?

As noted, I had earlier looked at Herman Hesse’s character, Joseph Knecht, the Magister Ludi of the *Glass Bead Game*, and found it wanting, although excellently conceived and depicted. No more fiction, and especially not shot through with satanic deception concerning spiritual / psychic phenomena! This latter could also be said for the Potter books, though not of Tolkien’s Rings Trilogy.

★ ★ ★

Just what might be those “standards I have suggested are vitally necessary for a spiritual art”? Foremost it must be the actuality of a life and its consciousness; and then must be the excellence of craft; then must come a spiritual union with the true God through Jesus Christ.

It is my contention – my aesthetic – that the beauty of poetry comes solely from the heart and consciousness of the poet, and from the drama of his existence, and that the function of language is to so unobtrusively and with such utter aptness of expression reveal the reality of – and within – consciousness, that the words cannot be seen – only the depths of a living heart being seen.

The human heart, even that of genuine saints, is not a pretty thing. For we remain self-aggrandizing and self-loving even at the expense of loving God and honoring His name, giving Him the glory instead of ourselves. The path of such a saint has as much of gloom as of glory, sin as of holiness, and yet grace and truth always prevail and become ascendant in such a soul, for the Shepherd is greater than the straying sheep, with the skill and the might to set him or her on the right course in due time.

So an “authentic spiritual character” will always be a real person, and – truth be told – such are riddled through with failings and faults while simultaneously being recipients of God’s steadfast love and care, which transforms wretches into loving grateful children.

Such is the protagonist / former antihero of this story!

* * *

This and the following piece are written to help those seeking to walk with Christ, by presenting various Scriptures suited to that end. These words of God constitute what is real in spirit.

COMMUNION WITH GOD, BASIC PRINCIPLES

FACT: What God has said; the word of God.

FAITH: Trust that what He has said is true, and true for you.

FEELING: Assurance in the mind and heart – your inner being – of the reality of God's word in your experience.

We must discern, first of all, what are the facts of the reality we are in. What is real? What is true? Do we believe what God says are the facts? Do we have faith in what He says? That they are facts in our lives? The following seven aspects of reality are considered.

1. Access into His presence

Matt 11:28 Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.

John 6:37 the one who comes to Me I will in no wise cast out

James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you

Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved

Heb 10:19 having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way

Eph 3:12 in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him

Psalms 46:1 God is...a very present help in trouble / see also Ps 50:15 / 37:17-18 / 91:14-15

Eph 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved;) and has raised us up together, and made us sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus...

Psalms 139:7 Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend up into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Your hand lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.

Psalms 4:3 ...the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

Psalms 140:13 the upright shall dwell in thy presence / **1 Cor 1:30** Christ Jesus ...is made unto us righteousness

2. Content of God's heart toward you as you are in His presence

1 Cor 1:30 Christ Jesus...is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption

1 Cor 1:30 ...of Him [the Father] are you in Christ Jesus...

Prov 15:8 the prayer of the upright is His delight

Prov 15:29 He hears the prayer of the righteous

1 Pet 3:12 The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers

Romans 8:31-39 [nothing] shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord

Luke 15:20 And he [the prodigal] arose, and came to his Father. But when he was yet a great way off, his Father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

Isa 30:19 he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear..he will answer thee

Heb 4:14-16 ...we have a great high priest...let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy

Romans 4:5 ...to him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness

Romans 5:6, 8, 10 Christ died for the ungodly...God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...when we

were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son

John 15:13 Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends

Heb 12:22 But you are come...to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Psalms 34:15 - 22 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry...the Lord is near to them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit...many are the afflictions of the righteous – the Lord delivers him out of them all

Isaiah 57:15 thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones

1 Pet 5:7 Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you

Jer 31:3 I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee

Psalms 143:8 Cause me to hear Thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust

Psalms 103:11 as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him **13** Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him **17** the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him

Psalms 145:18,19 the LORD nigh them that call on Him...He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them

Psalms 147:11 The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy

3. Stability and irrevocability of this access

Matt 28:20 I am with you always, even unto the end of the world

Heb 13:5 I will never leave you, nor forsake you

Isa 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God...I will uphold thee

John 6:63 It is the Spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak to you, they are spirit, and they are life

Heb 7:25 Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come

unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them

John 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand...

Phil 4:6, 7 Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus

Romans 8:39 ...[nothing] shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord

Matt 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away

2 Cor 6:18 I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty

2 Tim 1:12 ...I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day

1 Pet 5:10 But the God of all grace, who has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you

Jude 24 Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy...

Psalms 138:8 The Lord will perfect that which concerns me: Thy mercy, O Lord, endures forever: forsake not the works of thine own hands

Psalms 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Isaiah 43:1-7 When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour...and I have loved thee

Psalms 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me

4. Failure (sin) and renewal

1 John 1:7, 9 ...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to

cleanse us from all unrighteousness

Matt 18:21,22 ...Lord, how oft shall...I forgive? Seven times? I do not say to you...seven times, but...seventy times seven.

Luke 18:13,14 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted

Isaiah 57:15 thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones

Psalms 89:28-36 If his children forsake my law, ...and break my statutes... I will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break...

5. Unworthiness (sinfulness) and acceptance

Rev 5:9 [the Lamb]..thou art worthy...for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood...

Rev 5:12 Worthy is the Lamb that was slain...

1 Cor 1:30 ...of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption

2 Cor 5:21 For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him

Joel 2:25,26 And I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer worm, My great army which I sent among you. And you shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God. that has dealt wondrously with you: and My people shall never be ashamed

Isaiah 54:17 No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, says the Lord

6. Suffering and affliction

Heb 12:6 ...whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives

Psalms 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivers him out of them all

Psalms 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now I have kept thy word

Psalms 119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted: that I might learn Thy statutes

Psalms 119:75 I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me

Job 13:15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him

2 Tim 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution

Acts 14:22 ...we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world

Philippians 1:29 For to you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake

Romans 8:17 ...heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together

Isaiah 48:10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction

7. Joy

3 John 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice

John 15:9-12 As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you; continue in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

John 14:21,23,24 He that has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is

that loves Me, and he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will manifest Myself to him....If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He that loves Me not keeps not My sayings: and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

Psalms 16:11 ...in thy presence is fullness of joy

Psalms 5:11, 12 ...let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them shout for joy, because thou defendest them

Psalms 63:3 ...thy lovingkindness is better than life

Psalms 40:16 Let all those that seek thee rejoice, and be glad in thee

Psalms 105:3 let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord

JOY

is not the absence of suffering
but the presence of God

★ ★ ★

The spiritual warrior's rule:

Purity of heart, simplicity of life, and the presence of God.

★ ★ ★

GOD'S PRESENCE OUR PORTION

I would like to demonstrate that our portion – that which is freely given us by God – is nothing less than His presence with us in our lives, day in and day out, during our sojourn here on the earth in this life. In the life to come, this will be so much more the case, in that we will see with our very eyes, and experience with all our being, the glory and rapture of His immediate presence, in a fulness we do *not* know in this life. In *this* life we know God's presence by faith, that is, by believing in the truth – the reality – of His words. Alexander Nisbet, who wrote a commentary on 1st & 2nd Peter, said, “it [is] the nature of true faith to make the thing it closes with spiritually present to the soul.” In other words, faith experiences – in the soul of that person – the reality of what God has said.

Here, in our 21st century, we may walk with Him and be assured of His presence with us, so that He is our strength and our joy in the present moment, whatever life brings. Please note, this is not to say that we have a *sensory* experience of His presence, a necessarily *felt* experience of it, as in a *sensation*. Yet His presence is nonetheless a genuine experience. It is a truism that our walk – our relationship – with God is *experiential*, meaning *it is real to us!*

I suppose a lot depends on how one understands the term “experiential” with regard to the Christian's life with God. Of course we will not have a “flat” affect – that is, no inward experience in and of it – and then again we will not be guided by sensations as a marker of the Christian life. Yet one may say, “A *sense* of God's presence on the heart” – for the heart may sense

apart from the physical or emotional senses. I hope this will be made clear as we continue.

I am fond of saying that – with regard to our faith – we have a profound assurance in the depths of our being that God’s words are the reality of our lives. Whatever we may feel, His words are true, and *they* are what is real. So when the Scripture quotes the Lord as saying, “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” and “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5), does this necessarily mean we have a “felt presence” of the Lord? No, although *upon occasion* we *may* be very aware of the glory of His Person, as He draws near to us. I remember R.C. Sproul, in one of his video series, talking about this unusual manifestation of the Lord’s presence, and that it does not happen often, rather, quite rarely, in his case.

But I am *not* talking of this that Sproul speaks of when I say “a profound assurance in the depths of our being”. There are feelings in the heart – whether you call it one’s spirit, or one’s depths – that are not of the emotions. Perhaps one could call it an essential *knowing*. *From His word*, I *know* that the Lord is with me (Matt 28:20; Ps 23:4; Heb 13:5; Deut 31:8) and is kindly disposed toward me (Rom 8:35-39; Jer 31:3; Prov 15:8). Now this *knowing* is not a mere cerebral assent or activity, but a dynamic force in my heart, such that it causes me to rejoice and sing, or to venture into danger with calm courage; this *knowing* (perhaps you can come up with another word) is the apprehending of God’s reality (via His word) by and in my heart, and His word is full of power and glory – and many promises – and His word moves my heart, deeper than emotions, although it may give rise to emotions.

So when I talk of “profound assurance in the depths” it is of such I am referring to. This, to me, is an experiential walk with God. I am experiencing His presence, not sensations of it, but a profound knowing of it, such that by it I could face death, fear having been overcome by His presence – His presence *known* but not necessarily “felt” as in sensations. It is important we become familiar with this idea of inner awareness that is deeper than emotional feelings. As I mentioned above, this awareness may well give rise to emotions, but it is not the emotions. One’s emotions may feel fear

(from some threat), yet one's awareness – one's deep inner knowing – that God is with one *right then*, replaces the fear with confidence, trust, and joy. Such as David felt when he said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

This sort of communion with God is not the portion of "seasoned saints" only, but of *all* His children, even newly born-again ones. All that is needed is simple trust in His words, His promises. This is precisely what Peter meant when he said, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (1 Peter 1:4).

In the days I think are coming upon the church in the West – in the United Kingdom, Canada, America, the Western nations generally – times may not be so peaceful and prosperous as we once knew. And if that is the case we shall have great need of knowing our Lord intimately. Yes, this will mean having a clean conscience before Him, so we will have to live obedient and godly lives. And even if we are in peaceful and prosperous times, "normal" troubles, afflictions, persecutions, illness, relational discords, etc., all will send us to our dear God and Saviour for the comfort and strengthening of His presence. This sort of experiential life, walking with Christ on a daily basis, is a good life, and He is a good Saviour, King, and Friend. Here are some Scriptures to help:

* * *

Psalm 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Psalm 140:13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.

Matthew 28:20 I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

Hebrews 13:5 I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Exodus 33:14 My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

Isaiah 43:2-3 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:

Joshua 1:9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Matthew 11:11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Cf. Luke 7:28)

Psalms 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Proverbs 23:17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

Proverbs 28:14 Happy is the man that feareth alway

Psalms 95:2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

Psalms 100:2 Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

Psalms 139:7-10 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us

Hebrews 10:19-22 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Psalms 73:26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Deuteronomy 32:9 For the Lord 's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

Hebrews 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Deuteronomy 31:8 And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

John 16:27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

John 17:23, 26 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. . . And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

★ ★ ★

God's promises and assurances are of great value to us especially in times of spiritual darkness or dryness. His word is true, and His heart has not changed toward us: **Isaiah 50:10**, "Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon

his God.” (Cf. Ps 112:4; Isa 41:17-18; Mic 7:8; Ps 18:28.) Consider also Jeremiah 31:3, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

However cast down we may be, through sin, or carelessness, or simply God’s wise chastening, the Holy Spirit by Paul gives us this reality, “I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39). This hymn sums the matter up well:

How Firm A Foundation

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,

Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!

What more can He say than to you He hath said,

You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?

In every condition, in sickness, in health;

In poverty’s vale, or abounding in wealth;

At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,

As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.

Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,

For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;

I’ll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand

Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,

The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;

For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,

And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,

My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;

The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

E'en down to old age all My people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.

The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

Remember: It is in the devil's interests to discourage us (take the heart out) in prayer. He will whisper, "You have not prayed persistently or fervently enough; you have such little heart in prayer – God will not hear you. Your prayer is worthless." Of course the devil lies.

Indeed our words and cries to Father must be heartfelt (as John Bunyan said, "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words, than words without a heart"), but the *degree* of heartfelnness is not the devil's to judge! For God *delights* in the prayer of the upright (Prov 15:8, 29), and such we be if we be in the Saviour, and His word assures us we are heard and received (1 Pet 3:12; Rom 8:38-39). He pities His children who anguish over their feebleness and yet cry to Him (Psalm 103:11-13). As Puritan Thomas Watson put it, "Prayer as it comes from the saint is weak and languid; but when the arrow of a saint's prayer is put into the bow of Christ's intercession it pierces the throne of grace."

Let us never lose heart – we are loved despite all our failings and feebleness, and such love quickens and emboldens our hearts to cast our souls' care upon Him all the more (1 Pet 5:7).

We should also remember that our prayers to Father do not come to Him naked, as it were, but – as with all the rest of our hearts and lives – *in Christ*, clothed in Him, so that our prayers are transformed in Him into part of His

own efficacious High Priestly prayer, the indwelling Spirit of Christ helping us in our praying weakness (Rom 8:26, 27) as we draw nigh to God (James 4:8). In other words, we are not naked selves as we pray, but clothed in the holy garment of our Saviour, His merit, and His efficacy. As the hymn, “Through the blood of Jesus,” puts it, “The only view God has of me is through the blood of Jesus”.

This gives our trembling hearts a new sense of awe as we lift our eyes unto our God. In whatever we do we are not alone (Heb 13:5), we who in His eyes are “holy and beloved” (Col 3:12). The smile of a loving Almighty Father greets and receives our prayers.

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WARRIOR-SCHOLAR

The warrior must be a scholar, or rather, a certain *class* of warrior must, as attacks will be directed in such manner as to undermine the very basis of spiritual consciousness, which stands upon the word of the King. Undermine the word of the King, as contained in His book – in that alone – and the mind of the warrior has no foundation on which to stand – on which to *be*.

The word of truth – the Scriptures of the Jews, whether in Hebrew, Greek, English, or other languages – is the basis of spiritual life for the younger brothers and sisters of the Christ, who now take *His* place in the satanic warfare as He has ascended to the throne of glory and power, having accomplished His warfare, and blazed the path for those who follow Him.

The written Word itself must be defended, its reliability, intactness, purity, even these millennia since their being written. Whoever cannot defend these holy writings will be vulnerable to attack from various fronts – in the mind and spirit directly from demons, from human vessels of doubt, unbelief, and / or hostility to the King who is the Lord of the Writings, and by other means.

One should be familiar with the arguments used against their reliability, and be able to overturn them. To do this one must study, if not in great depth (some will pursue it so), then to get a basic grasp, sufficient to be convinced in one's own mind and to repel assaults. As the days get darker and times fiercer, these attacks will mount with greater subtlety and force.

Thus the warrior must also be a scholar, whether fledgling or master, for the times require it.

THE PRINCE OF DEMONS SPOKE

And the prince of demons spoke through his messenger saying, “If you kill the baby in the womb, it’s not real, it’s not a baby yet. It’s the right of women to dispose of this mere tissue in their own bodies.” And to the demons ranked around him he said, “These fools can be persuaded to butcher their own precious offspring, because I have taught them to despise all authority and law, and because they now have the freedom of sexual abandon without worry or consequence, except, of course, for that little death-bug that brings so many of them to me in their prime. What despicable puppets these humans are!”

And God on His throne of mercy and grace said, “I have formed My people in the womb, and while they are yet inside their mothers I have known them, and prepared mercy and goodness to follow them all the days of their lives, and they shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever, in the glory of eternal life.” And through His messengers He said, “Turn from the voice of the evil one, and from the cruel bondage of his servitude, and come to Me, for I have paid the penalty for your sins and murders, that you might have fellowship with Me, and live in My love.”

God has not created us to live under the thralldom of alien powers, in darkness and death, but to live in His kingdom and share in His glory.

A MULTI-HUED PEOPLE

*Judith, fierce blues-singin' Black,
is also Cherokee
blooded*

*her orange-brown skin
sacred
in every respect*

*You would-be cowboys
à la the blood
y horror stories
of slaughter
and rape
and white superiority*

*you better ring them wagons
good
for the war-party
on the horizon
is multi-hued
lightning-eyed
Humanity.*

I'm writing this piece for the book to touch upon a crucial matter in today's world, filled as it is with violence and passionate hatreds. I want to look at these hatreds.

But first, *where* is there “a multi-hued people”—by which I mean a harmonious and unified people? There is only one place it *can* be. There is only one place it *is*. I do realize that, in the past—and, alas, sometimes in the present—there has been / is ethnic prejudice in the church of Jesus Christ—an egregious violation of His commands, and such haters of their brethren likely not His at all. But what I am speaking of is the church I know—that I am a member of. There is probably an even mix of Blacks and Caucasians, with more Hispanics than either of the former two—so it appears to me—with a few Asians and others therein. (I prefer “ethnic prejudice” to “racism” as in Acts 17:26 we are told that God “hath made of one blood all nations of men”—so there is but the *human* race from one common source.)

Such a unified community *can* only be in Christ Jesus, if indeed we are united—are one spirit (1 Cor 6:17)—with Him, and abiding in His word. There is no other hope! Only in the heart of God—the true God—are we one Body comprised of many members (1Cor 12:12-14; Gal 3:26-29). Apart from the reign of God in Christ whose laws of life and love are written in our hearts (Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:25-27) there can be no harmony, for we know that outside of Him “the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). I see no hope for the rapidly deteriorating general culture. Earnest and good intentions, vision and great effort—are no matches against diabolic power and strategy. These are apocalyptic and abnormal times. Elsewhere in these pages I give my view of the “general culture”.

Trying to track down the current whereabouts of Judith in the poem above, I learned she died of heart failure in 2007, while I was out of the country and did not hear of it. But I also discovered a site by a scholar-poet friend of hers, and to my shock and great dismay learned some horrible things of what whites have done to blacks, even as recently as 1950 (I was 8 years old then). I refer to the lynchings in the south, which were *commonplace*! And a deliberate societally-approved tactic of terror to cow the African American community. Todd Steven Burroughs on his blog, theroot.com (theroot.com/articles/culture/2016/08/american-lynching-4000-unpunished-crimes/), writes about these things; (a routine but horrific photo on another blog of Todd’s here: drumsintheglobalvillage.com/2016/08/22/my-root-article-on-the-proposed-lynching-memorialafrican-american-museum/).

The coldness, callousness, institutionalized hatred, and *socially accepted murder of black men and women*, people “like Elizabeth Lawrence, who was lynched because she scolded children for throwing stones at her”, is appalling. Or others “who were lynched because they bumped accidentally into white people as they were going to the train station.” Little wonder their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren are filled with rage, hatred, and disdain for whites here in 2016! We Whites are ignorant of what to many Blacks is common knowledge. The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)—described as a nonprofit legal-rights group—is planning to open a Memorial to Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama in 2017, where some 4,075 instances of lynching are documented. I believe EJI is a legit and genuinely peaceful organization—with no “hate” agenda at all. In a brief essay, “The Legacy of Lynching” (eji.org/racial-justice/legacy-lynching) , we have these opening remarks:

After the end of slavery and the premature end of Reconstruction, Southern whites who had fought to keep slavery regained power of their state governments. The convict leasing and sharecropping systems were used to restore white economic dominance, and discriminatory laws deprived black people of political rights. Violent intimidation was the method of enforcement.

Lynching emerged as a vicious tool of racial control in the South after the Civil War, as a way to reestablish white supremacy and suppress black civil rights. At the end of the 19th century, Southern lynch mobs targeted and terrorized African Americans with impunity.

Another of EJI’s articles, *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror* (eji.org/reports/lynching-in-america) , further elucidates this to-many-of-us-little-known history.

These revelations put everything in a different light for me! The wildness and rage among the Black youths—such as seen in their “knock-out games”

—the passion and fervor of some liberal social-justice “Christian ministers” to confront matters of prejudice, the cynicism and residual anger of many Blacks, all made new sense to me. Unlike South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission which was a court-like restorative justice body where victims could tell their stories, and perpetrators of violence could give testimony and request amnesty [gist gleaned from wiki], in America there is only silence regarding this past of ours. In America we have not gone through such an exposing and healing process. And likely, in my view—due to the times we are in—despite its healthy and genuine intent to bring healing, such a memorial as EJI envisions would only deepen and inflame the hatreds that wrack and rend our culture’s social fabric.

For there is a deep reservoir of anguish, grievously wounded dignity, and passionate hatred seething in the Black community, that will likely be stirred up and amplified by the demonic currents in our collective consciousness (spoken of elsewhere here), and will likely be unleashed in the days to come. As well in the White community—there are those who still hate people of color for various reasons, and will respond in kind to loosed Black anger. Hardened hatred, rage, and desire for revenge in both camps—and forget forgiveness, that’s for the weak, they say—bespeak forthcoming violence.

So I repeat what I have said above: our only hope for an irrevocably unified and harmonious community will be in the precincts of God’s vast global house, where Christ His appointed King reigns with justice and love. We must increasingly enforce the observance of His commands to forgive and to love, while at the same time helping to “affectively educate” the hearts among us to show the same compassion and mercy to others we all have received from Him. We shall love as He loves—or perish amidst the unbelieving world, not true followers of Him.

And we are to comfort and help to heal those who have been wounded by the prejudices and other evils of our culture—including the evils within their own hearts—for now we are the Eternal Family whose friendships will last forever, always new, always developing, as the God who is our life is Himself infinitely new and fresh.

Any who would oppose what I posit—that harmony is only to be found in Christ and His kingdom—I urge you to reconsider, and to learn of Him, for all else by way of solutions is doomed, given that your unforgiven sin will bring you to a place in which lies the very root of prejudice, starting with Satan and his demons who have a loathing hatred of humankind, infecting it with all the rancor and malice of their own hearts. If you do not believe the message Jesus taught of the coming Kingdom of God, and how to enter it, your troubles in this world are virtually nothing compared to an eternity of suffering with the worst of the worst, and under God's anger—considering the price He paid to obtain forgiveness and mercy for you which you scoff and spurn.

My own family—Jews—fled Vienna after my grandfather, editor and publisher of the large paper in that city, died in prison while under interrogation by Gestapo officers. They immediately fled to America lest they be forced into work and death camps. All my life here in this country Blacks and Hispanics have welcomed me into their hearts and lives—even before I knew the Christian church—and I am grateful for that. But these are meaner times—and going to be even worse, as demonic infiltration of the collective consciousness further polarizes various ethnicities and classes—so now we need the grace and power of the King's law and His presence to enable us to live and love as we ought.

The friend I wrote of in the poem above, a great poet among the Blacks, taught me much in my younger days decades back, and I would honor her memory upholding the dignity of her people, among whom I have found glad refuge in our multi-hued Humanity.

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Note: the image in the poem above “...*the war-party / on the horizon*” is an echo of Jude 14, 15:

Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds...

and Revelation 19:13, 14, 15:

...his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations...

There *is* justice in the world, even if it is not seen until the Judgment. “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.” (Psalm 116:15)

★ ★ ★

DECONSTRUCTING THE GOLDEN NARRATIVE

The trouble with words nowadays is nothing is sacred anymore. I would have said, “Deconstructing the *sacred* narrative,” but that sounds so religious. Even an originally good word, “religious,” is loaded with negative connotations in many minds, and has lost its usefulness. Even the word, “good”....but you see what I mean. So I am reduced to using figures of speech instead of direct referents. At least getting started.

Of course there are things that are sacred, even to postmodern relativists. A good glass of wine perhaps; the sexual embrace of one's beloved; a musical score; a work of art; friendship; vistas of nature; the phenomenon of sentient life — one's own! And so forth. But these are sacred with a small “s”. Uppercase is passé these days.

And yet! Despite the onslaught of deconstruction there is a story — I shall not uppercase the “s” now lest some have trouble swallowing it — with so great resilience it has proven impervious to such machinations.

I just finished watching *Children of Dune* last night, and quite enjoyed it. Perhaps four decades ago I read some of the books, and within fairly recent years saw a couple of *Dune* movies. I like science fiction; sometimes it intuitively “realistic” works do not. But when I saw *Children*....good as it was, I thought, This is only an attempt to replace “the golden narrative” with an arresting saga, albeit a fantasy. We intuit a genuine and wondrous saga to this life of ours, even if hidden to us.

The Golden Narrative. It is a story which has been told, *definitively, once*, though it has been retold many times, and the telling of it has circled the globe of Sol's third planet, reaching millions upon millions of ears, up through the generations for millennia. It does tell of off-world interference with a race of beings, a bringing of vast ruination upon them, and again of off-world rescue, for those who would have it. Yet it is not fiction, and science, so-called, often (not always) strongly opposes it. There is that science which disallows the thought of anything *super-nature*, anything positing an order of being above the natural world. *The Golden Narrative*, although told by men, has indeed originated off-world, and from a realm above the natural order. I needn't elaborate on that here; it is in the story itself for those who wish to know it.

There are many attempts to "deconstruct" this story; some say it is untrue, itself a fiction; others say it is true insofar as it reflects the best aspirations of humans, that is, it is a "true" reflection of the potential of human imagination and evolution; others say it reflects the belief system of a tribal culture, and may be valid for that culture but not for others, whose perceptions of reality may differ. Others will say *words* themselves cannot properly signify such actualities, as there are no common — universal — meanings or truths to be signified. Some *add* to the narrative, either the text, or the sense, thus making it an alloy, its purity corrupted.

The Golden Narrative resides in a book comprised of many smaller books. On this level it is attacked also — the texts. It will be said: the people in the stories never existed; the stories were corrupted during their transmission; the authors were not those attributed; the sayings within the stories are not all authentic. The allegations of varieties of inauthenticity go on and on.

But this is the truth of it: the remarkable stories within the larger narrative are all true — each according to their genre — and all the characters said to be real (those plainly not parabolic) *are* real, and their words what they said. The foretellings — called prophecies by some — are all genuine; multitudes already fulfilled, and those not yet, will be. The narrative is called "golden" to indicate its great worth, and purity. The beings it tells of, both the human and non-human, are actual. The destinies it bespeaks — concerning humankind — are in the process of being realized even this moment.

The golden narrative itself is intact and finite, comprised of 66 small books in mostly two (sometimes three) original languages, translated into multitudes of tongues, both ancient and modern. There are definitive editions of these books, although this is disputed; it remains that there are such. Yet there are many sub-narratives, both written (as this little narrative itself!) and oral, and even just *lived out* — *this* type of “narrative” being the art of a life lived in fidelity to the golden narrative. The main has spawned *millions* of sub-narratives, touching them all with its glory and power. Some sub-narratives are masterworks of art: *The Divine Commedia*, *Paradise Lost*, *Lord of the Rings*; while the lesser ones are still potent to quicken the dead!

This needs to be said: *the* narrative is a living story under-girding — and overarching — all other stories, even those which deny it. It is the Story in which all other stories are. Your very reading of this little narrative is an intersecting of narratives — yours and mine. And as mine intersects with — and actually derives from — the golden, so *yours* is interacting with *it*.

In the narrative, there are *eyes* upon you you may not be aware of, *many* eyes, although I refer to a particular set of eyes, those of the Hero of the narrative, the one who effected the rescue spoken of earlier.

It is a narrative, the golden one, essential to the survival of the being past the gates of death (as well this side of them), and it introduces the reader to the Hero, a most remarkable being, who is able to effect wondrous changes in those who learn of and come to him.

But you must read it for yourself. And see him who is in it, to love him or hate him (for many do, oddly). Be assured, *The Golden Narrative* will endure when even the earth passes away; it is written within it it shall never pass away, and will be a glory of the world it foretells, a never-ending kingdom — a kingdom with *physical* but *radiant* bodies — a world of wonders. Those who enter the golden narrative will be born anew, never to die. Little wonder death hates it! And seeks to deconstruct it! But that cannot happen. Its defenders are able. And it itself indestructible.

The very first humans spoke of this golden thread which would run through the fabric of all generations. There was one to come who would crush the head of the now reigning monster who savagely lorded over the ruined race. And up through the years the story grew, as vision increased. For merely telling it some were killed (it was against the demon's law). For hearing and taking it to heart some gained that illumination which gave eternal life, laughing in the face of death. It was *the* bone of contention to the human race. And when the Hero of the story came into the world, the golden one himself, all Hell broke loose, and fell before him in defeat. It is a story of love, and of war, and the dark powers do all they can to suppress it, *to deconstruct it*, for the light pouring from this golden narrative torments them even before the time of their consignment to the burning lake. One of their torments is seeing the story draw men, women, and children into it, into the heart of its Hero, and being born anew in its glory and power, which they shall never share.

The narrative and its offspring are soaked with so many tears a ship could sail them, so much blood it could flood a land — such the price for singing its glories and praises! — but for love of *him* its tellers continue to sing, and for love of those who suffer the pains of life in this besieged world, that they might hear its healing sweet power and live — they sing. On pain of death they sing, though the words be mingled with tears and blood, of the glory of his heart and of his kingdom they sing. Even this very moment.

In the never-ending kingdom the sub-narratives will all be told (even after ten thousand years we'll have no less days to hear, and sing, and praise), and we will be knit together as in a glorious tapestry showing scenes of wondrous passion and heartrending courage born of love — our hearts will thrill to see it told, always fresh, new visions of it springing forth. And he himself will speak — will our hearts be able to bear *that*? He will grant it to be so, he who flung forth galaxies, set the hot jewels of suns in the heavens, bore the eternal suffering due all his subjects. What a heart! In this fathomless abyss of glory and joy we will ever soar, with wings as eagles amidst the peaks of majesty.

It is a sacred narrative.

POETRY—IN THE KINGDOM UNDER SIEGE

*The burden of Art, especially Poetry, is the establishment
– and defense – of Human reality.*

This essay is about consciousness, vision, and language in a time when worldview shifts have unsettled peoples' views of reality, indeed, even how they view their own personhood. And while these seismic upheavals concerning the perception of reality have impacted the general culture, there have been somewhat quieter developments regarding states of consciousness this past century that bear on our literature and poetry, and these – especially the poetry – have seen radical developments in both the uses to which language may be put, and the understanding of what it is, and all of these things are of interest to us, the poets of God's Kingdom.

This Kingdom is not at present in a placid setting; to the contrary, we are besieged on many fronts by foes of different species, using varieties of weapons, intent on either terminating our existence or obtaining our complete surrender, and the forfeiture (were it possible) of our state of being as children of the Highest.

We may go about our business as people and poets, expecting things to continue as usual in our lives, but I suggest we err in this complacency, and are in grave danger, even as the proverbial frog in the slowly-heated water who got cooked before she knew it!

Take our consciousness, for instance, as children of the God whose Spirit indwells us as the principle of our lives, and whose word establishes the reality we live in and by. This consciousness, which is our joy living in His truth, has been deemed *dangerous* in light of an emerging cultural consensus as to what are *acceptable* states of consciousness and concepts of reality. If you think I am kidding, or exaggerating, I'm afraid you are the oblivious aforementioned frog.

We may think of Postmodernism as simply the new worldview on the block, and while a bit extreme in its Political Correctness rules, a needed antidote to the excesses and arrogance of cultural bigotry and the old Modernism with its blind trust in Enlightenment reason, secular humanism, and social progress, all supposedly based on a “logocentrism” and Eurocentrism that disregard or oppress varying viewpoints, minority cultures and subcultures. However, according to the new postmodernist (PM) thought, we who live by the Bible, and seek to bring to God's world knowledge of His existence – as well His justice and His saving mercies – through proclaiming the person and work of Jesus Christ, are deemed guilty of violations – crimes! – against humanity. We are accused of spiritual and intellectual imperialism, seeking to impose our culture's story on other cultures, indeed, having our story *dominate* all others, while – the accusers say – it is simply one of many cultural constructs, real for us, but an infringement on the equally valid realities of what other peoples and cultures have determined are *their* truths. There are no universal and absolute truths, they say, and to affirm there are is to be a *Totalist* or a *Fundamentalist*, one who cruelly disrespects and seeks to invalidate other cultures' beliefs and realities.

Nor is this just a harmless tendency to relativizing truths and beliefs which can be successfully argued against by a clear mind, but the principles of new world-wide (starting from the West) philosophical and *legal initiatives* that are sweeping up all our institutions – education, politics, sociology, science, law, medicine, art, theology, psychology, history, literature, etc. – into their fold, and that will actually outlaw dissenters as disturbers of the social order and its health. That this is not a mere “futurist prediction” may be seen in that this is a growing consensus widely established even now, possessing legal teeth, as Canadians and some Europeans know – and even Americans,

although the encroachment here is subtle, for the present. Which is not to say that postmodernism is entirely destructive, for it also has important positive aspects we shall consider shortly. Which is also not to say that it remains the predominant philosophical paradigm in *all* minds and schools, for to many PM is dead and obsolete; yet it does appear to be the established *legal and moral* paradigm in the political and cultural spheres of the West, the impact of which will be – and is already – world shaking.

The question for us is, how may we as poets and writers effectively speak into this situation? (Other artists will have their own tasks and MOs, though they may be edified by ours.) First of all, we should not shy from publishing the vision we have been given and are alive in. That many do not spiritually apprehend the existence of God as He is revealed by His own Word, particularly in the person and sayings of the Lord Christ, should not deter us from unabashedly proclaiming life as we know it in Him, speaking from the awareness we have in this Realm of Consciousness, entrance into which is only through the living door, Christ the gatekeeper to eternal life, and the wondrous cultures therein – some in the process of being formed right now.

In these days the human race en masse is under lethal assault by spiritual forces of darkness, vast multitudes of us taken captive by the prince of that host at his will; even the *idea* – the divine image – of what it is to be human is being destroyed, or more nicely put, *deconstructed*; indeed, this is one of the prime tactics in the siege of humankind: ignorant of what we are, what we are meant to be, we have not withal to throw off the multifarious death that bears down so ferociously upon us, albeit with great subtlety at times.

Artists – poets and writers especially – have a calling to create – *to manifest* – human actuality within the actuality of God, thereby allowing light to illumine our condition, that those in darkness yet who love “the truth” (John 18:37) may hear Jesus’ word and see His light “shining through us” and, drawn so to Him, enter the kingdom we joyously and passionately herald. True humanity is preserved in God’s kingdom alone; elsewhere it is darkened and in ruin. Which is not to say that everywhere in the kingdom it is

known and manifested in good health; like lingering infections the old satanic distortions still cling to some of us: we are not to be light only to those without, but also to our kin, those within, for their healing and freedom – as we ourselves gain it.

Bob Dylan (I do not know his spiritual state, but ask the High King to show him mercy) said a true thing in his song, “Chimes of Freedom,” how they flash like lightning,

*strikin’ for the gentle, strikin’ for the kind,
strikin’ for the guardians and protectors of the mind,
and the poet, and the painter far behind his rightful time...*

It is, in part, to remedy his sad complaint this is being written, and so glorify the King of artists, who has made us, and not we ourselves.

I would like to discuss three aspects of our situation: Poetry in “the last days”; An aesthetic for the 21st century; then, lastly, The Global Arena of Consciousness – and the Story beneath all stories.

Poetry in “The Last Days”

This term “last days” refers to the entire period of time from the coming of Jesus Christ into the world to His coming again to close the age, ushering in an everlasting kingdom that shall love its poets, especially Himself, King of the poets.

Given the Biblical worldview, the imminent danger billions of our fellow humans are in, our status as minor prophets in the spirit of *the* Prophet (Rev. 19:10; John 17:18; 1 Cor. 2:16) and the terrible encroaching darkness (more blighting than the shadow of legendary Mordor) wasting both earth and souls in its occult – *hidden* – blast heat (if the shadow so wastes, consider that which throws the shadow!).... Given these things what ought our poetry to be?

Among the familiar engines of destruction surrounding our camp are the latest in the satanic armory: to be precise, these are engines of *deconstruction*, which attempt to take apart – disassemble through critical analysis – our language and use of reason, claiming these latter are valid only for the culture that “created” them and no other, thereby invalidating the claim that God and His word have absolute and universal reality, but are instead culture-created and thus culture-bound local – *not* universal – “realities.” The “texts” (read: sources of authority) in our culture are subjected to a hermeneutic suspicious of truth-claims which by their nature declare anything else false, bad or even incorrect; the PM hermeneutic considers such exclusions exercises of oppressive power.

Against such ideological assaults we respond with vigorous intelligence and activity of our own; in the past this has been called “the defense of the Faith.” As artists we are not involved in apologetics per se, for it is not primarily doctrine we fight or promote; what we fight against are *the states of consciousness* and *ways of seeing* that have come to prominence in our day which say there is no absolute truth, nor is there intrinsic coherence or value to personhood save what we – culture by culture (each culture having its own “truths” and “values”) – invest it with, and thus what we might erroneously term “absolute” and “universal” meanings or realities are simply constructs of respective cultures. Language itself, the new thinking claims, is a construct of a particular culture with its own logic and view of reality that is neither applicable nor communicable to other cultures. This philosophical cynicism and nihilism is already in place – and constantly gaining ground – in many of our Western institutions, as noted above. This “movement” gathers under its umbrella many disparate groups, and together they constitute a formidable adversary, in concert projecting a nihilistic epistemology so as to disarm all concerned opponents. We need to learn how to speak and *be* in the face of this cloud of corrosive philosophical poison, the equivalent in the intellectual sphere what radioactive fallout is in the physical. There are some who are invested in this as a means to power for marginalized and oppressed minority groups (gender, agender, sexual orientation, ethnic, economic, etc), to “throw off” the yokes imposed on them by “logocentric” (word- or reason-oriented) and “Eurocentric” majority

cultures. The name of this game is power, with “truth” being irrelevant and “justice” defined by special interest groups. (Two discerning Christian books on the subject are, *Postmodern Times*, by Gene Edward Veith, and *The Death of Truth*, by Dennis McCallum, Ed.)

To be fair, there is a desire among some postmodernists – in their “deconstructing” the “texts” (sources of authority) of certain dominant cultures – to do away with those boundary-creating “truths” and categories that exclude or marginalize those who don’t concur or fit in. Christians, in their withstanding the hammers of *modernist* assaults, often took up these “cudgels of persuasion” themselves in their “evangelism,” and alienated many. PM has opened to our view new ways of thinking and relating, showing us the value of inclusion and inclusive styles of being the church and evangelizing. We may learn from PM to be aware of our oppressive and power-mongering styles and tactics, turning the lens of the hermeneutic of suspicion upon ourselves to see if there are things in us which ought not be. We may even, as has been suggested, learn to number the *conversations* we have entered into with those we evangelize, rather than merely tallying supposed *conversions* – friendships as opposed to “conquests.”

The inescapable end result, however, of PM is the eradication of all commonalities between human groups and the mutual exclusion of all ethnicities, cultures, and subcultures, thereby utterly fragmenting and disintegrating the human family. I understand this was not what Jacques Derrida, an important postmodernist thinker, intended, but it is what is happening.

As the authority and intactness of God’s word – Scripture – cannot be successfully overthrown by direct onslaught, then the assault is to be made on the very foundations of language itself, and the attempt to relativize those cultures in which and from which God spoke, and in which He acted in history, thereby invalidating His universal authority. As a satanic strategy it is very clever, and do not be deceived into thinking this is not its source. And if it is validated by a cultural consensus, its *enforcement* can be given legal teeth.

It will perhaps be realized – the year now 2014 – that what PM has spawned in the legal / moral sphere is a human rights agenda giving legitimacy to

sexual activities and unions legally unrecognized for millennia, and simultaneously depriving legitimacy to cultures and sectors of society that oppose the legal and moral legitimacy of such “activities and unions”, so that there is a marginalization of age-old traditions of faith, particularly the faith of Christ.

After delegitimizing and marginalizing will come criminalizing, with accompanying persecution, incarceration, and “eradicating” of incorrigible “enemies of humanity”. But those called to bear witness – the Greek of which is *martus*, from which the English martyr comes – understand that they may have to put their life where their mouth is.

Our response to this vigorous “shadow of Mordor” must gleam with the brilliance of otherworldly light, and be possessed of a robust vitality such as can win the hearts of those who see something greatly desirable in the quality of our being, for our “weapons” are not carnal, but glorious in the depth and profundity of Christ’s heart. This gives a new clarity to His saying *we* are now the light of the world (Matt. 5:14-16). As *artists* our weapons against this particular form of darkness are our *spiritual and human actuality* manifested in our art. Remember, we know God because He became human – took on human nature and walked among us – and the attack on the integrity of human personality impacts the significance of the Incarnation. We would do well, then, to study the postmodern assault on reason, language and meaning, so that we comprehend it, and can answer to it. This is really the intellectual foundation of the new legal assaults marshaling against the camp of the saints. It is most doubtful our arguments will change the laws, but they may change hearts, and our examples of fidelity even unto death to the King of life may deeply touch hearts to believe in and love Him.

The challenge, then, for artists of the Kingdom, is how their *art* may be such as withstand this assault on our *lives*, for such it is. Our lives and our art are not impotent in this regard. We walk with the High King and trust the power of His gleaming scepter, and we know that things are not as they appear, that horrific destruction is all about, our adversaries voracious predators cloaked in invisibility (indeed we do not wrestle against flesh and blood

– Eph. 6:12). Given these things, we should have great hearts, great stories, and great art. As James K. Smith says in his *Imagining the Kingdom* (p. 163), “Why should the devil get all the best stories?”

An Aesthetic for the 21st Century

Let me beg the reader’s indulgence a moment, as I wish to comment on and critique some essays – from *Poetry* (Chicago) – and a book from a university press, which are some three decades old; I do this because, first, the publication of these items were watersheds – or reflected watersheds – in the development of contemporary aesthetics, and in dealing with these foundational premises I critique what is built upon them; and, second, I knew of no forums in which to publish such critiques when they appeared, whereas now there are. So bear with me, please, if I occasionally speak as though these articles and the book were current – as developments in aesthetics over the past thirty years are indeed current, as voices have spoken, establishing visions which are false, and still stand, and need to come down.

The following quote is from an essay in March 1984’s *Poetry* (Chicago), “Waking Up Over The *Aeneid*,” by Paul Breslin:

With Skepticism about the favored destiny of this or that people comes skepticism about teleological interpretations of history in general, a habit of mind that makes epic itself an intractable form for us. Epics such as Homer’s or Virgil’s—or even Milton’s, the last great example of the genre—tell a story universally known among its audience, a story which, moreover, assigns a universally acknowledged meaning to the sequence of events. As Alisdair MacIntyre argues in *After Virtue*, we no longer try to understand our experience by telling a story; we perceive a sequence of events but not a plot, not an action in the Aristotelian sense....That the kind of public narrative poetry we associate with the epic cannot grow in post-Romantic soil may be regrettable, but it is nobody’s fault, nor can sheer force of will restore

the epic to life. In a pluralistic culture, there are many stories, but no great story whose resonance is immediately audible to everyone. As Czeslaw Milosz says in *The Witness of Poetry*, “For us, classicism is a paradise lost, for it implies a community of beliefs and feelings which unite poet and audience.”

This is the “bird’s-eye view” of postmodernism in literature; the “great story” Breslin talks of “whose resonance is immediately audible to everyone” – i.e., a universally acknowledged reality – is nowadays termed a *metanarrative*, an “overarching explanation of reality based on central organizing ‘truths.’ ” In his book, *The Death of Truth*, Dennis McCallum (with Jim Leffel) comment,

Those who believe in universal explanations of reality are considered to be *totalistic* or *logocentric* in their thinking. Instead, postmodernists believe each group tells its own story or narrative, their own understanding of reality—understandings that others should never discount, exclude, or marginalize. *Totalistic* thinkers such as *fundamentalists* (...anyone who claims to know truth or charges another religion with falsehood...) want their story to dominate all other stories. (p. 201)

This view is the natural consequence of the denial of God: His story is discounted; instead we are reckoned but evolved beasts in an accidental and purposeless existence. Our consciousness of our history – read, “random and often bloody happenings” – has no redeeming value, so this reasoning goes, and our art but pointless signposts on our helpless, meaningless sojourn through futility and anguish. Being culture-bound our “realities” are but our various tribal constructs built on and within our peculiar languages and experiences.

Although such nihilistic vision purports to be an authentic and universally valid world-view (despite the PM claim there are no universals!) it in fact is the intellectual and aesthetic disintegration taking over much of Western

civilization, the minds of many of whose leaders have been blinded by a stealthily encroaching global darkness, a “strong delusion” (2 Thessalonians 2:11).

Meanwhile people the world over turn from the fantastic and useless mythologies of popular and classical antiquity, from the bleak perceptions of the self-proclaimed “evolved apes” become erudite, and from the “science” so impeccably turned against them, to their own collective intuitive vision, where simple perception makes sense both in terms of daily life and historical perspective: there is a palpable evil at work in the world not attributable to the mere bestiality of animal life – not even the wild carnivores – but to an image like man yet its utter antithesis. There is *diabolic* evil afoot in the world; somehow the gates of the dark realm have been opened wider than ever before! Intuition – as in much science fiction and fantasy – gives rise to a view of the earth, with all its sentient life, as an enchanted yet horribly besieged domain, and the dry rustling of the thoughts of the intelligencia in their chrome, steel, and glass tree-tops are as divorced from the consciousness of the global masses as their “literacy” and “art” are from the verities in the howling archetypal heartlands. The strange spin of the apologists of purposelessness and disintegration of meaning are as little side-pools in the great epic current of the human adventure on the Dark Planet.

We are here presented with a challenge – we the artists of the kingdom of God. The literati in the PM camp – who are great in number and influence – say there *is* “no community of beliefs and feelings which unite” artist and people. But the apostles – I have Paul particularly in mind – labored *and succeeded* against even greater odds. What turned the battle for them was the Spirit of Christ in their courageous, uncompromising, and wise proclamation of the Story of the Ages, and in the King’s call – *command*, if you will – for all men and women everywhere (Acts 17:30, 31) to turn from darkness to His light, joining Him in His Story of redemption and eternal life.

That such a glorious *metanarrative* can be told – *and received* – in this day is obvious. How else explain the immense popularity of the film version of Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*? As in the sixties counterculture (when the

books were famously loved) great multitudes longed for a story that overrode the atheistic separating of faith in God (and the whole supernatural realm) from reason, which separation resulted in the idea “there is no God in reality,” and thus neither are humans made in His image, so that what *we* are are meaningless things devoid of true personality in an impersonal universe. Tolkien, however, whose reason was informed by a knowledge of God, held forth in his work a mythic world that was ordered and meaningful, where absolute good and absolute evil (Francis Schaeffer’s “thesis & antithesis”) warred for the souls of the inhabitants of Middle Earth. The hearts of many, then as now, intuit an absolute order, design, and benevolence in this creation, as well as the antithesis of that, an evil which ravages and devours all that is good and sane.

Can we so tell the Story – or reflect it, or manifest a glimpse of it – in such a way as to arrest the hearts of those who see our art?

I refer now to the other article in *Poetry* (Chicago). In the August 1983 issue voices are raised telling us what must and must not be in order to have a great poetry – or even an *authentic* poetry. In the essay, “The Neural Lyre: Poetic Meter, the Brain, and Time,” by Frederick Turner and Ernst Pöppel – we are told that metered poetry alone is to be considered genuine, and that free verse is but an unwholesome aberration peculiar to bureaucratic and/or totalitarian states; we are told, in short, “it is not poetry.” This the supposed word that hath gone forth from Parnassus – alleged to be located somewhere around Chicago.

Quite some years have passed since this article, and likely they have published other – perhaps even opposing – views. One might think the view mentioned is outdated, but it is not the case. Just because many today write in measures other than formal meter does not mean metered poetry has no stalwart defenders! Indeed, a linguistic warfare exists in the arena of poetic consciousness, and only poetry – poems! – shall decide it.

Perhaps the last significant modern poet (writing in English) representing the tradition of poet-as-man-of-letters was – arguably – T.S. Eliot; he was withstood in his poetic/linguistic endeavors by William Carlos Williams,

who saw his use of scholarship and literary allusion, and in particular *his metered verse*, as antithetical to what Williams was trying to do with language, that is, find a measure inherent in speech instead of imposed from without. Ezra Pound was friend to both men; he influenced W.C. profoundly in regard to “de-poeticizing” his poems, bringing in an organic vitality through the use of image, with an utmost economy of words, in real speech. Oddly, he gave the same advice to both his friends, but they put it to different use.

Eliot took the world of poetry by storm with his long poem, *The Waste Land*. When it came out it crushed Williams; he could not deny its power, opposing as it did his own work with language.

That's the trouble with genius
he will create his reality
and we must live with it

Williams, however, had genius and power of his own, although it was slow going, and it was his to provide the foundation of a new poetry, while not building high upon it. His long poem, *Paterson*, is considered by most (himself included) a failure. He was discovered by a young poet living in Paterson (N.J.), Allen Ginsberg, who drank deeply of his poetics, as did numerous others afterwards, until Williams was seen as the master of a new school of poetry. It is important to learn of these things, and to see demonstrations (actual poems) of the uses the new poets put language to.

In the last section – “What the Thunder Said” – of his poem, Eliot's erudite (obscure) *possible* thought of salvation in various sectors, Christian faith, or the Grail legend – though these seem to be hollow and futile – or the Hindu Upanishads in the latter stanzas, are a rather lame seeking Redemption from his wasteland, and giving no solid hope at all. (Caveat: see the chapter, “Overturning Eliot's *Wasteland* ” for a modern critical approach to Eliot contra the traditional one.)

These are some of the seminal developments – and ongoing dynamics – contributing to the situation in contemporary poetry. Whether the schools

adhering to traditional meter or those of the new poetry will prevail, will not be decided by essays or arguments: only poetry – poems – will settle it. It is not a set of “rules” that shall determine any great poetry to be written, but a poet who knows what he or she is about. Only a poet can resurrect poetry from its lettered grave, its trashcan of the peoples.

On another front – as part of the postmodernist siege – are the voices of M .L. Rosenthal and Sally M. Gall (R & G) in their work, *The Modern Poetic Sequence: The Genius of Modern Poetry* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1983). Their discernment of internal dynamics in sequential poetry is profound, but they introduce serious error in their views, and such a mixture of truth and error is dangerous, as one may easily swallow poison if it is covered or mixed with nutritious and tasty fare.

In their Forward, R & G say – concerning the formulation of aesthetic theory – “Relevant theory grows out of direct engagement and sufficient empathy with literary works” (the rest of their quotes herein are likewise from the Forward). While this maxim is sound, and their insights into the nature of the modern poetic sequence keen, they have adopted the postmodern critical approach, the eventual result of which is the dehumanization of poetry. This they did as early as 1983. It is now – decades later – the fashion of the day in letters to declare (as we have seen) the demise of epic, dramatic, narrative poetry. (This would apply to all literature, not just poetry – and it would make the Bible, alleged to use outmoded thought-forms and culturally limited worldview presuppositions, irrelevant to modern thought – and it behooves us to be aware of and counter such assertions.) In what follows we will look from the “ant’s-eye view” at the effect of PM on poetry.

Poetry, R & G say, is no longer to be a poet’s voice lifted in song, as such might be contaminated by “externally imposed narrative, dramatic, or logical structuring.” “A poem,” they insist, “is not a literal communication but a structure of affect...” and “what counts in poetry is its dynamics, not its alleged subject matter.” This is the dehumanization of poetry, its reduction to mere “units of affect” where what is crucial is but “the emotional charge of the *language*.” When the perception dominates the consciousness that there is no order to history, either of the human race or of the lives of its

individuals, then the relevance of “voice,” “character,” “drama,” and “plot” must give way to a poetry stripped of personality and history, leaving but moments of affect and awareness which move by their own internal logic, by “successive reorientations of awareness and modulations of feeling.” R & G admit that “this evolution produces an ever more elusive and forbidding poetry,” but it does not seem to trouble them that poetry is now to be – in their view – out of the hands of the people and solely in the domain of the intellectuals and literati – those trained to delve into the obscure, or that without inherent meaning.

The value of the work, *The Modern Poetic Sequence*, is in its focusing upon the affective dynamics in and between poems, giving them a coherence based upon internal movement and vitality rather than external form, thus laying the foundation for long poetic works, without using the tool of formal meter. The disservice they do the art consists in their denial that there is any meaning in personhood (and in its art) except for random intense moments of feeling and/or awareness, or in history except for insignificant, purposeless events.

As Francis Schaeffer indicated in his gem of a book, *the God who is there* [sic], if postmodernists assert there is no Biblical God, and the cosmos is accidental and meaningless, it follows they would find no meaning and significance in the skin-bags of chemicals they see humans as. But God is, and we see in the light of His revelation, and would shed this light far and wide.

Do not be afraid – *do not be intimidated* – by those secular visionaries holding up their various banners championing Meaninglessness, Incommunicability, the Illusion of personality, the Demise of reason, the Absence of universal truth, and so on. We are authentic spiritual children of the infinite-personal God; we need to learn to speak as such in the midst of a blind and mad world. Consider: created in His image and likeness, and in accordance with His decree, we are given to possess certain inalienable qualities, namely, a) “immortality of the soul,” or as John Murray put it, “indivisible and indestructible, immortal subsistence” (*Collected Writings*, Vol. 2, p. 21) in either Heaven or Hell, depending on whether we are His or not; b) full moral responsibility for our choices and actions. (May I lay the blame on

Him or any other creature for my disobedience to His commandments? I may not.) c) With regard to our sentience: by God's decree we are indestructible souls having unending subsistence in the consciousness we now have. From His promises we children are given infallible assurance He will save and keep our souls in this life and forever; the *Westminster Confession* (III. iv) phrases it, by God's decree we are "unchangeably designed" to this fair destiny. There is an absoluteness to this status. He has immutably set us in the safety of His Son. Notwithstanding this wondrous gift, in this phase of our existence we are in training as moral agents absolutely responsible for our choices and actions. (Thank God for the precious cleansing blood that redeems our moral failures!)

We are partakers of His divine nature through the promises by which He has united Himself with us and separated us from the world, delivering us from the power of darkness in His death and resurrection, translating us into the kingdom of God's Son. But note, our possession of His qualities will always be of a lesser and derivative nature. We will possess them only by virtue of "possessing" Him – not having them in and of ourselves, i.e., not intrinsically.

Still and all, in the face of those who look upon me as merely a "skin-bag of chemicals and water" with no inherent significance whatever, soon-to-be-refuse in a later-to-be-extinguished solar system, shall I not assert my royal and absolute status as a member of God's family in an unending kingdom? I am most conscious of the absolutes that pertain to my existence and my status, and if I rightly distinguish these lesser – derived – absolutes from the glorious and eternal absolutes of the Almighty God, I will not err by ascribing to humans those qualities that belong solely to Him.

These qualities given us by the Creator when He made us in His image, and after His likeness, are they not among the very qualities that, in Tolkien's term, afford us to be sub-creators?

And thus I speak,

One mustn't let the image take

over
voice

nor language matrix
heart

the aesthetic
is this:

absolute sentience
wears words
as crystalline structure
diamond

spirit and mind
in sync

the ontologic truth
whole and nothing but
man

transparent
and irrefutable.

This is the only poem remaining from a (now lost) series to postmodern critics. It is an affirmation of personhood as irrefutable and absolute reality. We are not the negligible things it is asserted we are, but brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus, and children of the Father of light, sons and daughters who shall never perish, and who shall be actually like our Elder Brother, for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). Given these wondrous realities it is clear I may assert I am among the highest of “things” – only personality made in the image of God can make this claim – and what is our poetry but being solidified into language?

Williams and Pound of another time...and yet...Teachers in the school of poetics...yea...teachers in human consciousness, the *poiesis* of, masters of consciousness-as-reality, poetry solid as

any jewel, full as any heart. (From, *The Lightning Herald: Un Journal De Poètes Terribles*, p. 72).

Interwoven in the matter of “what is personhood” is the issue of what is language, and particularly, *what is poetry*, quintessential language? We, as emissaries of the King of Heaven and earth, endowed with His spiritual power, appreciate a view of poetry such as Charles Olsen sought to develop in one of its aspects; to him “the poem itself must, at all points, be a high-energy construct and, at all points, an energy-discharge” (cited in Louis Simpson’s *Three on the Tower: The Lives and Works of T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams*) and to us it is indeed that. Does someone object that these are poets of the world we are building upon? Solomon said, “...the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just” (Prov. 13:22). And their labors in the language are indeed treasure, by which we may glorify God and win the hearts of men and women. The words that come out of our mouths – and pens – carry life and death in them (Prov. 18:21). The very energy and truth of God may be in them.

The Global Arena of Consciousness – and the Story beneath all other stories

Let postmodernists condemn and critique; we are **living** in the Story that continues underneath all stories – some of these latter reflecting it dimly as mirage-images – and if we excel in our craft and in our spirits, our words will ring with the richness of truth, and contain a robust unearthly light, which, God willing, may illumine and touch even our adversaries’ hearts.

Do we have a vision of – I mean, do we *see* – what is going on in various realms of the world today, in the spiritual regions, the “world of letters” and the arts, the wars, the world of nations, politics, liberation movements, and the virtual world of online global awareness (to name but a few aspects of life on this planet)? A term I use to designate the gestalt of this reality is

the Global Arena of Consciousness. In this arena voices are lifted up proclaiming the supremacy of their visions of reality, and the postmodernists are but one of many camps vying for the mastery.

Can you envision it? In it stand the spirits – the very voices, words, awareness – of men and women from the beginnings of recorded history, those whose words were spoken into the air upon the earth, whose voices did not fall to the ground till they had eventually lighted on a page and were kept for ages of humans yet to come. All the poets, seers, prophets, magicians, occultists, etc. who had their words or thoughts saved in some written form now exist in the arena. In some sectors it may appear to be a battleground of sorcerers.

You might imagine the kinds of people who strive for the mastery, seeking to have their visions of *what is real* dominate – by virtue of their power – other competing visions. Not only the various sorts of seers contend, but economists, politicians, psychiatrists and psychologists, musicians, singers, even the mad. You who are seers (by the word of God) will appreciate how demonic spirit-entities seek to gain a hearing through humans who “channel” them much as mediums did a century ago. Anyone who thinks they KNOW something – or has an agenda to further – takes a shot on the world stage. Be assured that the Global Arena of Consciousness *is* the world stage, although not every lifted voice gets a *wide* hearing; in fact, very few do, and those by dint of either their genius (or perhaps even cunning), their political/military power, or by the force in their inner being. There may be other factors that get people heard globally, such as atrocious acts or other major evil doings. And the Lord, of course, places what He wants where and when He wants it.

The great writers of earlier ages, for example, and many artists and writers of the present day are in the Arena. Tolkien is well known – *and loved* – in it. Our political leaders – our recent presidents, and the leaders of other nations – are all in this arena, for as our lives hinge upon the doing (and undoing) of nations, so we listen to the voices of those who wield power, and effect events worldwide. Many also listen to those teachers who purport to

see what exists in the hidden realms, the realms called by some the spirit-world, or the place where other beings than ourselves exist, and where we ourselves will be fully conscious when this life is over. Not all believe such teachers, but they are among the most heeded and sought out of those voices on the world stage. Some have not lived on this earth for centuries, and some not for *millennia*, but they speak as loudly as those living now. For even in ancient times, before ever there were computers – or electricity – the words of some notable people were committed to memory and to writing. One might say that in the Arena of Consciousness are vast repositories of voices, many not belonging to those living in this realm now, but which may be called up and activated by the living.

This global arena of consciousness – and the activity within it – is a reality we are all a part of. This is part of a metanarrative that cannot be denied. In this great ocean of collective consciousness it will be *words of power* that prevail. There will be words attended by political and military power, and there will be those containing spiritual power. Does anyone think the Lord of the world will not speak into this arena, through certain He has raised up to this end?

Are you a visionary? A seer schooled by the Son of God, well acquainted with His word, an experienced veteran of the satanic wars, an accomplished craftsperson in the ways of language? Have you lived a life in the spirit unseen by natural eye, a life of adventure, suffering, joy, loss, gain, ignominious failure, renewal, a life of love and spiritual combat? Do you have a story to tell? A visionary adventure, nonfiction? Hold your course, hold steady and true. Well-crafted stories that are part of the grand Story slowly unfolding in this world beneath the radar of those without spirit-sight will soon become highly desired by editors who realize their value.

★ ★ ★

ANOTHER OF MY FAVORED UNGODLY SEERS

Another of my favored ungodly seers, Herman Hesse, has bitten the dust (in my eyes), along with Henry Miller. In his essay, “The Brothers Karamasov or The Downfall of Europe”, I see him reading into Dostoevsky his own mystical chaos, and his own spiritual darkness, full of fantastical ideas which appear to him as light and the beacons of the new freedom. Dostoevsky did indeed envision a new sort of being, with a new consciousness, free from all the trappings of Christian morality and sainthood – the influence of God and His word on man – and for such a one everything is possible, for there is no good or evil save what we say it is. But in seeing this new man, Dostoevsky did not cut him off from God and Christ, but he existed in His presence, and Christ called him to Himself and eternal life, spiritual desperado that he was.

Hesse, like Miller, expresses the labyrinthine ways of his own consciousness and assumes that his words are precursors of a new sanity free from the restraints of the Gospel of Christ – this Christ whom they assume is a mystical genius creature like unto themselves – and he thinks he sows light, in a new avant-garde being they hope to illumine with their visionary insanity born in sorceries and madness under the influence of the demonic, for they both partook of those potions, Miller and Hesse.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE BEAT POETS

The thing about the Beats—and I owe much of who I am to them, especially Kerouac (and Bob Dylan, though he'd be a younger brother to them)—is they were all swept up in the wave of sorcery (what Corso called “those eye-expanding chemicals” in the poem “Elegiac Feelings American” part 2) which poured into our lives in the sixties here in the states and then on into the entire world, we little thinking what was taking place as we so blithely pursued our paths. In my own book, I write of *its* poet (one year younger than Dylan),

“As the years passed, and he entered onto various spiritual paths, his vision grew. He began to understand the ways and reality of sorcery, though by no means grasping its significance to the world's evolving zeitgeist, and its transformation by the massive stealth invasion through the inner gateway...

“Although he didn't see it for many decades, more was going on in the psychedelic revolution than anyone imagined—occult happenings that would impact ‘the spirit of the age’ come the 21st century like pounding blows on the body and soul of humankind...

“He had no idea when he was first initiated into the sixties counterculture . . . what he was really participating in: the initial global-scale opening of a dimensional gateway between the realm of demons and the collective consciousness of humankind by means of these psychedelic drugs.”

Love these forerunners of the vision of our times though I do (and I have witnessed of Christ to some of them, even Ferlinghetti who at 96 still lives), my first loyalty is to the Son of God my King—I am *His* poet. For He has said of that Babylon of the end, of the judgment due her, “for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived” (Rev 18:23). And this sorcery continues and expands apace in *our* day. We have pop rock operas of Revelation instead of its vision discerning the pounding catastrophes about to hit clearly explained to us, even as our brothers and sisters in other lands spill their blood for His name’s sake. I labor to get my book out, a depth-charge of awareness in the sea of collective consciousness which is filled with deception, hype and jive.

Gregory Corso’s words in his poem “The American Way” are heart-rending:

...O the awful frailty of things
...O the sad sad awfulness of it all
...I can only sense some mad vast conspiracy!

And then speaking of the death of the “American Way”

There is no getting out of the Way
The only way out is the death of the Way
And what will kill the Way but a new consciousness
Something great and new and wonderful must happen
to free man from this beast

It is a beast we can not see or even understand
For it be the condition of our minds
God how close to science fiction it all seems!
As if some power from another planet
incorporated itself in the minds of us all
It could well be!

For as I live I swear America does not seem like America
to me

He refers to the satanic, for he was really a man of vision, even though of the world. The Beats did the best they could to sound an alarm, but they stumbled at the Rock of offense—the saints' testimony was pretty poor in their days—I suffered from lack of it too. May *our* testimony not be poor in *these* days!

Once I followed Kerouac and Dylan
on the open road
but meeting Jesus there
left my two friends to follow Him

the highway of holiness He blazed
leads to the City of Glory
but the other road to gloom and pain
where there's no coming back again.

I belonged to two overlapping communities, the beats – the San Francisco poets mainly – and the sixties counterculture, being a little younger than the beats, born in '42.

Around 1970, when I was 28, I ran into Allen Ginsberg in a diner in the East Village, asked if I could join him at his table, and talked with him about Jesus Christ, Messiah of the Jews (being one myself), though I don't think he heeded the message. Earlier, in college, when I read *Howl* in a laundromat, I wept—I esteemed him as a poet and person.

I owe much to the Beats—Allen, Jack, Greg, Ferlinghetti, Patchen, etc, though Patchen wasn't really a Beat but he was there—for their poetics, and early on for the vision-questing.

Though I don't think it should be overlooked that Allen, and Greg, and Ferlinghetti were fierce enemies of Christ and His gospel (though Lawrence is still alive, and there's yet hope for his soul), and the drugs they used (as did I in those days) were the *pharmakeia* (sorceries) strongly warned against in the Book of Revelation, and which have caused terrible havoc in the collective consciousness of humankind over the last half century.

I'd be extremely interested to learn if there is any info on Kerouac's thoughts of Christ (from his Catholic background?) in the last days of his life. I well remember the line in *Subterraneans*, "...O God the whole host and foolish illusion and entire rigmarole and madness that we erect in the place of onelove..." I wonder what he was thinking of there. Bob Dylan?—I have the sense he still walks with Christ.

Much as I appreciate the Beats for their poetry, their places in the culture of our age, and their hearts, I am mindful of the children of the living God in Christ and their precarious status in a society which hates the things of God, and is growing to ferociously hate His people.

I am also mindful of the poets and writers of the Everlasting Kingdom who write in Christ's name, and seek to further an aesthetic which supports them in both the art and the prophetic stance.

A little about Walt Whitman, as he was an inspiration to the Beats, particularly Ginsberg. It was 1965, hitchhiking around Mexico, and then into Belize (British Honduras in those days) and later into Guatemala, renting a little shack on stilts on the beach, and paying for meals in a poor family's home—that the only two books I took with me were the Bible and Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. I don't know why I took the Bible (some instinct, perhaps), but *Leaves*... I know, as I loved Whitman and his poetry. He was a companion and friend to my heart.

When I met Jesus of Nazareth on the road in 1968, I left off walking with Whitman, and various mystics, and set off with Him who was the answer to all my seeking.

I came to learn that Walt was a true antichrist figure, not as in blatantly against Him but rather seeking to take His place, thinking himself an illumined one; see his poem in *Leaves...*, “Chanting The Square Deific” where he thinks he incorporates in himself the spiritual archetypes of the world’s religions, including Satan in the third stanza, while in the fourth and last the Holy Spirit (“Santa Spirita”), and in the last lines assuming himself that Spirit. Little wonder Richard Maurice Bucke in his book, *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*, states Whitman is one of the finest examples of “spiritual illumination”. Whitman scholars, and spiritual seekers, know this.

Walt said, “argue not concerning God”, but our Lord Christ says to us through the writings of Jude, “ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). We must even contend with these great poets if they err from the way that leads to everlasting life in the Paradise of God.

And insofar as Ginsberg emulated Walt, he sought after both the poetic grandeur, inner freedom, and supposed illumined consciousness of his mentor.

I think it’s wonderful when Christ’s poets are into these American classics—so few Christians are—as to me they are the gems of our literature, telling their hearts and their stories in the manner Ferlinghetti spoke of in *Poetry As Insurgent Art*: “Bring together again the telling of a tale and the living voice”. And we need such real voices in these times of fiction, hype, and jive, to get a sense of real lives and hearts, however dark, as Ferlinghetti again said, “Be a teller of great tales, even the darkest.”

Yet, at the same time, having drunk deeply of them and learned what they have to teach, then, in loyalty to Christ, we must “take forth the precious from the vile...clean from unclean...and holy from unholy” (Jer 15:19; Lev 10:10).

I think those who lift up these poets do the art—and the artists among the saints—good service bringing these dark treasures back into the light of day, but we should always have a mind to the nuances of the sacred and the

profane, the former the realm of which we are headed for to an eternity of beauty. Alas, the latter heads to another realm, that of misery.

★ ★ ★

The Legacy of the Beats

They gave us poetry with a living voice, and visionary concern for the human condition, as did their father, Walt Whitman.

They also—in the midst of accomplishing the above—glamorized sorcery (the use of psychedelic drugs), precipitating the rapid demonization and consequent utter depravation of the human condition, through the continued sorcerous use of their children, the sixties counterculture, who exported it into the entire world.

Not a legacy that shall stand honored before the beatific vision.

★ ★ ★

A REMEMBRANCE

*Half a century later
a different world
that glory gone forever.*

Sitting in Starbucks in Astoria, some music that sounded like Simon and Garfunkel sent me back in time to a different era, a remembrance of a different consciousness, where there was a peace and glory in our hearts and in the air. Yes, we see now it was a *fatal* illusion—a counterfeit of a better state—but it was real nonetheless, and mightily tangible.

I am talking about the highs we experienced. Not only was our awareness heightened in a high-velocity psychic realm, but this consciousness was shared by *millions*—I am not exaggerating—filled with profound hope for the future of humankind. Nor just for the future, but for the present, as it was the wonder of the glory in the living moment that thrilled us and won our love for the path we were on.

For the most part we were mellow then, at peace within (yes, there were small pockets of evil and madness scattered around in this dangerous paradise, but far from us it seemed) and we were not alone, but part of a new tribe—the Human Tribe we often termed ourselves—and the heart of it was the new consciousness.

There was a mellowness (a key word!) and an openness to those around us, especially those who bore the marks of the tribe, and an excitement and joy in discoveries abounding in all spheres of life. The consciousness—there

were basically two types: the acid and mescaline sort of highs, and the grass, both staples, or, as we were being taught, *sacraments* of the new holiness we were becoming aware of. I think this was what caught our imaginations and our love: a sense of the *holiness* of life, and of relationships—of the *sacredness* of life, and of our friendships. We were no longer ordinary, mundane creatures, for there was a mystical beauty that was god- and goddess-like. We shone with the glory of angelic beings, creatures possessed of majesty and dignity one might read of in tales.

I could go on in this vein, but I desist. The beauty of those times led many of us to seek for the deity hidden in the Spirit that animated us and all things, and we went to the East in search of it, and thus began the New Age spiritualities, seeking such without the drugs.

Now, here in New York City in September of 2016, I think back on those days when it was a joy to be in community with friends, and one could find such communities all across the land. But here in the present the world has become hard, and cold—where warm, honest friends are few, and hard to come by. The world—even here in Queens, NY—is become once again a wilderness of hearts, as dangerous as any jungle or mountain forest with its beasts, the beasts of humankind worse than the animals. For the joyful consciousness we knew back then was a cruel illusion foisted upon us—an entire generation!—and a snare of such magnitude we reel under it even now, and of which I write a lot in these pages (mostly earlier in the section, “Babylon”). We were lured in by the experienced pleasantness and sense of supernatural glory suffused within and without our selves by demonic spirits counterfeiting the Holy Spirit of Christ. Like the labels given to attractive but evil men and women, “handsome devil” and “pretty poison”, we fell for the sorceries we were told were sacraments of the holy. Sorcery and its potions! Who would have known it was real—and deadly?

Our world has changed through this snare we entered, and we—the once mellow and tender—increasingly hear of atrocities committed every day, our hearts calloused by necessity lest we fall to pieces by the anguish and pain our fellows across the earth endure daily.

Those of us who have found the spiritual life that is in Christ and *His* community walk the balance of having nerves of steel and hearts of tender mercy. We are on guard continually, alert to our own self-centeredness, that it not hinder us from loving others, alert to demonic influence everywhere in the culture—indeed, in the very psychic air—and alert to the hostility of our fellow humans, as the message of Christ and the coming Kingdom of God is not loved by most, seeing as He calls all humankind to cease from evil—the breaking of His commandments of life and of love—and we are reviled for heralding it.

These are the reminiscences of the Poet transported back half a century by a tune in Starbucks.

★ ★ ★

LOVE FOR LGBTQIA PERSONS

I know it may seem otherwise to you, but let me, please, tell you my heart. It may well be you had some who were Christian in your families whom you deeply loved, and were loved by, and know of what I am going to speak, or maybe not. Whatever the case, why I speak to you is that you may learn of the things that are to come, especially after we die, and also of the holy God who exists.

There is coming a day, both dreaded and longed for, when all sin shall be judged and put away. For example, those who persecuted you, tortured you, killed you, and showed you no care – should these escape judgment? Should there not be justice in the universe? And judgment is coming, and, truth be told, who can call themselves so blameless (including me) as to be exempt from it? Yet there is forgiveness for those who sin, turn from it, and cleave to God's mercy in Jesus Christ.

What "sin"? Sin is any transgression of the Law of God, or any want of conformity to it. In many places in this law – found in God's word to us, the Bible – it is clearly said that all sexual relations outside of marriage between a man and woman are sin. This encompasses all heterosexual extramarital relations and all homosexual relations. God says He created humankind to live and flourish according to His design, and His laws guide us in that. To rebel against His laws is sin. Those who sin cannot enter into the everlasting kingdom of His love, but will go where the prince of rebels, the devil, is to go (along with his demons), which is Hell, and the lake of fire – a place of eternal anguish and torment.

It is an act of love – though it be decried and condemned – to talk to you of these things. If I did not, when we both stood before the great Judge on that day you would be in your rights to say to me, “Why did you not have the courage and care to tell me this was coming, seeing as you knew it?” And you would be in your rights to curse me before the Judge for my cowardice and hardness of heart in this terrible sin of omission. Of depriving you of the opportunity to forsake the path of destruction you were on and seek mercy, forgiveness, and eternal life, instead of the eternal death you would face.

As I said, not that I am blameless – far from it! – but the difference between us is that I heard of the Saviour and found forgiveness and newness of life in His love. I found that, instead of an eternal hell of God’s anger and the devil’s company (as well as the company of all the wicked of humankind), I was transported to a realm of mercy and life and love, where I anticipate a new body (also called a resurrection – or glorified – body) and life on a new earth, rid of all toxins, evil, suffering, pain, sorrow, yes, even rid of death. And should I not tell you of these things? Should I not tell you of the love of Jesus Christ who paid for all our sins on the cross, as He bore God’s wrath against rebellion and evil-doing while He took our place under judgment so that we would not have to suffer it? This is called His “substitutionary atonement” – that is, He took our place, and suffered so we would not have to. Me, I have done great wickedness in my life, and His sacrificial death for me availed in God’s eyes, and I am forgiven all!

I know it is hard to give up the things – especially the pleasures, loves, and autonomy – we delight in, but it is well said a greater love has compulsive power over lesser loves, and the love of Jesus Christ the Creator of heaven and earth easily replaces the lesser loves and pleasures of this present world, particularly those which violate the Commandments of Life and Love. There really is, as the old saying goes, “a heaven to gain, and a hell to shun.”

I know some say we should be silenced, but we will not be silenced so long as we live, for the love of God constrains us to speak. You may call what

we are about “hate” —but in reality what would be “hate” would be to keep silent about the awful danger you will face in the world to come.

For the love of Christ we speak, and for the love of you we do not remain silent. We have been doing this for over twenty centuries, bearing witness to the truth – and we shall till the end of the age.

★ ★ ★

THE DARKNESS OF MODERN POETRY

*...and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:
they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place...*

— Moses, Exodus 10

...the poet, and the painter far behind his rightful time....

— Bob Dylan

A proverb is attributed to Euripides, “Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.” While we know there is but one God, the saying yet has merit, for in our own Scripture it is written of those who “received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved...***God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie...***” (2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11). That is, they get what they desire — in full measure.

This is a terrible thing I say, for I speak concerning our fellow humans who are also our peers in the arts. Were life to continue on somewhat as we presently know it for untold years to come, there were no urgent problem; yet this is not the case: those who know the words of God realize there is a day hastening upon us that shall catch multitudes unaware, a day of judgment when every soul shall give account to Him who has power to send souls to “outer darkness” and a “lake of fire” or to a Paradise of glory.

Given that *many* of our contemporaries shall perish in this eternal state *soon* cannot but upset the “business as usual” mode we generally operate in.

Again I am writing about the arts — poetry and literature in particular — in relation to this reality. No matter the perishing do not believe it, we *know* it. In a sense different than Carolyn Forché’s this is nonetheless *a poetry of witness*. We bare witness *to* a generation, *our* generation. We bear witness *of* the Saviour of the world, and *His* vision of what is now and what is to come.

Some time ago I spent a while at a poetry site — a workshop — which, on the one hand, did me good, as I found myself having to tighten up my language and speak with a new clarity, but, on the other, did me ill, for I found myself in a world — simply *the* world, really — where the things of Christ’s kingdom were ridiculed and loathed, and where words and concepts used to depict them were deemed cliché or delusional. My very perceptions as a spiritual being were mocked as akin to a grade “B” movie. This type of invalidation, although worldview-based, purported to be genuine criticism with objective aesthetic criteria. In fact, this was a type of what I’d call, “worldview imperialism,” the intent of which was the suppression of a differing culture, that being, in this case, the Biblical — founded upon the Old and New Testaments. Were existence and the universe as unbelief says, it would not be suppression, but merely affirming what is — and the appropriate debunking of erroneous vision; I suppose this conflict of worldviews shall continue until there will be no mistake concerning what actually exists.

In the literary subculture of my sojourn poetry has become more a *commodity* used to gain personal recognition than an art-form used for the benefit of humankind. To tout *our* glory is the great end. Technical skill is valued over character and vision, a development novelist and poet Herman Hesse urgently warned against in his prophetic vision of the arts vis-a-vis the general culture in *The Glass Bead Game*, which earned him the Nobel Prize. In the proper balance character and vision are equal to such requisite skills. Without a code guiding the heart skill may be put to ill use. This is as true in the arts as in the sciences.

Overall I'd say my experience was positive, as I came away from it with some new poems I liked (most of which I did not post there), and my eyes opened to truths in the arts *that pertain to the new creation, that spiritual realm* — I could easily call it “state of consciousness” (being in Jesus Christ’s consciousness) — *existing here and now in this new world in its embryonic stage, not yet “fleshed out.”* These truths “in the arts” are no different than truth generally in the Never-ending Kingdom: There are those who will hear and embrace the message heralding it, and those who will despise and shun it. So, even though I term the experience positive — and I must say some of the posters and critics there benefited me and sharpened my skills, and I came to care for some — I was subjected to such disdain and ostracism it profoundly soured me to the art of poetry and literature, crafts I have long loved! And so I stayed away from poetry in general for months. I’ve been working instead on a paper concerning — and an online discussion of pertinent issues relative to — the textual criticism of the Old and New Testaments, another field I am devoted to.

Yet recently, reading something Greg Wolfe (editor of *Image*, the arts magazine) said, I was moved to return. My aversion to the aversion of others is over.

What I have seen in the world of modern poetry is but the hostility of the world *in general* to the God of Heaven and earth. I ponder what it was like for Lord Jesus when He walked among those who were reputed to be the seers of the people He came through, the Jews. Although they were said to be seers of the things of Heaven, some of them — particularly the religious machine — hated Him, and eventually set themselves to kill Him (not that these unfaithful Jews — for there were many faithful — were worse than the non-Jews; the Romans, representing the nations of the world, hated Him also, and were party to His murder). Daily He walked among them and suffered their ridicule and growing animosity. And He reminds us, “The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20). Poets and writers of the Lord, do not expect to be loved by the world. If you speak to it, be of a mind to call out His people from it, for He said, “Everyone that is of the truth hears My voice.” (John 18:37)

The writers of the world particularly did not like when I called them to account; they purport to be seers, but are blind, they purport to sing, but their music is surface tinkling with no heart; and if there *is* heart at all, it is that of Autonomous Man, who claims no need of God. Oh yes, there are great talents among them — greater than my own — but they are wasted, as the proverbial “jewel of gold in a swine’s snout” (Proverbs of Solomon 11:22a).

And so I will enter a series of poems here on these things, and some comments. If ever it becomes a crime to be a true Christian, let it not be said there was not enough evidence to convict me, in whatever realm of the world it be, the arts included!

★ ★ ★

I have seen great gifts in poets wash out to sea
being useless in that they were made for;
I have seen a nation undone from within, its poets silent
in the face of coming catastrophe
or blind, not seeing the tsunami offshore
about to hit — not of water but billowing flame
pouring over the world when the keep is rent
holding outraged Justice’s final say.
It’s such a drag, they exclaim
in their insular world, to hear these things,
while the roar from the sea is growing,
that fathomless deep seers name eternity.

★ ★ ★

Poets who cannot see into hell or Heaven
having no eyes past the senses
who cannot tell the realms beyond
what humans naturally know

are not poets as the seers of old
treasured by their peoples
and feared, vates and bards keeping alive
that knowledge without which men died.
The ones who cannot see are another breed.

★ ★ ★

IGNORING PROPHECY

In ancient times
bards sang the feats of kings
and of battles, heroics, and blood
sometimes freely given – for honor, for love
self-preservation flung to the winds
an encumbering cloak
changed for the bright linen of saints

and seers delved into the hidden
meaning of things written by prophets
who saw and heard outside of time
on the open field of omniscience
in the mind of the One who sends his sayers
with wisdom concerning the course of events
that praises might ring above the plaints.

But now, we know few bards and seers,
few singers as of old, few learned
in things that count, discerning
gems from glass, poets now unwilling to hear
wisdom that separates from the crowd,
approval from peers the honor sought, and acclaim,
few for their truth willing to be burned.

Can it be that among the ranks
of the world's finest singers

prophecy's lodes are not mined
but demeaned, and in their conceits
ignored? So be it! We give thanks
You have given the lowly to be bringers,
O wise King, of Your astonishing feats.

★ ★ ★

I look about and see no bard
lifting an alarm
of disaster just below the skyline
already reaping multitudes
in its grim scythe

Perhaps it is that few can see
so far, do not know the harm
about to strike, vast and certain,
nor the place of safety
above the field of havoc, lifted high

If poets will not sing it
or cannot – from poor sight –
we are in trouble
and our art, both seized
in fatal plight.

★ ★ ★

TRIBAL MYTHS

may be a proper tag
when talking of Arthur
or Middle Earth,
but we talk history
speaking of a crown

from ancient lineage
and supernatural birth

of course worldview may screen
facts from truth,
calling ancient records
myths, not allowing
God in his universe;
but it remains, the crown
himself was actually seen.

* * *

As I see it, the situation in contemporary culture — and in the realm of its arts in particular — is desperate. I realize that to the natural eye this may not seem to be the case at all. But I do not see with the natural eye, I see with the eye of faith's vision — that is, with full confidence and trust in what Lord Jesus has told us, and that it will come to pass exactly as He said.

It appears that most of the gifted voices — be they poets or writers — are not in the service of Heaven, but of the false light in which Autonomous Man lives and hopes and strives, which “light” has become a thick — palpable — darkness, an oppressive force the spiritual man or woman feels as surely as if it were an near-impenetrable barrier — a “force-field” — protecting a forbidden and menacing territory. I say “near-impenetrable” as the Spirit of Light may cut through it.

On the one hand I see this great company of singers and story-tellers swept away in a flash flood of devouring flame as the very last of the company of the redeemed bows the knee to the holy One, the very final saint having come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). As the water and work of Noah were laughed to scorn, so is the flame and saving Ark of believers in the end of days.

On the other hand I see a small company who walk in the light of Heaven — faithful in love to its King — and these are *His* singers and tellers. And

the saying of their Lord is on this wise: “for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have” (Luke 8:18). So they in the world who were not accounted much, their songs and tellings often mocked, perhaps their talents “smaller” than the worldly great, *yet* prized beyond comprehension by the One to whom they stay true, these He shall exalt to be the honored singers and tellers of *His* realm, which wondrous kingdom shall endure untold ages.

What is upon *us* is to pursue excellence of craft, with profundity and clarity of vision. To hold up the vision of the sacred, that is, our humanness, in its struggles, pains, and joys, as it lives in the care and glory of Him who redeemed it, at a price we shall never fathom, coming as it does from a wellspring of passionate love eternity cannot exhaust. Can we tell of this? Do we know it? It is a high calling, even if unacknowledged by the wide world. Those whom He calls will see the light you shine. The light of His glory is the beauty that shall save the world.

* * *

Into the tame world of modern poetry
taken with its own music
powers from another realm wreak havoc
picking us off one by one
our minds, our souls, and at the last the flesh
bites the dust, “for dust you are
and to dust you shall return” are the words
of earned curse, sentence of death

our vaunted poets of the day, “antennae of the race”
see nothing, decimated
— if you can believe, while we sing —
by predators in the midst
invisibility-cloaked, like in the flicks,
laughing while we die, until
— in the subtle realm, eyes on our captors —

we see how we've been taken

A dispassionate look at this thing:
we sold ourselves in our sin
out of the care of our heavenly Friend
into another's dread hand
and horde of malevolent spirits;
our own race made this free choice
consigning us to an ongoing slaughter,
but one way of sure escape.

An ambassador from the Saviour,
I suggest humility,
for he offers repeal of the sentence,
forgiveness of sins, and life
eternal, as He suffered in the place
of whoever will believe
in Him, a gift from God, *His life for theirs*
– a King's ransom for sinners

I realize this stuff is passé
for those who are perishing
while they mock the gift of mercy,
but His sheep will hear His voice
even in the din of the world
for He knows how to call them.
This is no time for artful poems,
poets of the age to come.

★ ★ ★

The Age To Come

*Time now to open your mouths
with a new open speech...*

*Where are Whitman's wild children,
where the great voices speaking out...*

–from Ferlinghetti’s “Populist Manifesto”

In the age to come where the world is filled
not with magic but the stronger enchantment
of glory that is the natural life
in a supernatural world – where God actually walks
with us – to use plain speech
in this realm is to fill it with wonders
thought cliché in the dying creation
of old, of robust sight denuded,
whose language is a bucket with holes
no living water in it.

Yet this “age to come” is present now
in the songs and vision of its poets
who oddly are mocked – the blind seeing only death
in their words, while those who see, joy
at the “new open speech” cried for
come, not from children of Whitman
but on tongues of the singers of Christ
who show the wonders of new heavens and earth,
by God’s wisdom death, pain, tears gone – *no more!* –
His daughters and sons of pristine light, in holy mirth.

★ ★ ★

This past Sunday (circ. 2010) I spoke on the Day of Judgment, that staging area for the two Destinies, and on the Day of God, His day of finally consummating the marriage to His beloved, that joy for which He endured the cross. We tend to think of God as “the great Stoic in the sky” — forever unruffled, unperturbed — too deep to be moved with great affect that can be seen. But we will see Him as He is in that joyous day; listen to Him:

The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save,
He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He
will joy over thee with singing.

—Zephaniah 3:17

I have been moved by many singers in my life; but when I hear the Son of God sing His love songs to His bride.... And when I hear our Father sing of His joy in His children.... Ahhh, what a life, world without end.

As I have said, there will be poets in that kingdom, and singers, and music. Do not lose heart.

★ ★ ★

THE CONSOLATION OF UNPUBLISHED CHRISTIAN POETS

you who cleave to the straight and narrow
fundamentals of the faith,
to the principles of holiness,
of true communion with God
through our Lord and Savior
Jesus the Christ,
and are spurned by the editors

as too narrow, or “fundamentalist”
– of whom the world is not worthy,
truth be told – heed this then
your sweet consolation and reward:
it may be you shall die, many
or most of you, without acknowledgment
or recognition, unsung, unpublished

no matter the excellence of your craft
long years perfecting your skill....
consider then
the brevity of this life, this training ground
fitting and preparing you for your station
in a kingdom where artist-seers shall be honored
in the presence of His Majesty

especially those who sing

His praises while on the Dark Planet;
so do not grow weary or disheartened
at rejection, only continue
and strive for excellence,
for your day will come, your gold purified
to be the coin of the Realm.

And this kingdom we hear so much of
will be actual, and we in it,
no tale or legend of earth approaching it
in glory or thrilling adventure,
and you who are friends and poets of the King
will be ablaze in the brilliance
of His presence as – even now – you rejoice and sing.

★ ★ ★

PART IV

A POET ARISES IN ISRAEL
AN IN-HOUSE AFFAIR

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PREFACE

I have held this book back many years. It is now time for it to see the light of day (being part of the larger work, *A Great And Terrible Love: A Visionary Journey from Woodstock's Sorceries to God's Paradise*). With the gained perspective of years it needed some adding to.

Of course for a Poet to stand among the people of Israel—that Israel which cleaves to its King, Messiah, *as well* the children of that apostate Jewry who spurned Him—and speak truly to both camps without fear of man, this must needs be—simultaneously—an act of war and of love. The prophetic office in Israel closed when the last prophet, John son of Zebedee (Matthew 10:2), finished writing the apocalyptic vision and prophecy given him around 95 CE—the culmination of all Old and New Covenant prophecy—so what *I* write is not “immediate” prophecy given me, yet as a student of prophecies the prophetic word of those who came before us is in my mouth. Paul the apostle of Messiah put it like this, “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16), and John was instructed by the angel, “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10). The word of our prophets is precious to us who heed them.

I say this is war because of the tearing down of spiritual/intellectual strong holds many have invested their lives building and defending. To err in this area of theology and vision allows actual blood to be spilled, *much* blood, precious blood. We Jews know this first hand, the Arabs also. But the Christian—and some of the Jewish—West do not; it mostly just sits in its easy

chairs in front of the TV and drinks in the fruit of its unseeing. A storm coming will turn these chairs over.

I do not know how many of my own family have perished because of the blind and blinding rabbinate, and when I say “perished” I mean in the prophesied Gehenna of eternal Hell, so this is no idle theology with me, and I mean it to be war, that the falsity plaguing my people may be challenged on the world stage, what *I* call, “Apocalypse Field, global arena of consciousness”. Will my opponents resort to the old tricks of murder, slander, and lies? What do I care, for I am given a heart and tongue to speak by Him who is Lord of poets, and there could be no power against me were it not given from above, so I will bear this testimony and love not my life even if it be unto the death. I mean to cut down the lies and hatred that have cost the *eternal* lives of so many Jews I cannot count them.

What I say is in accord with both the Old Covenant (Tanakh) and the New Covenant Scripture (B’rit Chadashah), despite the opposition of some, both Christians and Jews. These things impact the wider world also, as Gentile believers in Yeshua (Jesus) our Messiah are grafted into the spiritual faith of Israel, from which flows the river of eternal life to all nations—the ancient promise to Abraham fulfilled.

Mark you, the poet’s pen is not filled with lifeless ink. It is a sword of the Spirit of YHWH, and His vessel. It is among the foremost weapons of the Apocalypse—if so be it have the wind of Heaven filling its sails, and speeding its missiles, even as Heaven’s power sped David’s stone into the brain of the giant.

★ ★ ★

PART I

A POET ARISES IN ISRAEL

But who art thou, and where art thou
to be found, you named “a prince of God,”
having power and favor with the Most High
and with men?

Art thou to be found in the state
that has named itself Israel
while yet being under the covenant curses
Moses uttered in his third and fifth books?

For what happened in Europe, and now happens
in the land you call Israel
do not show to the world (or to ourselves)
a people blessed, but cursed

a people and a nation besieged by the enemy
of humankind, the prince of demons
– and those humans under his sway –
who loathe the blood of Abraham, and his seed.

Alas, the truth must be told,
the nation that calls itself by the name
of Abraham’s grandson, the wrestler with God,
was by Moses, and his later Prophet, bereft of the name

for it is written
(and not in the Talmud

nor yet by any rabbi
nor by the wisest of the Jews)

but by Moses, at command of YHWH,
in the Fifth book, eighteenth chapter,
verses fifteen through nineteen
concerning the Prophet who would arise

acknowledged by the sages as Messiah,
that whoever would not listen to the words
YHWH gave this one to speak
would be cut off from God and the nation

and would receive the curses spoken
ten chapters later, they and their seed after them,
which curses *we* received through Rome
and then in Europe, and even now in the land.

We have listened to rabbis who led us
into the jaws of death, over and over
and over again, for twenty centuries
in the School of Divine Chastening.

To whom shall I assign responsibility
for the death-camps?
And for our body-parts scattered across the land
in *these* days – by crazed bombers?

Shall I assign it to YHWH?
For many of us have done so
as we saw the Nazis destroy our loves
and the faith we held in vain.

I, poet of Israel, say no,
not to Him who is holy and righteous
in all His ways, but to them He warned us of
by Isaiah, His prophet, who declared,

“...the leaders of this people
cause them to err;
and they that are led of them
are destroyed.” [9:16]

I say the rabbis have led my people
into the curses of Moses
these past twenty centuries,
for if we had pleased God

and were under His sure covenant blessings
and protection, how is it possible
we had been spewed from the land
to be slaughtered and despised

among the goyim two thousand years
and to end in the ovens of Hitler?
The truth is – and only can be! –
we have followed treasonous leaders

in betrayal of our King,
and have reaped their destruction.
O nation of fools, we,
to be blinded so long!

As the prophets foretold,
the Gentiles came to His light,
and we followed our teachers
into darkness

even unto this blood-filled day!
Cast off the pretenders
who have slain our millions
and return to the *one* Book we are the people of!

I tell you Israel exists
but no longer tied to the land,
neither to the Jewish nation,

for the great net of the Almighty

has been cast over *all* the nations
to draw forth His elect
from the ends of the earth,
so Daniel's vision may be realized,

“that all people, nations, and languages
should serve Him:
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
which shall not pass away

“and His kingdom
that which shall not be destroyed.” [7:14]
Israel is now the international community
which bows the knee to Messiah, David's Son,

and which holy nation
gleaned from the nations
shall be the Israel which fills the entire world
and inherits all the land-promises,

an everlasting Kingdom of Glory
such as legend or dream never imagined,
with a Temple in it
built of living stones

which are the people in whom YHWH
dwells and lives
as we worship and rejoice in the glory
of His majesty and love forever;

which true Temple exists in these very days
in rudiment form
as people from among Jewry
and *all* the nations

bow the knee to Messiah

High Priest of Melchizedek's order,
King seated on David's throne,
mighty Prophet foretold by Moses

having ordered the Kingdom of God
at His good pleasure
cutting off the rebels
who love their own hearts above His.

At this time, Israel is not grounded
in this world, but in the hearts and lives
of those blessed who are *in* this world
but not *of* it

until the great Day of Judgment
and the Resurrection of the Dead.
Then the vast Israel of God
alone shall inhabit the earth

while His enemies inhabit the Gehenna of souls
in the darkness of hellish light
for the wickedness they have done
and for refusing Messiah

who brought cleansing
and forgiveness of sins
to Israel first, and then to the Gentiles,
which priceless mercy ought not be spurned!

Thus says the poet of Israel
to whomever has ears to hear,
as a call to join the people forever blessed,
whom God calls, *Israel My Glory*

★ ★ ★

ON WAKING UP IN HELL AFTER A SUICIDE BOMBING

From among the Jews goes up this cry:

“Our rabbis lied to us!

There is no God
in our midst.

We are far from Him,
and under His wrath.

The rabbis concealed our prophets’ teachings!”

From among the Muslims:

“Mohammed lied to us!

There is no Paradise, no girls,
no smile of Allah!

Our religion is a lie,
a demon’s fiction;
we die for nothing!”

From the seed of Abraham,
through Isaac, through Jacob,
through David, comes Messiah the King,
the first time as suffering servant
bearing the sins of His people,
the Lamb of God,
raised from the dead by the power of the Father.

The second time He will return

as Champion of His people
and avenging King over His enemies,
over those who deceived the multitudes
of *all* the nations and tribes,
suppressing the knowledge of His glory and truth,
so that they awake in Hell.

4/9/02

★ ★ ★

AN ALIEN REGIME

For Messianic Jews

There is a phenomenon in the Jewish State that is matched only in nations where entrenched demonic strongholds control much of the religious and /or political life of those nations – such as those under fundamentalist Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, or communist rule – and that is the legal persecution of believers in Yeshua (Jesus) with government sanction, and violent persecution without government interference.

If it is indeed the case that an alien regime, whose capital is in Gehenna, wields the spiritual scepter in Jerusalem – with considerable political influence – then our strategy of appeasement by avoidance of the prophetic stance will be as effective as British appeasement prior to the Second World War. Gehennian regimes eat appeasers for breakfast.

If it is said, “But they have been the standard-bearers of Judaism for centuries, and through awful persecutions have preserved Torah for our people,” it must be noted that that which they have preserved is not authentic Judaism, and all who hold to this spurious version of it shall perish, for it is the devil’s snare – this version of Judaism – concocted for the purpose of destroying the nation by sealing it against Messiah’s Spirit. The “Torah” they have preserved is not the Torah of Moses at all, for the instruction of Moses pointed to Messiah, and so it was with all the prophets. The “Torah” they preserved is a counterfeit, and *all* who stake their souls on this teaching will lose them eternally.

To put it plainly, the rabbis have destroyed more souls than ever did Hitler or Hamas. They have destroyed more Jews than all the evil Gentiles and so-called “Christians” up through the ages, by leading us into the dread curses of Moses (the Fifth Book, chapter 28; Isaiah 9:16).

The true story of these things is being suppressed in unrighteousness, and a fresh retelling of it – in the vigor of the LORD’s Spirit – will provide an exposure of the evil, and a vision of God’s love for those His ancient people, and it will happen, for a poet arises in Israel.

5/1/2000

★ ★ ★

SPIRITUAL IDENTITY THEFT: STEALING GOD'S GIFT

The identity under consideration is the name “Israel,” and as its origin and usage come from the Bible, we will first look there. When this name was bestowed upon Jacob by God at Peniel, after he had wrestled with Him through the night (see the account in Genesis 32:24-32), it was given to designate the patriarch’s new spiritual status: in the LORD’s own words, “Thy name shall be no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”

*This name is utterly unique! The LORD, set to purify and equip His patriarch of the covenant people, Himself wrestles with Jacob (as with us in all our adversities – truly it is Him in like graciousness behind the scenes) granting him strength to continue – and even prevail – in his desire for the blessing. Jacob’s own strength unequal to the task, and crippled in the struggle, he received strength from God: “with the name He gives the thing itself which the name implies.”*¹ The name was conceived and bestowed by God to designate a blessed state of being; it was passed on to his descendants as well, *and the name was also removed from some of them by the same Bestower, for serious violations of the covenant*, as seen in Exodus 12:15, 19; 30:33, 38, and Isaiah 9:13-17; 48:16-19,² and shown in the expressions, “that soul shall be cut off from Israel,” “...shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel,” “...shall even be cut off from his people,” “...destroyed from among you,” and “...destroyed from before Me.”

It should be clear that this is not a name to be bestowed by men,³ as God has created and reserved it for His own special use. It should also be clear He

retains the right to strip the name from whom He will, and specifies when this is to be done.

To use this name when it has not been given, or after it has been removed, is to steal a prerogative reserved by God to Himself. It is stealing the right to confer an identity from the Almighty God!

We will look at a modern instance of this in a moment, but let us first look at a warning to the people of Israel given by God through Moses in his Fifth Book, which bears directly on this:

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him. (Deut. 18:18, 19)

This is a warning to heed the words of those appointed to the prophetic office, and in particular Him who is the culmination and fulfillment of that office, the Messiah, whom New Covenant believers know as Jesus of Nazareth. The phrase, “I will require it of him,” means in this instance, “I will require his place among My people and his life.” Consider the destruction to be visited on those who with wicked hearts refused to “hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all His commandments...” (Deut 28:15), which promised destruction is shown in the verses following, so you may comprehend the dread import of the words “I will require it...”⁴ to the Jewish nation after Messiah appeared among them.

Messiah’s apostle, Peter, in quoting from this passage⁵ as he spoke to the people of Israel, rendered it, “And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.” (Acts 3:22, 23)

We have looked at the pertinent Biblical data, and have seen the name Israel given by God and taken away by Him (from those who did not warrant

it). We have seen it specifically taken away from those in the Jewish nation who, in the time of Christ and the apostles, refused to “hear that Prophet,” who would not “hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name.” Simply put, God openly cleft all those who refused His word through Messiah from the people of Israel, like a butcher cuts away gristle. As with a great cleaver He divided the nation, those who were His, and those who were not, even as aged Simeon prophesied over the infant Jesus in the temple, “Behold, this child is set for the falling and rising again of many in Israel ...” (Luke 2:34; Cf. Isaiah 8:14, 15)

From this point on, the people of Israel gathered around their King, Messiah Jesus. Those who did not were “cut off” from the people by the judicial decree of God. Jesus Himself foretold this event when He announced to the chief priests and elders of Israel, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” (Matthew 21:43) Immediately prior to that statement He told them the same thing in the parable of the vineyard, there holding up a mirror to their motives and actions (verses 33-41). Many of the priests, and some Pharisees, did turn to Him.

We look now at the “identity theft” spoken of earlier, which, amazingly, is abetted by some in the Community of Messiah, God’s authentic “holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9).

On May 14, 1948, descendants of those Jews who were declared no longer people of Israel by Messiah (and by the word of Moses) declared themselves a sovereign nation in the land of Palestine, to be called the State of Israel. Those Jews who denominated themselves thus, had for 2,000 years maintained their identity as Jews through subjection to rabbinic teaching devolved from the first century Pharisees, who were, in the main, the leaders of the apostasy from – and rebellion against – the God of Israel, and His appointed King. This stealing the name only God may give is an act of unbridled defiance.

I hear many Christians declaiming from various prophetic Scriptures and schemas that the Jewish state is still God’s Israel, and they go quite on about it, overlooking – or avoiding – the foundational decree on the matter.

But God's decree stands eternal: *A Prophet shall the LORD your God raise up...Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you.*

He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. [Jesus said,]...I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak. (John 1:10-12; 12:49, 50)

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My [the Father's] words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him.

Whoever abides in the word and Spirit of the King of Israel partakes of His identity and Kingdom, be they Jew or Gentile. Any others who call themselves Israelites, on any other basis, will answer for this identity theft – this stealing of that which belongs to God – on the Day that is coming quickly. Do not support them in their grievous delusion and sin!

¹ *Commentary Upon The Book Of Genesis*, by John Calvin, on 32:28

² Further references on this wise: Deut. 4:2, 3; Lev. 7:21, 25, 27; 18:29; 19:8; 20:6; 23:29, 30; Num. 9:13; 15:30, 31; 19:13; Psalm 94:23; 101:8; etc.

³ This is not referring to parents who name their children after Biblical characters, even such as Israel, Jesus, Moses, etc., which may be a way of honoring heroes of the Faith, and seeking the blessing of their children.

⁴ It is the same usage as in Genesis 9:5; 42:22; and 2 Chron. 24:22.

⁵ Deuteronomy 18:15, 19.

THE ILLEGITIMATE REGIME

The Orthodox rabbinate issues pronouncements as though it were the ruling authority of a legitimate spiritual regime, as though it were the arbiter of authentic Judaism. It presumes to render judgment on the validity of Reformed conversions, the Jewishness of Jews who hold Yeshua (Jesus) to be the Messiah, and on the Jewishness of children born of marriages where only the father is a Jew (see the piece below, “Of thy sons”), while it itself is manifestly an illegitimate regime whose authority and rule have been a cancer on the Jewish people.

To illustrate: The Lawgiver of Judaism pronounced an ironclad guarantee of protection and domestic tranquility on the Jewish nation if they but pleased the God of Israel, keeping His commandments and loving Him, yet we have been spewed from the Land to be slaughtered and despised among the nations for 20 centuries, to end in the ditches of Europe and the ovens of Hitler. There can be no doubt at all our rabbis have led us into the curses of Moses, for it is impossible that the covenant promises of the 28th chapter of the fifth Book could have failed.

But this does not mean there is no true spiritual government in Israel. The true kingdom of Israel is – and always has been – a spiritual kingdom under the direction and illumination of its prophets and faithful priesthood. In rebellion the rabbinic school set up a counterfeit government, establishing it through intimidation, deception and murder. The record of this war between the prophetic and rabbinic schools is the subject of much of the Scriptures. It is written in blood, as it was the hunted prophets who wrote most of them. Isaiah warned, “The leaders of this people err; and they that

are led of them are destroyed.” (9:16) The truth is we have followed treasonous leaders in betrayal of our King, and we have reaped their destruction.

The true spiritual government of Israel has not perished, but has thrived – albeit apart from the Land. And while the royal scepter has lit up the nations, the rabbis still gnash their teeth and seek to outlaw word of their King. Now the King of Israel (“*who* is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle!” –Psalm 24:8) has established His outposts back in the ancient nation, and once again they are under fire from the heavy guns of the Orthodox. Lift up your heads, O you outposts, for His glory fills your house, and He is mighty to save!

A poet arises in Israel, and he tells a story.

★ ★ ★

TO THE KINDLY AND GENTLE

To the kindly and gentle among Jews,
rabbi or not,
you have an offer
of redemption
if your heart yearns for the true God
more than the honor of men
for the day of His vengeance nears
in its fulness (we have known
this vengeance two millennia
in part)
but now is the time
to avail ourselves of mercy
from the Son of David
High Priest after the order
of Melchizedek

and the blood of sprinkling
He offers
will avail to the cleansing
of your souls
for His sacrifice is a sweet savor
to the Almighty
—run to Him! He is mighty
to save
and you know His voice

when you hear it
and He knows yours
who are loved by Him.
The time is now short
for the end is near
seek Him!

★ ★ ★

THE GOD OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE: FOR MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Some of us don't believe in God, and some *may* but think He is far off and not involved in our lives, while yet others *do* believe He is involved and are very religious, yet they follow the teachings of men and not the teachings God Himself gave, or they discard His continuing revelation through His prophets.

The stakes are high in this matter, for it is the testimony of Moses and the prophets that there is an afterlife and the failure to be accepted by God in covenant friendship will bode ill for one's place in that life to come.

We who are Jews – by blood or by faith – have a heritage and an honor granted to no other ethnic group, that being, God the Creator spoke through prophets to a people He loved, and these prophets were Jews, and the people He spoke to were Jews. This is the prime distinctive of the Jewish people, that God favored them by speaking to them, and made a covenant with them to be their God in this life and in the life after this, not just in the immaterial heavens, but after the Great Cleansing, on the new earth, where He will dwell with them – as a father with His children – in what has aptly been called the Kingdom of Glory.

This is the glory of the Jews – also called the Hebrews – that God is their God, and they are His people. There is a story of a servant who, given envelopes with some papers in them by her employers every birthday, thought them of little worth, and just kept them tied in a bundle, a little disappointed her employers gave her such useless gifts, but faithfully served them until

her death. When her relatives opened the bundle they found stocks from the employers' company worth multiple millions. She died not knowing it. So it is with many of us, we have been given an inheritance of untold wealth – not mere material wealth as in the story – but wealth of Shalom, a treasure of *eternal* well-being far surpassing anything we can conceive.

The very heart of this Shalom is fellowship – *actual friendship* – with the God of Heaven and earth, not only in this life, but beyond the grave and after the resurrection of our bodies, into the eternity that is our proper home, in the kingdom where we will be creatures possessed of an inner peace and glory of being that is our proper state. Moses told the truth when he related how, although created innocent beings who walked with our Creator, we fell from this first estate into inner ruin, alienation from Him so profound that many of us no longer even think He exists, physical decay now the way of our lives, and moral failure – this latter seen especially in how we fail to keep God's commandments of love and life, even to the point of not acknowledging them as from Him.

Some of us don't think much of Moses, or of the prophets who came after him. In this we are like the servant who was ignorant of her wealth. The prophets unanimously predicted a *great* Prophet (capital P!) who was to come and end the sufferings, the oppression, and especially the controversy – the aforementioned alienation – between us and our God. The rabbis called him the Messiah, the anointed of God. The prophets said Messiah would not only come to save the Jews, but would take some of the Gentiles under his wing: he would rule the entire world, and those who loved him would inherit all that God – whom he called his Father – gave him to bless his people with.

He – the Messiah – has come and gone (and will come again, as it is written of him). Come from the Father's side, and gone back, from where he rules the heaven and earth as appointed by the Father. His is a unique status. The prophets speak of him often: Micah says of him he is from eternity (5:2); Isaiah speaks of him in such terms that it sounds like God Himself is among us (9:6); Daniel says of him that he approached the throne of the Almighty and was given an everlasting kingdom which shall never be destroyed or end

(7:13, 14). Moses himself said that whoever did not listen to this prophet's words which the LORD (YHWH) gave him would no longer be included in the people of Israel (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19). Micah, again, said that this Ruler of the nation would be born in Bethlehem.

Messiah came according to the prophecies concerning him, fulfilling numerous predictions to the minute letter. He came mighty yet lowly, he was born of a woman, yet God was his Father (Isaiah 7:14), as was also prophesied. He came, first of all, to reconcile God's people back to Him, by being the sin-bearer for them – the Lamb of God he was called – so that God would no longer count their sins against them. Levitical sacrifices all symbolically pointed to this substituting of the innocent for the guilty, as object lessons preparing them for the true sacrifice Messiah would offer: he would be their Passover, so that all who were sprinkled by his blood (even as Moses later sprinkled the people and the tabernacle) were purified in God's eyes, and the Angel of death passed over them, as in the Exodus. That the Passover blood sprinkled on the lintel and two side posts of the door makes the sign of the cross – in blood! – is no accident.

One of the great errors we make – a *fatal* error! – is to think if we are good enough – generous, kind, honest, and so on – God will accept us. This error is called “*self*-righteousness, counting on our *own* goodness to qualify us for acceptance in His sight, and entrance into Heaven (if we even believe His saying that it's real). This is not the righteousness God accepts. It is mere human goodness, and not that absolute moral perfection He requires for intimate fellowship with Himself, and entrance into His eternal kingdom. So He gave us *another* treasure; not only the forgiveness of our sins, but He imputed the moral perfection of Messiah onto us: Messiah took our place bearing our sins, and gave us his place of perfect standing in the presence of God. This amounts to a *legal* gift: the removing the guilt of our sins, and the giving the righteous standing – the moral merit – of another, God's Messiah. Isaiah talks of this in the 53rd chapter of his prophecy.

Not that this was an utterly new thing, for God gave this gift to Abraham, counting him righteous simply on the basis of his faith in God's promises

(Genesis 15:6); and King David found this same forgiveness and righteousness, as he was a member of that same covenant God made with Abraham *and all his (genuinely believing) seed*. He believed, and it was counted as righteousness to him. He did not trust in his own righteousness! He would not have found favor had he done so.

Now Messiah has come to offer this gift of forgiveness and righteousness in its final and full manifestation, of which all the other types shown in the Law and the prophets were shadows compared to the realization, the fulfillment. *He* is the treasure God has bestowed upon His people.

In the *B'rit Chadashah* – the New Covenant or Testament – prophesied by Jeremiah (31:31 ff.), this treasure is revealed. Here are some of these priceless words:

He said he was sent “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (a), with the warning, “If you do not believe that I am he [of whom Moses spoke], you shall die in your sins” (b).

To the people he gave this invitation, “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest....learn of me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls” (c).

And he gave this promise, “This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one who sees the Son, and believes in him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (d).

History tells us that many – but certainly not all – in the Jewish nation rejected him. They were looking for a different kind of Messiah, a military commander and prince who would free them from the occupation and oppression of the Roman Empire, and *all* Gentile domination. They were not looking for a Savior from their sins, a restorer of them to the heart of God, the *true* return from exile (which was from the garden of Paradise, and God's love)!

Even today in this 21st century the priceless treasure of God to the Jewish people – and He has invited Gentiles too! – remains available, though often

ignored. “The gift of God is eternal life through Messiah Yeshua our Lord” (e).

All over the world both Jews and Gentiles call out to him whom God made ruler of Heaven and earth, asking him for forgiveness of all sin, and casting their souls upon his mercy, that he may deliver them from Gehenna, and to eternal life in his kingdom.

From the throne of power in the heavens he yet speaks; as it is written, “All that the Father gives me shall come to me, and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out” (f).

This is the treasure and glory of the Jews: such a Savior! Even at death’s door he stands ready to receive all who look to him. Well it is written of him, he is

“A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel” (g).

(a) Matthew 15:24

(b) John 8:24

(c) Matthew 11:28, 29

(d) John 6:40

(e) Romans 6:23

(f) John 6:37

(g) Luke 2:32

★ ★ ★

OF THY SONS

If, as maintained by some, Ezra declared that children of Gentile mothers and Jewish fathers were not Jews, how passed the royal seed through the Moabitish womb of Ruth eight centuries before? Ezra did not in fact say this, but, reiterating Moses (Deut 7:1-4), said, “Do not give your daughters to their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons...” (Ezra 9:12). The issue was polluting themselves with the demonic worship and filthy practices of pagan mothers or fathers – particularly of the seven forbidden nations – though in this instance the trespass involved only pagan women and their offspring. One could sooner wring milk from a stone than a doctrine of matrilineal descent out of this account!

Did not the sons of Moses have a Gentile mother? Yet they were accounted not only Jews but Levites (1 Chr 23:14-15; 26:24), a matter strictly of their father’s blood lineage. For lineage in ancient Israel could pass directly and solely from father to son, regardless of whether or not a Gentile mother converted. Else the royal line of the seed of Judah would have been broken a number of times (we will not consider Tamar, mother of Pharez, due to its antiquity). We have already considered Ruth, mother of Obed, “the father of Jesse, the father of David, king of Judah and Israel.” And Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, who succeeded his father as king of Judah, his mother was Naamah the Ammonitess. Rehoboam could never have become king through conversion – either his or his mother’s – but only through the royal blood lineage of his father. Consider also the wicked Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel of Tyre, was not her son, Ahaziah, king over Judah and father of what Scripture calls “the seed royal”? But we know from Moses that only a

true Israelite may sit as king: “From among thy brethren shalt thou set one king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.” (Deut 17:15) Do you say men disobeyed God in having Rehoboam and Ahaziah kings over Judah? Ahijah the prophet declared the word of the LORD otherwise: “Unto [Solomon’s] son [Rehoboam] will I give one tribe, that David My servant may have a light always before Me in Jerusalem...” (1 Kings 11:36) Do you say Naamah converted? It is unlikely, considering it was because of Solomon’s – and thus the people’s – worship of the Ammonite deities (1 Kings 11:4,5,7,8,33), among other false gods, that the kingdom was rent from him. Even in the dark days of Ahaziah son of Jehoram, the scepter of Judah was “a light always before [Him] in Jerusalem.”

The promise of the Messiah through David’s line was on this wise: “I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons...” (1 Chr 17:11). When we accept the doctrine of matriarchal descent only – a teaching conceived in the perilous Galut – we defer to a renegade rabbinate over the word of our God. Yet we who know Him and His word know lineage may come through father or mother, even to understanding the unique and unparalleled birth of Messiah, our Immanuel.

Lest I be directed to Lawrence Schiffman’s work on the subject, *Who Was A Jew? Rabbinic and Halakhic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism* (KTAV, Hoboken, NJ 1985), I would like to point out some of the flaws in the work which render it invalid from my point of view.

I hold as false the presupposition that Rabbinic (aka Orthodox) Judaism is the rightful claimant to the seat of authority over Jewish spiritual life. Its history as recipient of the Mosaic woes meted upon the disobedient and disfavored ought to be clear evidence even through the deceptive spin constructed by centuries and centuries of rabbis. Its opponent, and rightful heir to the spiritual scepter, Prophetic – aka Messianic – Judaism, is alive and well, despite its being clouded over during the time of its life amidst the Gentiles. And there are now godly Gentiles reckoned among Israel’s princes.

And now the true princes of the house of Israel arise and take their stand against the pretenders. This is not “missionary activity” or “conversion tactics,” it is bringing to the fore – to public awareness – the ancient warfare between the prophetic and rabbinic schools, in its modern phase. We will not be drowned out by the spin-masters who would deny us our place among the people.

We repudiate the foundational premises of Dr. Schiffman’s book, which he states at the outset: “the research presented here will be based largely on tannaitic [i.e., Pharisaic, Rabbinic] evidence...” One of the reasons he gives to justify this goes as follows, “...by the time Judaism and Christianity made their final break, it was the tannaitic tradition which was almost completely representative of the Jewish community in Palestine and, to a great extent, of that segment of the Diaspora which remained loyal to its ancestral faith” (p. 5). He elaborates on this “ancestral faith” later, when talking of converts to Rabbinic Judaism: “[the convert], like the people of ancient Israel, must accept not only the laws of the Torah, but also the Rabbinic interpretation or oral Law which, in the view of the tannaim, was given at Sinai as well” (p. 38).

Now it is this so-called “oral Law...given at Sinai” which forms the basis and foundation of the Talmud, and of the halakhah, the Jewish legal system that typifies Rabbinic Judaism.

But there is no evidence *in the Hebrew Scriptures* to support the existence of this “oral Law...given at Sinai,” while there is ample evidence to refute it. The story of Josiah king of Judah is one such example. Having received the throne after his grandfather, Manasseh, and father, Amon (who was slain by his servants), Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and when he was sixteen he began to seek after God, and soon thereafter started to purge Judah and Jerusalem of its idol-worship, yet it was not until he was twenty-six (in approximately 621 B.C.E.) that the book of the law of the LORD given by Moses was found hidden in the temple, and evidently lost a long time. When the young king heard the words of the law he rent his clothes, saying, “...great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do

all that is written in this book” (2 Chronicles 34:19,21). God was pleased with Josiah for his tender and obedient heart. It was the *written* Law and not any fictitious oral law which renewed the king and the people before God. Listen to the Scripture: “And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD. And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep His commandments, and His testimonies, and His statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book” (v. 30,31).

Make no mistake, we recognize the oral tradition of commentary and exposition that began around the time of Ezra the priest and scribe, when he read from the book of the law before all the people, and those under Ezra’s direction “caused the people to understand the law...” and “they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading” (Nehemiah 8:7,8). Down the generations this teaching was memorized in an unbroken tradition, with the rabbis of each generation adding their own interpretations.

By the time of Yeshua this oral tradition was vast, and not all of it in accord with the Scripture it was supposed to illumine. When Yeshua, whose Torah was to be the fulfilling and superseding of the Mosaic Torah, saw the violence done to Moses and the prophets, He critiqued and reproved the Pharisees, which earned Him their undying hatred, save for those among them whose hearts were open to His light. The B’rit Chadashah (New Covenant) tells the story of all these things, for those of you likewise open to Him who is the glory and crown of Israel.

This “oral tradition” and the Talmud of the rabbis, for all that may be meritorious in it, has been a bane to us Jews, for it keeps the people from the plain and fresh reading of the word of God. We sound more like Roman Catholics than Jews, who must get their food from their priests and their understanding from the traditions of the Church! We are called “People of

the Book,” but we do not know the Book we are the people of, for a wall of rabbinic learning has been placed between us and our God, as though we were too “slow” to understand for ourselves! And how many of us know the urgent warning of Isaiah our prophet, when he said, “The leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed” (Isaiah 9:16)? Do we not think he spoke to such a time as this? (As this sort of time has been upon us often!)

Josiah needed no oral law, for there was nothing he needed but the law of the LORD in the Book.

Schiffman is a scholar of the Rabbinic school, an enemy of the prophetic school. The fact of the matter is, the laws of the tannaim, while they kept the portion of the Jewish nation who apostatized from Messiah and believing Israel intact and self-regulating during their horrid exile, these laws violate and curse the prophetic faith of Israel, and they revile the King of the prophets, the Lord Yeshua, who was a light to the Gentiles, as Isaiah prophesied, and is now come to challenge the pretenders in Israel, seeing the time of the Gentiles nears its end, and a perhaps final gathering in of elect Israel is at hand (for the days darken greatly).

The contest between our two schools enters a new phase: we declare that we have assumed the spiritual rule and care over the *spiritual* house of Israel in the name of Yeshua Messiah. A people will be called from the midst of the State of Israel and international Jewry to receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life, adoption into the royal line of David through cleaving to David's greater Son, the one whom David confessed as Lord, Adoni (Psalm 110), and these people shall never die (though their bodies may till the great resurrection), greatly beloved of the Most High, willing to suffer for His name.

Read the B'rit Chadashah (New Covenant) the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah foretold would be given us (Jeremiah 31:31 ff). Cleave to the prophets of God, and to God Himself; renounce the rabbis of unfaithful men.

Unbelieving Israel has a sharp mind, but an empty heart void of the presence of the living God, without whom we are but zombies, the living dead, however agile of mind and glorious of skin-covering we appear. Dead meat,

whitewashed over with religious – or as is the case with many, secular – paint.

Read of your Messiah, O Israel, even amid the uproar and clamor of His enemies, whose hatred of Him is no less now than it was then. Just listen to them.

Read of Him, and of His covenant. It is given first for the Jew, and then for the Gentile. Make up your own minds. Don't listen only to the rabbinic school of faith (which has led us into so much bitter, abysmal grief and blood), listen as well to the prophetic; examine for yourselves the outlawed King and His words; see if He is what they say, or if they lie. See for yourself – it is your soul on the line, an eternal line! There is no Israelite finer than He! And He now King of Israel, and gatekeeper to eternal New Jerusalem which shall manifest after the Resurrection and great Day of Judgment.

Have not Gentile believers in Yeshua (Jesus) our Messiah been grafted into the spiritual faith of Israel, from which flows the river of eternal life to all nations? Much folly arises from failure to distinguish between the rabbinic and the prophetic traditions of faith in Israel.

I would highly recommend Michael L. Brown's 5-volume, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus* (he is a Jew), for a thorough discussion of the many issues; this is a link to volume 1 on Amazon ([amazon.com/Answering-Jewish-Objections-Jesus-Historical/dp/o8o1o6o63X](https://www.amazon.com/Answering-Jewish-Objections-Jesus-Historical/dp/o8o1o6o63X)). I *won't* recommend his other works on doctrine as in those he falls far short of his excellence on matters Jewish.

★ ★ ★

A HORROR

beyond the science fiction and fantasy tales
of our time: the demon powers themselves
have established a stronghold
– an ancient and mightily fortified position –
in the Orthodox Jewish religious world,
and like a cult spins spells of deception,
teaching illusions are reality,
but unlike a cult
this demonic entrenchment almost rules a nation
and is committed (and this is the horror)
to the *spiritual* genocide of that nation
far more viciously
than any of its earthly enemies are
to its physical destruction.

The terrible irony: pretending to be holy seers
(and believing it themselves)
the rabbinate and company
are in actuality
deceived emissaries from Hell,
fellow laborers with Satan
for the destruction of the Jewish state
and all Jewish people.

This spiritual/political situation began
some 2000 years ago

when the priests, teachers, and rulers in Israel
sided with the demonic realm
and its foul prince
against the God of Heaven.
They were blind to the evil
of their own hearts and actions
– so hardened were they –
but they handed the nation over
to the devil
nonetheless.

It is now time
to throw off the yoke
of the imposters and their demons
and give the nation back
to the *God*
of Israel.

★ ★ ★

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

I'm glad I saw the *Star Wars* movies
'cause one gets an idea
of fighting against the odds
in a mythic world
of amazing powers and weapons

Afar off I see the Orthodox embattlements
flying the Star of David,
but how weird it is
there is no light of God at all
in that great and fortified death-star

It purports to be holy and of God
but is itself deceived, and deceiving,
a horror spinning a spell
blinding multitudes to the true God
and killing those who oppose them

The worst is
they believe in themselves
unaware they are tools of demons
destroying faith in Him
who is Champion of Israel

So I ponder this dark sphere
bristling with evil powers and weapons
as it lays waste multitudes

and gathers them in the devil's net,
mighty, but vulnerable.

A wise man scales the city of the mighty
and casts down the strength
of the confidence thereof.
Grant it to be so, Lord,
show how the assault is to be made

That Your light penetrate the sphere
and shine glorious within
exposing all dark ways and thoughts
and capture with Your love
all those who love Your Spirit

destroying the dark star
of lying Orthodoxy,
bringing to the dust its false ways,
leaving only the sons & daughters of God standing
in the Shekinah of Yeshua's face.

★ ★ ★

WHAT JERUSALEM? WHAT TEMPLE?

There is an ancient plot of land in Jerusalem the Jews call the Temple Mount, while the Muslims call it (and the building on it) Haram al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary), aka, the Dome of the Rock. A journalist recently said of this place, “That is the epicenter of Jewish-Arab tension in this land since the beginning of the national conflict.”^[a]

The back cover of this journalist’s book on the subject reads, “Here nationalism combines with fundamentalist faith in a volatile brew. Members of the world’s three major monotheistic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—hold this spot to be the key to salvation as they await the end of the world, and struggle to fulfill conflicting religious prophecies with dangerous political consequences.”^[b]

The matter before us now concerns the Christians. A great block of them agree with certain fundamentalist Jews that the Temple must be rebuilt on this piece of land, and the Muslim mosque which stands there now — the third holiest shrine in Islam — must come down, one way or another. For these particular Christians, the imagined scenario is: the church will be raptured out^[c], the Antichrist will be revealed, and the Tribulation period will commence; after three and a half years the Antichrist will proclaim himself God from the rebuilt Temple precincts, and in another three and a half years the Lord Jesus will return, fight Armageddon, and His Millennial (thousand year) reign over the earth from Jerusalem will commence, and after this eternity proper will ensue. Thus saith the *Left Behind* books and the Dispensationalist teachers!

There is no room to refute these latter here (the interested reader is referred to a couple of books for this, one brief^[d], one comprehensive^[e]), but we will look at some vital Biblical principles involved: a) Where is the Jerusalem in which *God's* Temple is located? b) Where is the Israel in which God Himself dwells, in great power? And, c) What is the Temple *God* is building?

We know there are two Jerusalems: the apostle Paul puts it like this, "... Jerusalem which now is...is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."^[f] Elsewhere the Scripture speaks of "the heavenly Jerusalem"^[g], and "the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven."^[h]

Is there *a Temple* in the Jerusalem above? The 21st chapter in Revelation tells us "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."^[i] Is not the Temple with which Jesus' brothers and sisters have to do this very one? For Scripture says, "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."^[j] Do we not now "enter into the holiest"^[k], and is not our mercy seat the very "throne of grace"^[l] where mercy is lavished on those sprinkled with that precious blood?

If we have so great a salvation, the substance of which was only shadowed by the great types of the old covenant, why do we deceive the Jews, supporting their dreams of a paltry temple built of crumbling stones, and in which the blood of animals will be shed once again, which cannot cleanse their souls, thus ensuring their entrance into Hell? Do you think this is *God's* agenda? The plumbline of discernment is this, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."^[m] Whatever prophetic or covenantal scenarios may be thought up, that standard determines the eternal destiny of men. Everyone who dies outside of Messiah, the High Priest of the everlasting Temple, perishes in the Gehenna of souls.

Why are we hiding from the Jews the proclamation of the true Temple, the true blood of sprinkling? Not only are the Christian supporters of the mock temple enemies of the Jews, foisting upon these lost souls their own agenda,

they are enemies of the Arabs, as they incite the Jews to war upon them, also hinting that to destroy the Dome of the Rock would not be a bad idea, and as they do these things they utterly disgrace the name of the only One who can give eternal life to the Arab world. The Jews and Arabs are thus made expendable pawns as these Christians attempt to manipulate into actuality their version of the Apocalypse! (Please note: not all followers of Christ are of this ilk!)

Christians! Reason this out. Do you not know that the Temple of the living God is also here in this world now? By virtue of our union with Christ — made one body with Him^[n] — His people, along with Him, are now considered the temple of God. Speaking of the Gentiles (Arabs as well!) being included into “the household of God”^[o] — which Paul identifies moments earlier as “the commonwealth of Israel”^[p] — he says of these two peoples in Christ, they are, “an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”^[q] *The Jews and the Gentiles in Christ are the household of God, His Israel, and His temple.* Paul says it again: “for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”^[r]

The apostle Peter puts it this way, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”^[s] Why do we not proclaim that the God of Israel is building a great house — His Temple — stone by living stone? What do you think Paul meant when he spoke of provoking the Jews to jealousy, if it is not this very thing? There is a great celebration going on in the nearly completed Temple! Can we not call both Jew and Arab to come in? Can we not tell them that to build upon the tears, sweat, and blood of those in Palestine is an affront to God, *for upon His own blood, His own tears and sweat, He built a Temple eternal in the Heavens, and which He shall bring to earth after the great resurrection, with abundance of shalom for all those blessed to be in that glorious Kingdom?*

The true Jerusalem for the Christian is the heavenly; the true temple is the Lord Jesus and those living stones built into Him; the true Israel is that Representative and King descended from the patriarch of that name — the only

One now worthy of the name^[t] — and that community, that nation, which cleaves to Him, even becoming part of His body. Those of Jewish blood living in the Jewish state need to hear these things! They need to hear of Israel's true and eternal return from exile in Messiah — or they perish! Why not tell them of the joy the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has prepared for those who return to Him in these last days? What? Have we been so saturated with the “blood and guts” of Hollywood's “modern warriors” and “heroes” that we impose this conquest-through-violence on the kingdom of Christ? Beware, for those who live by violence — and incite others to it — shall die by it.

If these things be true – and a Reformed hermeneutic supports it – why do we not simply stand for the vision of Christ, holding forth the Kingdom He proclaimed, a kingdom not of this world? At least not *yet* of this world, as the day is coming when the new earth will contain *only* His kingdom, a kingdom of such glory and wonder we can barely imagine it.

But instead of this, Christians, why do you persist in fomenting the bloodshed between two peoples we are called to serve in love and illumine with the light of Messiah? You do the Jewish state (it is not worthy the name Israel) the gravest injustice in failing to call it to repentance. And you do the Arab world as grave an injustice by urging the Jews on in their aggression. How many of you know of Israel Shahak's book, *Open Secrets: Israeli Nuclear and Foreign Policies*, where he tells how close Moshe Dayan (then Commander-in-Chief of the Jewish Armed Forces) came to using nuclear weapons against Syria in 1973, declaring “the Syrian cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Latakia should be obliterated.” He was only stopped by Golda Meir and Henry Kissinger (pages, 39, 48, 49). And then there is what the Jewish military calls “the last-minute option,” which could be used in the event the Jewish state is being defeated by means of conventional warfare, and consists of “a devastation by nuclear weapons of a considerable number of Arab urban centres and such crucial installations as the Aswan Dam (whose destruction was envisaged in Israel before 1973).” (page 38)^[u]

The “light of the world” you are urging the Jewish state to be is the light of nuclear holocaust upon its neighbors, an abomination you are supporting

in the name of Christ. This “Christian” influence pushing for a conflagration of violence in the Middle East comes mostly from America.

In your deceiving the world about what “being Israel” means — this very heart of the issue of salvation! — do you think you will continue in this with impunity, putting the world at such awful risk with your hard-hearted delusion and blindness? You might unwittingly err in your distorting the prophecies, but your eyes are wide open to see the consequences and cost in terms of human suffering. May God silence you.

Footnotes:

^a “Jerusalem Holy Site a Tense Crossroads Again,” by James Bennet, NY-Times.com article, August 29, 2003.

^b *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount*, by Gershom Gorenberg (Oxford Univ. Press, 2002). From the back cover.

^c Some other Dispensational views have the church raptured — taken to Heaven — during or after the Tribulation.

^d *An Examination of Dispensationalism*, by William E. Cox (Presbyterian and Reformed Publ. Co., 1963)

^e *Wrongly Dividing The Word Of Truth: A Critique Of Dispensationalism*, by John H. Gerstner (Soli Deo Gloria Pub., 2000)

^f Galatians 4:25, 26

^g Hebrews 12:22

^h Revelation 21:2

ⁱ Revelation 21:22

^j Hebrews 12:22, 24

^k Hebrews 10:19

^l Hebrews 4:16

^m 1 John 5:12

ⁿ 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:15, 16; 5:29, 30

^o Ephesians 2:18

^p Ephesians 2:12

^q Ephesians 2:21, 22

^r 2 Corinthians 6:16

^s 1 Peter 2:5

^t Genesis 32:28, “as a prince hast thou power with God and with men.” Isaiah 49:3 (cf 49:1-3, 5-10)

^u Another shocking and revealing book by Shahak is, *Jewish Fundamentalism In Israel* (Pluto Press, 1999)

★ ★ ★

ن MARK OF THE CHRISTIAN

*This is the mark Islamists use
to mark where the Christians live
so as to plunder and ravage them*

*The Arabic letter is ن, a nūn, for Nasara / Nasari,
which is the Qur'an's word for Christians: Nazarene*

The mark usually means
the Nazarene Prophet Himself lives in that house
in union with His beloved
and whoever hurts them
without repenting of it
and seeking His forgiveness
will have to endure an endless suffering

as you do unto others it will be done to you
rape, murder, beheading, all forms of torture
– an eternal torment –
we do not deny Him to whom
Mohammed will bow the knee
and all other supposed prophets
who led the multitudes astray

You will surely contest our testimony today
(except *the* Nazarene show you undeserved favor!)
and we are willing to die without shedding *your* blood

as He is the Prince of peace
and true Prophet of Allah
(the “Allah” of Mohammed
a false one, an evil spirit)

And when you see Jesus coming
you shall scream and run
for it will be all over with you
forever in torment – *but*
for the moment there is mercy offered
to whomever desires forgiveness and eternal life
it is for this, for love of you we speak true.

★ ★ ★

THE INTRANSIGENCE OF THE RABBIS

One of you Messianic Jews has said,

“I believe the intransigence of the rabbis has only been deepened by the blatant anti-Semitism and persecution of what has been called ‘the Church’ (whether such were believers or not is another issue). How the ground under them would have been cut out had the Jewish people been treated with fervent love these past 2,000 years!”

And another of you has stated,

“Even though they [the Orthodox Jews] may hate us as believers and tell lies about us and seek to brainwash the public about us – they are fellow Jews who are acting out a scenario which the Church has contributed to mightily.”

To which I answer, do you think “the intransigence of the rabbis” could ever be *deeper* than it was to Yeshua Himself when He came to them in the spirit of reconciliation:

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Isaiah 1:18)

and He showed them not merely “2,000 years....of fervent love,” but an *infinite* and eternally saving love, and they would not.

Their intransigence was *utter* from the beginning – it has not deepened. Nor did they just hate Yeshua – they hated God: “He that hates Me hates My Father also....now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.” (John 15:23,24)

The attitude of the orthodox is not something “the church has contributed to mightily,” but the scenario they act out was acted out in its pure essence when they first laid eyes on Yeshua and heard His words: “But now you seek to kill Me, a man that has told you the truth, which I have heard of God... You are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth....He that is of God hears God’s words: you therefore hear them not, because you are not of God.” Summing up their attitude, He said, “They hated Me without a cause.” (John 8:40,44,47; 15:25) Please, let us not talk of any “deepening” of their hearts’ obduracy. They loathed and despised both Yeshua and His brethren because they were not of this world, but of Heaven, and the light they manifested exposed their evil deeds and hearts. (John 3:19,20)

I will grant you, the Gentile sector of the Church has sinned grievously, but that was not the *cause* of the hatred for Messiah, and to assert so but clouds the matter. The Church had simply (and wickedly) closed the door to salvation by returning hatred for hatred. And today we have the power and the voice and the wisdom to root out and destroy this evil in the Church and to expose this venom that still lurks in some churches.

If the One “who works all things after the counsel of His will” (Ephesians 1:11) and who has said, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,” (Isaiah 46:10) had determined that the scattered nation under wrath and judgment “had...been treated with fervent love these past 2,000 years” it would surely have been done, for who can stay His hand and thwart His will? And did He not say, “When a man’s ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him?” (Proverbs 16:7)

But this was not God’s will for treasonous and impenitent Israel. After the offer of cleansing in Isaiah 1, He said,

“But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword:
for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” (Isaiah 1:20)

Jeremiah has the LORD referring back to the covenant with Moses:

“....they obeyed not nor inclined their ear, but walked every one
in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon
them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them
to do; but they did them not.” (11:8)

And that covenant, with the blessings and curses thereof enumerated in Deuteronomy 28, depicts literally what has befallen us Jews who violated Moses by murdering the Prophet he announced and commended in 18:18 and 19 of that same book. And we know also how Peter warned the people from these very verses in his sermon in Acts 3:22, 23. (And yes, it is clear from the Scripture the Gentiles were a party to the murder of Yeshua, but I am dealing here with us Jews, not the Gentiles.)

And now, after such great and terrible affliction as has culminated in the 20th and the 21st centuries, and has plowed up and broken the hearts of so many living Jews, it is no time to be faint of heart and fuzzy of mind in proclaiming to them in the prophetic spirit the Cause and Effect of their astonishing and breath-taking history.

★ ★ ★

SATAN'S "ISRAEL"

That may be too strong a saying
for some of you
but is it not the truth?
Have not the children of the King's murderers
– those whom He called
children of the devil –
retained the spiritual scepter
even to this day?

Did we not for a price
sell the crown and hope and glory
of Israel
into the hands of the dark lord,
who murdered Him?

And was not the price for which
we sold the LORD from Heaven
the retaining of our authority and power
and employment
as the religious rulers of the nation?
This was *our* thirty pieces of silver
and we are still cashing in
on this blood currency.

And do we not *now* oppress Messiah's brethren
with violence, bloodshed and censorship,

even seeking to make their holy faith
against the law of the land?

An alien regime indeed
wields such a foul scepter,
whose capital is Gehenna
and has the rabbinate
in Satan's pocket.

It is an illegitimate spiritual regime
not recognized
by the ambassadors of Heaven
and princes of the true Israel.

★ ★ ★

SOVEREIGNITIS

With regard to the church's – both Gentiles and Messianics – attitude to Orthodox Jewry, and their suppression of the saving knowledge of Messiah among their countrymen, I think we have been stricken with a theological malaise called sovereignitis, wherein we overlook and excuse the role and responsibility of men because of our knowledge of the overriding sovereignty of God. I am applying this to the present where the most horrible crimes of spiritual genocide are committed against a people and we are of a mind to “respect the dignity” of the perpetrators because they are clergy or religious. And we get all theological about it and dress the horror of it with verses from Romans so that it even looks sort of Biblical, whereas in reality it *far* outstrips the horror of Herod's butchering Bethlehem's little lambs before their mothers. Those whom Messiah denounced as sealing off the door of the kingdom to others (Luke 11:52, Matt 23:13), pronouncing divine woes upon them, *we* want to have a more nuanced view of them, granting them a Biblical dignity, while the screams of their victims resound through the corridors of Hell, and those still in the world soak the ground with their tears and their blood.

★ ★ ★

THE EVIL SHEPHERDS

The shepherds of a flock, when called by the owner to account, slew him, and fled into the wilderness with the sheep. The owner's kin saved a few of the sheep and raised up a new flock.

The evil shepherds, after many centuries in the wilderness of blood and slaughter, came back to the spacious pasture-lands of the former owner, declaring they were now (and always) the rightful owners, and by right could live off the flock and rule the land.

When the descendants of the true owner stood up in the midst of their own small flocks on their ancestor's land, and spoke against the ancient murder and the ancient theft – with its modern continuation of the crime in the present-day land – the false owners, believing their own lies after so many centuries, denounced the true kin and owners and sought to outlaw them from the land and destroy their flocks (as their sheep would not listen to the wicked shepherds' voices).

★ ★ ★

YOU POETS OF THE JEWISH STATE

If you be worthy of the name
you will hold truth
above country
and all things in the world
even love
(especially love!)

at issue between us is the name
– a priceless spiritual property –
you call your state,
a blood-soaked land
of bloody, wicked souls, a mockery
of the patriarch, and He who gave him the name,
the two wrestlers at Peniel
the prince that had power with God
and men, and his Maker,
two parties
to Abraham's covenant
of blood

fulfilled in Messiah
– who took the covenant curse himself
though innocent
to free you from it

whose Father raised him again –
who divided the children
of said Israel
into the true
and the false –
who bowed the knee, and not

and took the kingdom away
from both land
and flesh
to a realm of spirit
– the name taken there too –
till the whole earth be the kingdom.

You poets of the Jewish state
forfeit the honor of your calling
as poets and seers
if you know not these things
if you toe the line
of devil and company
refusing fealty to the Heir of all
Abraham's and Judah's riches

the scepter, oracles, land, kingdom, blessing
of Messiah, and yourselves cast out
with the refuse of the nations
to wallow in blood and ignominy
en route to Gehenna, imposter Israel.

★ ★ ★

TRIBAL MYTHS

may be a proper tag
when talking of Arthur
or Middle Earth,
but we talk history
speaking of a crown
from ancient lineage
and supernatural birth

of course worldview may screen
facts from truth,
calling ancient records
myths, not allowing
God in his universe;
but it remains, the crown
himself was actually seen.

★ ★ ★

THERE'S A TIME

There's a time to turn the other cheek
and there's a time to smite
with all the power of God
in the weapons of spiritual warfare

words that hit like a hammer
words that raze as fire
and words that enter the heart and mind
as a two-edged blade

all of which are energized
by the Spirit of the Highest
to accomplish what they purpose:
the casting down of strong enemy holds.

When a demon takes the field
– I care not if he wears the yarmulke
of a rabbi, or the collar of a priest
or the title of a pastor –

in the global arena of consciousness
where the mighty in spirit vie
for the ascendancy,
I fight as did David's mighty men

to the death, for honor, for love
of the King, to vanquish the demonic spells
without quarter: as David had his mighty men,
Jesus has His.

THE FIRST “REPLACEMENT THEOLOGIAN”

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given unto a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.¹

–Jesus, to the chief priests and the elders of Israel 2

I actually don't like that term – “replacement theology” – as it's a misnomer, and it's in the title in quotes as what *others* say. The church hasn't replaced Israel. Israel has never been replaced. But Messiah Yeshua did *reconstitute* and *redefine* it according to *His* Torah [law, instruction]. Why should not the King set His nation in order, according to His good pleasure? We'll look at that in a moment. But first let's consider some of the things that are being said about so-called “replacement theology,” for this is what some folks presume to call what Jesus Himself did. An article in an issue of *Messianic Times* had the following title and statements:

GERMANS TAKE LEAD TO CONFESS PAST CRIMES AGAINST JEWS

“In deep shame and contrition we come before the Almighty and merciful God to confess the crimes and injustices perpetrated against the Jewish people down through the centuries, for which the Christian Church bears heavy responsibility.”

The article continued,

Christians officially repented for the Holocaust, the Crusader's destruction in the Middle Ages, the accusations and persecution during the Black Death, the practice of segregating Jews, the forced baptisms, the false accusations of ritual murder and conspiracy, the Spanish Inquisition, the pogroms, and replacement theology.³

Repentance is appropriate for all those things save one, the so-called "replacement theology." What the Germans mentioned in the article, and the Messianic Jews who publish *Messianic Times* mean by that term is this: the doctrine that the Christian Church is now the beneficiary of all the promises and blessings given to national Israel during the Old Testament era, with national, ethnic, Israel now disowned and disinherited; and to say it that way, without any qualification, betrays Biblical precision, rendering the statement inaccurate. It sounds quite different to say, the *Ekklesia*⁴ (gathered assembly) of Messiah Yeshua is heir to the blessings promised to Old Testament Israel, and *is* in God's eyes that Israel, while renegade "Israel after the flesh" – who disowned the Messiah (and expelled Him from the world), has no status before Him other than one more nation of the world.

A friend sent me another article from *The Spectator* (UK) 16 February 2002:

It was one of those sickening moments when an illusion is shattered and an ominous reality laid bare. I was among a group of Jews and Christians who met recently to discuss the Churches' increasing public hostility to Israel. The Jews were braced for a difficult encounter. After all, many British Jews (of whom I am one) are themselves appalled by the destruction of Palestinian villages, targeted assassinations and other apparent Israeli over-reactions to the Middle East conflict.

But this debate never took place. For the Christians said that the Churches' hostility had nothing to do with Israel's behaviour towards the Palestinians. This was merely an excuse. The real reason for the growing antipathy, according to the Christians

at that meeting, was the ancient hatred of Jews rooted deep in Christian theology and now on widespread display once again.

A doctrine going back to the early Church fathers, suppressed after the Holocaust, had been revived under the influence of the Middle East conflict. This doctrine is called replacement theology. In essence, it says that the Jews have been replaced by the Christians in God's favour, and so all God's promises to the Jews, including the land of Israel, have been inherited by Christianity.⁵

This will give the reader new to the controversy an idea of what is being said *against* so-called replacement theology. And be assured a lot hangs on the outcome of this controversy! As this article says, the very legitimacy of the Jewish state *as a prophetic fulfillment* is in the balance. For if its existence is found *not* to be a fulfilling of Biblical prophecy, then it is just another nation of the world, at best.

It needs to be said, people should not equate the Roman Catholic organization with Christians or the Christian Church. It is fair to say the Roman Catholics killed as many evangelical or Protestant Christians as they did Jews and Muslims! Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world,"⁶ and on the face of it that disqualifies Rome – according to its own claims – from being Messiah's community.

Regarding the use of the term "replacement theology," someone tried to define it as follows:

If we count Messianic Jews as Christians, and we include Gentile Christians in "Israel" (as seems consistent with this passage [Galatians 6:16, "the Israel of God"]), then Israel means Christians rather than Jews (that don't accept Jesus) – though Paul does not say it that way. We take this to be 'replacement theology'.

And there are indeed people who think this, and use the proverb, “If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck...etc.” However, in this case the creature does not have the DNA of a duck, notwithstanding its appearance from a cursory glance. Precision of language is of the utmost importance here. Perhaps another way of saying it would be that what is called “the church” is not in essence a Gentile entity: the *ekklesia* — although it has wrongly been de-Judaized conceptually — is a Jewish entity according to the Scripture, as I will demonstrate. I have no problem with its being de-Judaized in terms of ceremonial and traditional trappings, in fact I would insist on it in locations that are not culturally Jewish.

The Biblical data demands a certain understanding, and to do violence to that data constitutes – how shall I put it? – contradicting God to His face, much as impetuous Peter did when he sought to prevent the Lord Jesus from laying down His life for His sheep.⁷ As noted in the heading, Jesus told the chief priests and the rulers He was taking the Kingdom of God from them – national Israel – and giving it to another nation. *They themselves* had passed this judgment on the wicked husbandmen Jesus told them of in the parable spoken only moments earlier: those who slew the son – the heir – to gain the inheritance of the vineyard – Israel – would themselves be “miserably destroyed” and the vineyard let out to other husbandmen.⁸

Everything of God pertaining to the old Israel would be transferred out and into the Israel Jesus would establish: the Temple would now be His body; Torah would be His word, both directly and by His apostles; the Shekinah – the glory – would be the Holy Spirit indwelling the new Temple – His body; the Sabbath would be the rest in Him (different views exist regarding this), and the true Israel would be whatever He said it would be. Let us look at that a moment.

He very clearly announced there would be a change in the status of Israel – it, *as God’s kingdom*, would be taken from the present nation and given to another. It would no longer be God’s kingdom, neither would it be worthy of the appellation, Israel, which means “a prince of God,” nor of the blessing

given in that name: “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men...” 9

The foretold days of terrible darkness came when the rulers and chief priests allied themselves with the prince of demons, and against the God of Israel, and did as the Prophet plainly foretold in His parable mentioned above.

Who will dare accuse me of being anti-Jewish for telling this truth? It was my own house – the house of Levi – that bore false witness against the King. Telling the truth ever was unpopular in ancient Israel – witness the prophets! – and is so even now in modern Jewry, admittedly the children of the Pharisees.¹⁰

Then Jesus, after He rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, directed the apostle Peter in his sermon to the nation to speak on this wise:

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.¹¹

At that particular moment, by bringing to bear the word and warning of God through the ancient Lawgiver of Israel, restated again at the time of its fulfillment, God cleft the nation in two, those “destroyed from among the people” – cut off from the nation Israel – and those who were grafted into the new Israel being reconstituted by its King. This grafting in was according to their cleaving to Messiah in faith, trusting Him – and the Father through Him – to be their God, obeying His call to them to return from the long exile, to repent and believe in the Son of His love, and to receive forgiveness of their sins, individually and as a nation, and inherit the Kingdom prepared for them by Him, according to His covenant promise to the fathers.

So many images leap out from Scripture to tell this story. John the Baptist said this:

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather the wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.¹²

Is not the “wheat” that of Israel which repented and cleaved to Him, and continued to bear the name Israel, and the “chaff” that of Israel which were, as He said, “not of My sheep,”¹³ who opposed Him, and were cut off from His nation?

When the aged Simeon saw the infant Jesus in the Temple he said to Mary, “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against....that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”¹⁴ This is but another way of saying the same thing: He was coming to gather His true people to Himself, and turn the others away.

And this newly constituted Israel, with whom He would “confirm the covenant with many for one week”¹⁵ (of years), He then opened – giving this order to His apostles – to the Gentiles. Which Paul described to those in Ephesus as follows,

Remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world...¹⁶

The apostle then tells how the Messiah of Israel made them one people with the Jews, through the blood shed for forgiveness of sins, and His

having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make one new man,

so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby...For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God..."¹⁷

Exactly how Jesus "abolished in His flesh...the law of commandments" is another study, although it is told in this and many other passages of Scripture. The point to be emphasized is Paul's showing how the Gentiles are now become "fellow-citizens with the [Hebrew] saints, and of the household of God," still and eternally called Israel! In the Everlasting Kingdom the Lamb – and the Father – are called "the Temple"¹⁸ of it, and the Celestial City is named "new Jerusalem."¹⁹ The Israel of God is His people.

And Peter described the nation of Messiah in the very terms God described ancient Israel to Moses. First Moses:

Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to Me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.²⁰

But Israel of old did not keep the covenant²¹ and forfeited the promise – according to the stipulations of the covenant itself (see Deuteronomy 28), and yet the underlying covenant of promise made to Abraham remained intact, as Paul showed,

And this I say, that the covenant [with Abraham], that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.²²

In other words, although the Mosaic covenant was broken – revealing the utter sinfulness of humankind, and our inability to please God in this state – the Abrahamic covenant, also known as the Covenant of Grace, remained strong, and it was fulfilled in one Israelite (who also rendered a perfect obedience to the Mosaic covenant), the long-awaited Seed spoken of to our mother Eve, and longed for by the godly since the beginning of time – Jesus, the Saviour of the world. Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, spoke thusly of this fulfillment, his son being appointed “the prophet of the Highest”²³, to announce Him who Himself had come in the flesh to deliver His people:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our lives.²⁴

In this prophetic utterance Zacharias foresaw a *spiritual* fulfillment – involving a return from exile unto their God – which many in the nation did not see or want. This prophecy was fulfilled in the Israel established by Messiah, but not in that of Israel which apostatized and was cut off (then destroyed and scattered by Rome) – the spiritual descendants of which people the modern Jewish state, and world Jewry.

Now Peter, speaking of those who cleaved into Messiah:

To Whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones,

are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ....ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people...²⁵

The imagery remains consistent: we of the community of Messiah, called living stones, are built up a spiritual house, called also the commonwealth of Israel (as we have seen), the very house over which Moses ruled during his time, now ruled over by Jesus,²⁶ comprised of both Jew and Gentile, under Messianic Torah instead of Mosaic Torah, which new torah has given us the wonderful liberty which characterizes New Covenant spiritual life.

To repeat the central premise and conclusions put forth here: although this of which I have been speaking is spoken erroneously and disparagingly of as “replacement theology,” it is in fact a much more precise designation: the reconstituting of Israel according to Messiah’s separating the wheat from the chaff of them, and then, after a space, providing entrance to the Gentiles, according to ancient promises of God.

To be sure, those Christians enamored of the modern Zionist political/spiritual agenda (and there is a great “prophecy industry” with big money at stake!) will not take kindly to the views presented herein. And *some* of my countrymen according to the flesh, the Jews, being spiritual heirs of the apostate Pharisees cut off in Messiah’s winnowing out the chaff, will of course rage at this disinheriting them of both lineage and promise. This was in part their rage at Messiah Jesus when He said these things to their faces. From among the children of Abraham He called out His sheep, and those not His sheep did not know His voice – *hated* His voice! – and later, adding to their rage against Him and His flock, He called Gentiles into God’s Israel, as He had foretold,

And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.²⁷

The modern Jewish state is – in the earthly realm – a place of darkness and weeping, even to this day. The Messianic Jews in their midst – no matter they err in this business I write of – are the salt of the earth in that land (along with the Palestinian Christians), and are busy calling God’s people to their Messiah. Only as souls, great in number or small, repent and believe in Yeshua will they become God’s people, and part of Israel. Unbelieving Jews, living as a nation in Palestine, are as a nation of the world, under wrath save they repent. Even widespread repentance there will not make the Jewish state “Israel,” for God has His Israel comprised of many peoples; such repentance in the Jewish state will only transfer those individuals into Messiah’s *ekklesia* (also called the church), a kingdom not of the world, although many of us are still *in it*.

And to those who object that Jesus calls His community “the Israel of God,”²⁸ why cannot the King of Heaven and earth do according to all His good pleasure? “Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with Mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?”²⁹

¹ Matthew 21:43

² Matthew 21:23

³ *The Messianic Times*, Vol. 11, Number 2, Summer 2001 – Jewish Year 5761 (p. 14)

⁴ *ekklesia*, Greek, “from *ekkletos*, called out...It was a common term for a congregation of the *ekkletoi*, the called people, or those called out or assembled in the public affairs of a free state, the body of free citizens called together by a herald...which constituted the *ekklesia*. In the NT the word (in the Greek) is applied to the congregation of the people of Israel (Acts 7:38)...The Christian community was designated for the first time as the *ekklesia* to differentiate it from the Jewish community...The term *ekklesia* denotes the NT community of the redeemed...” From, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, by Spiros Zodhiates (AMG Publ. 1992)

P. 541. This word is generally translated church in the NT. *Ekklesia* is used here as the word church is so loaded with accrued meanings.

⁵ By Melanie Phillips. See: archive.spectator.co.uk/article/16th-february-2002/14/christians-who-hate-the-jews

⁶ John 18:36

⁷ Matthew 16:21-23

⁸ Matthew 21:33-41

⁹ Genesis 32:28

¹⁰ *Who Was A Jew? Rabbinic and Halakhic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism*, by Lawrence H. Schiffman (KATV Publishing House, NJ 1985), Pages 4, 5.

¹¹ Acts 3:22, 23; Deuteronomy 18:15-19

¹² Matthew 3:11, 12

¹³ John 10:26

¹⁴ Luke 2:34, 35

¹⁵ Daniel 9:27

¹⁶ Ephesians 2:11, 12

¹⁷ Ephesians 2:15, 18, 19

¹⁸ Revelation 21:22

¹⁹ Revelation 21:2

²⁰ Exodus 19:5, 6

²¹ Jeremiah 31:32; cf. 31:31-34

²² Galatians 3:17

²³ Luke 1:76

²⁴ Luke 1:68-75

²⁵ 1 Peter 2:4, 5, 9

²⁶ Hebrews 3:1-6

²⁷ Matthew 8:11, 12

²⁸ Galatians 6:16

²⁹ Matthew 20:15

★ ★ ★

ISRAEL HAS NOT BEEN REPLACED BY THE CHURCH

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people
whom he has chosen for his own inheritance. Psalm 33:12*

When Christ – the Messiah of Israel – came among His people, taught them and died for them, He came as the King anciently prophesied. Of Him Isaiah said, “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, *to order it*, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever” (9:7). Daniel saw in vision, “there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (7:14). Messiah, on the throne of David, shall rule a kingdom comprised of many nations.

When the angel Gabriel foretold His birth to Mary His mother, he said, “the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father, David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; And of his kingdom there shall be no end.” (Luke 1:32, 33)

We see here Messiah coming into the world to establish and order his kingdom; it is called by the angel “the house of Jacob”, and in this kingdom will be many nations, peoples, and languages; Micah said of Messiah, that He is “to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (5:2). We also see that Messiah, Jesus the Christ, extends the boundaries of His kingdom – the kingdom of Israel – to include all the earth,

and this is fitting, for “The earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and all they that dwell therein.... For God is the king of all the earth... . [He] reigns over the heathen” (Ps 24:1; 47:7, 8). There is no doubt that this long-awaited kingdom – of which Daniel said the God of heaven would set it up and it would never be destroyed but rather would do away with all rival kingdoms (2:44) – this very kingdom was Israel; its king, Jesus of Nazareth, seed of the royal line of David; its capital, New Jerusalem (on the renewed earth in the eternal state—Rev 21:1): “And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their honour and glory into it” (Rev 21:24).

But many in ancient Israel would not hear Him, rather *hated* Him. Of such, God speaking through Moses declared, “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him” (Deuteronomy 18:19), meaning, God would require his place in Israel and his life! The apostle Peter reiterated these words of Moses as follows, “every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:23).

In other words, the Lord – *the King!* – at this time *ordered* His kingdom by separating wheat from chaff, sheep from goats, and executed what He had earlier told the chief priests and elders of the people: “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt 21:43). The kingdom of God given to a nation *other* than Israel? *No*, rather the nation of Israel so ordered anew by its king as to remove its ties to the temple and its priesthood, and to the government – both of which were conspiring to slay Him! – and transfer it to a new government of His choosing, with twelve apostles instead of twelve tribal elders, and comprised of all true Israelites who would bow the knee to their King and God. The others – *all the others* – who refused to heed the word of the God of Israel through Messiah, were removed from the nation of Israel, as a butcher cleaves inedible gristle from the meat. Israel was now comprised of only those loyal to God’s Messiah. His body was now the true temple, His word the law, and His apostles the appointed rulers of the people. The land of Israel would be extended to include the entire earth, no more restricted by the geography of Palestine; the true Jerusalem would be

the heavenly, the one from above, to be brought to the earth in the fullness of time.

What was the status of those Jews cut off from the people of Israel? Unabashedly modern Judaism states,

“...it was the tannaitic [Pharisaic-Rabbinic teaching] tradition which was almost completely representative of the Jewish community in Palestine and, to a great extent, of that segment of the Diaspora which remained loyal to its ancestral faith.... Indeed, it is the *halakhah* [the Jewish legal system founded by the Tannaim] which may be described as that which typifies Rabbinic Judaism.” [1]

In other words, those Jews who refused to acknowledge Jesus as Messiah and were cut off by God from the nation – no more accepted as Israelites by the God of Israel, and by its messianic King – these renegades became rivals for the name and status of *Israel* and *Jew*. Though physical seed of Abraham, they were disowned by Jehovah. They murderously persecuted the true Israel when it was in their power.

What says Messiah of these? When giving John the letter for the church in Smyrna, Jesus says, “...I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan” (2:9). When the Greek word *blasphēmia* is used regarding humans it means reviling slander, and these Jews slanderously accused this small company of Messiah’s followers to the Roman authorities, causing their imprisonment and execution. Again, in the letter to the church in Philadelphia Jesus has John write, “Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship [bow down in humility] before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee” (3:9). This indicates that some of the church’s fiercest enemies were converted and won to their Messiah. But it also indicates that the King of Israel declared those Jews which were against Him (“He that is not with me is against me” Matt 12:30) were, in His eyes, not any longer Jews, but apostates.

The apostle Paul, by the Spirit of God, says the same:

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”
(Rom 2:28, 29)

Jeremiah concurs, for even in the Old Covenant uncircumcision of heart incurred God’s wrath, as it indicated wickedness and rebellion (Jer 9:25, 26). And again Paul says, “For they are not all Israel which are of Israel... but the children of the promise are counted for the seed” (Rom 9:6, 8), and “...if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal 3:29).

And yet again, in his letter to the church in Philippi, Paul says, “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (3:3) To the Galatian churches he says, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” (6:15)

Little wonder many in what is called Modern Jewry loathe Christ, the New Testament, Christians, and **God** for this pronouncement, even though it first came by Moses (Deut 18:15, 18, 19).

Paul says that in times past Gentile nations were looked upon as “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world...”, but now, in the fold of Messiah, they “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph 2:12, 19). This household of God is the same spoken of in Hebrews, Moses being a faithful servant in it – the house of Israel – while Christ is no servant but the “son over his own house; whose house we are” (3:1-6).

The Israel of God has not been replaced, but it has been culled, the faithful Jews gathered and the unfaithful cast off by word of the King; the promise to Abraham that “in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen 12:3) is now being fulfilled, as is the prophecy of Daniel that “all people,

nations, and languages should serve him” (7:14). Sometimes the kingdom of Israel is called the church, but this latter is a synonym, and no replacement! Only in *this* kingdom is *this* Scripture fulfilled: “In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory” (Isa 45:25), for justification before His presence is the gift of God through faith in Messiah; in true Israel alone are *all the seed* so blessed. The New Jerusalem which shall come down upon the renewed earth is its capital, and the glory of Israel is the Lamb who sits upon the throne of David, the divine Husband of that beloved Bride who shares His glory.

[1] *Who Was A Jew? Rabbinic and Halakhic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism*, by Lawrence H. Schiffman (KATV Publishing House, NJ 1985), Pages 4, 5.

★ ★ ★

TALIBAN POETS

I see the enemy writes poetry
but are any humans really enemy
and are we not told to love even these

as the psalmist said, I am for peace
but when I speak, they are for war –
yet I will hold forth the flag of truce

Will you accept that, Taliban poets?
Peace in the name of Christ?
Peace in the name of the sovereign God?

It is offered, do with it as you will.
I speak not as a soldier
with weapons that kill

I speak as poet
on Apocalypse Field
global arena of consciousness

in this realm truth is the weapon
voice honed keen edged
a spiritual blade

death is nothing to us
for we come back in resurrection;
the question is: whose God is real?

whose heaven
and whose hell
are real?

May the true God show you mercy
even though you have it not
for others, to your open shame.

Like all humans
you have been held captive
by the demon

and those who know not mercy
cannot show it
but now you have no excuse.

Light has been shown you
embrace it – that is, *Him*, Messiah –
or eternal darkness without mercy.

★ ★ ★

A “ONE-BOMB COUNTRY”

meaning one nuke could
wipe us out,
speaking of the earthly
State of Israel,
and so to be on guard
is wise

Wiser yet to have that life
death cannot kill
for resurrection overturns death
and God's Israel in Messiah
thus the Immortal Nation
scoffs at death and devils!

★ ★ ★

IT IS GOING DOWN

even now
they gather
for the kill
many not even knowing
that they are about
a battle all heaven
and all hell
eye with dread resolve

the one
steels the hearts of men and women
with valor
born of the champion
of heaven
united as those are
with him
their eyes on him
and the kingdom coming

the other
of a different cloth
infusing into men a molten hatred
of that heaven
and those who people it
fitting them with weapons
of a world gone mad

laws turned evil
that heaven's Lord
be bereft of kingdom on earth

are you ready for these times
will you stand when the waves
of them crash against your life
throughout all the world
and all held dear be wrenched away
in the whelming flood –
it's going down now
in dark and hidden planners' moves –
who is sufficient for these things?
Heaven's champion
steels his men and women with power.

★ ★ ★

OUR COURAGE IS DIFFERENT THAN DAVID'S

for the stone we sling
in the giant's head
is not as of old

nor the giant
that misshapen monster
stomping in the valley of Elah

but a *world* against us
and the King of the Jews
our Captain

and the stone *now* slung
the Name of unmatched power
into the heart of darkness

As Jesus we also fear not death
but scorn it as we bear witness
to God and His kingdom

knowing that death is nothing
in the face of resurrection
and the glory of His favor ever after

and the powers of this world
its sorry princes

and feeble weapons

helpless before our might
the Spirit of our God
as a flame to cobwebs

and we stand
unscathed by death
in bodies of glory

while our killers
melt in terror
at His presence

before whom earth and heaven
flee away
and the universe dissolves

and the Mighty One of Israel
rewards both the wicked
and the just

Our courage sees this
before it happens
and our faith pleases Him.

Our words of testimony
regarding Him
the sacred stone we sling.

★ ★ ★

To repeat,

I say the rabbis have led my people into the curses of Moses these past twenty centuries, for if we had pleased God and were under the sure covenant blessings and protection of Deuteronomy 28, how could we possibly have been spewed from the land to be slaughtered and despised among

the goyim two thousand years, and to end up in the ovens of Hitler? The truth is – and only can be! – we have followed treasonous leaders in betrayal of our King, and we have reaped their destruction. O nation of fools, we, to be blinded so long! As the prophets foretold, the Gentiles came to His light, and we followed our teachers into darkness.

Awake, O Israel, for the days further darken, and we need our Mighty One to see our way. Seek out the Messianic Jews among us, and cast off the pretenders who have slain our millions!

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PART II

We have seen too much blood. The ancient temple was the fount of *rivers* of blood, innocence covering guilt. Our own blood also, rivers of that. And it is coming up again, this blood-letting. There has to be a warning, a light shined on it, as we have forgotten the rock whence we are hewn: even in 2016 many of us are aware we are an ancient and unusual people, the people of a God, or a Book, but remember little else. A God who Himself offered a sacrifice, who Himself walked between the covenant cut animals, who Himself fulfilled what *we* could not on eternal pain of death. A God who loved us, and we scoffed. It is our written history! The *real* “Never again”—for it to be any benefit to us Abraham’s seed—must be *never again* will we walk by the holocaust visited upon Messiah unfeeling and ungrateful, and unavailing of that blood which covers sin, shed by the Lamb God provided. Other ‘never again’s will prove empty, bloody words!

To some, these words sound alien, irrelevantly ancient—and this but an indicator of a mindset heading for destruction.

ARE THE COVENANT CURSES OF MOSES TRULY ON US NOW?

Are the curses spoken in Deuteronomy chapter 28—written around 1400 years BCE—that would fall upon the Jews of ancient Israel *and their children* if they disobeyed the voice of their God as written in the Law Moses gave them, are these curses active today in 2016 CE, some 3400 years later?

The question then arises: Does the faith of ancient Israel have any bearing on modern Jewry, that is, does it have any relevance to *us*? It is written that the word of God given to Moses, and to the Biblical prophets and writers after him, will endure through all ages. King David, in Psalm 105:8-10, said this of it,

He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant...

Isaiah the prophet put it this way:

As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD;
My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in
thy mouth,
shall not depart out of thy mouth,

nor out of the mouth of thy seed,
nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD,
from henceforth and for ever. (59:21)

The word of God that goes forth from His mouth goes not in vain. It will accomplish that which He has said. Our unbelief will not annul it. Our unbelief in the God our forbears cut a blood-oath covenant with has been our undoing time and again!

It is said by a Messianic teacher, “Ethnic Jewry is no longer under the covenant curses spoken by Moses, since the Old Covenant is abrogated”, it being understood the curses of the Mosaic Covenant were annulled through the blood of the New Covenant, the B’rit Chadashah (cf. Jeremiah 31:31ff.). I reply, “Abrogated for whom? And in what respect?” Are they not abrogated strictly for those who come to Messiah, the mediator of the new covenant, whose death paid the redemption price for transgressions under Moses? (cf. Hebrews 9:14,15) For these and these only they are abrogated. For the death required by the violated covenant was offered by Messiah—an infinitely precious ransom for the transgressors of it—but those apart from Him have no such redemption, and are still under the power of that covenant’s curses.

Can it be thought that the wrath executed by the curses was *rescinded* by Messiah for those who reject His substitutionary offering for *their* covenant violations? The continuing power of those curses levied against transgressing Jews who also refuse the redemption of Messiah, this was not and is not rescinded. The Levitical system of law, sacrifice, and worship—all that ceremonial typology—*was* abrogated by the “better covenant” and *its* infinitely more precious blood, but those of us who spurned both the words of the Prophet who brought redemption (Deut 18:18, 19; Acts 3:22, 23) *and* the precious blood which covered the sins under that old covenant, we have no relief from the penalties pronounced against us.

The final metings of the Deuteronomic curses were the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and accompanying slaughter of a great multitude of us Jews in CE 70 *and* the CE 135 spewing of the people entirely out of the land

and scattering us into the nations of the world. The covenant with Israel was annulled, and as a geo-political nation and people there *is no longer* a ‘covenant’ entity called Israel. The present State of Israel is *not* the covenant nation, which should be obvious to those who behold it.

We Jews, to whom pertained the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, had received greater light than the nations prior to Messiah’s coming, and that law and that covenant mediated by Moses, although annulled by Messiah’s covenant, the already executed penalties declared by Moses are still upon us. Hence the unspeakable value of the death of Messiah for us, whose blood covers those covenant-breakers who come to Him for mercy and cleansing, but those who spurn Him are still liable for that broken law and covenant. It makes no difference whether to say we are under the Deuteronomic curses *or* the continuing wrath that sent them forth. The curses once executed upon the expiry of the covenant nation *and* the covenant are still upon us, whether one refers to the curses themselves or the power of them. Like a stone thrown it is out of the hand and in the air headed where it was aimed.

Indeed, all humankind stands indicted and guilty in their sin before the holy God, as all have transgressed His law—whether that written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, or that of His word written in the Law, writings, and prophets, “the Old Testament in its entirety [being] permeated with the requirements and judgments which are summed up in the ten commandments” (John Murray, *Romans*, p 106). All humankind are under the curse of God for the moral law broken, but we Jews are—in *addition*—liable to the penalties the more specific law pronounced against us and sealed in the covenant blood oath by Moses. Those of us who apostatize from this *prophetic* faith of Israel either *delusionally* cling to Moses (for the Torah of Moses is annulled and superseded), thinking we have remission of sin *without blood* shed for it, or simply live in willful ignorance, both views fatal to our souls. These realities must be brought out in the open so that we understand our status vis-à-vis God, which is different than the status of Gentiles. We Jews have a different history due to the curses of Moses we have lived and suffered under many, many centuries—though

we all will perish along with unbelieving Gentiles—and we need to understand from whence, and into what, we have fallen in order to return. Now that *return*—since the age of Moses has passed (*after all, the temple and its accoutrements, the Aaronic and Levitical genealogical records, etc., all long gone*)—needs to be made *precisely* clear and perfectly laid out so that Yeshua Ha'Mashiach, Jesus of Nazareth, is seen to be the new and eternal High Priest after the order of Melchisedek (Psalm 110:4), *the* Prophet, and *the* Everlasting King: in these three offices the Saviour of us Jews in this time when the breath of the dragon draws near, bloodlust in its eyes, and his chant the same as Islam's, "*First Saturday, then Sunday!*" (The meaning of this is, for those who have not heard it before: first the Jews must be destroyed, then the Christians.) A crucial thing to learn more of and to remember, is that resurrection changes everything—meaning death is not the final word—and there is life after death, whether it be blessed or cursed. In Messiah we are delivered from the fear of death.

The illusion of what we call Aliyah: As the era of Moses is over, and the theocratic, covenant nation of Israel dissolved, even in the modern political entity called The State of Israel those Jews therein remain in diaspora (for joining the Jewish state is but an illusion of Return from the exile), the true Return being only in Messiah, and His then placing them into His corporate body by the Spirit of God, which community is the true Israel, He being the only true Israelite—one who has never sinned and thus not liable to the curses upon lawbreakers. Those joined to Messiah become part of His mystical Body, the new humanity to people the new creation after the Resurrection and the Judgment.

This needs to be understood: the Divine nature of the new and eternal temple God is building, under the care of our High Priest—the spiritual, yet still physical, temple built of living stones—consisting of us who are joined to and built upon the sure foundation Cornerstone (Isaiah 28:16; Psalm 118:22; Matthew 21:42). Messiah is this Cornerstone, and we those living stones built upon Him. The living God dwells within this living temple, even here in its first stages in this world, though we await to see its glory as it manifests solid and complete in the world to come on New Earth Paradise. Its jeweled stones are *us!* (1 Peter 2:5)

Perhaps I will hear the old cavil of “Replacement theology”, but that has been put to rest above, for the Israel God honors is simply that which honors His Messiah; after all, did He not promise our father Abraham, “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen 12:3)? And this is that blessing, that we should be one people gathered around the God of Abraham, all those of the nations that cleave to His holy law as spoken through Messiah, along with us Jews—*all* the families of the earth. *All* those who come to God through Messiah are now His chosen people. The floodgates of mercy are open to whosoever will come! This is that blessing and promise given father Abraham.

To not believe is to fall away from His precious salvation, and perish in eternal Gehenna.

★ ★ ★

HOLOCAUSTS

The fierce wrath behind the final cursings of that now expired covenant was so hot it will remain unextinguished on this people till the threshing floor of the world gives up its chaff to the furnace of judgment and fiery indignation, the elect among us—the remnant—having first been culled out by God’s effectual calling of His people to Himself.

The linear—i.e., one-dimensional—thinking which views the Deuteronomic revelation of fierce wrath *as expended* and *finished* when the force of the curse was fully executed at the end of the Old Covenant era misses the nature and continuing power of that anger on the continuing sin that drew it forth in the first place.

Deut 28:45, 46 ...all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.

One of the *most important* of His commandments came ten chapters earlier, in Deut 18:18, 19:

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, *I will require it of him.*

Not only did we not hearken unto Him, but when, centuries later, He manifested in the flesh according to promise—our Messiah—we conspired to have Him put to death at the hands of Rome, and as He was a-dying—*Himself* the atoning sacrifice unto God for *our* sins—we walked by and mocked this Lamb God provided, not seeing the infinite heart of love burning immeasurably more bright than the bush Moses walked up to and took his shoes off to draw near.

But it is not too late for us to draw near the burning *we once passed by*. Not a bush, but a greater and more profound sight: a unique heart, and the divine presence aflame within it. A great hope, a great love therein. For we yet stagger under the wrath lying heavy upon us. We must not revolt at the monstrosity of evil which befell us under Hitler, cursing our God, *for that monstrosity is a reflection of our own hearts' murderous hatred of Him, the God of Jacob!* And this judgment *our hatred* provoked is *less* than the offense that occasioned it. It is a warning for those with ears to hear: a time of threshing is to come upon us again, greater by far than what has already come. We should be ware.

The execution by crucifixion of Jesus the Messiah of Israel and Saviour of the world, for the sins of that of humankind which shall cleave to the true God, was the most horrendous judgment that can be conceived by man, even though its depths cannot be plumbed by us. Involved in this must be the understanding of His nature, true deity and true human—two natures, though not confused or mingled—yet one Person. His divine nature upheld His human nature while receiving the wrath of God as He punished the sin-bearer bearing our sin. The infinite dignity of His Person gave infinite worth to His priestly sacrifice. This was the true passover lamb, no type or symbol as were those sacrifices of old.

Within the soul and body of Jesus the eternal wrath due untold millions of us was exhausted; the sin imputed to that infinitely holy soul (2 Cor 5:21) as much a torment as the wrath meted upon it—one cannot compare even the nuclear devastation of entire vast lands *with hundreds of millions destroyed* to such destruction and suffering as the Saviour endured for humankind. We underestimate the expanse of His being, and the wrath due us. The

Great Flood of Noah and *its* destruction was miniscule in comparison. It is hard for us to think on such vast scales. But let us try, briefly.

What happened to us under Hitler and his followers—*all of it, all the worst*—I want to tell you that even these depths of evil are light—*small*—compared to what we shall know in Hell. For there actual demons, and the devil, will be the company we're in, and that forever—without end, *ever*. What liberty they will have to torment us I do not know. But what Messiah calls “the lake of fire” bespeaks something unfathomably terrible. The holocaust should not even be compared to this unending—*eternal*—torment, bad as that was. What is coming is infinitely worse. So when I say God shouts to us that it is not well with us—and we heard that shout then in the camps of death—rational people should take note.

When the sun shines there is warmth; when it recedes there is darkness and cold. The sun does not cause the darkness, its absence does. When God takes His covenant protection from us—when He withdraws from us because of the vileness of our hearts, and our disdain for His covenant—who causes Him to distance from the moral repulsiveness of our ways? And when He is gone, and darkness is in our house, then devils come to wreak havoc in those once called the people of God. He said through the prophet Hosea, “yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!” (9:12) And through Moses He said—with respect to the breaking of the covenant,

Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? (Deuteronomy 31:17)

There *was* light when Messiah made His offering for sin—our sin. We walked by this epochal event—and *in spirit many continue doing so*—as though it were nothing, *worse* than nothing, an affront to us, despite our being carefully instructed by our spiritual teachers—Moses and the prophets

—and then no less a person than Messiah Himself, whom we despised, following renegade rabbis. The Holocaust, after the diaspora persecutions of twenty centuries, was a major judgment (though not of the order of things that are to come), to the end of alerting the nation—that is, world Jewry, particularly those of us within the newly-formed State of Israel, as well in America: it is time to wake up to the realities of our situation: time to revisit and reassess our history as the “people of the book” we purportedly are.

Our forebears walking by the crucifixion—our ancient rabbis and priests—mocking the One who hung there making atonement for the people according to the will of our God and Creator, set us on a path we have followed since, a path of blood, gore, and ignominy. It will not do to just leave it at that. If we are not utterly deadened at heart, and dull of mind, we may want to reassess those we blindly follow—or reject, and go secular—and what they have done, for we have partaken of their “reward”. Our ancient prophet, Isaiah, put it like this, *“the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed”* (9:16).

To some it may seem outrageous even to suggest the Holocaust was a judgment from the God of Israel. We have become very distant from any true knowledge of Him, and His holiness. But consider, even the pagan emperor was compelled to confess regarding our God, “all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Daniel 4:35) The God of Israel is the absolute sovereign over all the universe. Our prophet Isaiah (in 45:6,7) was given the words,

I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil [disaster, calamity]:
I the LORD do all these things.

The Psalmist, in 127:1b, said, “except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” Whether we see our suffering at the hands of the wicked as our simply having the covenant protection removed by God and

thus vulnerable to demonic men, or His designing our punishment as just retribution, it amounts to the same thing: our Safety has departed from us, and we are desolate. And exposed without protection.

We have no fear of God any longer, as some of our fathers had. But we desperately need this. He is just, and without any flaw in His infinite moral perfection—if we will not take that by faith in the word He has spoken—and proceed from there, we shall perish, as so many of us already have. For He has said,

...to this man will I look,
even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit,
and trembleth at my word. (Isa 66:2)

and,

The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart;
and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. (Psalm 34:18)

There is coming another great holocaust that will usher us into the eternal —*and deserved*—holocaust, what Messiah calls “the second death”.

Yet the floodgates of mercy are still flung wide. Of our age it is written,

In that day there shall be a fountain opened
to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem
for sin and for uncleanness. (Zechariah 13:1)

Do you know that fountain? It was opened for us outside of Jerusalem as the Lord of Glory bled paying for our sins. He was raised from the dead, and sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high, gladly receiving all who come to Him, contrite, in faith.

WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

We have been privileged to see great light, gleams of the dawning new age of humankind after the resurrection, but those who shut their eyes to it will see what, for them, must follow: an endless and agonizing night.

Some of us are entirely ignorant of the Book we are the people of, having opted instead for the “secular” view of things, seeing the “religious” among us not any thing we would desire to emulate! And so we shrug off all things religious, and become emancipated and enlightened according to the zeitgeist, the spirit of the foul age.

Others of us are indoctrinated by those we have loved into the Rabbinic faith, and more or less keep it, yet the *discrepancy* between what *the* one foundational book—*Tanakh*—says, and what the multitude of supposed sages in their Talmudic “wisdom” say, disturbs us and we, some of us, simply suspend our judgment and get by as best we can. But the Holocaust still shouts out to us that God’s righteous wrath yet rests upon us for the treacherous betrayal—*our* ongoing treacherous betrayal—of the covenant He made with us in time past. It may be that among us there no faith in Him left after the meat and soul grinder of centuries, but this then is only a repeat of our sad and woeful history. After Hitler no one can ignore the shout of God—the anger, and the love.

Please listen: it is true Messiah said, as He was dying, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). He remitted the sin of decide we all—Gentile and Jew—had committed. Yet we *continue* to laugh and

mock at His dying, His *infinite* propitiation for our sins. To revile this costly mercy is to invite the wrath it intercepted. We should not want to invite this upon ourselves! Not again!

This “infinite propitiation” is the perfect antidote—and God’s loving answer—to the “eternal torment” of Hell we are rushing toward. Our Father God accepted His beloved Son’s offering—the atonement—for our sin at the cross. Jesus’ holocaust in our place—bearing the holocaust of our eternal Hell—satisfies God’s demand for full justice, and we, sins forgiven for Christ’s sake, may enter into life on paradise New Earth, in the New Jerusalem that shall come down from Heaven (Revelation 21).

The Gentile nations will have their own major judgment for their rejection of the New Covenant that God so graciously offered *them*, the Messiah’s wondrous salvation set before them as well. If they see *us* come to Him, doubtless many of them will follow us.

Not all of us will heed and escape, but some will—perhaps more of those who are secular, and open sinners by the Biblical standard, than the so-called religious. As for both the blessings and the curses He gave Moses to declare, our disbelief does not annul the power of them; He says, from elsewhere in the Book,

I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD. (Ezek 24:14)

The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge,
and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor. (Prov 22:12)

There is no wisdom nor understanding
nor counsel against the LORD.

The horse is prepared against the day of battle:
but safety is of the LORD. (Prov 21:30, 31)

There are many devices in a man’s heart;
nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand. (Prov 19:21)

Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil [calamity] and good? Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD. (Lam 3:37-40)

We Jews are a chosen people, for good when we walk at peace with and in obedience to our God, but for ill when we walk contrary. In an extraordinary move the LORD our God brought our people back to the land, and at this time (2016) the population of the State of Israel is around 8.5 million (around 6.3 million Jews), and the number of world Jewry stands at around 15 million, give or take 1.5 million, depending on how the count is taken. When we figure that during the Holocaust 6 million of us were killed, the percentage vis-à-vis our total population now is shocking. A little less than *half of all of us* were wiped off the earth.

What is God doing bringing us back to the ancient land? I see two possibilities: first, giving us a place as a people again, not a Biblical people for we (even the various Orthodox groups) are averse to the *prophetic* faith of our fathers (that faith of Moses and the prophets, *not* the rabbis); and second, to a threshing floor, where the wheat will be separated from the chaff. Let me talk of that a little.

For those who have ears to hear, I repeat: about half way through the curses of Deuteronomy 28, in verse 45 Moses says,

Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee...

Severe as it is, this is a promise—and we should not discount it, for this is the lesson learned from the Holocaust to us who survive to this day. Some will not take this lesson to heart, but some will. And the Holocaust, you will recall my saying, horrendous as it was, was small compared to the holocaust

that ravaged the being of Messiah, Son of God—also known as “God manifest in the flesh” (more on that in a moment). And small compared to our Hell.

Looking at our situation, I will go a little further in Moses; in verses 64 through 66 of Deut 28 he says,

And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life...

This is upon us now in many nations, and even in the State of Israel we live in fear, if not of the knives, then of Iran’s nuclear bomb(s) many chaff at the bit to develop and lob into Tel Aviv or Jerusalem obliterating us all—grandchildren and great grandchildren—*all*. The last great dispersion. Dispersing us out of the world and into eternal regions. Horrible, you say? We are all going to die some day anyway (except the LORD returns for His people and for judgment before that). Whether you quietly die of heart failure in your sleep, or eaten by a lion, while the latter is a more painful death, the end result is identical. We shall all die. If it is earlier or later it boils down to the same. What Messiah warned us of is *the second death*. It is also termed eternal death. Going into eternal realms apart from the love and care of God in Messiah, but instead under His wrath, and in the company of all the world’s wicked, its sociopaths and psychopaths, along with the hosts of demons and their foul prince, Satan—this is what awaits us if we are bereft of Messiah’s covenant and saving friendship. We generally protest and say, “But surely I’m not to be reckoned among these misbegotten grotesqueries—I’m a *good* person, or at least I have *tried* to be good.” And this is our problem—we trust our own evaluation of our selves, and of the

essential human condition, rather than God's: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) King David, our poet and psalmist, by the Spirit of God said,

God looked down from heaven upon the children of men,
to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.
Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become
filthy;
there is none that doeth good, no, not one. (Psalm 53:2, 3)

If we discount the word of God in this, we will discount His views on everything. We, the people to whom He has spoken by Moses, the prophets, and Messiah, to whom He gave the gracious covenants (which first covenant He gave to no others), and to whom He has revealed His plan for this age of earth's history, *and* for the age to come where His paradise on the new earth will surpass all the finest dreams and visions of *this* age—we would do well to take the Scripture to heart.

And this Messiah, Micah said of Him,

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the
thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me
that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from
of old, from everlasting. (Micah 5:2)

The attribute of eternity may be posited only of deity. And this One was to come from Bethlehem.

And again, in Isaiah 9:6, Messiah is called,

Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace.

In Isaiah 53 it is written how He suffered for our sins, making atonement for us. Who could offer an acceptable atoning sacrifice but One possessing absolute moral perfection, and that could be no mere man (nor our corporate nation!) :

But he was wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities:
the chastisement of our peace was upon him;
and with his stripes we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way;
and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all . . .

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief:
when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,
he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,
and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:
by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;
for he shall bear their iniquities. (Isaiah 53:5, 6, 10, 11)

What our Messiah endured to end our exile from the heart of the living God, in taking our sins upon Himself and paying the penalty we should have paid . . . well, the depth of suffering cannot be fathomed by the human mind. We walked by that event once, but let us not do it again.

The Promised Land of the Israel *in spirit* has but one gateway, and Messiah the Gate-keeper. In Him is the essential return from exile; when this age is over and the flood of fire cleanses the earth, God will not only make our bodies new and glorified, but the earth as well, and the Land of Promise will be all the earth, and the unclean shall not dwell thereon *forever*. The great city of the new earth is called New Jerusalem, and there our God will dwell among us.

Lest any think to avoid the upheavals of the days to come by fleeing to the United States (where almost 6 million of us Jews live), think again, for this

land (from which I write at the moment) is also in the sights of the wrath of the Almighty for its own egregious wickedness. Please see the chapter, “The Fate of Babylon, a study in determining the identity and demise of Babylon in John’s Apocalypse”, for more on this, which pertains to the end of this age.

Even for those who carefully study the prophecies of the end of the age, we tend to minimize the pounding calamities that shall rack the earth, we tend to “think small” about these things. When it is said by the last prophet—John of the Apocalypse—that one third of humanity shall be killed during the period of the “sixth trumpet” judgments, to me this portends major wars and the use of nuclear weapons. I take this to possibly be the destruction of the large entity known as “harlot Babylon”, and possibly other nations. We know that there are those who have this *passionately* in mind for the small State of Israel. Jesus said in His Lucan Olivet Discourse that men’s hearts will be failing them for fear of the things they see coming upon the earth (21:26). Things ordinarily unthinkable will actually happen in our sight. It will be realized that the end of the world—of this age—is upon us, for such things can be nothing else but.

It would be wise to learn the *second part* of the Hebrew Bible, those of us who want to enter eternity in the care and love of God. It is the mark of a fool, in these days where even the “wise” are twisted in delusions, to remain in traditions that have betrayed us for millennia, and not think and investigate for ourselves. Even in the land, we are not a blessed people; we may be proud, and tough, but a curse dogs us—and it’s time to heed the writing on the wall, and not the books of effete religious characters whose views are worthless to cease the madness of these days. The anti-missionaries will rage and roar at what I say. I think my arguments, and vision into our actual condition, speak for themselves. Whatever the spinmeisters conjure up, our history—and present—speak for *themselves*. We need,

God’s Book, Old and New.

When I have spoken of the holocaust visited upon Messiah that was rightly meant for us—He bearing it as our substitute, just as the old animal sacrifices typified—this manifested the love of our God for us. We need to apprehend the truth, the reality, of that love, so as to cleave to Him with all the trust of our hearts and minds. The apostle Paul has a saying in his epistle to the Ephesian congregation, “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (1:6); grace is undeserved favor, and this particular grace pertains to the cleansing that makes us acceptable to our God, and it is written of by the prophet Zechariah in 13:1,

In that day there shall be a fountain opened
to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem
for sin and for uncleanness.

The fountain was His veins opened—and emptied unto death—for the love of us who would come to Him for mercy. But He did not remain dead, as it is written in David,

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;
neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption (Psalm
16:10).

He was raised from the dead according to the Scripture, and receives all who come to Him for grace in their desperate time of need. That Jehovah the eternal Son would so suffer in order to dispense such grace to the undeserving, there is an unspeakable glory manifested thereby, and for which He is praised continually in the new temple over which He is tender and kind and mighty high priest, the temple that is New Jerusalem in the heavens, and will comprise all of New Earth after the resurrection and judgment. Eternally blessed is the one whose feet tread *that* land! May that be *you*, dear reader.

A GREAT PROMISE, AND A GREAT HOPE GIVEN US

This is the promise, given through Moses:

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,

And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;

That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.

If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:

And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.

And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

(Deuteronomy 30:1-6)

The Mosaic era being over, and his covenant annulled—the Law having been fulfilled by and in Messiah—the land we are to be brought into is not the land of old we once were of, for it is *at present in spirit and truth that our Return From Exile must take place*: the Return is to the favor—to *the very heart and love*—of our God and Saviour, through Jesus the Messiah, in whom we have access, being washed clean by His blood, the perfect and acceptable sacrifice.

Wherever we are, in whatever land, in whatever circumstance, however defiled and laden with sins, these words from a hymn say it well,

Just as I am, and waiting not,
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come.

or another,

Come, ye weary, heavy-laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him.

The Messiah came, first of all, for the lost sheep of the House of Israel. You are still the blood children of Jacob, and the promise is unto you, as written above by Moses, speaking by the Spirit of the Almighty, the Redeemer of Israel—to whom you now may come in the name of Yeshua of Nazareth.

Shalom shalom

PART V

SELECTED POEMS

“If you would be a poet, create works capable of answering the challenge of apocalyptic times, even if this means sounding apocalyptic.”

–Poetry as Insurgent Art, Lawrence Ferlinghetti

NYC Tuesday 9/11/01 3:47 PM

I can still see the smoke billowing
from what is left of the World Trade Center
as I look out my window in Astoria
across the East River.

Only 27 days ago we beheld the massive grandeur
of lower Manhattan's skyline from the boat
as Tim, Karen, the girls, and I happily toured
our Statue of Liberty.

Visiting from Cyprus, they, and I tagging along,
we all took photos of ourselves
with the twin towers in the background,
rooted in the solid rock of New York.

But now the towers are rubble
from the terrorist attack of two hijacked planes
crashing into them – shown on TV the world over –
and New York City is stunned.

I am ominously reminded of Revelation,
chapter 18, and the fall of the great city,
Babylon, accomplished in one hour,
the smoke of her burning seen

from afar off, from the ships out at sea,
who cried when they saw
the smoke of her ascending, saying,
What is like the great city?

*And they threw dust on their heads,
and cried out, weeping and mourning, saying,
Woe! Woe, to the great city,
in which all who had ships on the sea
were made rich*

by her wealth!

For in one hour she is made desolate.

An ominous remembrance.

We are too stunned to mourn.

For surely there are thousands dead,
and multitudes injured.

Tomorrow we will mourn.

We know there is a Sovereign God over all
who works all things after the counsel
of His own will, and that not even a sparrow
falls without Him.

I take this as the beginning
of judgment on America
for our many sins
to bring us to national repentance.

A light tap of the Almighty
to indicate His displeasure
with our ungodly ways;
a light tap before a heavy blow.

Heaven's floodgates of mercy are flung wide,
and He summons us to Himself through pain,
individual pain, and national pain.
Come to the Cross, America, where your sins were paid for.

For we have not been light to the world
but darkness, the darkness of drugs,
racism, love of money, beauty, power,
and a hatred of God in our national life.

The smoke is *still* billowing from lower Manhattan,
and can be seen far out at sea.

I hear they are dancing in the Palestinian territories.
Here we are in shock, and tomorrow we will mourn.

Meditating on the Twin Towers & The Cross

During my quiet-time today
this is what came to me:

The images – from many different angles –
are indelibly imprinted in my mind
of the second plane crashing into the tower

the force of the jet
disappearing right into the building
into the offices full of people
about their morning tasks
and exploding their lives into eternity,

the people on the plane
feet away from the office workers
in these bizarre proximities of mass homicide

that image
of the jet crashing into the building
and our horror
at its impact
upon human lives

not only in those seconds
but in the minutes following
– people jumping rather than being burned,
one falling person killing a fireman on the street –
and then the collapses of both buildings

we are shaken to our depths
by the image of the jet
entering the building
– we can scarce apprehend the actual impact

the grand twin towers of New York's

and America's glory

the image of our pride,
financial leadership,
world supremacy

leader among nations....

the horror
that some would seek to bring us down.

★ ★ ★

Let me tell you God's story,
His disaster,
His day of terror

and the horror of the crash
into the edifice
of His glorious attributes Love
and Holiness.

What came crashing
into *His* building

– it was actually the Temple He had erected
of the image of His eternal glory,
His supremacy in the universe:

in human frame,
the eternal Son;

as the hymn puts it,
“Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail th' incarnate Deity!” –

What came crashing
into the glorious and tender body
of the Lord Jesus

with far more force than the jet into the building

was the speeding, roaring Wrath aimed
– with the consuming destruction of God's judgment –
at our collective sin borne by Him

and His body was not a building
filled with thousands of wrath-deserving sinners
(are we not?)
dying quick deaths

but housed eternal God, the Son,
and His fully human nature
which suffered infinite destruction due *us*
from the impact
of speeding juggernaut Fury

explosions of omnipotent outraged Justice and Holiness
in fiery chain-reactions
within His vast Being
wreaking deserved Vengeance upon our sin,
the sacrificed human nature sustained by the Divine

till the Fury was somehow subsumed
in His infinite capacity
– the Wrath due *us* gone, exhausted! –
as upon a burnt offering

and the great Image
of God's towering glory
fully Man, and fully God,
in His human nature
– dying the deaths we should have died –
collapsed,

destroyed,
dead.

★ ★ ★

The horror of New York's towers
is so much more vivid in our minds
than what befell God.

It was love for us
and not terrorist revenge
that sent engines of destruction
into His eternal Son,

for Father,
Son,
and Spirit
covenanted in Eternity
to make this great triune Sacrifice
for love of us.

May it be held up for the world to see
with greater vividness than the broken towers –
God's Disaster,
effected by divine love.

May the images in our minds
of the World Trade Center
lead us to meditate
on what crashed into Jesus Christ.

There is a happier ending to *that* Story,
for when the dust settled
God had one of His hymnists pen,

“In the cross of Christ I glory

Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

For God raised Him up alive again
after the crash,
and He will save us in Himself
if we will trust Him.

Learn of Him, and how He saves us,
for it is great
and eternal.

Every evil of those who will trust Him
paid for
by His precious blood
and suffering.

Out of God's disaster
flows a river of redeeming love,
a fountain of cleansing
for whosoever will
drink the Waters of Eternal Youth.

Wed 9/12/01 1:15 PM

★ ★ ★

Old Glory

I was waiting for a bus on West 14th Street in NYC
and looked up in the windy night sky
and saw atop the Chelsea Market building
an American flag billowing majestically in the breeze
highlighted in the dark by spotlights

it was a glorious sight, attended as it was by the vision
in my mind's eye, of our military might
propelled by a national sense of outraged justice,
of our renewed feeling of solidarity as a people
under one flag.

As I watched the flag furl and unfurl slowly in the wind
lit bright against the black night
I saw the fresh blood of our young men
willingly spilled for its honor
as they pursued our adversaries on distant mountains

I saw the resolve of our people – and our leaders –
to command the respect of the nations:
"Trifle with us at your peril!"
as we unleashed fury
on those who thought to make us prey.

I couldn't take my eyes off the solemn beauty of it,
of the vision of America, great and mighty,
unified and mobilized, pierced to the heart
by sadness at our recent national wounds,
yet still swift, powerful and dignified.

At that moment I felt a love for this land
I had never felt before, saw the glory of America
as I had never seen it before, and was awed.
This is truly a nation among nations
for all its flaws.

I love the sheer physical beauty of this country,
the towering, sprawling cities, rugged remote wildernesses,
its lakes, rivers, and especially its streams splashing and sparkling

about me as I lounge mid-stream on island rocks –
the vastness and variety of this rich land!

But I felt another sadness
mingled with our own recent losses,
for although September 11th has brought out
the seeming best in us, and we love ourselves
as I have never seen before

that flag was flapping and snapping gloriously
in eternity, one among many in the long procession of nations
up through recorded time, and I saw the judgment
inevitable from on high
from an outraged justice we ourselves trifle with

seeing as we have moral cancers that have eaten away our heart
for God, and for the laws of life and of love
that are the health and glory of any nation
or individual, turning instead to mere human religions
and disdaining – casting aside from us! – His holy word.

I've seen the signs – after 9/11 – which say,
"United we stand. In God we trust."
Alas it is not so, for we are still a bitterly divided people,
and the "God" who is "trusted" is not the One true,
but men and women make gods of anything they love.

How is it now, that in its hour of greatest peril
– and on the day of my sixtieth year here in this land –
my heart is filled with love and respect for this flag
as never before?
But it is fitting.

America, I am not *against* you – I am your poet! –

but *for* you, to plead with you to look above our glorious flag
to Him who lifts flags up and casts them down,
who draws souls to the Savior of the world,
the living ensign of God's justice and His mercy.

I daresay the atoning cross of Jesus the Messiah
is the banner of God's kingdom
and none who do not bow the knee
to His suffering glory there
shall enter it.

I know words such as mine here will divide
and not unite our nation, and so it is meant to be,
for not all Americans are Heaven-bound,
and some will rage at my words,
even as they raged when my King spoke His.

Love the flag I do
but I love the cross of Jesus Christ more
for great as our land is
the kingdom of God that shall replace this and all nations
is worthy of the first and purest loyalty

for it is the land of the great King
in whose heart is the spring of fathomless glory
and to be with and near Him
is worth all the lands, all the gold, even my life,
and I look beyond Old Glory to Eternal Glory.

March 21, 2002

★ ★ ★

A Poet Views Common Saints

(For Charles Simic)

from his own high vantage
of worldly wisdom
– pen dipped in rare ink –
imputing to them
(being so backward
as to love God and Christ
and hate that in the cultures of the world
which trample the holy)
ignorance, and hatred
of wisdom.

It is a sad day
(in centuries of sad days)
when poets walk on the flowers
of the Maker's garden
because they are simple blooms
with thorns
and say of their fragrance
These have the savor of death,
reviling that
the Gardener loves.

Charles, perhaps some of the priests in your line
knew that very One, and uttered prayers
for an unseen posterity
that He waft upon the breeze into their lives
words of that life dipped in the fountain
of unending youth – so please don't spit them out
because the vessel is common
or has a little good clean dirt in it.
Don't spurn the gift of *that* elixir, which to drink
brings the vision poets gladly live or die for love of.

The Mystery of the Call

Why is it that some will hear His call
recognize His voice,
and follow
willing in a heartbeat
to forsake all
for love of Him whom others cannot even see
as He is, of all loves
the most choice

Some, when they hear Him
hate Him
as dark deeds, and their doers
hate light
exposing them
and so harden, turning away
to where even noon is night
like those fanged who hate the day

Why is it that hearts are so
given to such love and hate,
the one to embrace exposure
reveling in His embrace,
the other turning back
to bloom in the shade ?
In your own choosing is your fate,
the proof of what you are made.

★ ★ ★

I Have Been Alone

all my life

but then, again,
who hasn't?

for it is the lot of us
that we are solitary
in our essence.

We who are lovers
of God
know how He breaks in
gloriously invasive
ravishing the loneliness of our hearts
with His exquisite presence
and we truly are
lovers of God

and we who are lovers
of our fellow humans
be they friends
or wedded lovers
also know respite
from the staggering solitude

but rare is the one
who has a companion
in the flesh
to keep him company
– or her company –
a mutual refuge of hearts
in the wilderness
of human society.

5/20/95

★ ★ ★

His Bride

*a man...shall be joined to his wife,
and they two shall be one flesh.
This is a great mystery: but I speak
concerning Christ and the church.*

— Paul to the Ephesians

She is the knock-out of the ages, His bride;
even the angels are astonished, wide-eyed
at a beauty beyond what they see in themselves
and seeing such mysteries desire to delve
into how it could be, this shining like deity
in one once consort with the dark prince, in infamy
before she was redeemed, and party to the deicide.

The price He paid to win her back was steep,
a horrid cost much wondered at in glory's Keep,
but He got her, and led her through the wilderness
of hearts, through enemies and great distress;
He taught her to stay near to Him,
hold to His word and heart when the way grew dim,
to trust Him, her friend in trouble, her guard in sleep.

It is the story of God the Son's bride;
she is many, male and female, for whom He died;
she is rugged soldier, little child, woman fair,
all one they are, all dependent on His care.
Safe now in the Kingdom, His glory their reward,
she shines full back the glory of her Lord,
He who ever lives, and for her was crucified.

★ ★ ★

The Strength of My Life

The strength of my life
is my friendship
with God – His with me
really, as He first loved
and I in joy returned.

My heart is a cup, full
of the water of life;
as maker, He seals all the holes
of my failures and sins
to keep my vitality in.

★ ★ ★

The Lord Like a Star

The Lord like a star
in the black night
has attended all my days,
the unfailing core
of my sanity and life

as the poet-king David said,
The LORD is the strength of my life,
so it is with those who are His,
He is the heart of our own hearts,
whatever befall.

★ ★ ★

The Shark Tank

*At the Gaz*¹

He jumped in
fat with conceits
thinking to make a big splash

he no sooner hit the water
than he lost a lot of weight
– which is good for the heart

now he's learning to swim
and the sharks seem not to mind
lean divers.

¹ The Gazebo, an online poetry forum and workshop

★ ★ ★

DISCERNING THE MIND OF THE LORD¹

To the KKK – And All Others of Their Kind –

The LORD the Judge of all nations and of every man and woman says to you,

Do you call yourselves after My name, and say that My Book is your Book?
Do you put your hope in Me, believing I shall separate you from the children
of wrath when they follow their father, the Devil, into the Lake of Fire?

Why then do you hate Me, and curse Me, spilling My blood wherever you
can, despising Me for the color of My skin? Do you not know I am the life of
every brown-skinned human that has knelt before Me and become Mine?

Do you not know they are flesh of My flesh and bone of My bones, that we are one spirit, and one body?

Do you not remember how I said whoever shall offend one of My little ones, it were better for him a stone were hung about his neck and he were drowned in the sea? And yet you call My little children, innocent in their years, venomous names which poison their hearts. Do you not know it is *Me*, their life, you call nigger, spic, redskin, and chink? Do you not know it is *My* life you are crushing and breaking and snuffing out? Inasmuch as you do it to the least of one of these My brothers and sisters, you do it to *Me*.

Have you no fear of *Me*, who shall add My awful wrath to your torments as you bathe in the lake of horror and pain? Do you think it a light thing to trifle with Almighty God, Lord of Heaven and Earth?

Those whom you call your Grand Dragons are but foul lizards of Hell to *Me*, and you their venomous brood. I tell you, unless you repent and live lives of service to My multihued brothers and sisters, horror and agony shall follow you all the days of your lives, and there shall be no mercy for you, neither in this world nor in the world to come. My sheep know My voice, and they have My Book, and My Spirit is their life. The goats of Hell I do not know, nor they *Me*.

¹ This is not a prophecy as per the Old and New Testament prophets of God, neither is it in the vein of those who hold the “charismatic gifts” continue in this day, but rather a discerning the Lord’s mind and voice according as He has revealed His heart and will to us in His Word, with that same liberty certain seers have taken, such as in Francis Thompson’s “The Hound Of Heaven,” and the authors of the hymns, “How Firm A Foundation,” and,

“‘Twas On That Night When Doomed To Know.”

Dear Ferlinghetti

The terrible things you say
– as a severe yet loving father
to a wayward child –
concerning modern poetry
almost alone ring true
in this time of the assassins
of the muse

to accommodate the shoes they make
to take them into easier places
they have laid a vast concrete plain
over the howling archetypal heartlands

this way being a poet is no risk
one just learns the dance-steps
to the fashionable tunes
and sings
with minimal breath

the wild children you called
exist
I have seen them
am one myself
– so have no fear
for the art
(this is no art
but war!)

it is our path
to demolish
what covers
the rich dark earth of the muse
what suffocates
the breath of its trees
leaving feathers and wing-bones

on the parking lot of souls

Ferlinghetti

I just wanted to tell you

I love you

and thanks

for holding up the banner

of life and death

in this land where editors have outlawed

breath

and that which also is beyond

their inner reach:

heart-music, and true speech.

★ ★ ★

It Is Often Asked

what grievance does God have

that He should storm against us with His wrath?

And why should we obey His rules

as though we didn't know how to live

and would conduct ourselves as fools?

To top the list, we don't even know this *thing*

is real, this killer of joy,

this would-be lord of all prohibitive!

To which it may be said, He is a king

of realms so pure and pristine bright

He'd not be fit to rule if not destroy

what wasted all His earth with blight

of misery, death, and raging pain.

The ravager is sin, which fiercely contravenes

those laws of love and life which shall prevail

and are the joy of His domain.

To oppose His well-thought plan to clean
the world of ills and comfort all who appeal
for mercy and new life, will fail,
for who can thwart His will to heal?
No cruel tyrant this sovereign Lord,
in pity took upon Himself the bane
undoing us, Himself bore the judging Word,
dying in our place, this tender Nazarene.

King of the new world, He had the right
to suffer in His people's stead
freeing them from the weight of guilt and death;
this Lord of Heaven and earth cares for them
as you have seen, to His last breath,
not just the good and strong, but bad and feeble
receive His grace; and as He rose from the dead
we also shall, His living-jewel diadem.

It is not right to rail against Him
who did and does us so much good,
but rail multitudes for a while will do
being so deeply enthralled with sin
— the defiant “I’ll do my own thing” —
pursuing what seems right in their own eyes
while in His face disputing what is true,
this majestic One who in eternity is king.

★ ★ ★

The Walking Dead

Flick
was likely created by
the walking dead
if we are being precise
as regards states of being

that is, those without eternal life
– certainty of unending joy and glory
after the body dies –
are the true living dead

and those the living dead
are also to be
the undying damned
except they take the Antidote

But few there are who know
their true state
and desire unending Life
but rather walk dead

Having a glorious skin-covering
often covers a dead and rotting heart
and of all things we most hate
is to admit it

So the show lets us dream
we are Alive
compared to those monsters
but we will be very like them in Hell.

★ ★ ★

While the Poets Are Having Their Usual Party

While the poets are having their usual party
wine of laughter mingled with hidden tears
demons are having one of their own
moving in stealth from mind to mind
laughing at the ease with which they take their prey.

Until the poet who speaks for the Lord
– commanded to do so and obeying –
warns them of the coming terrible storm
– terrible because they shall reel in horror
at the fury, the settled fiery indignation

of Deity – for spurning the word of truth,
of holiness, of mercy, of forgiveness,
thinking themselves so clever in their art
using judgment of cliché as a weapon
to parry the simple speech of saving grace

and the demons stir them up, amplifying
their building scorn
puff and posture, feebly indignant
– though some will hear and heed –
and then a billowing fiery storm.

★ ★ ★

“No Martyr is Among Ye Now Whom You Can Call Your Own”

–Bob Dylan, *I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine*

Oh there're a lot of them, only they're not hip
cool or whatever the now thing is to say of one
accepted, one of us – earth-only dwellers
of the 21st century, who belong
to the true human community
going forward, brave, new, world of green.

Who wants to hear it said of us we are lost
dead to God in our sin and rebellion
headed for an eternity of torment without Him
except we turn to the light and life of His commands
and His heart as revealed in Christ Jesus
and receive from Him forgiveness and eternal life?

It's really a *hateful* thing to us to have one say these things
to our faces, and we *will* martyr any such with the gall
to do so, for we've had enough of them these centuries
and we ought put a final stop to their madness which torments
us *now*.

But we have been *witnessed* to – the Greek meaning for martyr

–

and we slew them for their words: we want none of these among
us now.

★ ★ ★

We Who Are So Used To Comfort

how shall we live
when our lives are shattered
food scarce
clean water rare
electric grid down
wildness in the streets
and might the right

gone the days
of tender comfort
communities of friends
wirelessly accessed
the little joys
the light of our lives
now black night

how shall we get by
where find community
where some safety
if even for only our hearts
to know there are those who care
for us in our destitution
in our poverty

now we start to value
hearts at peace
and opened hands
in our time of need
when the world is mad
but where to find them
when they are so rare

As the old proverb
not missing the water
till the well is dry
we miss those who had hearts
like Christ
caring for the hurting
even the bad

even the sick
the weak
the lost
– would all were like Christ now! –
for we are no longer high
and mighty
but needy and full of fear

O our lives of comfort and peace
are fled from us
we now the ravaged and forlorn
now it makes sense to us
to hear the Saviour of the world
and His words of life in a land of death
and by His Spirit to be reborn.

★ ★ ★

What Times Are These?!

We apologize for the inconvenience, but this is the Apocalypse.

(After Subcomandante Marcos
and Lawrence Ferlinghetti)

Is there nothing unusual in the air
to you
can you not hear the sounds
of economies failing
cyberwar breaking through
bringing darkness of old centuries
into our modern lives

and contagion of lethal disease
plenteous enough to satisfy
the fourth horseman's lust
for pestilence
which always follows war and death
famine and societal madness
the shouts of looting and riots

can your ear to the ground
not hear it approaching
– ah well, those deaf to the warnings
the writing on the wall
don't hear till they're undone
and in the last gasps of their lives
they see it as they fall

if you have no vision
for the rise and fall of nations
no understanding
of the cause and effect of things

you won't see it coming
– judgments from on high I mean –
till you stand before God in terror.

The Apocalypse *is* about God
offended at the scoffing of His law
and enraged against the suffering
by the evil then perpetrated
against the helpless
and innocent
and His beautiful planet

it is also about the devil
who loathes humankind and God
and has his agents
even among the humans
who unleash terror
and death pain anguish
for the thrill and joy of it

believe it or not
God has a people on earth
faithful to Him
– gentle people –
these are in the sights of those
who hate God
and Apocalypse is this bloody war.

Yet death here is not the end of it
and courage not the taking of life
but the yielding of it
for the sake of testimony
to the Prince of peace
the God of life and holiness
whose gentle, eternal children we are.

★ ★ ★

To The Hosts of the King

in the days before the great battles of the end,
we of differing tribes and regions
must learn to set our odds aside
that our strength not be diminished
as divided we shall not well defend
against the gathering vast legions
nor stand firm against these unsanctified
hordes, whose one desire is to see us finished.
Let us rather unite and one song of high praise sing.

★ ★ ★

The Candle

-Valentine's Day, 1996

In God's temple there is a candle lit
for you, burning ever,
its flame of prayer and love ascending
regardless of the storms outside,
regardless of the weather.

That temple is my heart, by grace made fit
to love you, that flame of holy love in me
kindled by His own, steadfast and unending,
so I would be the man for you, bona fide
at last, a love not to chain you, but set you free.

★ ★ ★

You're All Just Too Religious!

We've got armies mobilizing against us
with strategies to silence our best weapons
– after trying to dismantle them
and failing – *now* poisoning the well
of the collective mind
the vast sea of it
with an unreasoned hatred of the King
we serve – Him *and* His law –
for it goes against the grain
of their feral passions

we don't think like soldiers
not even warrior saints
but fancy ourselves Puritans of old
transplanted into Century the 21st
very religious and fastidious
while the swarm begins to form
according to an inner tune
piped by the demon piper of souls
a swarming horde covering the earth
with blood on its mind

We'll be blind-sided, taken
by surprise, and after the shock
wears off (that it went down like this)
we will endure to the end
for we are His, and His Spirit sustains us
but we could have done better
discerning the times
being prepared – our families, friends
cared for better, braced for the hit
better kept our poise of mind, and wit.

Poetry / plain / as lightning

Poetry

plain

as lightning

illuminates subtlety of reality

ever so fine
as fine can be.

The human voice
in its essence
is, oh, poetry.

★ ★ ★

A Peasant Girl's Story

-near the Sea of Galilee, A.D. 28

I was milking my mistress' cow
Thursday morning
and the first light of dawn
was touching the mountains behind me.
The milk streamed into my jar,
I could hear the birds fly past
and sing,

as I waited for the dark sea below
to be filled like a bowl
with glorious sunlight.

Then from the mountain
where the pine trees roof you in
with shade and sweet odor,
I heard from the big rocks above
a voice.
Yes, all the way down here I heard it.
I looked across the sea
and my hand was motionless
on the cow's teat.
It seemed I was sitting in eternity.
It was that voice.
If God had a Son here on the earth
calling Him
about our suffering,
that would explain what I heard.
Half an hour I sat here trembling
as this living creation was bathed
by something
in that voice on the mountain.

When it stopped
I knew past the silence
that something....
something eternal and terrible
was going on
among these quiet hills.

★ ★ ★

Howl II

*The chimes of freedom flashin'....
strikin' for the gentle, strikin' for the kind,
strikin' for the guardians and protectors of the mind,
and the poet, and the painter far behind his rightful time....*

–Bob Dylan

1

Most of the poets who were singing
when I came of age
– realizing then I knew nothing as I ought to know
for so the drugs they gave me taught me –
are gone

I listened to their voices
danced to their music
followed their visions
these who showed in the end they were lost and deluded
though dearly loved

when the blind follow the blind
– in this realm of sorcerers and seers –
they both fall into the abyss
archetypal regions of terror
beneath the lettered wasteland

2

What now is left of my generation my voice and heart can hold?
Even beloved Woodstock, the heart gone from it
as we realized the sacraments of our communion
were poisons to us, bringing darkness to our spirits and hearts.
Our camaraderie, our union of minds, came from the peace pipe,

the passed-around j, the hit of 'cid, shared 'shrooms,
and when we put them away our community dis-integrated

and we scattered across the land, a galaxy of tiny far-flung candles
no longer a sun, no intact generation of light, warmth, and clarity
the Human Tribe, flower children who would change the world
who believed in love, knowing such depths of truth
in one another's arms and minds, who joyously shared all we had and were
who believed right would triumph over might, that love was stronger than
hatred –
we fell prey ourselves to the power of darkness, even now almost extin-
guished!

May I not howl with the anguish of our failure and pain?
Of the loved ones we left behind, lost, betrayed, forgot?
The agony (nicely suppressed with little pleasures) of having no vision?
blind in a Void of meaning, meat-heads, squalid petty joys at others' ex-
pense
living selfish, inhumane lives like the culture we once thought we'd escaped
and now we, the generation of seers and sorcerers, worse even than they,
howling at the moon, endangered wolves surrounded by far worse preda-
tors.

And these latter, who sees them? Blind seers and feeble sorcerers, we
not to know what creatures inhabit the realms we live in, *and worse!*
not to know who rules supreme over all our lives and deaths
little effete atheists amid colossi beings aware of us, *we* fatally *unaware* how
we offend,
ants among giants as we boast our words to the wind, slowly falling off
the world of the living into an abyss of no return, a home of horrors
we do not even know we are heading to, blind lambs to the slaughter.

Up through the ages, in times of great peril, men and women have risen
to call on the name of God, yes, howled in His ear, His heart, of these our
woes
not to an empty sky, lone in the mountains, not into the Void, a futile cry

but into a Heart, and a Mind, with the truth of our condition – and what is that?

We are blind, Father God, and cannot see what is to come, and what has been

or even what is; and there are forces which bind this darkness on us, unwitting captives

and we need deliverance – light, power, *love* within our hearts – or we perish

We confess there is a hatred among us for your Fatherhood, knowing as we do the false

images of fathers, thus have hatred for all authority, much of it evil, oppressive, cruel

and self-seeking.....but there are many, Father, who have seen You in the tenderness and glory of Your Son, the Christ, Jesus our Saviour and Friend.

Father, hear this my howl of agony – and all those who take heart in me – as I cry

for so many long lost loves in these seven decades I have walked Your earth among dear friends and loves – please redeem these our years and tears

I have in my mind many loved ones – precious women, precious men – a great number of them I do not know if they even yet live,

and so it is with many of us as we ponder our lives, now nearing their ends. This, O God of our lives and deaths, is a howl for mercy, and I know You hear *me*

as I am Yours, a wailing for the souls of these generations now on the earth. Please, Lord Jesus, eternal Son, reveal Your presence – known most clearly in Your dying love as You bore our sins on the cross – from Your present throne of glory.

★ ★ ★

Howl III

I remember reading Allen's *Howl* in a laundromat
in my college years, weeping . . .
some years later, found *myself* searching for a lobotomy house
to blot the anguish of a "Roman wilderness of pain"

half a century later, I weep for other things
and my own howl reaches into Heaven
to the Seat of Mercy, where sacred blood pleads,
also to the hearts of the generations of my time

for terrible things have come upon us, and *are* to come
and though a few do see, and take note
and try to prepare, most are oblivious, *unaware*
of suffering that is to come

of this are two sorts: the soon-coming
and the later never-ending – *the eternal*;
terrible as the first, the latter infinitely worse
horror beyond thinking

And here I am, a poet, born in Manhattan
come of age in Woodstock
wandered psychedelic heartlands in both
sustained in the hearts of lovers and friends

been in regions of the damned, snared by demons
been in regions of the blessed, in the presence
of Him who is light, and holy beauty
and been in the mere human, afraid of both

and have sung of both
and what is my howl now
but the vision of so many
plunging into eternity unready

hearing the bellowing howl that shall leap forth

from all their hearts
when they see the irreversible plight
they have madly charged into

dear friends and family I have
there
and I try not to think of how it is
with them

but especially those still alive
in this world
still with a chance
to change course

yet blinded, and resistant
to hearing what awaits them
and the offer of rescue
from so awful an unending future

I howl also for the soon-coming
troubles
that await the living
so-to-speak

for to be void of eternal life *now*
is not to be living
but to be
the living dead

and then
the undying damned
and should I not
howl

to see these things
and so few hear
or take them
to heart

this is worse than Allen's vision
this is worse than Dante's Hell
for this is *our* plight
and my sight.

House of Light

Upon the floor of wasteland Deathworld,
in the howling archetypal heartlands of humanity,
over seething Abyss, abode of the Dark Legions,
a terrible and mighty house of Light stands.

Upon the foundation of apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ Himself the chief cornerstone,
this great house is built up, a continuing work
renewed from one generation to the next.

The foundation eternally laid, immovable,
gleaming fierce against the dark encroaching power,
oft having suffered collapse of roof and walls,
fortress weakened through decay or assault.

Men and women are called, and illumined
to be living stones joined together, to blaze
and draw other living stones, all chosen
by the Lord of the house, His precious workmanship.

The Dark Legion, privy to it, rages against the work,
constantly seeking its weakening or ruin,
but the stones the Lord has placed flush unto Himself,
the men and women made one body and spirit in Him,

are unique: the men mighty in war, yet lovers of peace,
to defend the work while securing its joy within,
and the women pillars of righteousness, clear in faith
and tenderhearted in their Captain's love.

In Deathworld now there is an outpost of Heaven,
a fortress and sanctuary against the Evil Ones,
and mighty is the Lord in His house,
His House of Light unto the nations.

Poetry Is

Poetry is
what the poet makes
to hold his heart
– both chalice and wine
of him –
language and spirit wed,
full to the brim!

A jewel word-faceted,
divining-stone of depth
of me, and all I hold
within, be it woman
or deity.
The image is fluid
adamantine as the Word.

Can such subtle things as breath and voice
have power
to vanquish death?
Yes, if the breath of Him
who spoke all that is
speak *you* alive
– for behold *me!* *His* eternal masterpiece!

The Writing on the Wall

There is a scream of terror
in the shadows of awareness
seeking entrance to my home,
but the light in my heart, and my wife's
heart, keep it at bay

those without this antidote to horror
will be had by it.

The horror is that it will not
end, all the writing on the wall
belatedly making sense.

The purpose of my poetry is
gaining credence for a voice
– as a crystal jar holding balm –
that the mortally wounded
within may find withal to rejoice.

It must needs be then
non-fiction to the uttermost
and plain speech, understood
by all, but filled with presence
of One who sees, whose love saves.

This “writing” – by prophets of the ages,
graffitists of Heaven – on walls all about
refer to a savior whose name
is more than a curse, a name which hallows
even these poor pages.

To Win Your Heart

to love God, and not think ill of Him
I sing

is He for us, or against us
is the first thing
we must see
else how will we know
if He be friend
or adversary

to lay eyes upon Him
in His labor of love
for every soul
who loves what He's done and doing
wins the heart

a King interposes *Himself* between us
and the verdict / sentence of death
Himself
"I will take their place in the judgment
and execution
for their sins
that they may live

and when I live again
they shall live in union with Me.

I came not to destroy
nor to condemn
but to save

whosoever will
be saved by Me."

There is an urgency
to my song
for the time allotted
flies quickly by
and is not long

but the execution
and death
if not taken away
by this Substitute

we keep
and suffer
without end
ever
for the debt of our crime
against Him
is too great
to pay.

Shall I be faulted
and demeaned
to sing this love
Ha! If Heaven cheers
what do I care
even if it rains
poison spears.

★ ★ ★

God's Gifts

In the fields with my father-in-law,
Christaki, watering
the olive trees,
we had forgotten our own
water
in the village
and were thirsting fiercely
in the arid heat
(the water for the trees not good
to drink),
when I remembered the fig tree
our neighbor said we could take from,
so I went and got us four figs each,
and this was refreshing,
and we gave thanks to God,
and then
in a hedge near the youngest olive trees
I saw a cluster of grapes
and a quick search discovered three more,
so we each had two,
succulent and sweet,
and our thirst was slaked

we laughed at our good fortune
at being the recipients
of God's gifts,
rejoicing in the knowledge
He takes such care
of His children.

9/24/96

Cypriot Prayer for Rain

O heavenly Father,
please hear us, please
give ear to our plea,
for we call ourselves by the name
of Your Son,
and we have no one else to turn to
in our need

We remember Your many wonderful works
in the ancient times
and since
and Your kindness to our people
in granting us this precious faith
worth more than all the gold and jewels
the world holds

We confess our sins to You
which are many
and great,
for we have loved money
and pleasure
rather than You
and Your word

We confess that our religion
has grown so formal
and rigid
we have not the vitality
or freedom
to seek and save the lost among us
ensnared in the devil's wiles

and as priests we have grown
away from the needs of the people

and away from true and living union
with You,
O King,
and we are poor, and blind, and naked
and in so great need of grace ourselves

The soul of our nation is so dry
and the land mirrors our parched hearts,
both we and it groan for thirst;
nor do the spiritual wines of Europe
or Babylon/Amerika
quench our longings
but fill us instead with madness and dark passions

and we stagger and reel
under Your displeasure
for falsely thinking ourselves rich
and wise
and lovely
when before the eyes of Heaven
we are not

O have mercy upon our souls
and upon our land
O King of Heaven
and earth,
grant us to drink the living water
of Your Spirit
directly from Your word

that we might be revived
from the fount that fails not
nor is corrupted by the traditions
of men —
grant us to worship and live
in the great cathedral

of earth and sky

where You preside as Bishop
and High Priest,
and O King of the deeps
and the heavens,
unlock the floodgates
of mercy
that we might be filled with the glory of Your presence

and that our land's thirst might be quenched
even as our souls'
that we both may bear fruit
to Your honor and glory
and our sound of rejoicing
may be a sweet music
in Your ears

and Christ our God,
forgive us our sins
even as we forgive those
who sin against us
that we may be Your children
in spirit
and in truth. Amen.

9/24/96

★ ★ ★

Amid the Mirage Tales

Amid the mirage tales
of swords wondrously forged
we have yet to look upon the real
forging
of a spirit-blade

for the blade is fitted
in a man
or woman's heart
and voice

the soul's mettle
smelted in the crucible of days
shaped in the hands of the master
tempered in the furnace of affliction
infused with the off-world Spirit of light
honed keen with the vision of Christ

able now to cut through living darkness
of all kinds

hidden in the sheath of the heart,
drawn quietly for combat
in the Global Arena of Consciousness
on Apocalypse Field
outside the Gates of Eden

another not-often-seen reality
in that wondrous adventure
below the radar of most

the battle of the kingdoms
of darkness and light.

★ ★ ★

Woodstock — From its Poet

Its day is over
now but a tattered gateway
in the winds of the abyss
the demon horde already passed through
into the human heartland
our collective consciousness

the promise of its sacraments
acid, mescaline, grass, 'shrooms
to bring us divine light, and life
to our horror we saw
was pure sorcery
opening that dread gateway

the promise of Woodstock
a Trojan Horse from Hell
whose glories I once sang
its youths *now* on heroin
while I sing its demise
and the Armageddon it ushered in.

★ ★ ★

Thoughts in Paris

The arts are passé
what with terror stalking
the haunts of culture
especially here
renowned hub of the arts.

What good anymore
are they
what even the greatest
beauty of earth
when Hell is loosed

when everything men
and women, and children
hold sacred
is ravaged
and slaughtered.

The arts are passé
in these fiery days on apocalypse field
the rumbles of Armageddon
being heard
of those with ears to the ground

save perhaps apocalyptic art
Patchen's poets of death
singing their high songs
lions of fire stalking
the crawling shadows of the world.

2/10/16

★ ★ ★

PART VI

BABYLON

We now venture—in vision—into Babylon in its various aspects: its nature, goals, arts, sorceries, and its headquarters nation. This matter of sorceries—pharmakeia in the Greek New Testament—is a major aspect of especially the last days Babylonian empire, although ancient Chaldean Babylon was enamored of them as well, but not to the extent its final manifestation is, nor as regards their impact, not only on “Babylon” itself but on the entire world into which it exported this phenomenon. The spirit of our age bears witness to the influence of sorcery, the collective consciousness of humankind darkening in all its various sectors.

The blessed children of the age-to-come reside in Babylon—what is called “the great whore” (or “prostitute” or “harlot”) for its seductive power in drawing the nations and their rulers to indulge in its idolatries—and these children must not succumb to its charms, which, when they do resist, incur the ire of the Babylonians, also termed in the Apocalypse of John, “earth-dwellers”, for their only care is for the life on earth, not that Celestial City to come. It is a gauntlet of seduction and persecution for the saints, both presenting great danger. Here are some of its secrets.

21ST CENTURY BABYLON

The Biblical data all points to it: the military might, the economic exploitation of weaker nations, the power of the culture to draw people into its thrall, the prosperity to be gained by aligning with its economic and cultural goals, the degradation of morals, the sorcery drug culture and its exportation throughout the world – indeed, the exportation of *all* these things throughout the world, so as to intoxicate all nations with the wine of the golden cup of Babylon's abominations, as well as the fear of the power of the armored and armed Beast she rides. She's the greater image of ancient Chaldean Babylon, Tyre, and Imperial Rome . . . her beast is the composite of Daniel's four beasts that rise out of the sea to violently conquer the ancient world, each in their appointed time.

Yes, there are a few nations who resist, such as the Islamic, who are more in love with the world-conquering spirit of Mohammed; and the communists, who seek our money and the knowledge of our technology, but despise us, and desire our fall.

But we of the Light who live in Babylon – which one might well call the affluent West, and those poorer nations who lust after her wealth, power, and illusion of freedom – we who know what the truth is of her heart, and the falsity of her image, and the ugliness and evil that masquerade as beauty, luxury, and human rights, we see she is a demonic system of governance, or at least is being transformed into such at present, and we have come out of alliance, allegiance, and the allure of her, cleaving instead to God the Father of Jesus Christ.

We see the way her people dress, women showing off their physical, sexual beauty, men their physical muscle, gleaming looks, and financial prowess. She is at war with us, and our God is at war with her, so this means we also are at war with her. What kind of war? Certainly not physical! And even then “we do not war after the flesh” (2 Cor 10:3) nor are the weapons of our warfare carnal, for we are given to overcome the devil and his agents by the blood of the Lamb, and by *the word of our testimony*, and we love not our lives even unto death (Rev 12:11).

Spiritual and *moral* war is what we are called to – called to tell her that God will judge her for her various crimes and sins, her and the people who side with her against the God of purity and holiness, thinking it nothing to even kill God’s people. To bear witness of the coming Judgment after the general resurrection of all who ever lived, of the two Destinies—eternal life on Paradise New Earth or eternal death in Hell—and the mercies of forgiveness and eternal life for whomever desires these from God, given freely and gladly to all who come to Jesus Christ for them. The testimony of these things is our warfare and labor of love, ambassadors of God to humankind.

We call whoever has ears to hear out of Babylon and its fast impending doom, and into the Kingdom of God’s love.

★ ★ ★

BATTLEFIELD OF BEAUTY

*Beauty is not only a terrible thing, it is also a mysterious thing.
There God and the Devil strive for the mastery, and the battle-
ground is the heart of man.*

– Dmitri Karamazov, in *The Brothers Karamozov*, by Fyodor
Dostoevsky

In the passage this quote is from (Part One, Book III, Chapter 3) Dostoevsky holds forth two ideals of beauty, “the ideal of the Madonna and...the ideal of Sodom,” as though these were the two combatants for the hearts of men on the battlefield of beauty. I hear an echo of this in Solzhenitsyn, where he opposes a secular humanism to religion — namely the Russian Orthodox, although he has strong affinity with Roman Catholicism — as though the beauty of “religion” could stand against “the beauty of Sodom”! This beauty of Sodom, for Dostoevsky, is not just raw sensual pleasure, but that love — or desire — which is but human, typified in his story by the lovely and unscrupulous Grushenka. He does not refer to the dark lusts we reflexively think of, but to the well of earthly beauty and passionate love our longing hearts drink deeply from in lieu of a better love. Dostoevsky thinks to distill this matter of beauty to its essence in comparing Sodom against the Virgin. She to whom the angel said, “Blessed art thou among women,” and in whose womb God the Son was conceived — according to His flesh — by the agency of the Holy Spirit, she whose tender and holy heart cared for the young Lord all His youth, why has she been elevated to the pinnacle that is her Son’s place?

It is not fitting to contrast the world's cornucopia of sensual joys and beauties with the chaste young woman, "the handmaid of the Lord," not fair to the "blessed mother" to compare her in this way. She — notwithstanding Rome and Byzantium — is not the well to quench the thirst of the heart. She herself drinks from the well of the better love.

Fit to stand against the beauty of Sodom — the beauties of the world, really — is her Son, the young King, He who is so glorious in majesty the angels shield their eyes. As He leads His people into the fray against the powers of darkness — they having learned that the "jaws of death" are sometimes the bite of exquisite pleasure — they turn from the allurements of Sodom's fair beauties to gaze, if but fleetingly, upon the smiling face of Him who flung forth the billions of galaxies ^[1], and the *Creator* of all this earth's pleasures; *His* smiling approval is a beauty that satisfies the heart and steels the nerves; men and women both will walk through fire for His love.

How is it then, that great souls can err so greatly? Solzhenitsyn shows some of his thinking in this statement from an address to the International Academy of Philosophy in 1993,

Of course, one cannot declare that only my faith is correct and all the other faiths are not. Of course God is endlessly multi-dimensional so every religion that exists on earth represents some face, some side of God. One must not have any negative attitude to any religion but nonetheless the depth of understanding God and the depth of applying God's commandments is different in different religions. In this sense we have to admit that Protestantism has brought everything down only to faith. Calvinism says that nothing depends on man, that faith is already predetermined, and also in its sharp protest against Catholicism, Protestantism rushed to discard together with ritual all the mysterious, the mythical and mystical aspects of the faith. In that sense it has impoverished religion. ^[2]

This reminds me of another saying; in my files I have a quote from *Christianity Today* (April 24, 1995; p. 41),

Dosova commended [Billy] Graham for his preaching. “But this simple Western style is not enough for Russians,” she said. “For Russians, the message must be complex, so the individual not only worships but experiences the message. Westerners preach in a rational, logical style, but the Russian soul understands tears and mysticism.”

As a poet and writer I can relate to Dosova’s sentiment. Is it possible to so present the gospel that the complexity of intertwined human destinies, of the ways of our hearts, of the paths on which salvation finds and keeps us, and of Him who orders all these things, may be exposed, so that the sight of this *provide-ence* draws the soul, *arrests* the soul and leaves it panting after this ravishing and mysterious *One* who knows the labyrinths of our beings and ways, illuminating their dark corridors with wisdom and love, and draws us to Himself? A preacher I love has said, “God not a one- or two-dimensional Being, although He is often caricatured to look like that; in truth, His character is profoundly complex.”

What I want to show is that the “religious” imagination — however rich — is what is “two-dimensional” compared to the actual experience of God, and thus it is unfair to compare the beauty of *it* to the world’s beauties, as though it, or even the beloved Virgin, could represent the glory of God Himself.

I do not want to comment here on Solzhenitsyn’s views on other religions, although I hope he is not saying that “all paths lead to God, in greater or lesser degree;” as then I would have to withstand that view properly (for some lead to Hell). What I do wish to remark on is his view that religion — with all the embellishments he lists — is far greater than faith alone, even though he now laments the turning of his countrymen away from “Russia’s religion” and to Dostoevsky’s Sodom (spiritually supplied in abundance by the decadent West, I am sad to say). How can so great a heart miss the point that it is not faith *per se* — faith *itself* — we cleave so to, that this is but a gift He has given us, and the *way* by which we apprehend and hold onto *Him* who is the desire of our hearts, who satisfies us as the world cannot? It is *trust in His word* — our Scripture — by which we draw near to Him; this is

our faith; it is the trust *in Himself* He has planted in our hearts as a gift. He has magnified His living word above all His name! ^[3] For He lives in His word.

And such communion with Him, is this not the essence of what is called by some “mysticism”? Union with Christ, and in Him one with the Father — resulting in intimate fellowship with God — this is the goal the mystics of the ages sought. The Protestants — yes, and the pure Calvinists especially — know this well. I call it a *robust mysticism*, after the manner of David in the Psalms, or Paul in his letters.

Sometimes the traditions — and even the liturgies — of men become corrupt or archaic, and the beauties of religious music, architecture, and apparel deeply stir the senses but leave the heart and its volition untouched, so that gangsters are deeply moved, even to weeping, yet do not throw away their guns, drugs, and bloodied money, cleaving in remorse to the Savior for mercy and eternal life, and lesser sinners likewise do not repent, they just become “religious” over hearts hardened to God and neighbor. God’s word, on the other hand, goes to the deeps — the Spirit of God Himself speaking to the sinner in that living word — and the sinner is hardened or renewed, hates or loves, according to the mysterious will of God.

When Solzhenitsyn states, “Calvinism says that nothing depends on man, that faith is already predetermined,” it appears he objects on the grounds it will “discard...the mysterious, the mythical and mystical aspects of the faith” by putting the locus of salvation in God’s hands instead of ours. In supposedly making salvation a building on the foundation of human free will, he would disdain a house built otherwise. Nicholas Berdyaev, in his little volume, *Dostoevsky* (Living Age Books – Meridian, 1968), shows how Dostoevsky also was greatly wrought upon over the matter of human freedom. In *Letters from the Underground*, Dostoevsky’s hero says of a human being,

All he needs is an *independent* will, whatever it may cost him and wherever it may lead him....In only one single case does man consciously and deliberately want something absurd, and

that is the silliest thing of all, namely, to *have the right* to want the absurd and not be bound by the necessity of wanting only what is reasonable....for at all events *it will have safeguarded our dearest and most essential possession—our personality and individuality*....If you say that everything, chaos, darkness, anathema, can be reduced to mathematical formulae, that it is possible to anticipate all things and keep them under the sway of reason by means of an arithmetical calculation, then man will go insane on purpose so as to have no judgment and to behave as he likes. I believe this because it appears *that man's whole business is to prove to himself that he is a man and not a cog-wheel*. [Italics Berdyaev's] (pages 52, 53)

Without entering fully into this discussion on freedom of the will, I would like to aver a point of importance to me. Without the sovereign arrest by Christ of my plunge into eternal destruction, my freedom consisted of choosing which pictures would decorate my house as it was being swept in the river of time over the falls of death and into the abyss. I was shackled and bound by the spiritual deadness of my fallen human nature and rendered incapable of making even the slightest move toward God on my own to seek escape from destruction. From a conversation with a friend on this subject:

We must consider the *nature* of the free will of the creature we are speaking of. With the unregenerate man, his freedom is constrained only by the nature of his heart; it is free to act according to his moral and spiritual qualities. He is free, but he cannot — by nature — go beyond his own limits. He is dead to the spiritual life of God, and cannot choose anything but what accords with an evil heart. He has free will — the free will of a sinner antagonistic to God. The only thing that will change him is a new life and heart given in regeneration. I do not deny the free will of humans at all. But the range of choice is similar to your being committed to jail: you could choose freely within the precincts of the lock-up, never beyond it. Unless, of course, the president (or governor) issued you a pardon.

So Solzhenitsyn's disparaging dismissal, "Calvinism says that nothing depends on man, that faith is already predetermined," misses the very point that saves my life. It is not *faith* that is predetermined, it is a *love* that sought me out in the abyss of eternity, engendering — albeit to be realized in the future — a responsive love in me, thus rescuing me from the freedom to inescapably go into eternal torment. And to say there is no mystery in this! On the one hand there is a love that knew me — and willed to secure me — ever before I existed, and on the other we have the startling saying of Jesus,

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. ^[4]

This saying clearly presents the responsibility of humans, and how they act by what they love or hate. Is there not an unfathomable depth here? And the depth does not stop with man, and his love, but with God, and His, and ultimately one cannot plumb it. I kept the saying of Dostoevsky's "Underground man" in my heart for over thirty years, as I went through my own passage in the archetypal heartlands of humanity, and it lightened my way, until a greater light brought the clarity I now have. Perhaps this corresponds to what Berdyaev calls the two sorts of freedom Dostoevsky explored, the initial, and the final — the freedom to choose the truth, and freedom in the truth. I only know that regarding the *initial*, I gained *that* freedom solely in responding to an irresistible love. Is that a contradiction? Or a mystery? Perhaps a gist from another conversation can clarify:

When [your friend] says, addressing something that passed earlier between you, “the concern you expressed in your e-mail about the idea that God might compel someone to be saved, because that would be a sign of weakness in God,” I would elucidate further by urging a more detailed examination of the word *compel*. It can be used in many different senses: “I was compelled by her beauty...”, “He was compelled by the moral force of her argument...”, “The majesty of his person and the quality of his love compelled me to follow him...”, “I was compelled by my conscience to...” and so on. It may be a quality that draws, moves, and even drives the affections, the mind, and/or the conscience by outstanding virtues and not by mere and base force. The sense I am referring to — and the sense in which God compels someone to come to Him and thus experience salvation — is not a compelling which violates the will of the person, but wins it over; it is a compelling by virtue of the ravishing excellence and profundity of His love which kindles in (say) my heart a responding love, and desire to be joined to Him. The “forcing” that results from such passionate love is not to be likened to that of coercion. So do not be offended by the word, please.

I equate *irresistible* and *compel* to be the same quality (as used here), but seen from different vantages, objectively and subjectively: *He* was irresistible and *I* was compelled. Sometimes a person may be so winsome they capture our hearts. We know this humanly speaking, so why may love not enter into the issue of the freedom or bondage of the will? Suffice all this to say that Solzhenitsyn’s dismissal of Calvinism on the grounds it impoverishes religion...well, “religion” is impoverished compared to the robust mysticism of that faith which allows intimate fellowship with the divine Friend!

Contra Solzhenitsyn again, *plenty* depends on man, such as obedience, creativity, self-sacrificial love, loyalty, all that is involved in being human in the kingdom of God. All that we may do as sub-creators — to use Tolkien’s term — depends on us (albeit, paradoxically, we depend on God for life, strength, vision, wisdom, indeed for everything)!

Are we ordained from eternity “unto [specific] good works” ^[5] thus making our creations or vocations mechanically? No, we are given talents — skills — with passions and loves to propel them into actuality, even as an artist pursues his or her craft with joy, or a mother devotes herself to the nurture and upbringing of her children with passion and delight. The children of God learn — after Paul — to “labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in [us] mightily.” ^[6] That is, we discern what God is doing in and through our lives, and we co-operate with Him as intelligent children. To labor thus in resurrection power, having the energy which comes from being in perfect spiritual rest, and the fullness of heart which comes from being perfectly loved, both of which are part of our present inheritance in Christ, this is abundant life (it is resurrection power!), with freedom of the will found in loving our God, and choosing to do His will.

What impoverishes man — and what impoverishes the Gospel of Christ in particular — is the absence of that preaching or teaching which declares His marvelous and abundant provision for the wretched characters we are. When I say provision I mean, among other things, the gift of the righteousness He bestows upon — imputes to! — the poor young saint struggling (sometimes unsuccessfully) against his or her ungodly passions and desires. The gracious, undeserved, *stability* the tempest-torn soul knows in this family of the heavenly Father, where he or she will *not* be cast away despite repeated failure, engenders a gratitude, built on the security of a steadfast love, that bonds the soul to God with cords of joyous, repentant, adoring, and grateful love. The sufferings of Christ as He took the place of His people under the poured-out fury of outraged Justice from the Father — utterly exhausting the punishment due us for our sins — bespeaks a wealth of grace proffered us, and along with the moral perfection of His obedience to God’s law imputed to us, why, we stand now before the holy Godhead robed in the righteousness and purity of the Son, nothing between us and the Love of Heaven! *This* is riches!

This preaching of the opened vaults of God’s choicest treasures given in Christ to the lowest of His struggling saints may impoverish “religion,” as Solzhenitsyn terms it, but it is the making rich of all who seek Him, and is

the antidote to the glory of earthly pleasures. Russia could use a little of this, to offset the banes of its religion and modernity, or rather, *post-modernity*!

Let us look again at this quote of Dostoevsky's;

"Beauty is not only a terrible thing, it is also a mysterious thing. There God and the Devil strive for the mastery, and the battleground is the heart of man."

Might we not aptly typify Dostoevsky's "Sodom" by the figure of Aphrodite? (The accoutrements of man's religions I would include in the beauties of the world.) And here the battle is not between her and the Virgin, it is between Aphrodite and Jesus the Christ. The antidote to *her* ravishing beauty is the revelation of *His* saving love to a world about to go over the roaring falls of time into the seething maw of Thanatos while embraced in the arms of her pleasure (underneath her guise, is she not the archetypal hag, the monstrosity whose gaze turns hearts to stone?), and will not this love of Christ the Savior capture the hearts of those who love the Light that has come into the world, and win them into the safety of His heart, them gladly willing it to be so?

The preacher I mentioned earlier has another saying, "The essence of beauty is relationship." (Consider, what avails great beauty without love, but a torture akin to that of Tantalus?) To be in the love of God — to be passionately and steadfastly loved by Him, and loving Him in return — is the rarest beauty there is. The entire world lies under the sway of a counterfeit beauty — a hidden stinger of death in her kiss — and the lifting up the genuine beauty of a love which has abolished death for all who will come and bow the knee to the young and glorious Lord of eternity, this beauty devastates all contenders on the battlefield, exposing them as tawdry playthings of dwindling Time. The Scripture says to the thirsting soul, *Whosoever will*, let him come and freely drink the living waters of His love! ^[7] And He assures, "him [or her] that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out." ^[8]

[1] D. Russell Humphreys, Ph.D., *Starlight and Time: Solving the Puzzle of Distant Starlight in a Young Universe*, (Green Forest: Master Books, 1997), 9. “There are about 100 billion galaxies within the viewing range of our best telescopes.”

[2] Cited in, Joseph Pearce, *Solzhenitsyn: A Soul In Exile*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 302.

[3] Psalm 138:2

[4] John 3:17-21

[5] Ephesians 2:10

[6] Colossians 1:29

[7] Revelation 22:17

[8] John 6:37

★ ★ ★

OVERTURNING ELIOT'S WASTELAND

Actually it's already been done by James E. Miller in his two critical works, *T. S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land: Exorcism of the Demons* (1977), and, *T. S. Eliot: The Making Of An American Poet, 1888-1922* (2005) – that is, the *traditional view* of *The Waste Land* has been overturned, which posits Eliot wrote therein a critique of 20th century civilization.

“...*The Waste Land* has seemed to be from the beginning a kind of incredibly complicated ink blot designed for a Rorschach Test, confirming whatever is already present in the eye of the beholder. Whether Marxist, Christian, or aesthete, readers could hail the poem as summing up the attitude of a generation. And the poem's ‘meaning’ became embodied not only in criticism, sociology, and history, but also in other works of art.”
(Miller, *T. S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land*, p. 159)

It turns out there was a great difference between the original version before Ezra Pound radically pared it down, and the published version, and we owe Miller's scholarship for this new take on the poem, in terms of Eliot's intent and vision.

This present piece originally started as an overturning of the (illusory) “wasteland civilization” view I had been schooled in, but not from the vantage of Miller; an overturning not by writing a better *Waste Land*, or

countering it with a visionary optimism, rather a devastating it through a vision of such horror that literary, cultural, social, and sexual wastelands are all swallowed up in a vision of the *abyss* that renders them effete and shallow in light of the monsters and terrors lurking in the heartlands within human consciousness. Monsters not without, seeking to destroy us (though there are those!), but monsters who incarnate within us, *as us!*

It is the difference between an erudite poet – a true man-of-letters – seeing a wasteland and expressing it in “high literature” – per the traditional view of the poem – and a post-Leary, post-Dostoevsky, post-Hesse occultist-poet warrior priest plunged into the psychedelic / spiritual depths opened up in the sorceries of the sixties and seventies of the 20th century. In short, the Abyss swallowed up the Waste Land, as a shark swallows a smaller predator. It swallowed up the poet also! – and is the adventure of one turned into a horror unto himself, a real literary anti-hero, yet exemplar of the human condition.

WILL EVER A GREAT POET

visit this earth again?
And if so
what will he/she be like?
Will they be ignorant
of drugs
and the places our heads go
thereby?
Will they be ignorant
of the road
and this generation of pilgrims,
ignorant of the rape
of our earth
by the “respectable,”
ignorant of true speech
and heart music,
ignorant of how we yearn

and suffer,
how we are besieged by madmen
in costumes,
how we love
at grave peril
to our hearts?
Will they be academic stiffs
too dry to swallow,
or will they be loved
by us?

Has there no poet emerged from what is often disparagingly called “the Woodstock generation”, no traveler in the howling archetypal heartlands – the wilds of the abyss within – who has emerged with wit and life intact? The old school at least has Jung’s, *The Red Book*; have we no martyr (witness – from the Greek *martus*) among us now, whom we may call our own, as Dylan has Augustine put it? May *A Great and Terrible Love* stand up and be counted.

★ ★ ★

REFLECTIONS OF A FORMER OCCULTIST, NOW THOROUGHLY CONVERTED TO CHRIST, ON HARRY POTTER

Between the sorcerous potions common among us who were part of what was called the Human Tribe of 1960s counter-culture America (evolved in part, in later days, into Woodstock Nation), and the Eastern and Theosophical teachings prevalent in that time, Harry Potter's journey is nothing new to us, a popular child's version of *An Introduction to Adeptship in Sorcery, Conjuring, and Occult Warfare*.

It seems to me that those disciples of the Lord Christ most enamored of the Potter story are those who give least credence to the actuality of sorcery, conjuring of spirits, and the warfares both among occultists and between occultists and Christians. Or why would they treat lightly things both terrible and dark, save they thought them but fantasies?

True, the books are turning out to be a riveting tale, and the scope of its telling, especially after book four, is broadening and deepening. And it is a tale of high adventure, one which arrests the attention of children, as in Harry's world they have worth, their lives have meaning, and life is no longer a painful bore. Alas, Harry's world is not entirely fantasy, for there are indeed potions, spells, hexes, conjurings, psychokinesis, astral travel, remote viewing, and there are indeed powerful witches and wizards, although in many circles they are now termed adepts, if their powers be highly developed. That they operate with these occult "gifts" by means of enabling

spirit-entities is common knowledge to the seers of Christ, although the wizards et al often think it is “ascended masters,” “God,” “helping spirits,” or their own psychic force so enabling them.

Within the world of occultists it is known that there is what is often termed “the White Brotherhood” of benign practitioners, and also the other side, those who practice the “Dark” or “Black Arts,” scorning all notions of “goodness” in lieu of power and glory. Helen Blavatsky, a notorious occultist of the 19th century, declared she was of the former, while Aleister Crowley of the 20th unabashedly aligned himself with the latter.

Those seers of the Lord Christ given the Spirit of discernment perceive that both the “white” and “black” camps of occultists operate directly by the power of demonic agency, the dark adepts, however, being the only ones to realize and acknowledge it.

When children unwittingly see this world of occultists painted so attractively it is little wonder they seek to access this world themselves. It is no great secret that, unlike Narnia and Middle-Earth, the world depicted in the Potter books is real and accessible. Does anyone not think that schools for witchcraft and wizardry will not flourish now that they have become culturally honored and accepted? Here again is the saying true, “The pen is mightier than the sword.” For with one fell swoop the stigmas against demonic arts have been overthrown, and a new spiritual realm has gained the ascendancy in the popular imagination. No conquering armies could have imposed such on the civilized world.

For those lovers of the Potter worldview, a new moral universe has been opened. Both among the mentors and the friends of Harry, most of whom teach or study at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, morality is based upon what may best be termed “situation ethics,” where one does what seems best to one at the moment, given the circumstances, as there are no absolute standards concerning what is good or evil to inform their judgment.

Consequently it is permissible to lie, steal, and hate, as Harry and his friends do. It is deemed alright because they do not like the person they hate and

steal from (Professor Snape, who in turn despises them), and this seems to justify it. The lying is more generalized, whenever the occasion calls for it. It is as natural as being a boy or girl. An unregenerate boy or girl, that is. And herein is the problem: where mature readers can overlook such moral lapses, or even the worldly state of mind, in lieu of the larger story of good versus evil, the younger readers identify wholly with Harry and Hermione and Ron, and deeply love their characters. They are their heroes, and models of character and vocation. They have taken to *their* hearts the hearts and minds of unregenerate characters.

In a universe where there is no God, but rather a tolerant and kind, albeit mighty, wizard who overlooks such moral deficiencies, anything is permissible as long as the ends are good, as the saying goes, “The ends justify the means.”

About this old wizard, Professor Dumbledore; he is somewhat the equivalent of Tolkien’s Gandalf, or Lucas’ Obe-Wan Kenobe, and is indeed a character to be admired and revered as a sort of powerful holy man committed to opposing evil and establishing goodness.

The thing is, he is not of the line of warrior-priests that serve the Lord Christ, but rather of “the White Brotherhood” of powerful occult adepts energized by demonic power. Gandalf, on the other hand – the creation of Roman Catholic Tolkien – is metaphorically patterned after Tolkien’s faith, and not the occult.

There are, in the Potter books, those Muggles (non-magical people) who hate and fear the magical folks, and who seek to work them ill. May it not be, that in the popular imagination (especially the young, who will be ruling the world in a few years) the Muggles in real life are the Christians, those uptight backwards-thinking religious fanatics who – it is alleged – liked to burn witches and wizards before it became against the law, and some of whom object to the Potter world-view even yet!

Does anyone not know that entrance to the magical world of the occult may be by a mere drop of potion, or a few whiffs of enchanted smoke, or a tablet produced in a sorcerer’s laboratory? And that these are widely available and

used? What? Are so many naïve concerning the sectors of consciousness that exist in the civilized nations, not to mention those nations yet under the darkness of demon-appeasement and worship?

Some of us once were among such sorcerers of the civilized world, and lived in those realms as they dominated the youth culture of the 1960s and '70s, and are familiar with its apparent glories and actual abysses, and all the denizens who inhabit those realms and exercise a variety of powers. We recognize Satan as the one who brought the psychedelic potions into our midst that we might be propelled into the occult regions, some of us to perish there, some of us to continue but on the fringes of that world, enjoying the sorceries and ignorant of the terrible darkness thereof, but on some of us God had mercy, revealing the glory of the Lord Jesus, the crucified and resurrected Savior, and quickening our hearts to be His children and walk with Him. We now seek, in His name, to be a light and a warning to the world, as the darkness encroaches over this entire planet like the shadow of Mordor.

In that what we do in spirit is not seen (such as prayer), we too function in the occult realm (for occult simply means hidden or unseen, as in medicine doctors examine patients for “occult blood in the stool” or “occult carcinoma”). But we walk in the Spirit of the Lord, according to His holy laws, and war with the weapons appointed by Him, and forged in the furnaces of His heart, which are mighty to the bringing down of great and terrible strongholds of the dark powers.

Would that the children of today knew the battle of good against evil is not to be found on computer screens or in fantasies, but in and against their own minds and hearts, and that they knew of the grim adversary worthy of their utmost attention and effort, and most of all, that they learned of a Champion worthy of their love and utmost loyalty, Who has as reward for their friendship a Never-Ending Kingdom of such wonder and glory as they never even dreamed, not to mention the continuing friendship there with Him and His mighty men & women warrior-priests.

May poets and seers rise up to reveal the wonders of *His* realm, **and may the best vision of reality prevail** in the global arena of consciousness on

this charred and besieged planet on the dark side of Eden's gates. May our God raise up *His* storytellers!

★ ★ ★

Addendum, after book five, *The Order of the Phoenix*.

There is not much to add to the above, save that in the fifth book Dumbledore himself lies (when confronted in his office by the Minister of Magic, with others present). One might say that there are circumstances where to lie is proper, say in the saving of lives; a real-life example would be those people hiding Jews from the Nazis in World War II, and lying when their houses were being searched by the SS. This is an ongoing debate in the Christian community, and rightly so. But in Harry's world there is no debate. It is just done, and done freely, for there is no Supreme Law as to what is good and evil. The characters are laws unto themselves, doing what is right in their own eyes.

★ ★ ★

Books six and seven, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.

More of the same (interesting story, but the same darkness disguised as light).

A twist from the news, Oct. 16, 2007, Carnegie Hall, NYC:

The big revelation of the night came when she [J.K. Rowling] was asked if Dumbledore had ever found love. With a sigh, she seemed on the verge of saying no, but then revealed, "my truthful answer to you... I always thought of Dumbledore as gay." After a collective gasp, the audience roared with applause. Rowling was clearly astonished by the positive reaction and exclaimed, "if I'd known it would make you so happy, I would have

announced it years ago!” She went on to say that she thought Dumbledore had fallen in love with Grindelwald, a Dark Wizard he defeated in battle in 1945, which possibly made it forgivable that he had not seen Grindelwald’s true nature, because “falling in love can blind us to an extent.”

From Time online: time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1674073,00.html

So we see the full unsavoriness of this dark tale.

★ ★ ★

THEY GOT IN THROUGH THE INNER DOOR

[An angel] “was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.”

–Revelation 9:1-2

This is generally understood by commentators as an influx of demons into the human realm spreading intense spiritual and moral darkness through their extraordinary powers of deception.

What human realm? The air, the physical environment? Flying around as invisible (or visible) birds? Blotting out the sun by their great numbers? I think not. Rather this is a *vision* not a cinematic depiction, and is clearly symbolic of *spiritual* realities. The Greek underlying “pit” refers to a hole or shaft, and “bottomless” refers to an abyss, so that what we are given to see is an opening made to the abode of the demonic realm, which creatures then inundate the realms of earth, particularly the *hearts and minds* of men – and these creatures (likened to an immense, almost endless, swarm of locusts) are distinctly told not to harm the earth, but only humans, and that not unto death, but only to torment.

But how did they get into this realm of humankind? Well, the angel opened the pit, or shaft or hole, and the “key” to do it was “given” him, indicating a divine commission from the Almighty.

What was this “key”? Before I answer that let me take a bird’s-eye view of the visionary terrain, *humanly* speaking. The counterculture generation of the 1960s – also known as the Woodstock generation – has been spoken of as a “generation of seers” due to the sort of drugs and potions they were enamored of, which drugs were often referred to by them as holy “sacraments”. They have also been called “a generation of sorcerers”, for these drugs were such as gave mystical vision into the spirit world, and have been used for such by occult paths of older civilizations and peoples around the world.

But in the American 50s and 60s, starting with the Beat poets and writers seeking visionary experience, and then spilling over into the general culture, abetted by self-appointed teachers, these chemically-induced psychic and visionary experiences went mainstream, first in the U.S. and the U. K., and then exported world-wide via the immensely popular and exciting “Woodstock spirit” through many culture-bearing vehicles, such as poetry and literature, music, proselytizers (both professional and lay), and the drugs themselves. A lethal Trojan Horse, it turned out. This new consciousness filled the world – or at least the youths and free-spirited intelligencia around the world – with great hope and enthusiasm, at least initially. Government intelligence agencies also explored – and exploited – the drugs, with a view to developing psychic warfare capabilities.

However, it later became clear what had happened, and those verses from Revelation shed the light. The shaft was opened through this human agency at the decree of the One who watches over all human affairs, as a judgment upon humankind for its rejection of the sacred and its “worship” of the profane (“you want profane? drink it to the dregs!”). This “human agency” was directed by divine providence to fulfil those prophecies that would bring open exposure of both the human heart and that malevolent guiding spirit behind all human affairs, both of which were in *lethal* opposition to the purity of God’s heart (Eph 2:2-3).

In verse 15 of Revelation 9 it is written that more “angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year”, showing that Revelation *spoke not only of mere dynamics and recapitulated patterns*

of activity during the age of Christ and His church, but of events – in this case, a single event of long duration – in history, at an appointed moment. The four angels that were loosed in 9:15 were given not only to foment further deception, but to instigate killing – and one third of humankind at that! No one – or very few – dare to envision what that would entail if it took place within the next few years. There are those who with all their demonic hearts long to lob a nuclear weapon on a certain Middle Eastern country, which if done would indeed lead to “men’s hearts failing them for fear . . . looking [on] those things which are coming [upon] the earth” (Luke 21:26).

Going back to the initial opening of the door to the bottomless pit – the demonic abyss – what opened this was the dissolving of the barrier between the dimension of human consciousness and the realm of demons. There was a God-given inner wall, so to speak – a barrier – separating these two realms, so that the latter would not be able to wreak its havoc unrestrained within the collective human heart, though occasional witches and sorcerers were able to break through using psychedelic (sorcerous) potions, which is why they were so widely outlawed up through the ages.

In centuries before the twentieth there was certainly demonic deception throughout the world (they had been at it for millennia), and men’s minds were targeted with falsehoods and lies of various sorts, as well their souls being tempted in manifold ways, but the Woodstock event let them directly into the human heart en mass, and globally.

So the gate was opened by these ancient instruments of occult practitioners and welcomed and used by untold millions around the world. Even in the middle of the second decade of the 21st century, in 2016, there is a powerful movement to make legal, not only “medicinally” but “recreationally”, the staple of the psychedelics, marijuana, now far more potent than it was in the days of Woodstock.

In God’s providence, we humans opened the inner door to let the demonic forces in. The times of ensuing darkness have seen the hard work they have done permeating the institutions of both the civilized nations and the hearts

and cultures of the more primitive peoples. Intense darkness is now widespread, Light increasingly despised. But as the division of Revelation 9 between agents of deception and torment, and agents of deception and killing is not static, we now are approaching the latter phase: the killing. Not *only* the madness of religious regimes gone wild with hatred against any other belief systems (and these seeking weapons of mass destruction), but lusts for territories, egos feeling slighted and enraged thereby, ethnic groups against other ethnic groups, increasing individual insanities and murderous “lone wolf” rampages, with nuclear, biological and chemical agents enlisted as means of warfare and death.

The spiritually discerning man or woman may observe the filling up of the zeitgeist—spirit of the age—with satanic content, spilling over into individuals already open to murderous suggestion through involvement with sorcery, or even just living in a sorcery-laden culture.

[Note in the recent news (October 1, 2015): first day of recreational marijuana sales in Oregon, and mass shooting in Roseburg, Oregon’s Umpqua Community College.]

Not only individuals, but groups, and nations, will be filled with the darkness from the pit, and go on murderous rampages. Only safe place left is in the care of God, which for human souls is in union with Jesus Christ. Come Hell and high water, with Him we may survive unscathed into the world to come.

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THE OPEN OCCULT WARFARE

It won't seem so noticeable at first, folks just being a little more intense – folks in the business of communication, singers / rappers, poets, teachers, gurus of various ilks. I'm thinking of rappers right now, seeing as I did a video of some rappin' to a crowd in Colorado at a wax festival. Wax? You not hip to that? It's a tech product of the already 20x stronger grass, refined to be, what? 50x even stronger? One dab / toke – by vaporizer – keep you high for 5 days they say.

All of which to say, when on the high wavelength, the energy – the force – in the consciousness and voice comes from a hidden realm. Let me talk about “occult” for a moment. Some folks into discernment – good people with good stuff to say – take the view that all use of the word “occult” refers to evil, the demonic. I would refer the reader back to the story in Abyss, “A Great and Terrible Love”, where I talk of a neutral use of the word “occult”.

Much as I *really* like some discernment ministries, I don't take kindly to any muscling in on the language and taking a good – and neutral – word hostage to an exclusive usage, invalidating all other legitimate use!

Anyway, back to the story! Checkin' out these rappers to the stoned crowd – themselves also high – I could dig the power in their voices. Now, I oughta say that rap depends on the music for its power and soul-entering way; the beat enables the voice and heart to bop right in, gives it its dancin' shoes and moves deep into one's being. Without the rhythm the rhyme would be lame, and the rap flat on its face.

But there will be some who can use the voice alone with power; some demonic sweet-talkers, others poets of the LORD, and yet others. The new trippers, be they on wax or other stuff, will come on strong with sorcery (that for which Babylon falls) and will seek to lord it over meeker voices.

Those in whom the Spirit of Christ resides have a power that cannot be overcome, and they will speak truth to whomever opposes the kingdom of God; of course they can die, but death is no enemy to them, only the door to their glory, we willing to suffer that for the testimony the King gives us to say—besides, resurrection negates death!

As marijuana becomes more widely legal watch the intensification of public discourse, quickened by fountains of the occult. It is a strange world coming.

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MARIJUANA AND THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

Those names don't go together, though there are some who would have us think they do. In fact, if one considers the Bible authoritative over the lives of humans, especially those who profess faith in it and in the Christ it reveals, there are explicit—and extremely severe—warnings for those who use the drug and others in the same class. *What* is its “class”? Drugs termed either *psychedelics* or *entheogens*, such as LSD, mescaline, peyote, psilocybin mushrooms, hashish, and other substances with like properties. In the Old and New Testaments they are classed as substances which enable humans to engage in *sorcery* (from the Greek *pharmakeia*), which is spiritual communion with—or openness to—the demonic realm.

And *what* are the properties of such drugs? To cite three brief quotes from commentators on the linguistic and Biblical meanings of *pharmakeia*: in Revelation it means “*drugs that induce magic spells*” (Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, p. 302). *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Vol 2, p. 558), says it belongs to “a magical tradition of herbs gathered and prepared for spells, and also for *encouraging the presence of spirits* at magical ceremonies” [emphasis added]. And then from *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, by Spiros Zodhiates, we have: “*Pharmakeia* means the occult, sorcery, witchcraft, illicit pharmaceuticals, trance, magical incantation with drugs” (pp. 1437, 1438).

In the Septuagint or LXX (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) the words *witch* or *sorcerer* / *witchcraft* or *sorcery* from the root *kāšaph* [a verb

meaning to practice magic, to practice sorcery] are translated *pharmakeia* just as the Greek New Testament has it. It was a known thing in Biblical times, and in ancient Israel shunned as a capital crime, as it allowed potent demonic influence into the close-knit holy community. In the New Testament it is forbidden and unrepentant users consigned to the lake of fire (Rev 21:8), forever barred from the City of God (Rev 22:15). In extra-Biblical literature *pharmakon*—drugs—may refer to legitimate medicine, poison, or magic potion, but in Revelation its (and its cognates) only meaning pertains to magic potion, although there is an element of “deception” involved in its effects. In Paul’s epistle to the Galatians (5:20) we have the word *pharmakeia* again, translated in the AV and NIV ‘84 witchcraft, and in the ESV and NASB sorcery. It is listed there among the works of the flesh, along with murder and adultery.

In the New Testament holy communities, equally as close-knit as in ancient Israel, the sorcery-enhanced consciousness of one member can powerfully infiltrate and affect the psyches of other members without their being aware of it, allowing entrance of demonic power and influence into the hearts of others. Little wonder it merited the death-sentence in Israel of old, and eternal death in God’s people now if unrepented of!

Many who take these particular drugs are fully aware that when “high”—when in the altered states of consciousness they induce—they have uncanny perception of and access into the depths of others’ hearts without their consent or awareness. The psychic enhancement and abilities they afford are the stuff of demonic invasion of souls, which is witchcraft and sorcery. This sort of trespass is expressly forbidden by the prohibitions against it. The LORD said to Moses, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live” (Exodus 22:18). In the church age we are *not* to exact that punishment; instead we warn that *spiritual* death—and that eternal—will be the consequence.

We in America are becoming a nation of witches and sorcerers. As I have written above, we entered onto this path half a century ago, back in the Woodstock era. And we are moving toward the full-blown expression of it as marijuana becomes fully legal, the realization of which shall be a culture—an entire society—whose collective consciousness is open to the depths

of Hell and all its hatred and vile indecency. Increasingly the police will be vilified and targeted; the Christian churches and ministers likewise—for God gave us government to keep order and justice (which it has often failed to do), and the Gospel of Christ to hold at bay the flood of evil and deception, that societies may thrive in righteousness and peace, families remain healthy and intact, and souls may be saved and enabled to live godly. Those will be things mostly of the past.

Those who say that such evil times will pass are naïve; true, evil times in the past have turned for the better, but these days are unique: the ubiquitousness of sorcery will not recede, neither will the floodwaters of Hell, for this is the beginning of its final hour, and the power of darkness, as prophesied. How long till this “hour” comes to its full fruition I do not know. Are there other sources of Satanic input to the collective consciousness? Indeed there are—from many cultural sectors—but sorcery is a prime one, as noted in Scripture, and explained in earlier chapters.

There will be a place in these days when the enemy shall come in like a flood, that the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him (cf Isaiah 59:19), that standard being the word of God rightly explicated among Christ’s people. And this standard will be held high until it is deemed illegal, and the churches shuttered.

It will be the pastors and elders—in some churches deacons—that will hold the line against the flood of satanic influence, and announce that the partaking of sorcerous drugs will not be tolerated. Those in the congregation who come in “high” I would—from the pulpit—bring into the presence of the Lord and ask Him to reveal His anger against them according to His word, as when He said, “I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers” (Malachi 3:5)—and give them a sense of the fires of Hell and the wrath of His fiery indignation against the adversaries of His word in the house of the Almighty. No stealth sinners will enjoy sitting “high” when by His Spirit He manifests His displeasure to them.

Those pastors and believers who have been seduced by error in the churches, and by the “glory” and “open shame” of the culture, will need to repent and

receive forgiveness to stand in the congregation of the righteous. Those *true* believers who have bought into the lies of medical marijuana (this spoken of, refuted, and explained in “The Fate of Babylon”) will have to repent, rather suffering their illnesses than opening their hearts and minds to the influence of the demon prince.

There must be a sanctuary free from the vile spirit, that the presence of the Holy One may fill the hearts of His beloved people with the light of His countenance, and the glory of His infinite majesty and dignity—to hold us over till the awaited marriage supper of the Lamb, and we bodily rejoice in His presence forever.

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OCCULT WARFARE NO LONGER HIDDEN, BUT OUT IN THE OPEN

Given the definition that occult warfare is human psychic activity empowered by demonic agency and directed against other humans, the title of this piece depicts what exists in our culture in the U.S. today, as well as in the United Kingdom. How do I come to this conclusion? It's all wrapped up in one word: sorcery.

And what is sorcery? The use of a certain class of psychoactive agents—psychedelic drugs such as LSD, mescaline, peyote, psilocybin, hashish, marijuana, and others with like properties—which open the user to the spirit realm without the Holy Spirit, thus unprotected and receptive to all manner of satanic influence. The “high” person becomes filled—with greater or lesser potency of demonic presence, depending on various factors—with a psychic power manifested in their speech, song, writing, or even just their presence, that impacts those exposed to it. Folks who get “high” are well aware of their enhanced psychic “potency”.

Given the increasing legality of extremely potent new strains of marijuana—and even more potent derivatives of them, such as “wax”—along with the now majority of the population's approval of such, whatever is in the hearts of men and women who partake of these sorcerous concoctions will enter into the culture's collective “conversations”. This easily affected zeitgeist is becoming *denser* with a certain quality. I give a few examples of it: “Death to the police!” “Crush the pizza owner who won't cater an LGBT wedding!” “[C]hurch leaders must be *made* ‘to take homosexuality off the

sin list.’ ” [emphasis added] This last in the NYTimes: (www.nytimes.com/2015/04/05/opinion/sunday/frank-bruni-same-sex-sinners.html)

I’m not saying that all who support or say these things are getting “high”, but that the cultural context—the societal matrix—is both friendly to, and runs with them. The resulting cultural frenzy—exemplified by the new phenomenon of digital mobs—is an open manifestation of satanic power like unto a wind filling the sails of human hearts.

To demonstrate what I mean, just observe the blowback when a Christian seeks to pour the cool water of reasoned discourse on the fervent, fiery condemnation of Christian loyalty to God’s laws. Like pouring water on a gasoline fire!

Of course these thoughts of mine will be scorned and laughed at by some (“Pity the poor fool believing in devils and sorcery! No, better yet, crush him! He doesn’t deserve to be heard—and really, even to live! For we are sick of their tormenting us [cf Rev 11:10] with talk of sin and coming judgment!”).

It appears we are morphing into the devil’s world, and his spirit—modified to appeal to the prevailing culture’s bent—the intelligence of this brave new world independent of God and traditional morality, to the end that whatever is in the hearts of men and women may be glorified and made the new truths to live by, and Heaven help those who oppose the mighty wave of cultural consensus, for the world is not big enough for the both of them to be in it. And if the Christians are peaceable, renouncing violence, the end is clear.

The coming resurrection of the dead, however, changes the equation. For those appointed to be the outcasts and the slain prefer to bear witness to the truth of God, His word, and His law, and suffer the consequences, than to acquiesce silently in the face of what God calls unrighteousness warranting eternal judgment unless repented of and forgiven—which latter He has provided abundantly and gladly, for all who will come to Him. We desire, for love of our fellow humans, and loyalty to our God, to announce these precious gifts of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

This present zeitgeist—and its development into even more extreme future manifestations—is the result of over half a century’s brewing in the cauldron of humanity’s heart mixed with demonic input. And now, with the further help of those potions which “expand” the minds of men and women, it will out!

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Matthew 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

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DOES AMILLENNIALISM “SPIRITUALIZE” AWAY BIBLICAL TRUTHS, PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT PROPHECIES?

As profound and insightful—and true to the text—as the best amil commentators are (I think of Greg Beale, Dennis Johnson, Dean Davis, Cornelis Venema), there *is* something missing: a link bringing the application of their understanding to the times we are in. Folks in the premil camps are still able to talk about the “spiritualizing” of the amils concerning prophecy. A false claim, though this needs to be addressed.

A remedy hinges on one point, which some do recognize, though few in the amil camp. And this is the identification of the sorceries spoken of in Revelation 9:21 and 18:23 (as well 21:8 and 22:15) as being the psychedelic agents of the Woodstock era—including the increasingly legal and potent marijuana of today.

Sheer unfamiliarity—benign ignorance—is likely the cause of this. Nonetheless, this crucial identification sheds a lot of light, as I indicate below in the following articles.

NEW INSIGHTS IN AMILLENNIAL ESCHATOLOGY

“Does God give only academicians and seminarians insight and understanding? May He not use even wilderness-trained men?”

I will argue in this paper that a lack of understanding concerning the word “sorceries” (Greek, *pharmakeia*, φαρμακεία) and its cognates in *The Book of Revelation* have led to overlooking key elements in some of its prophecies, and thus inability to appreciate their import and relevance to the times. It is accepted that the “eclectic” or “modified idealist” view (Beale)¹ allows *some* departure from the idealist, though as to where the line is drawn there is no clear consensus. Beale himself says, “...certainly there are prophecies of the future in Revelation. The crucial yet problematic task of the interpreter is to identify through careful exegesis and against the historical background those texts which pertain respectively to past present and future.”² Please note this is not an academic presentation, but aimed rather at a popular audience *as well as* academics, so don’t hold it to the precise standards of strict academic formatting.

Basically my view is this: the *pharmakeia* of Revelation 18:23 and 9:21 (a variant in the latter reading φάρμακον *pharmakon* – drugs – does not affect translation) are the very drugs used and heralded by the sixties and seventies counterculture that were exported into most of the world and which – in retrospect – are seen to constitute a prophesied event clearly depicted in Scripture. The Greek *pharmakeia* is generally translated “sorceries” in the New Testament. Geerhardus Vos, although speaking of discerning the Antichrist, enunciated *a principle* applicable here,

“[It] belongs among the many prophecies, whose best and final exegete will be the eschatological fulfillment, and in regard to which it behooves the saints to exercise a peculiar kind of eschatological patience.” (*The Pauline Eschatology*, p. 133)

O.T. Allis in his book, *Prophecy and the Church*, expressed the same sentiment:

“The usual view on this subject [‘the intelligibility of prophecy’] has been that prophecy is not intended to be fully understood before its fulfillment, that it is only when God ‘establishes the word of his servants and fulfills the counsel of his messengers,’ that the meaning and import of their words become fully manifest.” (p 25)

Stuart Olyott in his, *Dare to Stand Alone: Daniel Simply Explained*, thinks likewise:

“We must realize that some of the Bible’s teachings relating to the very last days will not be understood until we are *in* those days. That is why it is both unwise and dangerous to draw up detailed timetables of future events. Some parts of the Word of God will not become obvious in their meaning until the days of which they speak have dawned.” (p 166)

[These three men are all of the Amillennial school of eschatological interpretation.] The reason this has not been widely recognized is that those who live godly have no notion what the dark practice of sorcery entails, a practice that astonishingly became a national and even global *recreation* of sorts, and for many also having a spiritual or psychic aspect. In short, what was Biblically termed sorcery became widespread and accepted. In 2016 one of these substances, marijuana, is quickly gaining legal and cultural approval across the United States (and elsewhere in the world as well).

The sorcerous drugs and potions of our day are *exclusively* the psychedelic substances LSD, mescaline, peyote, marijuana, hashish (a derivative of marijuana), psilocybin mushrooms, and all drugs with their unique properties. This does *not* include the opiates, various analgesics, and other legitimate medicinal pharmaceuticals. (A discussion regarding the medicinal use of marijuana, and the resurgence of LSD and the like for therapeutic purposes may be found in the paper published below, “The Fate of Babylon, a study in determining the identity and demise of Babylon in John’s Apocalypse”.)

To cite but three brief quotes from commentators on what the linguistic and Biblical meanings of *pharmakeia* are: in Revelation it means “*drugs that induce magic spells*” (Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, p. 302); it belongs to “a magical tradition of herbs gathered and prepared for spells, and also for *encouraging the presence of spirits* at magical ceremonies” [emphasis added] (*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol 2, p. 558); from *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, by Spiros Zodhiates, we have: “*Pharmakeia* means the occult, sorcery, witchcraft, illicit pharmaceuticals, trance, magical incantation with drugs” (pp. 1437, 1438). In the Septuagint or LXX (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) the words *witch* or *sorcerer* / *witchcraft* or *sorcery* from the root *kāšaph* [a verb meaning to practice magic, to practice sorcery] are translated *pharmakeia* just as the Greek New Testament has it. It was a known thing in Biblical times, and in ancient Israel shunned as a capital crime, as it allowed potent demonic influence into the close-knit holy community. In the New Testament it is forbidden and unrepentant users consigned to the lake of fire (Rev 21:8), forever barred from the City of God (Rev 22:15). In extra-Biblical literature *pharmakon* – drugs – may refer to legitimate medicine, poison, or magic potion, but in Revelation its (and its cognates) only meaning pertains to magic potion.

I should mention that Joseph Thayer (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 4th Edition) additionally notes a metaphorical use – that is, deception – for *pharmakeia* /sorcery in Revelation, as some others also hold. To show why the use of “sorceries” in the Rev 18:23 passage refers to activities involving certain kinds of drugs rather than figuratively for mere deceptive practices, consider the classes of transgressors in Rev 21:8 who are consigned to the lake of fire: “the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable,

and murderers, and whoremongers, and **sorcerers**, and idolaters, and all liars”. Sorcerers (from *pharmakeus*) here specifically means one who administers or uses a certain class of drugs to “enchant”, to cast a psychic spell upon by use of these drugs and accompanying demonic power. It doesn’t mean a deceiver – a liar – generally or even figuratively, but specifically one who uses sorcerous potions. Liars / deceivers are *already* classed separately in this listing. (The same with poisoners / murderers.) Likewise in Rev 22:15 where a similar Greek word, *pharmakos*, is used for sorcerer, with the same meaning as *pharmakeus* in 21:8, again with liars / deceivers and murderers named separately in *that* list. In these verses the usage clearly refers to drug-using-and-promoting people, so it is clear *pharmakeia* / sorceries in Revelation 18:23 – “by thy sorceries were all nations deceived” – refers to drug-related activity and not deceptive practices. On the other hand there is no doubt that Thayer’s, “the deceptions and seductions of idolatry” **are a result of and part of** Babylon’s sorceries, but the sorceries themselves are distinctly *pharmakeia* / *sorcery* (i.e. drug) activity.

There is even a new name for this and the other psychedelics:

Entheogen: “An entheogen (‘God inside us,’ εν εν- ‘in, within,’ theo θεος- ‘god, divine,’ -gen γενος ‘creates, generates’), in the strict sense, is a psychoactive substance used in a religious, psychotherapeutic, recreational, shamanic, or spiritual context.”
(Wiki)

The reason we can identify the present-day drugs with those spoken of in Scripture is that while the names may differ or be unknown, the properties are exactly the same: encouraging the presence of spirits and inducing magic spells and trance states. The world is very familiar with this, as the online article, *The Spiritual Use of Cannabis* (goo.gl/nTo57J) shows. The “spiritual / occult” use of LSD and other like drugs may also be easily found in a Google search. This discussion on marijuana between a spiritual teacher and an inquirer (erowid.org/plants/cannabis/cannabis_spirit6.shtml) reveals what the world is all too familiar with, but many

Christians, alas, not. It really doesn't matter if a person does not use marijuana for such "psychic/spiritual" reasons, but only for pain relief, sensory enhancement, artistic acuity, recreation, or other things. It remains that the properties inherent in the chemical so affect the nervous system and consequently the soul, that the latter becomes open to a realm of spiritual consciousness despite the user not perceiving it for what it is. Deception is a major element in this realm of awareness, and when a user enters it unaware its influences are operative upon that person's heart and mind nonetheless. For example, when someone gets "high" on marijuana just for fun, to enhance and amplify the senses for emotional and sensory pleasure, this is still "sorcery" – albeit low grade – and the user likewise open to covert demonic infiltration of the thought-life and heart. Note: marijuana is sometimes focused on here because it is the one psychedelic substance that is increasingly legal and available in the U.S. and around the world. The other drugs in this class operate similarly.

In short, this is what "sorcery" is: entering this realm of psychic awareness whatever the intent may be.

What Happened

To start this section I would like to give a literary and visual image of this overlooked "prophesied event clearly depicted in Scripture" to help clarify and simplify the concept I want to convey.

The large-scale aspect of this event started in Woodstock – Woodstock as a symbol for the counterculture generation of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s – though one could trace the event's inception way further back. What happened in the Woodstock generation was a disaster of biblical proportions that slipped by unseen. It is *still* unseen yet the havoc wrought by it is felt everywhere, and multitudes sense something is so off in our *present* world as to be unnatural, though many would not go so far as to say *supernatural*.

Woodstock is usually known / remembered for its drugs; well, a lot of other things too, but the drugs were basic, and at the heart of what happened. It

was commonly understood then they opened one up to a spiritual – note, *not* a “religious” – consciousness, and we saw sacred things, in ourselves, in others, and in the world we were in. We were convinced this new consciousness had the power to change the world for the better, so it was natural we would seek to export it everywhere.

And we did. But this “spiritual consciousness” had a depth to it we were initially unaware of. It did transport us to a new state of consciousness – awareness – which was familiar to a certain class of seers, but we were novices, babes in the woods. A lot of what we saw and experienced purported to be light and glory, sacred and of exquisite human depth, and in a sense it was – for there *is* light and glory and sacredness in the human heart and body, and we tasted deeply of these things. But in the human heart there are also self-centeredness, self-aggrandizing, and self-love – often at the expense of others’ well-being; there are also non-human things, for there is a “gateway” in the depths of our hearts that opens into spirit-worlds, and not all in these realms is safe or sane. That is, not all mean us well. And when we open ourselves to such realms unprepared or in forbidden ways we may come under the influence of beings capable of exploiting our faults and destructive qualities without our even knowing it, as these are beings capable of interfering with our thought-processes and hearts undetected.

Looking at this from a *visual* angle: an apt image of the collective consciousness of humankind is a vast reservoir with the varied cultures of the world as swirling waters contained therein. At the bottom of this reservoir is not hard rock or land, but an *almost* impermeable membrane of sorts, on the other side of which is another realm – or dimension – which harbors spirit entities hostile to humans. It’s also called the spirit world, or a realm thereof. It’s all about us, we are just not normally aware of it.

This near impervious partition between the two species is sometimes breached through the use of substances which fall into the category of *sorcery*, an unusual class of drugs which allow the barrier “membrane” – figuratively speaking – to become fully permeable so that denizens from either side may pass over into the other’s realm. Though few would knowingly enter from the human to the *other* region, so filled with horror and madness it is!

God must be brought into the picture to make things clear. He's the one who erected this barrier for the safety of humankind, to protect them from far more powerful adversaries they had become vulnerable to when they lost their strength in an earlier incident with them (the history goes far back).

Sorcery, the use of drugs and potions to open the barrier, has been the endeavor of witches, shamans, wizards, pagan worshippers, and the like for untold ages, to the end of gaining psychic influence over other humans through the demonic power they become channels of (though some falsely claim these powers are *for* other humans and are benign). Due to this immensely destructive force such activity and its practitioners have been outlawed in many societies, though some have allowed it, to their great detriment.

Returning to Woodstock: the LSD, marijuana, psilocybin mushrooms, mescaline and other "psychedelics" – substances of ancient standing (save the synthetics, most notably LSD which was only produced in 1938 and its sorcerous properties partially recognized in 1943) – became widely used in the U.S. and U.K., and the resulting *direct and widespread* entrance of the demonic realm into the human commenced what would come to have an *enormous* impact over the ensuing decades. Demonic influence has always been in the world, affecting the thought-life of humans, but its *direct* and *unimpeded* access to the human heart and life on a large scale was a new development. Those humans without a specific and deliberately active guard against such influence are *all* vulnerable to the strong delusion they relentlessly promote. When LSD, marijuana et al were exported into the wide world through the exciting new Woodstock spirit, the opening of the human world to the demonic created thereby was *global* in scale, and the havoc they began wreaking would eventually swell to catastrophes of immense magnitude – earthshaking and shattering, precipitating great destruction and suffering!

A pertinent excerpt from the essay, *The Fate of Babylon*:

"The explosion of these drugs onto the world scene was an *event* (the term now used for military-scale biological, chemical, or

nuclear *events*) that befell nations around the globe through the drug-energized sixties generation in America, as this potent counterculture permeated these nations through its music and musicians, literature, art, film, and other culture-bearing media and vehicles, as well as spiritual teachers and gurus (think Timothy Leary and Baba Ram Dass / Richard Alpert, both Harvard professors). The nations and cultures of the world were leavened from within by the exciting new consciousness of the sixties and the Woodstock spirit exported into them, but it was a Trojan Horse filled with the denizens of Hell. Its impact was, in the psychic realm, the equivalent of a massive nuclear detonation. . . . The damage done is irreversible.”

The darkening *zeitgeist* of the world (“spirit of the age”) that we live in now – 2015 – is the direct result of this massive demonic incursion into our midst beginning half a century ago. What they hate most are Christ and God, then humankind, and after that peaceful societal order – domestic tranquility – enforced by law and government, as the holy, human, and orderly go against both their nature and their goal for the planet.

They now are able to enter the *unprotected* human heart and mind either directly (affecting the passions and perceptions) or through ideas (affecting thought-life and perception) and the results in various areas will more and more manifest. Some notable ones are: hatred of authority (the targeting of police will spread); exaltation and normalizing of various kinds of depravity will bloom in full; anti-Christian hatred and persecution will increase; dissenters will be dealt with violently.

Even those who never took drugs are impacted by the new *zeitgeist* – this ever-evolving cultural norm – and humankind filled with this new “spirit” will be one in which the saying shall be realized (to quote Dostoevsky in his *Brothers Karamazov*), “If there is no God, everything is permitted.” In other words, with no absolute standard, anything goes. And this increasingly is the world we are in now; it will become a place where reasoned discussion is disdained, and impassioned feeling will emerge as that which trumps what was once considered sane and decent.

This new year will open some eyes within the precincts of the holy people. William Hendriksen, respected New Testament commentator, discussing Rev 20:7-10, wrote,

“ . . . the era during which the church as a mighty missionary organization shall be able to spread the gospel everywhere is not going to last forever; not even until the moment of Christ’s second coming. Observe what is happening in certain countries even today. *Are certain regions of this earth already entering Satan’s little season?*” [emphasis added] (*More Than Conquerors*, pp 194-195)

Note that he wrote this around 1962! *Were he writing today he would no doubt express himself far more strongly.* We are being slaughtered in so many countries around the globe, and the “civilized” West appears to be gearing up for a massive dealing of the “problem of Christians” and their “witness” – which many can see, though it has been slow coming. It may well be speeding up.

★ ★ ★

I want to juxtapose two images to see the connections that may be made. First, we have the one shown above of “a vast reservoir with the varied cultures of the world as swirling waters contained therein” and at the bottom of the reservoir not land or rock but a barrier likened to a membrane which can be penetrated – made permeable – by the use of certain means. On the other side of the barrier are hosts of demonic beings who, at a certain definite point in history, were enabled by human actions (engaging in sorcery on a global scale) to enter the collective consciousness of humanity and wreak, first, psychological and spiritual havoc, and then, secondly, provoke murderous bloodshed between men. This is image one.

The second image is from the Bible, primarily the Book of Revelation, though other parts of Scripture witness the same things. In Rev 9, in the

beginning of the chapter we see a star fall from heaven, which most commentators agree is likely an angel (they disagree whether it is holy or evil) though a very few hold it is Christ. This angel opens the “bottomless pit” or “abyss” – the ability and authority to do this given by God – and out of the opening thus created poured such a cloud of thick, black smoke – as though from a huge furnace – that the sun and the air were made dark by it. And this heavy smoke belched forth demonic beings resembling a swarm of locusts that covered the whole earth, though not real locusts, as they were commanded not to hurt the earth and its greenery as locusts do, but to torment men for a set, limited period of time, and to torment them so badly they would want to die, but couldn’t bring themselves to do it. This influx of the demonic into the human realm is common to both images.³

The second part of chapter 9 has a new and more intense invasion of demonic beings from a symbolic “Euphrates river” – an ancient image of the boundary where enemies would issue from to attack and destroy, whether the target was Israel or Rome. In the Revelation vision (which is shown from different angles in different passages) this boundary was “dried up” to allow them to pass over (Rev 16:12ff.), and from another angle (9:14ff.) four evil angels were loosed (four is usually a symbol in Rev for worldwide or universal) to commence the new, and now *lethal* havoc to be wrought upon men, the which would kill one third of humankind. It is interesting and instructive to note (according to my thesis) that the progress of the great deception took around 50 years – half a century – from its beginning to its turning into an accelerated wave of killing.

At the end of chapter nine’s *second* vision of the results of demonic invasion upon humanity is the saying (9:20-21) that those who survived this globe-wide destruction refused to turn from their evil and to God, but preferred to continue in their idolatry (worship and love of *things* instead of God), and murders, sexual immorality, stealing, and *sorceries*. This is the first mention of sorceries in Revelation.

What is common to each of these juxtaposed images, is the realm of humankind invaded by demons from Hell who have been let in by the opening of an entrance of some kind. In the first image it was a result of sorcerous

drugs. It will be argued here that in the image (the Biblical vision) from Revelation the cause of the opening of Hell to invade humankind was also – initially – from sorcerous drugs.

The point I want to make is the correspondence between the literary and visual image of the reservoir of human consciousness invaded by the demonic and the Biblical image of humankind invaded by same, and in the Biblical image we also see that sorcery is one of the primary causes of the judgments that fell on men in the latter days of Babylon. There is a startling correspondence between the literary and the Biblical images, which will be further examined in Rev 18:23.

* * *

But first I'd like to make some general comments on the unusual correspondence between the passages Revelation 9:1, 2; 16:12-14; and 20:1-3, 7-9. (To note in passing, it's understood by Amillennial scholars that visions which are sequential in the text are not of necessity *chronologically* sequential, but simply as seen and recorded in the vision narratives by the apostle John.)

In Rev 20:1-3 we see an angel come down from heaven and bind Satan from deceiving the nations *qua nations* for “a thousand years”, and after this period, in Rev 20:7-9, he is loosed again, whereupon he gathers the nations from “the four quarters of the earth” in an attempt to destroy “the camp of the saints”.

In Rev 16:12-14, 16, as the sixth angel poured out his vial (or bowl) on “the great river Euphrates” it was dried up allowing devils to go forth to “the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty . . . into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon”.

And in Rev 9, with the fifth and sixth trumpets, we see (as we have above) deception and destruction ravage humankind through an opening of Hell which loosed hordes of devils upon the world to deceive and destroy.

Stephen Smalley remarks on this,

Beale (507) notes that the reference to the river Euphrates in verse 14 [of Rev 9] anticipates the battle of the sixth bowl in 16.12-16 (the ‘great River’ features in verse 12); indeed, the sixth trumpet and the sixth bowl seem to depict the same event from different points of view (cf. 9.19). . . . God’s judgement, like his sovereignty, is universal and eternal, but **it is discovered historically at particular moments**, and it derives from exact and human circumstances. See also on verse 15.⁴ [emphasis added]

Now at Rev 9 verse 15, and “the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind”, we see with regard to **the timing of the events** spoken of, **they are particular and historic**, not – in this case – the age-long recapitulated dynamics of “pure” idealist understanding (as other “eclectic” or “modified idealist” commentators likewise note). Smalley continues,

The torment of the first woe is followed up by the widespread killing in the second. The four angel-winds, chained up at the river Euphrates until this moment (see on verse 14), are now ‘released’ to destroy one-third of the human race. . . . These agents ‘had been in readiness’ for the action to follow; and the perfect tense of the verb... *hētoimasmēnoi*, lit. ‘had been prepared’, ‘had been made ready’..., intensifies the notion that the angel-winds were poised to attack at a particular moment in history (cf. Matt 25.34, 41).

They were in readiness for this ‘very hour and day and month and year’. . . . [highlighting] the double truth that God is responsible not only for this judgement but also for its precise timing (see also on verse 14).⁵

Concerning the particular timing of the sixth trumpet, Beale says,

John hears the voice say that the time has now come. The angels are released according to God’s sovereign Timetable. The time

that these angels are to be released is specified down to the hour to emphasize that “all the forces of history are under the sovereign control of God. He is the Almighty One (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 19:15; etc.).”

The last quote by Beale is from Robert H. Mounce’s, *The Book of Revelation (Revised)*. Immediately before this quoted sentence Mounce says,

At the exact moment decreed by God the angels of destruction and their demonic horde will be released upon the human race. (p 195; NICNT edition)

Again, this makes clear that in Rev 9:15 we are dealing with events in time that may be discerned, and if already past in hindsight as historical realities.

Beale says of the nature of the deception,

In contrast to the fifth trumpet, the sixth includes death together with deception. *Therefore, the sixth trumpet intensifies and develops further the woe of the fifth.* . . [emphasis added]

The deception manifests itself partly through the false teachers affirming the legitimacy of some form of idolatry for Christians (cf., e.g., 2:6, 14-15, 20, 21). The harm of deception is also seen as a judgment in the OT and NT generally (e.g., Isa. 6:10-12; 29:9-14; 63:17; Pss. 115:8; 135:18; Rom. 1:18-27; 2 Thess. 2:9-12); the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart in Exodus 4-14 is a well-known example. The deceptive facet of the sixth trumpet is implied by its parallels with the sixth bowl, especially the judgment of deception and the manner in which it comes: the pouring out of the bowl on “the great river, the Euphrates,” results in the coming of “the kings from the east,” and of “three unclean spirits like frogs” coming “out of the mouth”....of the dragon, of the beast, and of the false prophet to gather together “the kings of the earth” for battle (16:12-14; so also 17:17; 20:8; cf. 17:8). *The*

equation of the sixth trumpet with the sixth bowl is a natural one, since elsewhere in the Exodus plague tradition the frogs are paralleled with serpents and scorpions as instruments of judgment . . .⁶ [emphasis added]

Beale supports the view, commonly held among amils, that in the sixth bowl and sixth trumpet, intimately connected, we approach the end of the last days.

In line with what Beale says regarding false teachers, there are actually some Christians in positions to teach who approve the use of marijuana for other believers, whether from sheer naiveté, the seductions of worldly culture, or, as is likely, deception arising from both.

These “teachers”—*some even in the Reformed churches!*—look at the identification of the psychedelic drugs as the *pharmakeia* / sorcery agents condemned and forbidden in the Scripture as being an “idiosyncratic interpretation”. It matters not to them that lexicographers and commentators affirm this identification, nor does it trouble them that they themselves are unable to give an alternative interpretation of what the *lethal* sin of using *pharmakeia* agents is, if continued in without repentance (some do assert it is abortifacients, but this is poison and *murder*, already covered in the lists of Rev 21:8 and 22:15). Neither does it matter to them that the drug-using world is fully cognizant of the properties of the psychedelics, including shamans and other occult mystics and practitioners—instead they simply deny what is obvious to so many. The most terrible thing of this denial is they tacitly allow their entrance into the precincts of God’s temple, thinking it adiaphora—a matter of indifference. This calls to mind what Beale said above about deception being a judgment—even upon the churches—during the fifth and sixth trumpet woes of Revelation:

“The deception manifests itself partly through the false teachers affirming the legitimacy of some form of idolatry for Christians
...

There is no worse form of idolatry than that which deifies the demonic presence, “worshipping” God in it.

Nor is it just marijuana that’s on the horizon for us. When the media start to talk of the *medicinal benefits* of psychedelic drugs, there is a logic to this, and it goes: “If a substance can be used medically, and we can observe the benign properties of it in case studies, then it goes to show that, contrary to previous reports, it is not harmful if used responsibly.” This is perhaps the prime modus operandi toward legalizing recreational marijuana: if it relieves pain along with other wonderful benefits it ought to be available to all. And so it is going with LSD, psilocybin mushrooms, and other substances with like properties. Babylon’s NYTimes—that bastion of Western sanity—has been slowly pushing the idea, along with the legalizing of marijuana:

LSD’s Long Strange Trip [a 5/2016 video lauding its benefits]:
(nytimes.com/video/us/100000004406557/llds-long-strange-trip.html)

An article: “Can Mushrooms Treat Depression?”
(nytimes.com/2014/11/30/opinion/sunday/can-mushrooms-treat-depression.html)

Another article: “Hallucinogens Have Doctors Tuning In Again”
(nytimes.com/2010/04/12/science/12psychedelics.html).

LSD is once again being used (under special license) by the therapeutic community, there being a resurgence now of this supposed “therapeutic” use, per (among other sources) the NY Times of Apr 11, 2010.

To begin tying all this together: Revelation 9:1, 2, 16:12-14, and 20:1-3, 7 *all* reveal a loosing of either Satan or his demons to attack humankind, whether directly or by means of humans deceived by them, and not only is the assault upon humankind in general but a special emphasis is on destroying God’s people. All of these revelations of Hell opened and the demonic loosed to torment, deceive, and destroy parallel the initial “sorcery-opening” of the

demonic realm for a massive influx of spirits into the realm of humanity. Of course, even during the earlier part of the age-long “millennial period” satanic influence was operative throughout the world upon individuals, and God’s power through the preached Gospel of Christ across the nations enabled the elect of God to receive Him, throw off the chains of satanic enslavement, and to enter His kingdom, but near the very end of the age the Gospel would be hindered from open proclamation and the darkness of satanic power would once again hold the entire world in its thrall, save those whom God had protectively sealed by His Spirit.

The opening of the bottomless pit, or abyss, in Rev 9 and Rev 20 finds a minute correspondence in the commencement of the sorcery which allowed the incursion of the demonic into the collective human consciousness half a century ago. Looking at the world now, it appears that the killing phase of the sixth trumpet is slowly coming into its own.

But I wish to draw attention to a passage we have not considered yet, and that is Revelation 18:23. This will bring to the fore a new and vital aspect of discerning the prophecies in John’s *Apocalypse*.

We have already touched upon the world being “leavened” within by demonic influence resulting from the importation of the Woodstock spirit and its drugs. When we read in Revelation 18:23 the words spoken by Heaven to the entity called Babylon, “for by thy *sorceries* were all nations deceived”, we may understand that for this, along with other sins and crimes against both God and humanity, she would be judged with “plagues” (horrific catastrophes) that would *utterly* destroy her. In Rev 18 we are given a vision of this destruction, as well in Isaiah 47 and Jeremiah 50 and 51.

Babylon in the New Testament refers generally to world culture (in all its global variety) in opposition to God, but specifically to the *headquarters* nation that is the heart of world culture with its economy and commerce, politics, law, education, arts, entertainments, technological prowess, and military strength. In ancient Chaldean times it was the vast fortified city of Babylon, from which its respective emperors reigned over the empire; in Roman times the city of Rome was the heart of the empire. Neither

Chaldean Babylon nor Rome were destroyed when the days of their power had passed. And yet in the Old Testament prophecies it is said they would be destroyed. Why the apparent discrepancy? Richard Bauckham in his, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, introduces the concept of “eschatological excess”, wherein the lack of complete fulfillment of OT prophecies was so they would “transcend their immediate relevance to the prophet’s contemporaries and to continue to direct later readers to God’s purpose for their future” (p 152), which “excess” John utilized in depicting its final and full realization. Bauckham remarks, “in this excess of promise over fulfillment lay the roots of much apocalyptic eschatology” (p 154). This applies greatly to the idea of “Babylon” at the end of the last days.

In the 21st century a case could be made the United States of America is the headquarters of the final Babylonian empire. To follow that thread one might consult the chapter below, “The Fate of Babylon, a study in determining the identity and demise of Babylon in John’s Apocalypse”, even though I do not wish to pursue that in this shorter paper. Nonetheless, it is the major practical implication this paper points to.

¹ G.K. Beale, *New International Greek Testament Commentary: Revelation* (Eerdmans 1999), pp 48, 49.

² Ibid., p 49.

³ At one point the analogy fails, for the water / air blackened is throughout, while in the collective consciousness those individuals resistant to (protected against) the demonic leavening are identified and ejected from the mass as alien, that is to say, persecuted, and expelled from their human communities.

⁴ Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*; IVP 2005), p 237

⁵ Ibid., pp 237, 238

⁶ Beale; Op. Cit., p 513

THE FATE OF BABYLON, A STUDY IN DETERMINING THE IDENTITY AND DEMISE OF BABYLON IN JOHN'S APOCALYPSE

1 Preface

2 Introduction

*3 The Significance of "Pharmakeia" References in Identifying
21st Century Babylon in Revelation*

4 Further ID'ing of Babylon

5 The Fate of Babylon

6 Light in the Darkness

7 Afterword

Preface

After returning to the U.S. in 2011 from the foreign mission field and pastoring a couple of churches in the Middle East, one of which I helped to plant, and in this latter preaching over 60 sermons on the Book of Revelation, I found that many – both pastors and people – in the United States are somewhat oblivious to the importance of Revelation, or the Apocalypse as it is also called, to our own time in 2016.

This is greatly due to the confusion and conflict engendered in the churches concerning eschatology (the study of the last things) because of faulty exegesis and / or political-religious agendas. Many are put off and discouraged

from studying it by these. And it is a shame, as the Apocalypse was meant to be taken to heart by *all* the ages of the New Testament church.

Of all the various schemas used to interpret Revelation, only one includes all the churches from John's day to the end of the age, bypassing none. This means that the book and its vital – *urgent* – counsel was as much for the church in Smyrna of Asia Minor in 100 A.D. as it was for the churches of the Waldenses in the mountains of Europe in 1,200 A.D., and for the churches in our contemporary world of 2016 A.D. The Amillennial – aka the *present* “millennial” reign of Jesus Christ from heaven, and His binding of Satan, as well his loosing at the very end of the age – is the only view that does not exclude large segments of the age-long church from the blessings of wisdom, courage, and warning promised the readers and keepers of the prophecies of Revelation. Only in the context of the *entire* NT church age do the details of the visions fit into perfect place.

The Apocalypse of John is the New Testament's last prophecy (Rev 1:3; 22:7,10,18,19), and it has rightly been called “the climax of prophecy” as there is nothing left undealt with of all the word of God foretells. What is particularly grievous is that the urgent information meant for the church in the very end of the age pertaining to approaching danger – *extreme* danger – is disregarded by many in God's flock, and we go about our lives as though we shall never experience nationwide suffering and disaster.

In earlier ages – I am thinking of Antiochus Epiphanes a century and a half before the time of Christ, who wasted the Old Testament church – warnings about persons and events enabled the saints to prepare their hearts and minds for trouble. In those days the clear predictions of Daniel gave the saints warning, and they knew God was in control despite appearances to the contrary; we have the same need for when our own time of troubles come, and they are coming, if we but understand the warnings aright.

Introduction

I have been surprised at the plethora of entrées concerning Revelation's Babylon linked to America on the internet, almost all of them by Dispensational prophecy buffs. *This* paper, however, is a *Reformed* look at the matter,

with classic Amillennial commentators used and consulted. For example, what do these latter have to say about Babylon as depicted to us by John?

From the start, we understand – according to an Amil “modified idealist” hermeneutic – “Babylon” is a symbol, and not a literal resurgence of the ancient city-state in what is now Iraq. Revelation’s “harlot Babylon” is quite nuanced, spoken of as a woman seducing the kings of the earth and its people (Rev 17:2,15); it is also referred to as a city having dominion over the earth (Rev 17:18). It is edifying to read the various interpretations commentators give to this Babylon. They indicate both the historical *and* present-day significance of the cultural, economic, military, and political critiques in Revelation, and show this book of Scripture as potentially subversive of oppressive political regimes.

The first excerpts below are from Richard Bauckham; in his commentary he perceives Babylon in Revelation as referring mainly to Rome; he highlights John’s scathing critique of it, and Bauckham’s insight is quite remarkable. Yet the majority of amil commentators see Babylon not *only* as Rome, but as well other similar cultural and political systems up through history, as the quotes below by Dennis E. Johnson, G.K. Beale, William Hendriksen, and Simon J. Kistemaker make clear. So what Bauckham says of *Rome* I extrapolate onto other later regimes, including such in our own time, the 2nd decade of the 21st century. Thus, when you read Bauckham’s remarks on Rome, I suggest that in your mind you apply that as well to the next – the *final* – manifestation of Babylon Scripture envisions.

Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*

“The Book of Revelation is one of the fiercest attacks on Rome and one of the most effective pieces of political resistance literature from the period of the early empire. Its thoroughgoing criticism of the whole system of Roman power includes an important element of economic critique. This condemnation of Rome’s economic exploitation of her empire is the most unusual aspect of the opposition to Rome in Revelation, by comparison

with other Jewish and Christian apocalyptic attacks on Rome, and it has also received the least attention in modern study of the book.” p. 338

“The Book of Revelation uses two major, complementary images of the evil power of Rome. One is the sea monster (‘the beast’), introduced in chapter 13. It represents the imperial power, the Roman Emperors as a political institution, and in particular their *military might*, on which the Roman Empire was founded. The other image is of the great city Babylon, first named in 14:8, and then portrayed as a woman, ‘the great harlot,’ in chapter 17. Babylon is the city of Rome (built on seven hills: 17:9) and in particular the city of Rome as a *corrupting influence* on the peoples of the empire. Chapter 17 brings the two images together: the harlot is enthroned on the seven heads of the beast (17:3, 9-10). In other words, Roman civilization, as a corrupting influence, rides on the back of Roman military power.” p. 343

William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation*,

“Babylon is the world as centre of seduction” p. 154

“Babylon.... it becomes evident that the symbol has reference to a great industrial and commercial metropolis. Babylon, therefore, must indicate the world as a centre of industry, art, culture, etc., which by means of all these things seeks to entice and seduce the believer, that is, to turn him away from God. It symbolizes the concentration of the luxury, vice, and glamour of this world. It is the world viewed as the embodiment of ‘the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life’ (1 Jn. 2:16).” p. 168

“a pleasure-mad city” p. 168

G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*,

“Though closely associated with the beast, the woman is not to be equated with the beast. That she rides the beast connotes her

alliance with the state. The woman must represent that part of the ungodly world that works together with the state, such as the social, cultural, economic, and religious aspects of the world. In this context the work that they agree to do together is that of persecuting the saints...” p. 853

“The followers of the beast are guilty primarily not of immorality, but of idolatry....

“Babylon was the ungodly world power under which Israel had to live in captivity. While Israelite saints did not go along with Babylon’s religious practices, they were nevertheless tempted to compromise. When they remained loyal to their God, they underwent trial by their oppressors (see Daniel 1-6). The ungodly social, political, and economic system dominated by the Roman Empire placed believers in the same position as Israel was in under Babylon... Therefore, here in the Apocalypse Rome *and all wicked world systems* take on the name ‘Babylon the Great’... [emphasis added –SMR]

“The nations’ cooperation with Babylon ensures their material security. Without this cooperation, security would be removed. Such security is a temptation too great to resist. Therefore... ‘she made to drink’ means that the nations were forced to ‘drink’, to comply with Rome’s and society’s idolatrous demands, if they wanted to maintain economic security.

“Babylon’s promise of prosperous earthly welfare for its willing subjects is an intoxication that the majority of the world’s inhabitants also want to imbibe. Once one imbibes, the intoxicating influence removes all desire to resist Babylon’s destructive influence, blinds one to Babylon’s own ultimate insecurity and to God as the source of real security, and numbs one against any fear of a coming judgment”. pp. 741, 755-756

Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation*,

“...the harlot Babylon shows us Rome from the perspective of the spiritual threat of compromise through economic seduction, yet she also transcends Rome and encompasses every expression of the idolatry that worships economic prosperity and cultural achievement, whether in Nineveh, Chaldean Babylon, Tyre, Rome, or later entrepreneurial empires.” p. 243, 244 [emphasis added]

“This woman represents fallen human culture in all the apparent glory of its achievement and the true repugnance of its arrogance.” p. 246

“ ‘...the great city,’ all that makes the city emblematic of human culture and achievement – music, craftsmanship, food preparation, domestic life, and commerce...” p. 253, 254

Simon J Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Book of Revelation*,

“The text reveals symbolism, evident in the two expressions *prostitute* and *many waters*. These two should be interpreted not literally but spiritually. First, the great harlot’s goal is to lead people wherever possible away from Christ; hence, she is the exact opposite of the church that seeks to lead all people everywhere to Christ.” p. 462

“Nebuchadnezzar, boasting about the city he built, used the expression *Babylon the Great* (Dan. 4:30). He exhibited inordinate pride that resulted in his immediate downfall, because not he but God is sovereign over the nations (Dan. 4:32). Similarly, this same expression adopted by the great prostitute seals her own doom. The woman called Babylon, sitting on many waters, which the angel interprets as the peoples, crowds, nations, and languages (v. 15), symbolizes the population of the entire world. The name *Babylon the Great* is a figurative description of all the godless inhabitants in the world. In the second half of the first century, the city of Rome was a cesspool of iniquity and thus became a symbol of worldly pleasure, enticement, and lust.

But as I have pointed out above, to focus attention only on Rome of apostolic times is too restrictive. The name *Babylon* applies to the lasting conflict between Satan's henchmen and the people of God.

"The woman calls herself 'the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth.' She is the mother superior over all those who commit spiritual prostitution by worshipping the beast. Her underlings proclaim the gospel of the Antichrist while she herself receives their adulation and praise. She is the source of all that is evil directed against God: slander, murder, immorality, corruption, vulgarity, profanity, and greed. And she originates these sins by putting her underlings to work. She is also the mother of all abominations in the world, for every sin originates with her. The disparity between this woman who personifies evil and the woman who is the church cannot be greater (12:1). The apostle Paul teaches that the church is the mother of believers (Gal. 4:26). Blessed are those who have her as mother and God as Father. Conversely, God's enemies belong to the mother of abominations and suffer the consequences." p. 466.

I don't quote Herman Hoeksema (*Behold, He Cometh!*) on Babylon as he veered off and said she was *only* the apostate church, while I agree with the rest that while the false church is *included* in Babylon, the harlot encompasses all of the godless world.

These interpretations, although they differ somewhat, are not at odds: they compliment one another. But to the gist of what I want to discuss:

Given that Babylon signifies the cultural, academic, legal, economic, and religious / philosophical aspects of fallen humankind, and the beast (from the sea) the antichristian political and military powers, we see in Rev 17:16 that God has put in the hearts of the ten horns (kings / kingdoms) on the beast to hate and destroy the harlot. These would be nations in coalition with a dominating power to attack this entity, Babylon. This exemplifies

Jesus' saying in Mark 3:24 and 26, "And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.... And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end." And I found myself wondering, "What would this look like? How would it / could it take place: The governments and their military going to war against the economic and cultural center or centers of the world?"

Of all the commentators two give an inkling: Beale, who draws greatly on the OT and the Jewish writings, regularly finds background for the symbols used in Revelation; he says,

"In both Nah. 3:4-5 and especially Isa. 23:15-18, Nineveh and Tyre are called harlots because they cause ruin and uncleanness among the nations by economically dominating them and influencing them by their idolatry" [emphasis added]. Op. cit., p. 885.

" 'The woman' is interpreted to be 'the great city, which has sovereignty over the kings of the earth.' She includes the entire evil economic system of the world throughout history. She receives power from the devil himself. Her economic-religious influence formerly even extended over the political realm ('the kings of the earth'). But their loyalty will shift toward the beast and they will become antagonistic toward her in the end time. That the 'woman' has sovereignty over the world demonstrates that she must be identified more broadly than merely with unbelieving Jerusalem or the apostate church. Likewise, 18:23 reveals her universal nature by describing her as one who has 'deceived the nations.'" Op. cit., p. 888.

Kistemaker has an interesting take:

"Does John have in mind the destruction of Rome whereby subordinate vassals rise up against her? Hardly, for the imperial city never entirely fulfilled the words in this verse. The splendor

of Rome diminished in the course of due time, and the empire came to an end in 476, but the city itself remained intact. On a broader scale, the text applies to nations pursuing economic and political goals to the detriment of others. When wealth and riches accumulate, a sudden downturn causes these nations to collapse ...

“These kings together with the beast are determined to destroy the woman who has dominated them.” [emphasis added] Op. cit., p. 478.

So we have the thought that economic domination and exploitation by Babylon breeds resentment and a violent retribution. And we also see that the *city* of Rome was left intact, even though the empire was finished, and the great Chaldean city of Babylon was not destroyed either (per Isaiah 47 and Jeremiah 50 and 51), as Cyrus the Persian conquered the Babylonian Empire, taking the city of Babylon in 539 BC, yet this city was left intact as well. The *utter* destruction of “Babylon the great” spoken of in Revelation 17 and 18 – and in Isaiah and Jeremiah – remains to be fulfilled.

If we look back in history as shown to us in the Scripture, we find that the two previous manifestations of “Babylonian” empire – Chaldean Babylon and Rome – both had their *headquarters* in specific city-states, while their empires themselves were far-flung.

The purpose of this study is to seek to discern more particularly what this Babylon is, and what its destruction at the hands of the beast and kings could be. Granted, there is a lot of flakiness and surmising regarding these points in much current thinking, but this is an attempt to understand in a responsible and Scripturally sound exegesis. It does, however, venture into a realm rife with error, unfounded speculation, conspiracy theories, and just plain wackiness (although some of these aforementioned rightly intuit close to the truth, if what *I* understand approaches the truth). The reader may discern and assess for him or herself, and as regards my conclusions may take them or leave them. In said conclusions I assert Revelation’s prophetic visions when rightly understood are meant for our warning, comfort, and assurance in present and yet-to-come difficult times.

The Significance of “Pharmakeia” References in Identifying 21st Century Babylon in Revelation

It is said by some Reformed Amillennialists that one ought not identify any specific historic events as prophesied by John in the *Apocalypse*, save that pertaining to the local churches addressed in chapters 2 and 3, and the return of Christ in judgment at the end of the age. Though Beale, one of the most thorough expositors of the Apocalypse, says, “...certainly there are prophecies of the future in Revelation. The crucial yet problematic task of the interpreter is to identify through careful exegesis and against the historical background those texts which pertain respectively to past present and future.” (Op. cit., p. 49) I am positing and arguing the existence of an event which is a recent and ongoing notorious transgressing the Law of God through the widespread use of what Scripture calls “sorcery”, and which *can* be discerned as a marker identifying a particular nation – a prophecy fulfilled seen in retrospect.

Said transgression is seen in the phrase spoken of Babylon in Revelation 18:23: “for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived”, and was a prime – but not the only – cause of the unparalleled judgment executed against her, wherein she was utterly destroyed. The word translated from the Greek as “sorceries” is in the original language *pharmakeia*. Although this was a sin of Chaldean Babylon in OT times (cf. Isaiah 47), it has not been prominent since, though in Acts 19:19 we do see repentance in Ephesus resulting in many burning books pertaining to magic arts. We’ll take a brief look at the sin involving *pharmakeia*.

Cornelis Venema, author of *The Promise of the Future* (which work has replaced Anthony Hoekema’s *The Bible and the Future* as the standard Reformed seminary textbook on eschatology), has said of Revelation,

The book, though addressed originally to the circumstance of the church in the first century of the Christian era, certainly speaks of *events that will occur prior to the return of Christ* and as well of events that are typical of the entire period of history

in which we now live.” (From the article, Revelation 20: Part II – The Millennium is Now graceonlinelibrary.org/eschatology/revelation-20/revelation-20-part-ii-the-millennium-is-now-by-cornelis-p-venema) [Emphasis added]

At issue is the question, is this *pharmakeia* / sorcery spoken of in Revelation truly a discernable *event*, and if so what actually is it?

Woodstock is well known as the time when drug use in the United States commenced as a popular activity from the 1960s through the 70s, went underground for a while as a result of increased law enforcement, emerged again in the 21st century by popular demand, and two of them, marijuana and hashish, are now in the process of incremental legalization. I refer specifically to what are termed the psychedelic drugs, namely marijuana, hashish, LSD, mescaline, peyote, angel dust / PCP and other substances in the same category, which may include speed and others, but excluding legitimate medicines, as well narcotics. What connection is there between the New Testament’s statements concerning the Greek word *pharmakeia*, the Woodstock drugs, and the identity of Revelation’s Babylon?

First, a brief primer on the Greek and Hebrew terms, on what is Biblically defined as *sorcery*, and the laws of God with respect to this in the Old Testament and in the New:

We have a word in the New Testament (in the books of Galatians and Revelation) which is translated “sorcery” or “witchcraft”, the underlying Greek of which is φαρμακεία, *pharmakeia*. The same word – *pharmakeia* – is used in the Greek Old Testament (sometimes called the Septuagint or LXX) and is likewise translated sorcery or sorcerer and witchcraft or witch. The word [your] *sorceries* in the Hebrew OT is *kesheph*.

From *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, Warren Baker, Eugene Carpenter (AMG Publishers, 2003), we have this entry,

3784. kāšaph: A verb meaning to practice magic, to practice sorcery. It occurs with words of similar meaning in Deuteronomy 18:10 and 2 Chronicles 33:6. While the exact meaning of

the word is obscure, it involved the use of supernatural powers that hardened hearts against the truth (Ex. 7:11). Those in Israel who used such powers were to be executed (Ex. 22:18[17]). . . Judgment is promised against sorcerers when the Messiah returns (Mal. 3:5).

In the *New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon*, p. 506 (Hendrickson/Jay P. Green Sr. 1979) is this entry on the Hebrew word *sorceries*, and its cognate in Arabic, *cut off, cut up*: “acc. to RS^[*], is prop. herbs etc. *shredded* into a magic brew”.

[* W. Robertson Smith]

So what is the New Testament *pharmakeia*? It is the Greek word used in Revelation 18:23, where the symbolic “harlot Babylon” is said to have deceived the nations by means of her “sorceries” (*pharmakeia*), and it is also used in Rev 9:21 of the Textus Receptus / AV (while what are called the Majority Text and the Critical Text have a variant reading in which the Greek word is *pharmakon*: drugs “that induce magic spells”, although it doesn’t affect the translation, per the NASB or ESV). In Rev 9:21 it is used with respect to men refusing to repent of their “sorceries” in the time of terrible judgments in the world, of those that survived these lethal judgments meted upon the rebellious of the earth. When Paul uses this word in Galatians 5:20 (translated “witchcraft” AV, “sorcery” ESV NASB) it is called a work of the flesh, along with murder and adultery.

Related words (called cognates) are used also in Rev 21:8 and 22:15 of “sorcerers”, those who use and administer the drugs, and influence others by means of them. In 21:8 it says that these people have their part in the lake of fire – “the second death” – and in 22:15 these are said to be eternally barred from the City of God. Let’s try to get a sense of what this deadly (per Scripture) *pharmakeia* is. Consider this entry from *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol 2, p. 558,

“ . . . *pharmakos*, magician (Rev. 22:15); *pharmakeus*, mixer of potions, magician (Rev. 21:8); *pharmakeia*, magic, sorcery (Gal.

5:20; Rev. 9:21; 18:23). The basic word *pharmakon* does not occur in the NT [save in the aforementioned variant –SMR], but its meaning of medicine, magic potion, poison gives the underlying idea of the words. Potions include poisons, but there has always been *a magical tradition of herbs gathered and prepared for spells, and also for encouraging the presence of spirits at magical ceremonies* (cf. possibly the final sentence of Ezek. 8:17: ‘They put the branch to their nose’). Sorcery is classed among the works of the flesh in Gal. 5:20.” [underlined and last bold and italicized emphases added]

Another example, from the old ISBE,

“The word translated in the AV ‘witchcraft’ in Gal 5:20 (*pharmakeia*) is the ordinary Greek one for ‘sorcery,’ and is so rendered in the RV, though it means literally the act of administering drugs and then of magical potions. It naturally comes then to stand for the magician’s art, as in the present passage and also in . . . the LXX of Isa 47:9 . . . translated ‘sorceries.’” (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, James Orr, Ed., Vol. 5, p. 3097.)

And from, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, by Spiros Zodhiates:

“Strong’s #5331, *pharmakeia*, from *pharmakon*, a drug, which in the Gr. writers is used both for a curative or medicinal drug, and also as a poisonous one. *Pharmakeia* means the occult, sorcery, witchcraft, illicit pharmaceuticals, trance, magical incantation with drugs (Gal. 5:20; Rev. 9:21; 18:23; Sept.: Ex. 7:22; Is. 47:9, 12). (pp. 1437, 1438)

The lexicons and the commentators hold that *pharmakeia* pertains to drugs used in the “magic arts”. In fact, Kistemaker says of *pharmakon* (drugs) – appearing as a variant in Rev 9:21,

“φάρμακον [*pharmakon*]—‘magic potion . . .’ [and refers] to the concept of *drugs that induce magic spells*.” [Emphasis in original]. (Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, p. 302.)

I think this is sufficient for the moment to demonstrate that the underlying Greek for the word in Revelation translated “sorceries” – *pharmakeia* – is directly and exclusively used to refer to drug use and drug-related activities of a certain kind, although Joseph Thayer (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 4th Edition) gives a metaphorical use as well, which shall be discussed just below.

To show why the use of “sorceries” in the Rev 18:23 passage refers to activities involving certain kinds of drugs rather than figuratively for mere deceptive practices, consider the classes of transgressors in Rev 21:8 who are consigned to the lake of fire: “the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and **sorcerers**, and idolaters, and all liars”. Sorcerers (from *pharmakeus*) here specifically means one who administers or uses a certain class of drugs to “enchant”, to cast a psychic spell upon by use of these drugs and accompanying demonic power. It doesn’t mean a deceiver – a liar – generally or even figuratively, but specifically one who uses sorcerous potions. Liars / deceivers are *already* classed separately in this listing. Likewise in Rev 22:15 where a similar Greek word, *pharmakos*, is used for sorcerer, with the same meaning as *pharmakeus* in 21:8, again with liars / deceivers named separately. In these verses the usage clearly refers to drug-using-and-promoting people, so at the very *least* it is quite likely *pharmakeia* / sorceries in Revelation 18:23 – “by thy sorceries were all nations deceived” – refers to drug-related activity and not deceptive practices. On the other hand there is no doubt at all that Thayer’s, “the deceptions and seductions of idolatry” **are a result of and part of** Babylon’s sorceries, but the sorceries themselves are distinctly *pharmakeia* / **sorcery** (i.e. drug) activity.

The picture we are getting is of drugs used for sorcerous potions, which may “encourage the presence of spirits” and “induce magic spells”. Often

we find in the OT the use of synecdoche (a figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole or vice versa) when the word *pharmakeia* and its cognates are used, as the use of drugs is the essential and common component in almost all of the “magic arts”. Consider, the Jews who translated the OT Hebrew into the Greek LXX *always* used the word signifying “drugs used as magic potions” when referring to certain magic arts and its practitioners. Why would they do that – use that particular word – were it not actually so?

But what does all this talk of drugs used for occult purposes – for “sorcery” – have to do with 21st century life? Aren’t sorcery and magic potions something of the ancient past, legends, and superstition? First, let us be clear to differentiate between the entire realm of superstition with regard to the occult and its practices, and the plain Biblical definition of the term. It is granted that there is a vast repository of arcane nonsense in legends, fictional stories, etc, as well as some factual accounts. Yet it is also certain there *is* a Biblical definition with regard to actual *pharmakeia* / sorcery, for to violate it was death under Moses and removal from the church under Christ – very serious punishments!

Were there things happening in the 1st century (and earlier in OT times) that no longer happen now in our day? But if that’s so, why does John in the Revelation speak of sorceries as pertaining to the end times – the *very* end times – which may well be in or near our own time?

And can it be that such a sin as this – ranked with murder and adultery, and warranting eternal punishment if unrepented of – is incapable of being identified by modern exegetes?

There *is* an answer to these questions. Since the latter half of the 20th century – from events in the 1950s through the 1980s – we have developed a term never before used in the history of the world: *recreational drugs* (though I conceive it possible Chaldean Babylon had some equivalent). People differ in their views of them. They began in popular use in the ‘60s, and the two staples of the counterculture that used them were marijuana and LSD, although mescaline, peyote, hashish (and hashish oil – both of

these derived from the marijuana plant), STP, PCP (angel dust), and sometimes various amphetamines or cocaine were mixed / used in conjunction with these drugs. To law enforcement these drugs are sometimes a big deal (though some agencies and laws are becoming more lenient, and marijuana is slowly becoming legalized in the U.S.), but to the general populace they pretty much are no big deal at all. Connecting them with sorcery, given their popularity and seeming harmlessness (at least as regards grass), seems farfetched!

Oddly, the properties of these drugs – *all* of those noted above – have *the same properties* as the *pharmakeia* / sorcery drugs Scripture strongly warns against: the capability of “*encouraging the presence of spirits*” and *inducing spiritual / religious states of consciousness*. That ought to send up red flags of warning to those who ponder these things.

At any rate, *prior* to the 1950s such things – *recreational drugs* – were unheard of, save perhaps in small subcultures (some musicians, for example, who used marijuana). In the *pre*-counterculture days going all the way back to ancient Israel, Biblically defined *sorcery* was verboten – *a forbidden thing* – connected as it was to the demonic and demonic practitioners. History is replete with instances of severe inquisition and punishment of those suspected of sorcery and witchcraft; nor were all such occult activities merely superstitious or hoaxes, seeing as the God of Israel took it very seriously, instructing His primary OT Lawgiver to execute the death sentence on violators, and revealing to John in His Revelation to him that eternal torment would be meted on unrepentant violators of His law given through Christ and the apostles. So we know there is real substance to such activities, for the Bible to take such a view of them!

In the pre-‘60s counterculture times such things showed their faces only in the crawling shadows of the world, rightly condemned by society. These were shrouded activities, and no wonder superstitions arose about them – they were hidden, frightening, and unknown.

In the time we live in some modern Christians do not acknowledge these things, even though the unbelieving world does, as per – for example – this

site on The Spiritual Use of Cannabis (goo.gl/nTo57J) shows, which gives an interesting history of its use in various religions for obviously sorcerous / *pharmakeia* purposes, in accordance with the Biblical definition. This one *pharmakeia* substance – far more potent than its predecessor in the Woodstock era – is on its way to decriminalization and legalization in our time. These things were foretold by the Spirit of God in Revelation.

Two astute writers on the fulfillment of prophecy, Oswald T. Allis and Geerhardus Vos, commented thusly,

[The prophecy of Antichrist] “belongs among the many prophecies, whose best and final exegete will be the eschatological fulfillment, and in regard to which it behooves the saints to exercise a peculiar kind of eschatological patience.” (Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, p. 133)

Although widespread sorcery is not “Antichrist” per se, the principle Vos states – the “best and final exegete will be the eschatological fulfillment” – applies here as well. O.T. Allis in his book, *Prophecy and the Church*, wrote similarly to Vos when he said,

The usual view on this subject [“the intelligibility of prophecy”] has been that prophecy is not intended to be fully understood before its fulfillment, that it is only when God “establishes the word of his servants and fulfills the counsel of his messengers,” that the meaning and import of their words become fully manifest. (p 25)

We now in the year 2016 find ourselves in the unusual position of being able to observe – in hindsight – “the eschatological fulfillment” of a portion of the Babylon prophecy, that being the phrase ending Rev 18:23, “for by thy sorceries (*pharmakeia*) were all nations deceived”, and for which she would later be judged.

I realize that's quite an assertion – observing in hindsight part of the Revelation prophecy on the final Babylon – but consider: there *will* be a time when this may be said with *absolute* certainty (which I am *not* claiming), for before the end shall come many things prophesied will have come to pass, and those still alive will see and understand. I do believe I am seeing accurately now.

The explosion of these drugs onto the world scene was an *event* (the term now used for military-scale biological, chemical, or nuclear *events*) that befell nations around the globe through the drug-energized sixties generation in America, as this potent counterculture permeated these nations through its music and musicians, literature, art, film, and other culture-bearing vehicles, as well as spiritual teachers and gurus (think Timothy Leary and Baba Ram Dass). The nations and cultures of the world were leavened from within by the exciting new consciousness of the sixties and the Woodstock spirit exported into them, but it was a Trojan Horse filled with the denizens of Hell. Its impact was, in the psychic realm, the equivalent of a massive nuclear detonation. The “fallout” of this “detonation” came in the presence of malign spirits and their influence upon the new thinking: it became (seemingly) obvious to all that real vitality was *not* to be found in the Christian faith but in the relativity of postmodernism – the validation of *everyone's* and every *culture's* subjective truths and beliefs – and thus was the world made ripe for satanic deception on an unprecedented scale.

It was obvious now – at least to “enlightened” people – that the Christian worldview was a relentless cultural and spiritual imperialism, evil in that it denied the validity of all thought and cultural development contrary to itself and, for the sake of humankind's health, urgently needed to be eradicated. We see, with the progressive delegitimizing of Christianity, the rise of fundamentalism in pagan religions such as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, with these now showing murderous hostility to Christians (not just verbally, but in acts). Communism also attacked “Christian imperialism” with new rigor, as seen in North Korea, China, Eritrea, etc. And it will eventually give rise to the final deception and manifestation of satanic power in the last and worst antichrist figure and beast government that shall institute

the “final solution” for God’s people – the followers of Christ. And the Jews will be hated as well.

The damage done is irreversible. The timetable of the Sovereign God is counting down. Across the non-Western world Christians are already under severe duress – violent, murderous persecution increasing daily. And the signs are that a groundswell is building in the West – the mystery of iniquity and lawlessness – and that He who restrains it will not restrain it for long (2 Thess 2:6 ff.). In the West lawlessness will come *by means* of the law.

In the West many professing followers of Christ are awash in the wine of great whore Babylon, rooting in her pleasures and entertainments, worse off spiritually than their brethren in other lands being persecuted, for at least the latter are awake, if bleeding.

Finally, let me preemptively answer some objections. Some may say that because the drugs are illegal, that is sufficient to settle the matter; yet in some countries – with Christians in them – one of the sorcerous drugs *is* legal; and it is essentially decriminalized in many parts of America, already legal in a number of states, and it is far more widely legal if one has a script from a doctor. So the old laws of the civil magistrate are no longer fence enough against this evil. And I daresay that in a short time marijuana will become legal throughout the United States. Our present POTUS has recently declared it is no more harmful than alcohol.

No, it is up to the church to come to understanding, and to take a stand, *at least within its own precincts*. More particularly, it is up to the pastors and elders of God’s flock, and with them the sessions and classes and boards of elders, to teach and uphold the word of God.

Nor will it do to liken this one *pharmakeia* substance – marijuana – to alcohol, saying only that we must be sober and clear of mind, for it is an entirely different substance with a profoundly different effect on the human system and consciousness. It is foolish naiveté to confound the two.

Yet some will say as regards *ongoing* use of this drug, “We are only enjoying ourselves; we are not involved in spiritual or occult activity, these Biblical prohibitions do not apply to us.”

To answer: It’s common knowledge that there had been an upsurge in *psychedelic* drug use starting in the 1950s with the Beats, and in the ‘60s with the counterculture (as well government intelligence agencies, politicians, practitioners in the therapeutic fields, artists, intellectuals, teachers, lawyers, etc, etc). Seeing as this was such an open and widespread phenomenon very few have made the connection with the topic of Biblical “sorcery”, an activity commonly thought of as taboo and arcane. On top of this, the fact that many of those who used these drugs did so “recreationally” and not for any sort of occult or spiritual purposes, has given the impression that these drugs were not *necessarily* “sorcerous” although they *could possibly* be used for those ends. This was the time when “sorcery” / *pharmakeia* became widely popular and supposedly both fun and enlightening. “‘Sorcery?’” some will say, “What, are you crazy, we’re just having fun! Just because others have used grass and acid for that, don’t lump us in with that crowd! Our culture is not a monolith, there are many different things going on.” (I will focus for the moment on marijuana as this *pharmakeia* drug will increasingly be legally and socially acceptable in the U.S., although as noted above, the spiritual damage has already been done with that and the other drugs in the previous century.)

Some will say, “I have seen people high on marijuana, and they are not mentally impaired but rather brilliant in their thinking and their arts.” No argument with that, except to say that the devil, prince of the demons (as well his underlings), are also “brilliant”, so brilliance is no sound criterion of judgment against a sorcerously affected state of mind.

It just goes to show how poorly thought-out and naive our views on the topic are! People smoke or ingest marijuana to attain a psychological or psychic “high” – an elevated and enhanced state of consciousness – though some would deny calling this “high” as much a *pharmakeia* activity as a more spiritual awareness, or some would say not even that, but only a psychological high, or simply an enhancement of the senses. To deny that *pharmakeia*

can involve enhanced *physical* sensation and pleasure through this psychic “high” – without any overt occultism at all – is an attempt to distance their sinning from *pharmakeia* activity. But this is taking refuge in lies. *We must recognize that to use sorcery to indulge in sensory (including psychological) pleasure is as much one of its activities as the seeking of psychic, occult, and spiritual experience.*

This following is the view of David H. Stern, the author of the *Jewish New Testament Commentary* (1992 Jewish New Testament Publications); in his comments on Revelation 9:21, he translates the Greek *pharmakeia* in that verse as,

“Misuse of drugs in connection with the occult, usually translated ‘sorceries,’ ‘witchcraft,’ or ‘magic arts,’ [and] here rendered by this longer phrase in order to focus on the fact that using potions and drugs is an essential part of the word’s meaning – as is clear from the derived English words ‘pharmaceuticals’ and ‘pharmacy.’ The usual renderings suggest to many people a setting so removed from the fabric of their lives that the text does not speak to them. The reason I employ this lengthy expression is that the *Jewish New Testament* is a product of the 1980’s, when the Western world has seen an explosion of drug abuse, and I want readers to understand that this subject is dealt with in the Bible.

“Spiritually speaking, there are four distinct categories of drug misuse: (1) taking drugs in order to explore spiritual realms, (2) taking drugs in order to engage in ‘sorcery, witchcraft and magic arts’ while under their influence, (3) giving drugs to other people in order to gain control over them, which is another form of ‘sorcery, witchcraft and magic arts,’ and (4) taking drugs for pleasure. The last is a misuse because the drugs in question – besides whatever temporary enjoyment they provide, and apart from their adverse medical and psychological effects – open a person to supernatural or spiritual experiences; but these experiences are almost always demonic and not from God, since the

Holy One of Israel reveals Himself through his Word (Ro 1:16-17, 10:8-17), not through drugs.” (pp. 816, 817)

Analysis of *pharmakeia* nature and action. To preemptively address a possible objection: no, the *pharmakeia* drugs do not contain demonic power. This would be the negative mirror-image of Rome’s claiming the wafer actually contains God’s grace, that having been infused in it by Him, and that it confers grace apart from any motion – faith or devotion – on the part of the recipient. Such, along with Francis Turretin, I would deny. Both views err. In Turretin’s words, “nothing corporeal can by its own power effect anything spiritual or act upon the soul” (*Elenctic Theology*, Vol 3, p 365), that is, evil or good do not inhere in physical objects; even alcohol or tobacco are not evil in themselves – it is their misuse that results in damaging effects on the human body and soul. Or Turretin again, “the sacraments do not work grace physically and *ex opere operato* [produce of themselves] as if they possessed a force implanted and inherent in them of conferring and effecting grace” (*Ibid.*, p 363). The same *inability* to contain and/or confer evil applies to the drugs.

So at this point please note that I do **not** assert that demonic power is in the substance of marijuana or LSD, etc. It is simply a plant – or, with respect to LSD, a synthetic mix of chemicals – derived from the created order of things. Their effect is upon the physical body, particularly the brain and neurological system.

Whence then, the sorcerous power of the drugs? Perhaps this may illustrate my view: I was wondering a while ago, reflecting on this topic, what if (indulging briefly in the “if – then fallacy”) there were no demonic realm, no demons, just God and His creation in a holy state; and if someone inhaled the smoke of marijuana, or ate psychedelic mushrooms or peyote buttons, and the affect from ingesting these substances was to make them very aware of their inner being and of the outer physical and spiritual worlds? If there were no demons, this would not – in that context – be sorcery, nor would those substances be categorized and prohibited as *pharmakeia* agents. There would be no demonic influence at all. But this conjecture

presupposes a blessed state greater than original innocence (for there was a devil lurking about the garden), rather the pristine holiness of the eternal state. Perhaps it can be seen where I am going with such thoughts.

Suffice it to say that the drugs act upon the brain and nervous system of humans in some way that they become open to spiritual phenomena, both within themselves – their own human spirits (the depths of their being) – and whatever spiritual is without, which in our world today includes other humans and demons. The demonic agency is not something inherent in the drugs, but is in the world (“the whole world lieth in wickedness” 1 John 5:19; cf. Eph 2:2) , and the drugs open one to that. They don’t open one to God, because God has forbidden using those drugs, and using them incurs His displeasure. I would think that sins of this sort done unwittingly incur less guilt, though the damage to the human soul is not lessened thereby. And damage done to the human community – whether the world or the church – continues, as demonic influence pours in through contact with the consciousness, activities, and works of those partaking the forbidden and unclean thing at issue here.

The *pharmakeia* agents are unusual – in comparison with other recreational drugs – in this regard: instead of infusing powerful energy (speed/amphetamines) or euphoria (cocaine) into the system, they disable the controlling mind and will of the user and render the consciousness exposed to its own energy and depths of being, *and* to the presence of other beings in their vicinity, human or otherwise. It is this making the consciousness *naked* and immeasurably more sensitive in its apprehension of what is, that is the distinctive of these sorcerous drugs. I do not wonder that some may be incredulous that such things might be. Who could imagine it, such a thing happening? I mean, we see reference to such in movies like *Matrix*, with the blue and red pills – the red pills actually truncated in their consciousness expansion by virtue of the reality-level of the movie – yet showing the concept of taking something that generates awareness. I don’t mean to buttress my argument by this reference, just to show a popular version of the concept.

Back to reality: there are drugs that act upon the brain and nervous system, infusing – as I noted above – energy or euphoria into the nervous system,

whereas the unique properties of the *pharmakeia* agents bring an element into their effect on the brain and nervous system and then on the soul that renders it *open* rather than acted upon with infusion of power or euphoric sensation. One assesses *pharmakeia* drugs by their properties, their effect on the human system.

This is getting into that mysterious interaction / interrelationship between the physical brain and the immaterial spirit or soul of man, and as this is hard to define or delineate, so it is hard to define or delineate the actual affect of the *pharmakeia* drugs on the brain, and how this affects consciousness. Even scientists cannot measure immaterial substance such as the soul or spirit of man, or love between humans, and thus they could not – at least scientifically – explain such things as we are seeking to discern.

As I sit here typing this I am aware of my Saviour and God; my spirit apprehends His presence by means of His written word in Scripture: “I am with you always” He said; He is seated in the throne with His Father He told us, and so I perceive and experience Him by faith (“ . . . it being the nature of true faith to make the thing it closes with spiritually present to the soul” –Alexander Nisbet, *Commentary on 1st & 2nd Peter*, Banner of Truth, p. 25). So I am spiritually conscious – *aware* – of Him. But I am not aware of anything else in the spirit-world, neither angels nor demons, although I know they exist, and are likely in my immediate vicinity. I abide in the Spirit and power of God and have no fear of that which I know is around but cannot see. If my wife were awake now I would be aware of her, and of her spiritual state – to some extent, if she revealed it to me.

But if I took a dose of LSD, or smoked a joint of THC-potent marijuana, I could become aware of things in my vicinity in the spirit-realm – not God’s angels, for they manifest only at His will, and *not* to the disobedient (normally) – but rather of the denizens of the dark lord’s realm, and the human spirits of nearby humans. This has been the testimony of so many people that it is common knowledge among those who have committed this sin, or are familiar with those who have.

Using these drugs in the presence of other people often involves an apprehending the depths of their beings apart from their voluntarily opening

them to us; it may thus be a sort of “rape” of their psyches; it also may involve a transmitting into them depths of our own souls unasked-for and unwanted by them. Extremely serious psychic transgression is involved in such things, and it is clear why it was forbidden in ancient Israel, and in the new covenant community of the saints.

But how can someone be convinced – namely those skeptical – that what I say of these drugs is true? How could they possibly know – or even believe – if they had no personal experience of them? It *should* be sufficient that the Lord has raised up witnesses through the exposition of His word, and the accompanying testimony of those He has rescued from participation in these activities.

Which brings me to the matter of witnesses, and legal testimony. In this matter of the *pharmakeia* drugs there are three witnesses:

- 1) The testimony of Scripture: these drugs exist, are used in sorcerous activities, and are condemned by God on pain of death.
- 2) The testimony of exegetes, linguists, and commentators: who define what sorcery and witchcraft are by indicating the use of drugs to enter demonic realms, and the practicing of their crafts there by said users.
- 3) The testimony of those who have experienced these peculiar drugs, and *they* are of two classes: a) godly men and women who have been delivered from the use and effects of them; and b) ungodly men and women who continue in use of them and clearly tell of their properties, their affect within their beings, and their efficacy in entering the spirit world.

The quality of this legal testimony (Deut 19:15; Matt 18:16; 2 Cor 13:1; etc) ought to be sufficient for skeptics to *at least* take notice, and ponder, weighing it.

To return to the brain and spirit: I cannot explain how the drugs’ action upon or affect in the brain and *its* effect on the spirit works any more than I can explain the relation between the spirit and the brain. What do we know about that? The immaterial soul is able to control – to direct – the physical brain, nervous system, and from these the body. Material substances –

brain and nerves – are able to directly impact, and influence, an immaterial substance, the soul, and the soul the body. There is such mystery here at this juncture – but it is very similar to the *material acting on the immaterial* of drugs/brain/and soul. How can I go further in explaining such things? It remains, that evil is not inherent in things, but in the human heart, and in the environment of evil beings, in the midst of which we live, according to Scripture.

But what about medicinal use? Isn't that legitimate? This is a more nuanced topic than the world realizes, as it does not have spiritual discernment. But we who are Christ's should have it.

It is understood that a person psychically “elevated” by marijuana may experience a sense of detachment from the bodily source of pain, and thus a decrease in the sensation of its intensity; still, the very action that detaches from the pain will open one to other aspects of the “high” such as consciousness in a dimension not usually entered in the normal state of mind, the dimension spirits inhabit. Even were I (speaking personally) in extreme pain I would not opt for marijuana relief, as the “cure” would be far worse *for me as a Christian* than the ailment: making myself vulnerable to demonic activity – deception, depression, oppression, delusion, attack, etc. The web page linked to earlier in this article, *Spiritual Use of Cannabis*, showing its use for shamanistic and psychic activity in a number of pagan spiritual paths, clearly demonstrates its effectiveness and power as a means of enhancing contact with the spirit world and its occupants. Does one think that by force of will – or “good intentions” – one can hold off demons one has opened one's consciousness and heart to? One can surely hold them off by the word and Spirit of Christ, but if in disobedience – even if done unwittingly – opening wide the door to their entrance through sorcerous drugs, they will take advantage of that and either enter or exercise their influence under cover of deception. The folks who say, “I'm only using it for simple enjoyment; but for ‘sorcery’ – be it far from me!”, deceive themselves thinking they can avoid the consequences of entering the dimension of satanic presence, *even if they do not believe it*.

Let me posit a possible situation in an area where grass is legal for medicinal use. What would one think of a pastor, say in New Jersey, New York, or California where medicinal grass is legal under prescription for pain (or Colorado, Washington state, or the country Holland where it is simply legal), who, having smoked before the service, ministers while high? Or where a number in the church are (legally) high in the service? Would you assert that, if they've done it in moderation (or for pain relief), this is fully in accord with the word of God? Does using a Biblically forbidden substance for pain relief exempt one from obedience to God's law? Did God have a good reason for forbidding *pharmakeia* drugs? (Note: this is *not* forbidding standard analgesics, even medicinal opiates. Psychedelics – *pharmakeia* substances – are a class unto themselves.)

Or if the assistant pastor – who teaches the teenage Bible study – has pain from a sports injury, and smokes (with a prescription) beforehand, is that okay? Though surely there will be teenagers – as well as adults – who, knowing their pastors are smoking marijuana (under medical license) for pain relief, will say, “Well, if they can do it for pain – and are okay mentally, and also accepted by the church – why can't I do it as well for fun? We can see it's not harmful if used reasonably.”

Besides the corruption of morals of others, children included, let me say what the Scripture view of this would be. A pastor has smoked his grass (ostensibly for pain) and expanded his consciousness by opening himself to the spiritual realm – much as the Hindus do to contact their spirit entities – and he is now open to energies and influences or thoughts that come to him from he-knows-not-where. But they seem to be godly and in accord with the Bible, and he has a new depth of feeling for the subject he is speaking on, and sharp insight, and he powerfully feels what he believes to be the presence and love of God. Has this man increased his godliness and anointing through the drug? Scripture says he has taken a drug (*pharmakon*) . . . known to induce magic spells, and to encourage the presence of spirits at magical ceremonies. Well, one wouldn't call a church service a “magical ceremony” someone might respond! Unfortunately, using a sorcerous drug of the *pharmakeia*-class would turn that church service into a

magic ceremony, replete with demonic agency operating through the minister intoxicated by it.

Some years ago (May 16, 2012) in the NYTimes online OP/ED section, an article appeared by a *sitting* New York State Supreme Court Justice, Gustin L. Reichbach, titled, *“A Judge’s Plea for Medical Marijuana”* (nytimes.com/2012/05/17/opinion/a-judges-plea-for-medical-marijuana.html), and is one of the most compelling, heartwrenching cries for the allowing of medical marijuana I have heard (and I’m sure those reading can come up with like cases they know of). Read it and see. Justice Reichbach is a for-real candidate for this medical use. Which better allows me to make my point: As far as the world is concerned, allowing this man medical marijuana – and as he puts it, the “inhaled” kind, not the synthetic – is simply a human right, a humane medical treatment. But spiritually, what is the cost? Now Justice Reichbach is not – to my knowledge – a disciple of Christ, but for a disciple what would the issues be? It would be opening the heart and mind to demonic activity. Let me put myself in his place: without some grass – *inhaled* – I cannot eat (my appetite has failed), and cannot sleep, both of which I need to sustain my life. But with it, I could do both. Would it be worth it to me? To the world this dilemma is false, delusional, and *cruel!* To the spiritual man or woman it is vital and actual: would I allow my communion with Christ and communion with other disciples in spirit to be open to influence or infiltration by demonic beings? Just for the ability to eat something, or sleep, or to relieve pain? Put another way, would I, under torture – being starved, subjected to sleep deprivation, and inflicted with pain – betray my Lord and my friends? With God’s help I would *not*. Why, given the same conditions of affliction, would I voluntarily sin, if I would refuse to in the other case? No, God giving me strength I will retain my integrity of being before Him and my friends. I would refuse to smoke the “medicinal” marijuana for the sake of keeping my spiritual health and integrity. *Especially* if I were in terrible pain with advanced, terminal cancer, I would not use marijuana for relief. Would anyone in their right mind, when on the very brink of death, open their hearts and minds to demonic influence? That would be sheer destructive madness!

[The only exception of marijuana use for healing – in which its medical benefits are legitimate and actually good – pertain to medicinal marijuana with THC in lotions and creams that do not enter the blood-stream or get one high, or to the non-psycho-active (i.e., does not get one high) ingredient CBD, which is used for preventing seizures in children or other legitimate uses. Any use of marijuana that gets one high is participating in sorcery.]

In sum: there is an entity of which it may be said, “for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.” Is there a nation that widely used, championed, and exported to all the world the use of marijuana, LSD, etc? I’m afraid there is. And we all know which it is.

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Further ID’ing of Babylon

There is only one Babylon as far as we are concerned, now in the 21st century, the final and über Babylon, of which the Chaldean and Roman empires were previous and lesser – what are called *typical* – manifestations, great as they were. For the one in our time is greater, and more dangerous. It has not yet morphed into its final stage, as certain things must come to pass before it is known as the Great Whore, *drinker of the blood of the saints* (Revelation 17:6).

Those earlier empires called “Babylonian” in Scripture both had headquarter cities and nations that were the hearts of their empires. Given the precedents, final Babylon will also have a headquarters nation. This is what is written of her:

“Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they

shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come” (Rev 18:8-10).

These words are ominous: “utterly burned with fire” and “Standing afar off for the fear of her torment” as those at sea “see the smoke of her burning” fill the skies . . . this sounds like onlookers far out at sea watching the destruction of a nation pounded by massive nuclear strikes, keeping their distance from the radiation, for fear of it.

When it is written of her, kings and nations and merchants of the earth have “committed fornication” with her, this refers to partaking of her idolatrous economic and cultural enterprises, loving them above God, and to the exclusion of Him. When it says they have “lived deliciously with her” this means they have shared her luxurious lifestyle, at the expense of the poor, whom they have exploited. Further indicators that ID her:

Bullet Points on ID’ing Revelation’s ‘Babylon’ as the American Empire

- We fill the world with moral filth, sending our Secretaries of State to officially fund and push for abortion, and for the acceptance of homosexuality, with subtle and not-so-subtle diplomatic and economic penalties against those nations who do not comply with our agendas. Even now our POTUS is threatening a country (Uganda) for its criminalizing sexual perversion.

And VP Biden threatens the nations of the world, “I don’t care what your culture is [with respect to homosexuality]. . . inhumanity is inhumanity [and] prejudice is prejudice”, warning, “there is a price to pay” for such “inhumanity”. As though God were inhumane by stating in His law this is a violation of His standard of health and love for the humankind He created.

- We have inundated the world with our “entertainment” industry, globally exalting theft, dishonesty, immodesty, blasphemy, adultery and various sexual perversions, violence and murder, and idolatry in the genres of superheroes and demi-gods, overwhelming indigenous cultures around the world with our perverse vision of “entertainment” and culture.
- We have, through economic and military “strong-arming”, exploited poor nations in the name of free trade and economic openness, draining their wealth and resources to support our own luxurious lifestyles and standards of living. We have made many rich through our rapacious consumption of the world’s goods and energy, and have at the same time impoverished and endangered vast multitudes.
[It may be of interest, by way of stark corroboration, to see these books: *The New Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* (2016), by John Perkins, an insider, and, *Will America Change?*, by Sardar and Davies, two outsiders (authors also of the earlier, *Why Do People Hate America?*). Outsiders may afford us, as Robert Burns said, “O would some power the giftie gie us / To see ourselves as others see us!”]
- We have, through our unsurpassed military might – greater than all the other nations of the world *combined* – coerced much of the world into complying with our various agendas, political, military, economic, and cultural / moral. What we say in much of the world, *goes*.
- We have, through our exporting of the Woodstock spirit, and the psychedelic drugs that have power to bring us into the spirit realms, fulfilled this Scripture: “for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived” (Revelation 18:23). We have thus opened the collective consciousness of humankind to the swift infiltration and influence of demonic spirits. This has affected the thought-life of the world in unprecedented ways, and has marginalized the Faith of Jesus Christ throughout, wreaking untold havoc in the mental and spiritual spheres of *all* the nations.

- Since the infamous Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court ruling in 1973, our nation has *murdered 58 million children* (and counting) in the wombs of their mothers, a slaughter far more wicked than the Canaanite nations who were destroyed by God in ancient times for the same crime of infanticide. We put great pressure on other nations to do the same thing, in the name of “reproductive rights”, i.e., the convenience of avoiding responsibility for our sexual activities. Our children are human sacrifices on our altars of convenience.
- We have thought and said of ourselves (as a nation – both rulers and people), “we sit queen among the nations, and shall not be bereft of our allies, and shall not ever see national tragedy and sorrow” (cf. Rev 18:7). And yet we have exploited our own people – Americans – and have embittered them with the establishment of unjust economic structures, so that growing multitudes go homeless and in hunger.
- We have poisoned our environment through the avarice of uncaring industries, filling our homes, waters, lands, air, and foods with carcinogens, toxins, and immune system-weakening chemicals, so that vast multitudes go ill with new and horrific diseases.
- We have shaken our fist at God and His laws of life and love, banning Him from our children’s schools (replacing His truth with falsehoods), our universities, our laws, our science, our medical industry, and our workplaces. We set this evil example for all the nations to see.
- We are as much a mighty and wicked empire as ever Rome and Chaldean Babylon were in their days. We have exploited and intimidated the whole world. Our days as such an empire are numbered; the Scriptures alone give a full and clear view of what we have become.
- And yet we do not perceive ourselves as we are. We are in a cocoon of delusion, thinking ourselves “a righteous nation”, a fitting “policeman of the world”, but in truth we are war-mongers, always seeking our own self-interests, oblivious of the suffering we cause others.

These are some sketchy and preliminary points of identity comparing the U.S. with the entity called Babylon in the Apocalypse of St. John.

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If the above points were not enough to anger the world, we are increasing their disillusionment of us by the revelations (leaked by Edward Snowden) of our National Security Agency's spying on other world leaders and their nations' citizens through our truly *super* surveillance technologies. I surmise that we will further anger the nations through such acts of aggression and disregard for the welfare of the world community that at some point they will mount a concerted offensive against us during a period that our military capabilities have been temporarily deactivated through either a cyber attack or a solar flare event which completely takes down our electric grid, although a man-made EMP attack is also feasible.

In the prophecy (17:12) it looks like this: the ten horns are kings / nations (ten a symbolic number for a *full or complete amount*) who give their military strength to the beast (17:13), a new political-military leader who hates Babylon and channels the nations' hatred of her into a devastating assault – most likely nuclear – which utterly destroys her. The Lord has put this hatred of her into the nations' hearts (17:17) so that they fulfil His will, which is to put an utter end to that entity called the final Babylon.

Before this occurs, it is written that Babylon rides the beast (17:3, 7), meaning that it is the beast's military might that empowers harlot Babylon to have dominating influence over all the nations and rulers of the world (17:1, 15). According to this view, the United States of America is both the beast *and* the whore Babylon, a nation combining unsurpassed warfare might and irresistible seductive *economic, technological, and cultural* power. Ancient Chaldean Babylon was another such entity, and its "beast" strength and authority was removed from her overnight – in an "hour" – when the Medes and Persians took Babylon, killed its king, and became the new power in world politics and military might. (In the Book of Revelation the beast is a symbol of persecuting antichristian government, though it may also refer

to its ruler.) So the beast aspect of America will be removed from her of a sudden, and passed to another nation and the ruler of that new nation, the former beast being vanquished.

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The Fate of Babylon

The Christians in Babylon are unlike Christians in many other parts of the world – except perhaps other nations of the more affluent West – as even though the U.S. is in dramatic economic decline, it still lives high on the hog compared to our suffering brethren in regions where they experience bloody persecution and often life-threatening deprivation.

We Western Christians are – those of us who remain economically afloat – fat cats also riding the beast “the great whore” rides (Rev 17:1; 19:2), and we share some of her glitter and luxury even if we live godly, for this is a prosperous nation, and we partake of her benefits even if we sincerely serve God alone. True, all the nations and cultures of the world that are in opposition to God comprise the entity Babylon, yet it is also true that, as with the past Babylonian manifestations, the empire has a headquarters nation, and perhaps the above has convinced some of you that America likely fits the bill.

Let me talk to those who doubt: Is this I posit but sheer speculation? Then what does the Scriptural statement regarding Babylon’s sorceries mean? If language has meaning it *has* to mean something, and there is no better explanation than what I have given – unless one wants to wander off into abstract and vague figurativeness. I think I have shown that what is referred to is specific and substantial, and with the additional points of identification it is a most reasonable exegesis. A lot depends on understanding correctly, even our peace of mind and very faith in “a time of trouble” (Daniel 12:1-3).

America is not what it once was, though perhaps it always had within it the seed of this development which, after a while, took over what Christian

heaven was in it, and grew into what it is and is yet to become. For its transformation is not yet complete, as it has not turned lethally against the saints (Rev 17:6; 18:24). That is all that remains for it to become. We shall likely also see the forcible suppression of dissent from those citizens who speak against the evil of the ruling powers.

When America is gone (more on this below) the rest of the world will go on – although shattered and reeling from Babylon’s utter destruction – pursuing the mad agenda of the *new* beast, which will be the continuing persecution of God’s people in all the nations that remain after *nuclear holocaust USA*. It may well be there is a global move to go after them even while the U.S. still exists – the U.S. may even be the catalyst for this in the West – but I think America will somehow offend the world by some truly outrageous deed, which will provoke it to turn against her – according to God’s plan (Rev 17:17).

With regard to the timing of things, consider the deeply insightful words of Dennis Johnson on the symbolism of Revelation in relation to time elements in it:

Just as the vision genre sometimes compresses vast historical eons into symbolic images that pass like the twinkling of an eye (see Rev. 12:1-5, which spans redemptive history from Genesis 3 to Acts 1), so a split-second in time may be expanded in visionary description and simultaneous events presented as successive, in order to help hearers to see different facets of Christ’s victory. – *Triumph of the Lamb*, p. 176.

This idea may be helpful in making sense of things when they seem to be grouped very close together time-wise, namely the global persecution of the saints depicted a number of times in the Apocalypse, the destruction of Babylon, and the war of Armageddon – which is another angle-shot of the war on the saints, in the midst of which the Lord Jesus returns to a) call His people out of their graves and those still living from the earth to join Him in the heavens, and b) to devastate the earth-dwellers who abused and slew

His bride; and then very shortly after, to raise them from the dead to stand before Him to be judged and consigned to eternal torment. The time frame between now in 2016 and Babylon's shedding the blood of its Christians, being herself destroyed, the further slaughter of the saints in the remaining nations of the world, the calling out of the world His people to Himself, and the Day of Vengeance – could be some years off, and then months or weeks or days between final events. None of this can be ascertained beforehand, as our Lord warned we should not try to do.

Although Babylon had ridden on the back of the beast – the beast which, through all the ages in various manifestations, had gotten his authority and power from the dragon – the authority and power of the dragon had now deserted that beast which carried the last Babylon and world-dominating power, and moved to another beast manifestation, similar to – I repeat – when power was transferred from Chaldean Babylon to the Persians and Medes in one night, which became the new world power, the old having been vanquished. The beast that bore Headquarters Babylon was now itself vanquished, and the whore with it.

G.B. Caird, in his commentary, *The Revelation of Saint John*, interestingly says of the fifth vial / bowl of wrath (Rev 16:10), “The darkness was not the three days’ visitation of Exodus x. 21 ff., nor even the paralysing terror so vividly described in Wisdom xvii, but *the total eclipse of the monster’s imperial power*” (p 204) [emphasis added]. What is especially interesting about this is that for the destruction of Babylon the mighty Beast-nation that she rides and by whose power she prevails upon the nations, must be suddenly made defenseless (the spirit and power of the Beast – which is from the dragon – is evidently transferred then to another nation or nations), leaving harlot Babylon herself defenseless and vulnerable – to attack and destruction.

I have said above that what the text of Revelation 18 seems to describe, Babylon totally destroyed by fire, and that in one hour, with the nations observing it standing afar off for fear of her torment as the smoke of her arises – could well be a nuclear holocaust, and their fear of its fallout. I know this

will be very hard for Americans to hear, much less envision, but it is going to be *some* nation, and no other is as likely a candidate as we are. And in these days, how else could an entire nation be destroyed by fire save by nuclear thermal blasts and their heat?

There is another matter to consider. I am proceeding here as though this scenario will be the case; yet how far in the future I cannot tell. Could it be as far off as twenty years? Thirty? I do not know; yet consider how far we as a society have moved in depravity and wickedness in just the last *ten* years, and how police-state-like our government has become in that time, and both these developments have accelerated and are accelerating ever more rapidly as the months go by. Could it be in ten years the U.S. morphs into a Christ and Christian-hating nation, severely punishing believers? I don't know; but lawsuits continue to rise from activists against Christian businesses that will not perform services which tacitly approve their ungodly lifestyles. Could it be in two years? Again, who can tell how quickly things will unfold?

And other troubles may arise; if one considers the notorious wickedness in this land, judgments against it may arise before *final* judgment. Consider Revelation 18:8, "Therefore shall her [Babylon's] plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

Commentators agree that the phrases, "in one day" and "in one hour" (verse 10) signify the *suddenness* of the judgments visited on this entity Babylon. May it not be that the first two of the three clauses in the sentence are sequential? I had initially thought this was one event of judgment—by fire, such as left "the smoke of her burning" visible to those observing from "afar off for the fear of her torment" (verse 10)—but after further reflection on the mention of "famine" have come to think that the respective actions of the plagues (8a) and the *utter* burning with fire (8b) are not simultaneous but come one after the other. For famine—suffering and death through prolonged lack of food—takes a while to be effected.

So I come to this: with great suddenness judgments bringing death and grief and famine strike Babylon, fulfilling the words just prior: "How much she

hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her” (7a). Then *after* this—*how* long after, weeks? months? who can tell?—is the utter destruction by “fire”.

Some of these preliminary judgments could possibly come directly from the hand of God, who controls the forces of nature, but we must remember that the angel in chapter 17 who was given to make John understand the symbolism told him that the destruction of Babylon would come at the hands of the “ten kings” who “hate the whore . . . For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will” (vs 16, 17). That is, the complete number (10 a symbol of completeness) of nations in league with the beast would burn her with fire. Given the extent of the destruction at their hands it does seem likely that this would be from a large array of nuclear weapons. The earlier plagues could also come from these “ten kings” as a result of other forms of warfare taking down Babylon’s critical infrastructure, the electric grid, banking, transportation, food and water delivery, etc. This would cause catastrophic upheaval and suffering.

Babylon’s demise may come piecemeal before the final reckoning. For far less wickedness nations in Biblical times have been fiercely judged and destroyed.

I’m sorry to place such horrendous scenarios before you (for I and my family will partake of whatever you partake of), but it is important we be mentally and spiritually prepared for the worst, even while hoping for the best.

A preacher and pastor I have high regard for has said, as regards the sudden onset of real suffering, the *shock* of it – coming completely unexpectedly and unprepared for – may be more shattering to the soul than the suffering itself. The apostle Peter said, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you” (1 Peter 4:12). Because we in America have been exempted for so long from serious, massive, national suffering we have thought it would never come, and have taken into our own hearts America’s belief that she “shall see no sorrow” (Rev 18:7). i.e., grief at immense catastrophe and resultant suffering. Better for the church to anticipate such than multitudes of us

experiencing nervous breakdowns as society falls apart, or we get turned upon as the Jews were in Nazi Germany. We should meet catastrophes with hope, eyes upon our God, who will usher us into His kingdom, and His presence.

It was with deeply heartfelt purpose – loving care – God gave us prophecies to alert us to upcoming dangers or catastrophes, that we would not be taken by surprise. Twice Jesus said to His disciples, “I have told you before” (Matt 24:25; John 14:29) on this very wise. And earlier, in Old Testament times, such prophetic forewarnings sustained God’s people in and through terrible calamities.

This is from Stuart Olyott’s commentary on Daniel, *Dare To Stand Alone*. The angel has been telling Daniel the visions of chapter 8:

“You have heard the truth, Daniel,” says the angel (26). “Now preserve the vision, because the future will need a record of what you have seen.”

And it did. In those darkest of days, when the people of God were being hounded and killed in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, they needed and they had the comfort of this chapter of Daniel. Throughout that period they were consoled by knowing that this wicked man could not have stepped on to the page of history without divine permission and that everything he did, however awful, was nothing other than what God had predicted centuries earlier. They knew that in God’s time, and in fulfilment of verse 25, he would at last be removed. To know all this was an indescribable comfort to them in horrific times. (p. 110)

This will be the case again, when the writings of Revelation will be “an indescribable comfort” in *our* “time of trouble” (Dan 12:1). John Calvin speaking on Daniel 8:9-11 goes on at more length concerning the LORD’s care for His people in severe troubles by letting them know they were coming. These are some excerpts:

9. *And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.*

Now God shews his Prophet what peculiarly concerned the welfare of his Church. For it was of very great importance to warn the Jews of the calamities which were about to oppress them. There is nothing which more torments the minds of men than their becoming bewildered in false imaginations, and thinking the world the sport of chance, while they never ponder over the providence of God nor reflect upon his judgments. Hence, with this design, God wished to teach the Prophet and all the pious the nature of their future afflictions, since they would thus understand how events never happened by chance, but all these scourges proceeded from God; for the same God both determines and executes his decrees, as he also predicts future events. For if nothing had been predicted, the pious would have glided gently downwards to despair in consequence of their heavy afflictions. . . . Antiochus, indeed, who is here alluded to, advanced with cruel tyranny against the people of God. If this had not been predicted, they would have thought themselves deceived by the splendid promises concerning their return. But when they perceived everything occurring according as they had been opportunely forewarned, this became no slight solace in the midst of their woes; they could then determine at once how completely it was in the power of God to relieve them from so many and such oppressive evils. With what intention, then, had God predicted all these things to his Prophet Daniel? clearly that the Jews might look forward to a happy result, and not give way to despair under events so full of anxiety and confusion. This, then, was the utility of the prophecy, with reference to that particular period.

When the Prophet says, *Out of one of those four horns a little horn arose*, Antiochus Epiphanes is most distinctly pointed out.

. . .

10. *And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.*

Here Daniel continues the vision which he had received. We have already shewn the object of the Almighty to be the preparation of the faithful to bear serious calamities, because nothing new or unexpected should happen to them. Now, Daniel's dwelling upon this point is not surprising, for it becomes his duty to inform the faithful of the heavy calamities which were at hand, and thus to mould them to patience and equity. . .

11. *Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.*

Daniel announces something still more atrocious here, namely, the exaltation of the little horn against God. . .

. . . [W]hat can be the Almighty's design in allowing his temple to be polluted, and all true sacrifices to cease throughout the world? One corner alone, as we have lately mentioned, was left where God wished to be worshipped, and now Antiochus seizes upon the temple, and profanes and defiles it with the utmost possible indignity, thus leaving no single place sacred to the Almighty. For this reason I have asserted the prophecy to appear very harsh. The Prophet now increases the indignity when he speaks of *the perpetual sacrifice*. For God had often borne witness to his temple being his perpetual "rest," or "station," or "seat;" yet he is now ejected from this spot, as if exiled from the earth entirely. The temple could not exist without sacrifices, for the whole worship under the law was a kind of appendage to the temple. As God had promised the sacrifice should be perpetual and eternal, who would not assert, when Antiochus destroyed it, either all the promises to have been deceptive, or all authority to have departed from God, who failed to defend his right against that impious tyrant. Surely this must have been a distressing calamity, overwhelming all the faithful! And when even at this

moment we read the prophecy, all our senses are horrified by its perusal. No wonder, then, that God forewarned his servant of such sorrowful events, and such incredible evils, to admonish his whole Church in due season, and to arm them against the severest temptations, which might otherwise strike down even the most courageous.

[End Calvin]

It is thus with serious purpose our God warns us of troubles coming. True, such have come throughout the entire New Testament church age, and from the beginning Revelation's warnings were given and the church up through the age was given notice and thereby greatly benefitted. As the end of the age approaches there appear to be more intense and more widespread tribulations affecting not only the church but the inhabitants of all the earth, yet the church is going to be singled out by said inhabitants for special mistreatment. The Amil understanding, without going into the errors and excesses of Dispensationalism (and even Historic Premil), nonetheless receives the admonition to brace for plagues and assaults.

Touching now upon the final catastrophe for America (if so be this is the right understanding of the prophecies).

* * *

Nuclear Impact

We have observed, in the previous sections, the ID'ing of Revelation's Babylon as the United States of America, through both the sorcery connection and America's other crimes and sins against humanity, the earth, and God Himself.

In chapter 18 of John's Apocalypse we see the destruction of Babylon by what appears to be a nuclear holocaust meted out by a coalition of other nations under the direction of a new world power. If such is indeed to be the

case, this study by Jonathan Schell in his book, *The Fate of the Earth* (2000, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, pp 52-61. . . Originally published by Knopf, 1982), which is a powerful anti-nuclear statement published to let the world see the folly of stockpiling nuclear arms, pretty clearly depicts the sort of devastation Babylon would experience if the thoughts presented in this Fate of Babylon paper are true.

[Schell has just finished a long description of what a single one-megaton nuclear bomb detonated above the Empire State Building in Manhattan would do, the multi-layered devastation spreading out into Queens, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and New Jersey. Now he proceeds to give a very brief description if this were the more likely twenty-megaton bomb instead (although the Russians are reported to have a *sixty*-megaton weapon), and the scenario of a massive nuclear attack nation-wide. In *this* scenario, that horror book of a devastated U.S. called *The Road*, by Cormac McCarthy, would seem way too optimistic. Some comments from me after the quote of Schell.]

A description of the effects of a one-megaton bomb on New York City gives some notion of the meaning in human terms of a megaton of nuclear explosive power, but a weapon that is more likely to be used against New York is the twenty-megaton bomb, which has one thousand six hundred times the yield of the Hiroshima bomb. The Soviet Union is estimated to have at least a hundred and thirteen twenty-megaton bombs in its nuclear arsenal, carried by Bear intercontinental bombers. In addition, some of the Soviet SS-18 missiles are capable of carrying bombs of this size, although the actual yields are not known. Since the explosive power of the twenty-megaton bombs greatly exceeds the amount necessary to destroy most military targets, it is reasonable to suppose that they are meant for use against large cities. If a twenty-megaton bomb were air-burst over the Empire State Building at an altitude of thirty thousand feet, the zone gutted or flattened by the blast wave would have a radius of twelve miles and an area of more than four hundred and fifty

square miles, reaching from the middle of Staten Island to the northern edge of the Bronx, the eastern edge of Queens, and well into New Jersey, and the zone of heavy damage from the blast wave (the zone hit by a minimum of two pounds of over-pressure per square inch) would have a radius of twenty-one and a half miles, or an area of one thousand four hundred and fifty square miles, reaching to the southernmost tip of Staten Island, north as far as southern Rockland County, east into Nassau County, and west to Morris County, New Jersey. The fireball would be about four and a half miles in diameter and would radiate the thermal pulse for some twenty seconds. People caught in the open twenty-three miles away from ground zero, in Long Island, New Jersey, and southern New York State, would be burned to death. People hundreds of miles away who looked at the burst would be temporarily blinded and would risk permanent eye injury. (After the test of a fifteen-megaton bomb on Bikini Atoll, in the South Pacific, in March of 1954, small animals were found to have suffered retinal burns at a distance of three hundred and forty-five miles.) The mushroom cloud would be seventy miles in diameter. New York City and its suburbs would be transformed into a lifeless, flat, scorched desert in a few seconds.

If a twenty-megaton bomb were ground-burst on the Empire State Building, the range of severe blast damage would, as with the one-megaton ground blast, be reduced, but the fireball, which would be almost six miles in diameter, would cover Manhattan from Wall Street to northern Central Park and also parts of New Jersey, Brooklyn, and Queens, and everyone within it would be instantly killed, with most of them physically disappearing. Fallout would again be generated, this time covering thousands of square miles with lethal intensities of radiation. A fair portion of New York City and its incinerated population, now radioactive dust, would have risen into the mushroom cloud and would now be descending on the surrounding territory. On one of the few occasions when local fallout was

generated by a test explosion in the multi-megaton range, the fifteen-megaton bomb tested on Bikini Atoll, which was exploded seven feet above the surface of a coral reef, "caused substantial contamination over an area of more than seven thousand square miles," according to Glasstone. If, as seems likely, a twenty-megaton bomb ground-burst on New York would produce at least a comparable amount of fallout, and if the wind carried the fallout onto populated areas, then this one bomb would probably doom upward of twenty million people, or almost ten per cent of the population of the United States.

The "strategic" forces of the Soviet Union – those that can deliver nuclear warheads to the United States – are so far capable of carrying seven thousand warheads with an estimated maximum yield of more than seventeen thousand megatons of explosive power, and, barring unexpected developments in arms-control talks, the number of warheads is expected to rise in the coming years. The actual megatonnage of the Soviet strategic forces is not known, and, for a number of reasons, including the fact that smaller warheads can be delivered more accurately, it is very likely that the actual megatonnage is lower than the maximum possible; however, it is reasonable to suppose that the actual megatonnage is as much as two-thirds of the maximum, which would be about eleven and a half thousand megatons. If we assume that in a first strike the Soviets held back about a thousand megatons (itself an immense force), then the attack would amount to about ten thousand megatons, or the equivalent of eight hundred thousand Hiroshima bombs. American strategic forces comprise about nine thousand warheads with a yield of some three thousand five hundred megatons. The total yield of these American forces was made comparatively low for strategic reasons. American planners discovered that smaller warheads can be delivered more accurately than larger ones, and are therefore more useful for attacking strategic forces on the other side. And, in fact, American missiles are substantially more accurate than Soviet ones. However, in the last year or so, in spite of this

advantage in numbers of warheads and in accuracy, American leaders have come to believe that the American forces are inadequate, and, again barring unexpected developments in arms-control talks, both the yield of the American arsenal and the number of warheads in it are likely to rise dramatically. (Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union reveals the total explosive yield of its own forces. The public is left to turn to private organizations, which, by making use of hundreds of pieces of information that *have* been released by the two governments, piece together an over-all picture. The figures I have used to estimate the maximum capacities of the two sides are taken for the most part from tables provided in the latest edition of "The Military Balance," a standard yearly reference work on the strength of military forces around the world, which is published by a research institute in London called the International Institute for Strategic Studies.) The territory of the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, is three million six hundred and fifteen thousand one hundred and twenty-two square miles. It contains approximately two hundred and twenty-five million people, of whom sixty per cent, or about a hundred and thirty-five million, live in various urban centers with a total area of only eighteen thousand square miles. I asked Dr. Kendall, who has done considerable research on the consequences of nuclear attacks, to sketch out in rough terms what the actual distribution of bombs might be in a ten-thousand-megaton Soviet attack in the early nineteen-eighties on all targets in the United States, military and civilian.

"Without serious distortion," he said, "we can begin by imagining that we would be dealing with ten thousand weapons of one megaton each, although in fact the yields would, of course, vary considerably. Let us also make the assumption, based on common knowledge of weapons design, that on average the yield would be one-half fission and one-half fusion. This proportion is important, because it is the fission products – a virtual

museum of about three hundred radioactive isotopes, decaying at different rates – that give off radioactivity in fallout. Fusion can add to the total in ground bursts by radioactivation of ground material by neutrons, but the quantity added is comparatively small. Targets can be divided into two categories – hard and soft. Hard targets, of which there are about a thousand in the United States, are mostly missile silos. The majority of them can be destroyed only by huge, blunt overpressures, ranging anywhere from many hundreds to a few thousand pounds per square inch, and we can expect that two weapons might be devoted to each one to assure destruction. That would use up two thousand megatons. Because other strategic military targets – such as Strategic Air Command bases – are near centers of population, an attack on them as well, perhaps using another couple of hundred megatons, could cause a total of more than twenty million casualties, according to studies by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. If the nearly eight thousand weapons remaining were then devoted to the cities and towns of the United States in order of population, every community down to the level of fifteen hundred inhabitants would be hit with a megaton bomb—which is, of course, many, many times what would be necessary to annihilate a town that size. For obvious reasons, industry is highly correlated with population density, so an attack on the one necessarily hits the other, especially when an attack of this magnitude is considered. Ten thousand targets would include everything worth hitting in the country and much more; it would simply *be* the United States. The targeters would run out of targets and victims long before they ran out of bombs. If you imagine that the bombs were distributed according to population, then, allowing for the fact that the attack on the military installations would have already killed about twenty million people, you would have about forty megatons to devote to each remaining million people in the country. For the seven and a half million people in New York City, that would come to three hundred megatons. Bearing in mind

what one megaton can do, you can see that this would be preposterous overkill. In practice, one might expect the New York metropolitan area to be hit with some dozens of one-megaton weapons.”

In the first moments of a ten-thousand-megaton attack on the United States, I learned from Dr. Kendall and from other sources, flashes of white light would suddenly illumine large areas of the country as thousands of suns, each one brighter than the sun itself, blossomed over cities, suburbs, and towns. In those same moments, when the first wave of missiles arrived, the vast majority of the people in the regions first targeted would be irradiated, crushed, or burned to death. The thermal pulses could subject more than six hundred thousand square miles, or one-sixth of the total land mass of the nation, to a minimum level of forty calories per centimetre squared – a level of heat that chars human beings. (At Hiroshima, charred remains in the rough shape of human beings were a common sight.) Tens of millions of people would go up in smoke. As the attack proceeded, as much as three-quarters of the country could be subjected to incendiary levels of heat, and so, wherever there was inflammable material, could be set ablaze. In the ten seconds or so after each bomb hit, as blast waves swept outward from thousands of ground zeros, the physical plant of the United States would be swept away like leaves in a gust of wind. The six hundred thousand square miles already scorched by the forty or more calories of heat per centimetre squared would now be hit by blast waves of a minimum of five pounds per square inch, and virtually all the habitations, places of work, and other man-made things there – substantially the whole human construct in the United States – would be vaporized, blasted, or otherwise pulverized out of existence. Then, as clouds of dust rose from the earth, and mushroom clouds spread overhead, often linking to form vast canopies, day would turn to night. (These clouds could blanket as much as a third of the nation.) Shortly, fires would spring up in the debris of the cities and

in every forest dry enough to burn. These fires would simply burn down the United States. When one pictures a full-scale attack on the United States, or on any other country, therefore, the picture of a single city being flattened by a single bomb – an image firmly engraved in the public imagination, probably because of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – must give way to a picture of substantial sections of the country being turned by a sort of nuclear carpet-bombing into immense infernal regions, literally tens of thousands of square miles in area, from which escape is impossible. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki, those who had not been killed or injured so severely that they could not move were able to flee to the undevastated world around them, where they found help, but in any city where three or four bombs had been used – not to mention fifty, or a hundred – flight from one blast would only be flight toward another, and no one could escape alive. Within these regions, each of three of the immediate effects of nuclear weapons – initial radiation, thermal pulse, and blast wave – would alone be enough to kill most people: the initial nuclear radiation would subject tens of thousands of square miles to lethal doses; the blast waves, coming from all sides, would nowhere fall below the overpressure necessary to destroy almost all buildings; and the thermal pulses, also coming from all sides, would always be great enough to kill exposed people and, in addition, to set on fire everything that would burn. The ease with which virtually the whole population of the country could be trapped in these zones of universal death is suggested by the fact that the sixty per cent of the population that lives in an area of eighteen thousand square miles could be annihilated with only three hundred one-megaton bombs – the number necessary to cover the area with a minimum of five pounds per square inch of overpressure and forty calories per centimetre squared of heat. That would leave nine thousand seven hundred megatons, or ninety-seven per cent of the megatonnage in the attacking force, available for other targets. (It is hard to imagine what a targeter would

do with all his bombs in these circumstances. Above several thousand megatons, it would almost become a matter of trying to hunt down individual people with nuclear warheads.)

The statistics on the initial nuclear radiation, the thermal pulses, and the blast waves in a nuclear holocaust can be presented in any number of ways, but all of them would be only variations on a simple theme – the annihilation of the United States and its people. Yet while the immediate nuclear effects are great enough in a ten-thousand-megaton attack to destroy the country many times over, they are not the most powerfully lethal of the local effects of nuclear weapons. The killing power of the local fallout is far greater. Therefore, if the Soviet Union was bent on producing the maximum overkill – if, that is, its surviving leaders, whether out of calculation, rage, or madness, decided to eliminate the United States not merely as a political and social entity but as a biological one – they would burst their bombs on the ground rather than in the air. Although the scope of severe blast damage would then be reduced, the blast waves, fireballs, and thermal pulses would still be far more than enough to destroy the country, and, in addition, provided only that the bombs were dispersed widely enough, lethal fallout would spread throughout the nation. The amount of radiation delivered by the fallout from a ground burst of a given size is still uncertain – not least because, as Glasstone notes, there has never been a “true land surface burst” of a bomb with a yield of over one kiloton. (The Bikini burst was in part over the ocean.) Many factors make for uncertainty. To mention just a few: the relative amounts of the fallout that rises into the stratosphere and the fallout that descends to the ground near the blast are dependent on, among other things, the yield of the weapon, and, in any case, can be only guessed at; the composition of the fallout will vary with the composition of the material on the ground that is sucked up into the mushroom cloud; prediction of the distribution of fallout by winds of various speeds at various altitudes depends on a choice of several “models”; and the calcula-

tion of the arrival time of the fallout – an important calculation, since fallout cannot harm living things until it lands near them – is subject to similar speculative doubts. However, calculations on the basis of figures for a one-megaton ground burst which are given in the Office of Technology Assessment's report show that ten thousand megatons would yield one-week doses around the country averaging more than ten thousand rems. In actuality, of course, the bombs would almost certainly not be evenly spaced around the country but, rather, would be concentrated in populated areas and in missile fields; and the likelihood is that in most places where people lived or worked the doses would be many times the average, commonly reaching several tens of thousands of rems for the first week, while in remote areas they would be less, or, conceivably, even nonexistent. (The United States contains large tracts of empty desert, and to target them would be virtually meaningless from any point of view.)

These figures provide a context for judging the question of civil defense. With overwhelming immediate local effects striking the vast majority of the population, and with one-week doses of radiation then rising into the tens of thousands of rems, evacuation and shelters are a vain hope. Needless to say, in these circumstances evacuation before an attack would be an exercise in transporting people from one death to another. In some depictions of a holocaust, various rescue operations are described, with unafflicted survivors bringing food, clothes, and medical care to the afflicted, and the afflicted making their way to thriving, untouched communities, where churches, school auditoriums, and the like would have been set up for their care – as often happens after a bad snowstorm, say. Obviously, none of this could come about. In the first place, in a full-scale attack there would in all likelihood *be* no surviving communities, and, in the second place, everyone who failed to seal himself off from the outside environment for as long as several months would soon die of radiation sickness. Hence, in the months after a holocaust there would be no activity of any sort, as, in a reversal of

the normal state of things, the dead would lie on the surface and the living, if there were any, would be buried underground.

To this description of radiation levels around the country, an addition remains to be made. This is the fact that attacks on the seventy-six nuclear power plants in the United States would produce fallout whose radiation had much greater longevity than that of the weapons alone. The physicist Dr. Kosta Tsipis, of M.I.T., and one of his students, Steven Fetter, recently published an article in *Scientific American* called "Catastrophic Releases of Radioactivity," in which they calculate the damage from a one-megaton thermonuclear ground burst on a one-gigawatt nuclear power plant. In such a ground burst, the facility's radioactive contents would be vaporized along with everything nearby, and the remains would be carried up into the mushroom cloud, from which they would descend to the earth with the rest of the fallout. But whereas the fission products of the weapon were newly made, and contained many isotopes that would decay to insignificant levels very swiftly, the fission products in a reactor would be a collection of longer-lived isotopes (and this applies even more strongly to the spent fuel in the reactor's holding pond), since the short-lived ones would, for the most part, have had enough time to reduce themselves to harmless levels. The intense but comparatively short-lived radiation from the weapon would kill people in the first few weeks and months, but the long-lived radiation that was produced both by the weapon and by the power plant could prevent anyone from living on a vast area of land for decades after it fell. For example, after a year an area of some seventeen hundred square miles downwind of a power plant on which a one-megaton bomb had been ground-burst (again assuming a fifteen-mile-an-hour wind) would still be delivering more than fifty rems per year to anyone who tried to live there, and that is two hundred and fifty times the "safe" dose established by the E.P.A. The bomb by itself would produce this effect over an area of

only twenty-six square miles. (In addition to offering an enemy a way of redoubling the effectiveness of his attacks in a full-scale holocaust, reactors provide targets of unparalleled danger in possible terrorist nuclear attacks. In an earlier paper, Tsipis and Fetter observe that “the destruction of a reactor with a nuclear weapon, even of relatively small yield, such as a crude terrorist nuclear device, would represent a national catastrophe of lasting consequences.” It can be put down as one further alarming oddity of life in a nuclear world that in building nuclear power plants nations have opened themselves to catastrophic devastation and long-term contamination of their territories by enemies who manage to get hold of only a few nuclear weapons.)

If, in a nuclear holocaust, anyone hid himself deep enough under the earth and stayed there long enough to survive, he would emerge into a dying natural environment. The vulnerability of the environment is the last word in the argument against the usefulness of shelters: there is no hole big enough to hide all of nature in.

[end Schell]

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Light in the Darkness

1 Cor 7:29-31 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And *they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.*

Heb 11:13-16 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded

of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now *they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly*: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

2 Cor 4:16-18 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While *we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Isaiah 26:20-21 Come, my people, *enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.* For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

This Isaiah 26:20 exhortation led Edward J. Young, in his commentary, *The Book of Isaiah*, to remark, “The locking of the doors suggests the determination completely to shut oneself from the outside world and to turn to God alone” (Vol 2, p 230 fn 47). This in the 24:1 – 27:13 section depicting the final judging of the world by the LORD. There will come a time for all of us when we must turn to God as the only source of salvation and comfort, as saints up through the ages have also done – not looking to any place or anyone in the world for help.

It’s a dark vision, I know – and if it is true (every person should decide for themselves if this is credible) what hope there is is in realms unseen, for what is seen will be unstable or destroyed. Yet God will be with us without

cease come what may. My own thought is only a Pollyanna-type – or one seriously deceived in their eschatology – can dismiss the signs of the times we are in. Where are those who, like the children of Issachar that came to David in Hebron to join his forces after the death of Saul, were said to be “men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chronicles 12:32)? Who understands the times we are in, and what *we* should do?

The first thing to attend to – whether it will come to pass on this wise or not, for the end of the age will be tumultuous however it falls out – is to cultivate a close walk with the LORD.

Know your Scriptures, especially those that speak of His promises to be with His people. These two brief papers earlier in the book are meant to be a help in this regard (I would encourage the printing of them in hardcopy, as we should not take the continuing existence of the electric grid for granted): *Communion with God*, and *God’s Presence Our Portion*.

We should increasingly shut those doors which open to finding our comfort, entertainment, and pleasure from the world, and learn to enter that door which brings us to the throne of God, His mercies and His presence in our time of need. There is nothing wrong at all with enjoying the world, for it is God who gives us all good things, yet we must learn to serve “the LORD [our] God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things” (Deut 28:47) even when there is scarcity of “good things” from the world, but rather bitter. It may be we shall have to wait in hope for “the abundance of all things” in the Land of Promise after we cross chilly Jordan. For there, in Celestial City, we shall lay eyes upon the Creator, our Redeemer and Friend, Jesus Christ.

Afterword

Below is a list of books (a couple of articles and one mp3 sermon series included) on Amillennialism and Revelation commentaries that are amil, plus one book on Daniel. These men do not go as far as I do in specifically

identifying Babylon and its destruction, but I have stood on their shoulders for my understanding.

Sam Storms' new book is primarily a refutation of the premil view (he also refutes postmil) and a defense of the amil. I am not happy with his partial preterist take on the Olivet Discourse, but otherwise it is informative.

Riddlebarger's two books (listed below) are both excellent; the one on antichrist is superb.

Venema's *Promise of the Future* has replaced Hoekema's *The Bible and the Future* as the eschatology textbook of choice in the P&R seminaries (so I have heard). Both are excellent. I think Venema's up-to-date views make it preferable if one has to choose between the two.

Engelsma's two *lengthy* articles on Amillennialism are outstanding. The hardcopy book version of *Christ's Spiritual Kingdom* is preferable.

The Revelation commentators listed are all amil, all of them in the camp of "eclectic" interpretive methodology, or "modified idealist", per Greg Beale, who seems to be taking the lead in the field of Revelation studies at this time. Also one mp3 lecture on interpretation of symbols by Beale using Revelation 11.

Still, the others are also very good. Of especial note is Bauckham's *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* – a smaller work of 169 pages – filled as it is with profound insights and observations.

For those unfamiliar with end-times studies I would recommend Dennis E. Johnson's, *Triumph of the Lamb*, and William Hendriksen's, *More Than Conquerors*, as worthy introductions to the subject. URLs are given in full for use in PDF versions.

Partial Bibliography for Revelation and Amil:

G.K. Beale, *New International Greek Testament Commentary: Revelation; The IVP New Testament Commentary Series: 1-2 Thessalonians; Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament; The Use of Daniel in*

Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John; and *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*; MP3 sermon series at Monergism: monergism.com/blog/exposition-revelation-mp3-series-g-k-beale

Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation*

Cornelis P. Venema, *The Promise of the Future*

William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation*; and *Three Lectures on the Book of Revelation*

Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*; and *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*

Kim Riddlebarger, *The Man of Sin: Uncovering the Truth About the Antichrist*; and, *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times*

Dean Davis, *The High King of Heaven*, a great book on the important hermeneutical issues involved

David J. Engelsma, *Christ's Spiritual Kingdom: A Defense of Reformed Amillennialism* (A shortened online version mountainretreat.org.net/eschatology/amil.html; and *The Messianic Kingdom and Civil Government* [prca.org/prtj/apr2004.htm#The Messianic Kingdom and Civil Government](http://prca.org/prtj/apr2004.htm#The%20Messianic%20Kingdom%20and%20Civil%20Government) (online article)

Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation To John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*

Vern Poythress, *The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation* (online version frame-poythress.org/ebooks/the-returning-king)

Stuart Olyott, *Dare to Stand Alone: Daniel Simply Explained*

Samuel E. Waldron, *The End Times Made Simple*

Anthony Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*

Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Revelation*

Arturo Azurdia, *An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (81 MP3 sermons)
monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/azurdia_revelation.html

Leon Morris, *The Book of Revelation* (Revised Edition)

G.B. Caird, *The Revelation of Saint John*

Sam Storms, *Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative* (he was premil, and now uses his old knowledge to expose its errors)

It is my prayer the LORD use this work to strengthen and prepare His precious saints for the days ahead, whether they linger or come soon.

[This version updated May 2016]

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THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF THE AMIL VIEW

The Amillennial (or *present* millennium) view opens our understanding to the crucial times we are in and times soon to come. All other end time views exclude the churches of other times: the premil all those churches before the end time, and the postmil those churches after 70 A.D., denying the relevance of the Scripture—and especially the Book of Revelation, the *climax* and *crown* of Biblical prophecy—to those people of God outside these narrow limits. The word of God is meant to be clearly understood in and for all ages.

As with Daniel's prophecies concerning the devastation Antiochus Epiphanes would wreak in the church of God around 150 B.C.—the LORD preparing His remnant for the extreme suffering to come, even the worship of Him being outlawed in the one place in the world where it existed, and the temple so defiled that worship could not take place there—so it shall be again in *our* day, but *globally* the faith *and churches* being outlawed, the Lord having important *discernment and encouragement* for us who live near the end, and *such* days.

The Book of Revelation spoke clearly and urgently to the very people of the apostle John's day (around 90-95 A.D. and the years following) who experienced horrific suffering, yet had the Apocalypse's comfort, power, and warnings strong in their hearts. Revelation and all other Scripture likewise spoke to the peoples of the following centuries, instilling courage, wisdom, and godly caution. It spoke to the persecuted Waldenses in the mountains of Italy and France (Gaul).

To the Reformation church it gave them power and vision to withstand Rome, the great harlot Babylon *and* Beast of their day. Has it anything concrete for us in the second decade of the 21st century? Has it anything besides the yet valid warnings to come out of the Babylonian Vanity Fair of our Western cultures? Anything to make us like “the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chron 12:32)? How many Christians have clear “understanding of the times” now, in 2016?

Because of the cultural tide turning against us of late many of us in the Way have come to realize that our easy life under the protection of both government and a supportive society may swiftly be coming to an end, and hard times may well be upon us, if not right away, then in the wings waiting to be called.

But that’s not all; our cultures—the U.S., as well as Europe and the “West” generally—are becoming so hostile to the laws of God, violating them with such egregious wickedness and violence, that we should expect severe judgment on them from on high. The pampered West shall not be exempt from the fiery trials of our faith known by our brothers and sisters elsewhere, in other regions of the world.

It is little understood today that the psychedelic drug explosion of the fifties, sixties, and seventies—the LSD, marijuana, hashish, psilocybin mushrooms, peyote, mescaline, etc—and exported by the Woodstock generation into all the world, constitutes much of the basis for the horrific judgment of end times Babylon spoken of in Revelation 18:23, “for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.” The psychedelic drugs of those days—and the potent marijuana of today—were and are sorcerous potions opening the dimensional gateway to the demonic realm, allowing an influx of satanic influence and activity into the collective human consciousness that, over the past half century, has gruesomely impacted and slowly but surely transformed the zeitgeist—spirit of the age—into one that hates God, His people, and all civic order and decency, so that now we see the full realization of these words: “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for

the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Rev 12:12).

It’s becoming clear that the recent amillennial scholarship in eschatology is establishing itself as the dominant force in the church, notwithstanding the premil IFB and similar congregations and postmil Presbyterian micro-denominations to the contrary—perhaps I should say in the *visionary* church—and is capturing the hearts, minds, and imaginations of many with its clarity, simplicity, common-sense fidelity to the text, and thrilling vision into the reality of our situation. For it is a joy when we realize that the word of our God is relevant to the point of enabling us to understand the spiritual dynamics—and some events—at play in both “the whole world [that] lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19), and in *us* the church of the living and mighty God in its midst.

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This piece is especially for those who like to examine minute details of Scripture—and the Book of Revelation in particular—seeking to glean finer nuances of understanding, resulting in sharper vision of the things revealed.

CORRELATING VISIONS IN REVELATION

Looking at connections between the fifth and sixth trumpet visions, and then between these and the fifth and sixth vial (bowl) visions, as well as Revelation 20, and what these compiled and compared visions reveal, per the best Amillennial commentators

We'll be looking at the following topics – not necessarily in this order, and with some intermingling of them:

- Massive influx of satanic deception: verses, with commentator notes
- Satanic invasion: Relatedness of fifth and sixth trumpets, with commentator notes
- Relatedness of fifth and sixth trumpets with like vials (bowls), with commentator notes
- Commentators on Rev 9:15's "hour day month year" as depicting an historical event

Unusual the correlation between **Revelation 9:1, 2, 16:12-14**, and **Rev 20:1-3, 7**. It's understood by amil scholars that visions which are sequential in the text are not per se *chronologically* sequential, but appear simply as recorded

in the vision narratives. Visions in different parts of Revelation may be talking of the same events simply from different perspectives, as we shall show.

In **Rev 20:1-3** we have this written,

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled . . .

There is the general ongoing deception of individuals as the Gospel goes forth throughout the church age (for not all believe), but not the deception of nations, as the power of the gospel being preached the world 'round had prevented it; but when the gospel preaching is suppressed *globally*, this commences the "little season" when Satan is finally able to deceive nations worldwide.

Contemporary amil commentators are unanimous this binding of Satan occurred at the first advent – specifically during the life, and especially the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Jesus Christ – which commenced the "millennium". Mention is made in **Rev 20 verses 3 and 7** as to when he shall be loosed,

[bound] till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison . . .

Again, these commentators agree this loosing shall be shortly before the Parousia, the return of the King in fiery judgment against the church's persecutors and in love for – and to rescue – His bride.

When this loosing occurs it is implied that Satan will have power to deceive the nations (qua nations) once again, this time attempting to have them destroy all the people of God – the Christians, but including many of the Jews as well – on a global scale. This deceiving power seems congruent with the vision of **Rev 16:14**, where out of the mouth of the devil and the beast come unclean spirits like frogs,

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

This after the symbolic Euphrates River is dried up to allow them to pass over to do their work.

Looking now at **Revelation 9** in light of the above, we see that its visions correspond with the two above. At the beginning of the millennium, which we saw in **Rev 20**, Satan was bound – he and his hosts – from having free reign to unleash the darkness of deception *on a global scale*; then in **9:1 and 2** we read,

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

We see as the vision proceeds that it is an enormous black cloud of demons and their poisonous influence which pour forth from the abyss, and the work they do is deceive – the sun and the air were darkened – and bring spiritual darkness and torment upon the earth and in those men's hearts which had not the seal of God. It is understood that the black clouds of smoke, the sun, and the air, are symbolic of spiritual events and realities, and the collective consciousness of humankind, which was being plunged into psychic and mental darkness, thicker and more grievous than it had been.

So at the beginning of the NT church age we had Satan bound, as a result of the gospel in its power going forth across the world to draw into God's kingdom those who love Christ and keep His word, sealing each one from spiritual harm, impacting multitudes in many nations. Then in **Rev 16:14**, which is near the very end of the age, on the verge of the last battle, called Armageddon, we saw demons going forth in power to bring darkness and deception upon the world, and also in **Rev 9:1, 2** the hordes of Hell are loosed, to bring darkness and deception. It does seem that this is the same spiritual scene we see in **16:14**, and also foretold in **Rev 20:3** and realized in **20:7-9**,

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth . . .

It appears that **Rev 9** mirrors **16:14, 16** and **20:7, 8**, and some interesting and pertinent *new* information will be brought to bear on that shortly. Back to **Rev 9**. There is also a connection between **Rev 9** and **Rev 18:23**, which shall likewise be discussed shortly.

In **Rev 9**, after the spiritual / psychological darkness and torment of the fifth trumpet, comes the sixth trumpet and demonic hordes which not only torment but kill, and *"the third part of men" at that!* These of the sixth trumpet also were "loosed" at the River Euphrates, even as the demons of **16:12-14** appeared after the Euphrates and "the water thereof was dried up", to lead men to war against God and His people. Clearly there is a difference between the one third killed of **Rev 9** and the total destruction which shall ensue upon those who attack God (and His people) in **Rev 16**, though I attribute this to that which is initial, and then what is final, in terms of judgment, i.e., between the judgments of the fifth and sixth trumpets and those of the fifth and sixth bowls or vials. In both these particular trumpets and bowls demonic deception is involved.

An odd note at the end of **Rev 9**: in **v 21**, those men who survived the previous *massive* plagues pounding the earth and its people, would not repent

“of their murders, nor of their *sorceries*, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts” [emphasis added]. For the first time in Revelation we have the word “sorceries”, *pharmakeia*. Keep this in mind, please, as it is significant.

Speaking of the impact of the influx of demons into the human sphere shown in fifth trumpet of Revelation 9, Dennis Johnson says, “*this outbreak of demonic activity among the unbelieving carries the expression of God’s wrath in the course of history to a new level, a first woe.*” (Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, p 149) [emphasis added]

It should be noted that Johnson does not attribute this “expression of God’s wrath in the course of history” to any particular event, save to mention it cannot be the historicist’s “Muslim invasions of Europe (e.g., the Moors in Spain)” (Ibid., p 353). Nonetheless, he says that this *outbreak* is expressed *in history*.

Stephen Smalley commenting on **Rev 9:2**, (Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*; IVP 2005) says,

Verse 2 demonstrates that the divine judgement, which was previously limited to the demonic region, is now being extended to the earthly realm (Beale 494). (p 227)

The full passage of Beale has,

Consequently, the picture in v 2 indicates that the judgment formerly limited to the demonic realm is being extended to the earthly realm. As a result of Christ’s death and resurrection, the devil and his legions have begun to be judged, and now the effect of their judgment is about to be unleashed on unbelieving humanity, who give their ultimate allegiance to the devil.

An essentially identical pattern of widening judgment occurs in 12:7-12; 13:3-8; 16:10; and 17:8 (although in 12:12 ff. the saints are also affected by the extension of judgment in the form of persecution and attempted deception). (G.K. Beale, *New International Greek Testament Commentary: Revelation*, Eerdmans 1999, p 494)

Smalley writes, “Beale (824) suggests that the demonic locust-scorpions of the fifth trumpet (9.3-11) are the agents of the ‘agony’ which is poured out from the fifth bowl. . . . The judgmental action of the fifth angel, despite its figurative and eschatological elements, seems to be expressed in time and space; but it nevertheless anticipates the judgment of the end-time, when weeping and ‘gnashing of teeth’ await the unbeliever (cf. Matt. 8.12; 22.13; 25.30).” (Op Cit, p 406)

The words, “expressed in time and space” indicates this is a departure from the idealist mode* into the actual historical, meaning this symbolic image finds realization as a particular event. (* The modern amillennial hermeneutic method is, as noted elsewhere here, eclectic or modified idealist, which means that in the main Revelation’s symbols are suggestive of spiritual dynamics repeated throughout the church age—recapitulated—but there are exceptions to this when actual historic events are referred to. The eclectic or modified idealism will then depart from the strict idealist view).

Which is to say, there may in hindsight be seen prophesied events occurring in time, as the phrase “which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year” (Rev 9:15) indicates God manifesting in time His specific “woes”—referring here to the massive judgment of the sixth trumpet, which is an outgrowth of the profound, vast deception loosed in the fifth.

This is Beale from his book’s p 824: “Perhaps the demonic scorpions of the fifth trumpet are the agents of the ‘pain’ of the fifth bowl. Like the woe in 9:1-11, the pain (πόνος) in 16:10 may also be linked with the removal of some forms of earthly security, which causes the wicked to focus on their lack of

spiritual security (as is evident from 21:4, where πόνος refers to the ‘pain’ or ‘distress’ of forms of earthly suffering).”

We see Beale here connecting the fifth trumpet and the fifth bowl. We will see him do this again with trumpets and bowls.

* * *

Beale on Rev 16:12

“ . . . the drying up of the Euphrates’ waters is a picture of how the multitudes of Babylon’s religious adherents throughout the world become disloyal to Babylon. Disenchantment with Babylon is a prelude to Babylon’s judgment and the final judgment itself. 17:16-18 states that ‘the kings of the earth,’ the political arm of the wicked world system, will turn against the economic-religious arm and destroy it. The same text implies that Babylon’s destruction begins with the ‘kings of the earth’ dissuading Babylon’s innumerable economic-religious followers from remaining loyal to her.” (p 828)

Beale on Rev 16:14b

The purpose of the deception is “to gather them together for the war of the great day of God Almighty.” The same expression occurs in chs. 19 and 20, where it refers respectively to the beast and the dragon gathering kings together to fight against Christ at his final coming . . . [Rev 19:19; 20:8]

The reference here is probably the same as in chs. 19 and 20: the confrontation between the forces of the beast and Christ at the end of the age. (his larger Commentary, pp 834-835)

Beale on Rev 16:16

The thought of v 14 continues. The demonic spirits deceive the kings “and gather them together at the place” where the war is to occur. The outcome of the war is described in 17:14; 19:14-21; and 20:7-10, where the forces of the dragon and beast are portrayed as destroyed by Christ and God. The place where the battle is to be fought is called “Armageddon.” Like the place names “Babylon” and “Euphrates” so “Armageddon” does not refer to a specific geographical locale, but the whole world. (p 838)

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It is written in **Rev 9** that there are four angels bound in or at the great River Euphrates, and a command given that they should be loosed:

And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men (v 15).

Stephen Smalley remarks,

Beale (507) notes that the reference to the river Euphrates in verse 14 anticipates the battle of the sixth bowl in 16.12-16 (the ‘great River’ features in verse 12); indeed, the sixth trumpet and the sixth bowl seem to depict the same event from different points of view (cf. 9.19). . . . God’s judgement, like his sovereignty, is universal and eternal, but it is discovered historically at particular moments, and it derives from exact and human circumstances. See also on verse 15. (Ibid, p 237)

Please note two things here: first, the sixth trumpet and sixth bowl / vial are considered “the same event” though from different perspectives, perhaps one further in time than the other; and, second, with regard to **the timing of the events** spoken of, they are particular and historic, not – in this case – the

age-long recapitulated dynamics of idealist understanding (as other “eclectic” or “modified idealist” commentators likewise perceive). As above with Dennis Johnson’s “historical expression of wrath,” here we have an event “discovered historically at particular moments”. This is a significant departure from the normal Amillennialist idealism. Smalley continues,

The torment of the first woe is followed up by the widespread killing in the second. The four angel-winds, chained up at the river Euphrates until this moment (see on verse 14), are now ‘released’ to destroy one-third of the human race. . . . These agents ‘had been in readiness’ for the action to follow; and the perfect tense of the verb... *hētoimasmēnoi*, lit. ‘had been prepared’, ‘had been made ready’..., intensifies the notion that the angel-winds were poised to attack at a particular moment in history (cf. Matt 25:34, 41).

They were in readiness for this ‘very hour and day and month and year’. . . . [highlighting] the double truth that God is responsible not only for this judgement but also for its precise timing (see also on verse 14). (pp 237, 238)

With regard to the particular timing of the sixth trumpet, Beale says,

John hears the voice say that the time has now come. The angels are released according to God’s sovereign timetable. The time that these angels are to be released is specified down to the hour to emphasize that “all the forces of history are under the sovereign control of God. He is the Almighty One (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 19:15; etc.).” (p 508)

The last quote by Beale is from Robert H. Mounce’s, *The Book of Revelation (Revised)*. Immediately before this sentence Mounce says,

At the exact moment decreed by God the angels of destruction and their demonic horde will be released upon the human race. (p 195; NICNT edition)

Again, this makes clear that in Rev 9:15 we are dealing with events in time that may be discerned, and if already past in hindsight as historical realities.

With regard to historic timing – of the fifth trumpet in particular – I repeat the earlier quote of Dennis Johnson,

Though limited in duration and severity, this outbreak of demonic activity among the unbelieving carries the expression of God's wrath in the course of history to a new level, a first woe. (Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, p 149)

So far, among the commentators, this “outbreak” “discovered historically at particular moments” has not been discerned, located, or identified.

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Beale says of **the nature of the deception** in Rev 9,

In contrast to the fifth trumpet, the sixth includes death together with deception. Therefore, the sixth trumpet intensifies and develops further the woe of the fifth. The intensification is signified by the fact that, whereas smoke affects people in the fifth trumpet, in the next trumpet they are affected by smoke together with the fire from which it comes. . .

The deception manifests itself partly through the false teachers affirming the legitimacy of some form of idolatry for Christians (cf., e.g., 2:6, 14-15, 20, 21). The harm of deception is also seen as a judgment in the OT and NT generally (e.g., Isa. 6:10-12; 29:9-14; 63:17; Pss. 115:8; 135:18; Rom. 1:18-27; 2 Thess. 2:9-12); the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in Exodus 4-14 is a well-known example. The deceptive facet of the sixth trumpet is implied by its parallels with the sixth bowl, especially the judgment of deception and the manner in which it comes: the pouring out of

the bowl on “the great river, the Euphrates,” results in the coming of “the kings from the east,” and of “three unclean spirits like frogs” coming “out of the mouth” . . . of the dragon, of the beast, and of the false prophet to gather together “the kings of the earth” for battle (16:12-14; so also 17:17; 20:8; cf. 17:8). The equation of the sixth trumpet with the sixth bowl is a natural one, since elsewhere in the Exodus plague tradition the frogs are paralleled with serpents and scorpions as instruments of judgment . . . (p 513)

. . . the demons bring physical death on many whom they have held in a condition of deception, while tormenting and keeping the remainder in such a state. As noted, this means that the sixth trumpet is an escalation of the fifth by its introduction of death, but the sixth trumpet continues to unleash the affliction of the fifth against all the surviving nonelect. (p 517)

So here Beale is connecting the fifth and sixth trumpet judgment visions, saying that the latter intensifies and develops the former. Those familiar with my other writings on this subject will recall that the sorcery-induced influx of demonic influence and presence depicted in the fifth trumpet, over the course of the following half a century gave rise to escalating murderous content in the zeitgeist, so that in this demonically-transformed spirit of the age to take life was to many not a big thing.

I sadly recognise a fulfillment of Beale’s statement where, “false teachers affirming the legitimacy of some form of idolatry for Christians” as deception being a form of judgment, and that upon an online Reformed community dear to me, where the leaders and supposed guardians refused to condemn *in the churches* the world culture’s whole-hearted acceptance of smoking or otherwise ingesting marijuana and its derivatives, tacitly approving it for the people of God, and suppressing warnings against it through censorship. That is a deadly serious matter.

Even after the third of humankind is eradicated from the earth in some major holocaust, the fifth trumpet’s vision signifying deception is continued in the sixth, so that the survivors of the enormous death-toll are still

held in the power of deception, as Armageddon proper draws near. How long between the death of the world's third and the final universal death is unclear; it could be simply a matter of days or weeks, or it could go longer—months? or years? Even after the death of the third, the persecution of the saints will continue, expanding into a *global* persecution and attempted eradication, which is the main component of Armageddon, and which provokes the return of the King to furiously avenge His elect, first calling them up to Himself, and ending the age in flaming fury; upon which is the completion of the resurrection and then final judgment.

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Beale p 503

In the comments on Rev 9:11, he says, “The two names of Satan express his function of utilizing demons so to work among the impious that they will eventually be destroyed by death of body and spirit. The demonic activity lasts only ‘five months’ and is but part of the process of leading to this final macabre goal. The sixth trumpet portrays the completion of this process.”

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Miscellaneous Comments

Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of St John*, p 147, The Sixth Trumpet, Rev 9:13-15

...in the religious consciousness of the Jews and Jewish Christians, the invading enemies of God's people (e.g. the Assyrians, the Babylonians) would have come from beyond the Euphrates. The river will be mentioned again at the pouring out of the sixth bowl (16:12), strengthening the case for essentially the same events being alluded to in the trumpet- and bowl-septets

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Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*

I want to give special attention to D.E. Johnson, because despite his clear statements regarding idealism, he sees the end battle as historic:

Sixth Bowl on the River Euphrates:

Gathering for the Battle (16:12-16)

The sixth bowl reveals preparations for the last battle, the final showdown between God and his enemies... (p 231)

...the drying of the Euphrates that John now sees signals the coming relief and release for the church and defeat for its enemies.

The enemies defeat, however will take them unawares. . . . In fact, they are assembling to meet their own destruction. (p 232)

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William Hendriksen, discussing Rev 20:7-10, wrote,

“ . . . the era during which the church as a mighty missionary organization shall be able to spread the gospel everywhere is not going to last forever; not even until the moment of Christ’s second coming. Observe what is happening in certain countries even today. *Are certain regions of this earth already entering Satan’s little season?*” [emphasis added] (*More Than Conquerors*, pp 194-195)

★ ★ ★

Wm. Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors*, p 122

The sixth angel describes war; not one particular war is indicated but *all* wars, past, present, and future. Yet we are convinced that the symbol refers especially to those frightful wars that shall be waged toward the close of this dispensation.

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William Hendriksen, *Three Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Zondervan, 1949):

The Gospel Age will not last forever. It will come to an end: satan is going to be loosed out of his prison. In thorough consistency with what we have said about the binding of the devil for a thousand years the loosening must refer to the fact that, in God's permissive providence, the period during which the church as a mighty missionary institution publishes the Gospel everywhere will end. This will happen very shortly before the second coming. That this final period during which satan will rage most furiously is going to be of brief duration is emphasized throughout Scripture. Revelation speaks of it as "a little time," 20:3, and clearly indicates that it will be followed immediately by the second coming; verse 11. (p 26)

It is clear from the passage which we are considering—note especially such expressions as "the nations which are in the four corners of the earth," and "they went up over the breadth of the earth," Rev 20:8, 9—that in these final days which shall immediately precede Christ's second coming the opposition to the church is going to be *world-wide*: the entire world, functioning as one great social and political unit under the leadership of antichristian government, will do its utmost to destroy the church. Unto the beast will be given "authority over every tribe and tongue and nation," 13:7.

How far has this program advanced? Where are we today? In this connection one may well ask: has there ever been such a

cry for One World? Think of the Atlantic Pact or of the seriously proposed political unification of the countries of Europe. Moreover, if antichrist should come to-day he would be able to make use of inventions which did not exist a century ago: airplanes whose velocity exceeds the speed of sound, the radio, television, etc. It may be later than we think. There are those who judge that at least for certain regions of the earth satan's "little time" has already begun: think of religious conditions in Russia, for instance. And it should be pointed out that it is certainly not necessary to draw the conclusion that this season of great tribulation for the church of God will begin *simultaneously* in every part of the world. (pp 27, 28)

As can be seen here, Hendriksen looks about his world (circa 1949) and surmises that what he is seeing is likely the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy.

Leon Morris, *Tyndale NT Commentaries: Revelation*, p 129

The vision [of the sixth trumpet] is to be interpreted along the lines of the preceding vision, but everything is greatly intensified.

Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Revelation*,

Rev. 9:12

The three woes succeed one another in increasing intensity: the first woe follows the sounding of the fifth trumpet. It relates the release of demonic forces that are empowered to harm but not to kill for a specified duration. The second woe occurs when the

sixth trumpet is blown. It reports that four angels are released to kill a third of the human race by fire, smoke, and sulfur. The calamities that occur are designed to bring the human race to repentance and faith in God; they call the people to change their sinful ways by turning back to God. **These two woes also instruct the saints to observe the signs of the time, for the end is imminent.** The third woe introduces God's judgment of the dead (11:15b-19). [emphasis added], p 292

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Dean Davis, author of *The High King of Heaven: Discovering the Keys to the Great End Time Debate*; from private email exchange 12.12.2014

Q: Speaking of Rev 9:1-2, when you said on p xx “we find a warning that in the last days Satan [and his army of evil spirits will strive mightily to obscure the truth of God; to cloud the minds of men with errors and lies]” etc, did you mean the idealist entire Gospel period, or the “last of the last days”?

A: *A sharp question. I think it covers the whole Era of Proclamation (see 1 Tim. 4:1f), but since it's the fifth seal and the first of three final woes, there's some “progressivity” here, meaning that this darkening will be especially acute in the last of the last days.*

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Stephen Smalley on Revelation 9:2:

“As long as the shaft [to the abyss of Hell] is sealed, it is implied, earth-dwellers are protected from the demonic powers below (see also verse 4); for the abyss is the place of chaos and destruction, harbouring forces of darkness and death . . . The pit is also a place of tormenting fires . . . When the ‘subterranean smoke-stack’ (Wall 128) is opened, therefore, clouds of smoke pour out;

and agents of terror are released through the shaft to wreak their havoc on the earth.” (Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*; IVP 2005) p 226

“Verse 2 demonstrates that the divine judgment, which was previously limited to the demonic region, is now being extended to the earthly realm (Beale 494).” p 227

“The fifth trumpet-call is designed to challenge the persecutors of the saints, and those who are tempted to compromise with them, to realize that idolatry and syncretism are without hope, and to bring the rebels back to faith. It could also provide a warning to those within John’s community whose understanding of Christian teaching is inadequate, and whose ethical behavior is therefore unworthy, that God’s saving judgments is always breaking into the life of the Church. By contrast, true followers of Jesus experience peace, rather than torment (Phil. 4.7); and, rather than fearing death, they are able to embrace it willingly as a way of entering the presence of their risen Lord (Phil. 1.23).” p 230

★ ★ ★

Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Revelation*,

The following interpretation [of Rev 16:12-16 and the sixth bowl] is offered tentatively as being most in line with the general meaning of the book.

The pouring out of bowl 5 punished the unrepentant by the tribulations of a society thrown out of gear. Things are bad enough when the beast’s kingdom works properly; when its machinery runs amok, they are infinitely worse. Bowl 6 is the next and last stage of the divine punishment, and in it the purposes of God and Satan in a macabre way converge. Having seen his perversion of human society confounded, Satan

says, 'If I can no longer pervert, I will destroy'; and he and the beast and the false prophet inspire the kings of the earth, no longer able to maintain the inconstant balance they call 'peace', to a frenzy of mutual slaughter. Armaments multiply, armies march, and men die—not their kith and kin, but they themselves; for as Trumpet 6 was the last warning, bringing death *before* them, Bowl 6 is the last punishment, bringing death *to* them. But while Satan is saying, 'I will destroy', God is saying, 'So you shall'. Satan's purpose is to assert his power; God's is to prosecute his justice. The result is the same: Armageddon.

Armageddon, therefore, is the end. When 'the great day of God the Almighty' comes, the powers of this world will find themselves suddenly confronted by their rejected Lord, coming as unexpectedly as the quotation of his words come into the chapter at verse 15. That battle will be the last: the torment of the fifth Bowl followed by the destruction of the sixth, as darkness in Egypt was followed by death, on the night of the first Passover.

But though it is to the last day that Bowl 6 chiefly refers, we ought not to forget that whenever destruction comes upon the impenitent sinner, that is for him the 'last day', the end of his world, and the final confrontation with Christ, who comes at all times like a thief, when men least expect him. (pp 149-150)

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Of Hendriksen and Wilcock, Greg Beale said,

The present commentary fits most within the overall interpretive framework of such commentaries as Caird, [A.F.] Johnson, Sweet, *and above all Hendriksen and Wilcock*. (Op. Cit., p 49) [emphasis added]

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Concluding Thoughts on These Visions I Have Shown Some Correlation Between:

We can see in Rev 16:12-14, 16, how that the deception from the dragon, the two beasts, and their demons that led the nations to war against the saints and their God began with the 6th bowl being poured on the Euphrates, drying up the waters, preparing the way for the gathering of the kings to war. The 6th bowl begins with the releasing of the demons to deceive. The question arises: how long did this period of deceiving go on before it was able to mobilize the nations under the kings of the whole world? Was it a quick work, or did it take months, or even years? Was this pouring of the bowl on the Euphrates—and its effects—connected in some way to the 6th trumpet, the angel of which was told by a voice from the altar which is before God, “Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates”, and these angels precipitated the massive killing of one third of humankind. Beale sees a connection between the 6th trumpet and the 6th bowl, and as well a connection between the 5th trumpet and the 6th trumpet. Deception is a common factor in all these symbolic events.

I perceived a half a century between the inception of the 5th trumpet’s deception to its fruition, and then the commencing of the 6th trump’s activity. So far I am but looking in hindsight at things already transpired. Could it be that the deception of the 6th bowl is the fruition of the deceptions of the 5th and 6th trumpets? A trail of deception—though perhaps a stream would better picture it, growing stronger and broader till it overflows the entire world of humans? All this deception involves demons being loosed which affect men to anguish and violence, and the source the “outbreak of demonic activity among the unbelieving [which] carries the expression of God’s wrath in the course of history to a new level, a first woe.” This initial outbreak I have identified and located as the 1950’s, 60’s, and 70’s indulging in sorcery, and exporting it so as to become a global phenomena.

A word on this “sorcery”. The spiritual community of which I am a part—the Reformed—being so enamored of doctrine and the intellectual apprehension thereof, as well the application of it to their lives, appear to

miss *spiritual* phenomena which is not part of their worship, discipline, and godly experience, thus denying the existence of that which they know nothing of. In itself, it is well to be ignorant of such doings, and so without knowledge of the deep things of Satan which were opened in the human realm during the calamitous 1960s and 70s when the countercultures of both the U.S. and U.K. availed themselves of a class of long-forbidden, potent drugs. But now the dragon's eggs, as it were, are hatching, and they do not see the danger (as such little dragons mature exceeding fast).

Safe behind their godly lives, books, and ideas (and they are truly safe, *spiritually*), they do not see the enemy coming in as a flood, not merely in the general ungodly culture, but into the sacred precincts of the Lord's house, for when the laws of the land *legalize* the sorcerous drugs of marijuana, hashish, and derivatives of these two—all of which are immensely more potent than they were in earlier days—and there are no cogent prohibitions against them in His house, then they will come in, defiling it with the demonic presence. In not perceiving the Biblical prohibitions against sorcery, when the civil magistrate okays them they are now acceptable in their eyes. It is a grave error, as they shall find out in the decline of godliness in their church communities—and individual's spiritual lives and psychological wellbeing.

* * *

The amil commentators have differing schemas concerning the relationship of the seals, trumpets and vials to one another. Perhaps the most helpful scholarship on this matter is in Sam Storms' *Kingdom Come*, in chapter 13, "The Book of Revelation and Biblical Eschatology: The Chronology of the Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl Judgments", particularly pages 394-406. He lays out quite a few of the views. Without going into all the minutiae of detail I will give a general idea of how I see it. It should be understood that my seeing the fifth trumpet's vision of immense spiritual and psychic darkness suddenly unleashed being fulfilled by the sorcery of the Beat and Woodstock generations opening the shaft of the abyss is the tether to which my understanding is tied, and by which I am oriented to the other visions. One

might say it is a weak nail upon which to hang my position; however, I can ably defend it, and make fuller sense of the material than others. In truth is a solid and immovable nail, and will prove itself sound.

Seals 1-5 pertain to the entire age. The first four speak of judgments meted upon the wicked for idolatry, wickedness, and persecution of the saints. The fifth is the saints crying to God to avenge their blood unjustly shed. Seal 6 opens a vision of almost the end of the age, just before the second coming. The first four trumpet visions seem to refer to judgments on man's environment: earth, oceans, inland waters, and atmosphere, and for the most part are the results of man's own abuse of his world; for instance, the dangers and the toxicity we have introduced in these respective realms. These appear to have commenced—or at least become full-blown—with the industrial age. Trumpet 5 speaks of a massive influx of demonic influence entering the human sphere, such as darkens the spirits and souls of men—only the unregenerate, as the seal of God protects His children from this “woe” and the resulting torment—and this appears to lead directly to the sixth trumpet and further demonic activity in the human realm, manifesting in mass killing, one-third of humankind to be precise. This has not manifested yet, though we have a lot of nuclear saber-rattling among ungodly and violent world leaders. There is also a growing madness in the world, violence becoming increasingly rampant, world leaders unstable yet steady in their unhingedness.

Such a massive death-toll could be caused by pandemics of disease, or by nuclear exchanges. The death of one-third of humankind would indicate a preliminary major judgment as a prelude to an Armageddon-scale final judgment. The destruction of Babylon headquarters would fit the bill for such a “preliminary” thing. Okay, so this speaks of the sixth trumpet. The commentators, notably GK Beale (and others after him), see this sixth trumpet judgment as leading into the sixth vial, which is Revelation 16's Armageddon. Interestingly, the darkness of the 5th trumpet is similar to the 5th vial's: “And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat [or throne] of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness” (Rev 16:10).

How does all this relate to the “little season” of Satan being loosed to gather all nations to war against the saints and their God? This “little season” of

Satan is contemporaneous with the silencing, criminalizing, and violent actions against the global church of Christ. It is written of Babylon that she was “drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Rev 17:6). Perhaps she is the precursor to a broader violent persecution of the saints. We will unmistakably recognize Babylon flying her colors when we see this.

My “exegetical basis” is rather standard, and I follow the commentators above (plus some others) fairly closely, with the exception of my view—and exegesis—of *pharmakeia* / sorcery being a key interpretive tool in the interpretation of the latter trumpets, vials, Babylon, and Armageddon. Not that I really differ from them, but that I fill in much that they leave blank.

Challenging convention is sometimes necessary to break new light.

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THOUGHTS ON THE FOURTH AND FIFTH VIAL (BOWL) JUDGMENTS OF REVELATION 16

Dennis E. Johnson, in his commentary on Revelation, *Triumph of the Lamb*, when introducing the bowl judgments, says, “As the bowls belong to the symbolic dialect in which John’s visions bring their message, so also the effects of the outpoured bowls are conveyed in symbolic impressions, not photographic reproductions.” (p 224)

The Scripture on the fourth vial reads,

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory (Rev 16:8, 9).

I must admit I am not clear about the issues of climate change and global warming, the conflicting reports confusing, so I take no sides in the matter. What I do know is that all agree the earth’s climate *is* warming, though whether due to human actions or apart from them, or a mixture of the two, I do not know, and many scientists are not clear either. And from John’s words we are to understand it will increase *greatly*—though through what *causes* we are in the dark about, save that God will see to it.

We see that John prophesies in the passage above the heat of the sun will become very intense upon the earth. Yet it must also be remembered that the images depicted in Revelation are “conveyed in symbolic impressions, not photographic reproductions”, so we do not know exactly what to expect. Only hindsight will tell us clearly. Still, it does seem that painfully increasing heat will be our lot. We will all be observing what happens as the months and years go by.

Then we have the fifth vial:

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds (Rev 16:10, 11).

As I noted in *The Fate of Babylon*, G.B. Caird, in his commentary, *The Revelation of Saint John*, says of the fifth vial of wrath,

“The **darkness** was not the three days’ visitation of Exodus x. 21 ff., nor even the paralysing terror so vividly described in Wisdom xvii, but *the total eclipse of the monster’s imperial power*” (p 204) [italicized bold emphasis added]. What is especially interesting about this is that for the destruction of Babylon the mighty Beast-nation that she rides and by whose power she prevails upon the nations, must be suddenly made defenseless (the spirit and power of the Beast—which is from the dragon—is evidently transferred then to another nation or nations), leaving harlot Babylon herself defenseless and vulnerable—to attack and destruction.

Dennis Johnson says in *Triumph of the Lamb*,

The beast's reign has always been shrouded in spiritual darkness . . . This palpable [present bowl's] darkness thus exposes the beast's rule for what it is, a domain of delusion and confusion. John has noted elsewhere that guilty people love darkness for the cover it offers for their evil deeds . . . Yet the beast's followers find no comfort in the darkness of his domain, but only a disorienting anguish that makes them chew their tongues in despair . . .

. . . The world system's center of power, the beast's Oval Office, cannot be insulated from the wrath of God, who will expose the devil's darkness for all to see. (p 230)

The fourth vial seems to foretell a world overheating to a lethal degree. Are the world's recent extreme heat-waves a precursor of worse to come? The fifth vial talks of darkness overwhelming the seat—or throne—of the beast. The ancient city of Pergamos was once—because of its political-spiritual associations—called by Jesus “Satan’s seat” (Rev 2:13). The Beast’s headquarters in the end time is given the same designation.

It may very well be the “darkness” of the vial is not merely symbolic of demonically induced psychological anguish and socio-political chaos, but could also be speaking of that which many hands are striving to accomplish: the taking down of America’s power grid. This sort of darkness—whether it come from “natural” (solar?) causes or man-made (cyber?) activity—in conjunction with extreme heat would literally fry us, especially in summer.

And not just fry, but—as so many fictional scenarios of the chaos resulting from a loss of electricity have envisioned—a descent into a nation-wide madness and agony hard to imagine. What kind of relief hard-pressed government forces could muster—if any—is unknown. It would probably make Cormac McCarthy’s horror story, *The Road*, look tame.

As Babylon’s doom was falling, a voice from heaven said, “How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her” (Rev 18:7). And how much grief and suffering she has inflicted

upon the nations of the earth, render that to her as well. So Babylon will suffer before her end, and the nations' "tumultuous peoples that have served the beast and lusted after his whore" (Johnson, p 236) with her, though less than she who allured and seduced them.

Such prophetic vision will not be taken seriously—even by many who believe the Scriptures!—until it comes to pass. What protection can there be? These two bowl visions would seem to be poundings that fall upon Babylon before her finale. The only protection I know—so unforeseeable will things on earth be—is to walk closely with Christ. Seek Him, friends who read this book, for He may be found in these days of grace, which is His undeserved favor.

Nor can it be told how long till such things come to pass. Consider, it took around 50 years from the time of the dimensional gateway opening between the demonic and the human realms through the widening use of sorcery—the psychedelic potions of the sixties counterculture—for the spiritual darkness of Revelation 9's fifth trumpet judgment to reach the level of psychological devastation it now has. We presently see the next "woe": the spirit of murder—unrestrained killing—presently at work in ISIS and in "lone wolf" attacks the world around. For the sixth trumpet of Rev 9 to reach fulfillment one third of the world's population must die, most likely in the conflagrations of war, though pandemics of lethal disease could do the job as well.

It may be that the destruction of Babylon, and possibly the Jewish State along with her, could be that "one third", in which case these words would subsequently be read only in other parts of the world. But Babylon and the State of Israel may not be those wiped out—it may be others, and possibly through disease.

In any case, the half century it took for the fifth trumpet to be well-realized did accelerate the madness possessing the leaders of the world—just look at the U.S. elections for president in 2016, and the goings on of other leaders around the world!—as well as the people, for the descent into moral evil has moved rapidly, even in just a few years. Things may happen—may change

—more quickly than we expect. So who is to say that it will be soon—a few years—for whose Babylon to morph into the blood-drinking murderess of Christians (Rev 17:6), or long—a few or more decades—of dystopian oppression for her to reach her apex of iniquity? But when she does, that will be the sign her destruction is imminent, and our full redemption near.

As the Lord Jesus said, “Watch and pray.” Be alert, vigilant, aware of the times—and stay near to Him, communing with Him intimately, that you not be taken unawares when “Men’s hearts [are] failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:26). Be sure you are knit closely into a Bible-believing church, under the life-giving word and Spirit of God—even if that exposes you as being one of the despised “Christians”, for they only shall survive the wrath that shall be loosed from Heaven. The resurrection will prove the promise that not a hair of your heads shall be harmed (Luke 21:18). The just shall live by faith.

The sixth bowl—Revelation 16:12-14, 16—is also of great interest, but I have spoken of it above and below, and in the section Armageddon, in the brief chapter named, “Images of Armageddon”, so I will not speak of it here.

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THOUGHTS ON SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE PREMILLENNIAL AND AMILLENNIAL VIEWS

I want to express these thoughts to the end of bringing our camps closer together, for we do have some strong agreements, particularly as regards the very end of the age. We usually clash with reference to the identity of Israel, and of the Church, and also concerning the thousand years, whether it be literal and earthly, or symbolic and heavenly yet impacting earth. The timing of the rapture another area of dispute.

But to skip those points of difference for a moment, let me get to where we are pretty close in understanding. I bring this up because the premil folks (and particularly the Dispensational) are very sharp in picking up that America is latter-day Babylon (*I would say its headquarters*), and that events do indicate major conflicts and judgments are in the wings. They also have sharp discernment re deviation from Biblical spirituality in these days—I think of Lighthouse Trails, for example (except for its eschatology, or identity of Israel)—when many others seem to be pretty much asleep. So I want to let these folks know how much I love and value them.

About these days we're in . . . something is clearly afoot, both across the land, and “in the air”. Regarding this “air”, I’m not talking about rumors and ideas of conspiracy theorists, etc—though they should not be laughed at, but seriously considered—but rather what’s called the zeitgeist or “spirit of the age”. There’s something in *this* air—the collective consciousness of our American society—that is becoming increasingly demonic fast, and

few know the main source of the influx of this spirit. And the only place I see it accurately spoken of is among you Dispys! The Reformed are mostly (though not entirely) out-to-lunch on this!

Of course I am talking about the *pharmakeia* connection, of which the Revelation of John speaks four times (Galatians once, and numerous times in the Greek OT), the primary one at Rev 18:23: judgment is said to come on Babylon, “for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.” In that one phrase is a horrible, world-shattering development!

It took fifty years for the seething cauldron of humankind’s collective consciousness to be well-leavened with the satanic inpouring that started back in the fifties and sixties, like thick black smoke bellowing out of the abyss into the air and blotting out the sun (Rev 9:1-6). Half a century! I don’t know how long till we see whore Babylon “drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Rev 17:6), but when we do her transformation will have been completed, and her vast destruction near. For us, that will mean we go down with her, and rise in spirit to be with our Saviour.

About the thousand years, it’s a special number in Scripture, and it means completeness to the nth degree, as in Psalm 50:10, where all the beasts of the forest are His, and “the cattle upon a thousand hills”—not *only* a thousand, but *all* the hills in the world. The thousand years are *all* the years of the church age, from Christ’s first coming till right before His second.

A literal thousand years in earthly Jerusalem makes *three* distinct ages, this present time, the supposed Jerusalem reign age, and then the eternal age, whereas Jesus—who spoke of *two* ages *only*—when talking of the one who blasphemes against the Holy Ghost, said this sin “shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world [age], neither in the world to come” (Mt 12:32). He said it again in Lk 18:29, 30; Lk 20:34, 35; and Mt 13:39, 40, 49 (cf. Eph 1:21). He repeatedly says there are only two ages—not three! The 1,000 year “age” of an earthly Jerusalem reign of Christ contradicts clear statements of Scripture.

The two witnesses of Rev 11 aren’t two individual prophets working wonders, but symbols of the legally established testimony of the church (in the

mouths of two or three witnesses a thing is established as true), symbolic just as the temple and measuring rod in the first and second verses are symbolic. The 1,260 days / 42 months / 3½ years or times are the period of tribulation for the church—along with the power of God’s word manifested—throughout the age, three and a half years well known to Israel for such affliction, as in the days of Elijah (James 5:17), or the ravages of Antiochus Epiphanes, or the ministry of our Saviour. These time periods are likewise symbols. This entire evil age (Gal 1:4) is the period of the two witnesses’ testimony. And their prophecy will be realized in fiery destruction at the judgment for those who seek to hurt them, with plagues and droughts and famines now, for the prayers of the afflicted saints unto God result in these judgments upon the wicked of the world continually.

In Rev 12:5ff we understand that the woman “clothed with the sun . . . and upon her head a crown with twelve stars” was Israel who gave birth to Christ, who was then triumphantly caught up to heaven and away from the smitten, mortally wounded dragon in his wild death-throes. She (now transformed into the NT people of God) then fled into the wilderness 1,260 days, to be fed and nourished 3½ years and protected from the face of the serpent, the great dragon. In verse 17 this persecution continues, until in Rev 13:7 it was given to the beast to overcome her seed, the saints. This 3½-year period continues throughout the age, and, while the dragon warred on the saints all through it, only at the end is it given him to completely prevail, as Rev 20:3, 7-9 shows. (But this prevailing is in appearance only, for in truth we rise again in triumph and glory, as written in Romans 8:36, 37.) With you folks, I think we are very near the end now. I don’t think WWIII is about to commence (perhaps reflecting the 6th trumpet, where one third of the world’s people are killed) quite yet, as some conspiracy buffs are now trumpeting. What happens after the fiasco election may give some indication of where things may head, God sovereign over which wicked ruler is over us as our doom nears.

I think it a poor move, the idea to take up arms against the massive fire-power of the government, and one that will backfire on the larger peaceful Christian community. I have spoken of this in the chapter, “Provoking The

Beast—By Armed Resistance”, in the Armageddon section. Christians have *spiritual* weapons with which to wage this warfare.

In Rev 11 again, we have in verse 7 that picture of the final rising of the beast to war against the saints and overcome them. The same event from other angles is in Rev 13:7; 16:12-14, 16; 19:11-21; and 20:3, 7-9. We see the same thing in parallel accounts. The rapture itself is seen in Rev 11:11, 12, the murderers of the saints seeing them made alive again and standing on the earth before they are raised Heavenward, which terrifies them as at that moment they realize their testimony was true. And then the Lord from heaven says, Come up here!, and they go up to Him, and the last trumpet sounds.

All this to say that the symbolic understanding (I was Dispy many years) is not vague liberal “spiritualizing” away of Biblical truths, but a better way of seeing what is actually happening. In Rev 9 the 5th trumpet’s symbolic vision of the massive opening of the interdimensional gateway between the demonic and human realms beginning at Woodstock is true to life, and a clear picture (see the chapter, “New Insights in Amillennial Eschatology”). The same with the 6th trumpet, and the bowls / vials as well.

About Israel: the booklet, *A Poet Arises In Israel*, here in the larger book, addresses the identity of that nation. The chapters, “SPIRITUAL IDENTITY THEFT: Stealing God’s Gift” and “Israel Has *Not* Been Replaced By The Church” go into this. Peter, after Pentecost, in quoting from Deut. 18:18, 19 as he spoke to the people in Jerusalem, rendered it, “And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:22, 23), made a clear decree that *cut off from the nation* all who rejected Messiah. That decree stands to this day. Apostate Jewry is not God’s Israel. Only in Christ is a Jew re-grafted into the now *international* Israel of God.

What is the meaning then of the return in 1948? Only God knows. Perhaps it is to be a threshing floor of judgment at the end of days, the wheat from the chaff. At the end, when the 6th trumpet sounds one third of the earth’s people shall be killed—could headquarter Babylon’s demise be part of that?

And the State of Israel? Many *yearn* to utterly destroy both of these nations. This is when we see “Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth...” (Luke 21:26). When men see Israel nuked (if this is what will happen), it shall be clear the end is nigh. What was thought certain is now gone! And when the U.S. is destroyed there will be no mistaking it!

The Israel of God can never be destroyed, for resurrection changes everything. We die only to rise again. Imposter Israel goes to Gehenna when destroyed. How important to herald the Good News to that people before the great wars of the end!

Please, let it not be said that the amils are off in some effete spiritual realm of delusion! At least let it not be said of *me*!

How long will it be for things to start happening? On the one hand, the Lord said for us not to try to know the day or the hour, which would include month and year also. On the other hand, we can see the devil’s forces moving into place. Things have moved so quickly these past five years, who knows what two years down the road will bring? Though it could be decades. I have no hope in any of the political folks, for it is written, “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Rev 12:12). Whatever man or woman is not sealed with the Spirit of the living God will be subject to the strong delusion promoted by the wicked one (2 Thess 2:11), and filled with a foulness of spirit come from hell. Those unsealed will become enraged like their father the devil. All unregenerate will be unpredictable (even our dear family members), and liable to extreme changes.

To the inhabitants of the earth the antichrist—the beast—will be a hero! He will be the leader of those who “take counsel together against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us” (Ps 2:2, 3). This foul one will tap into the zeitgeist, with all its hatred of the law of God and teachings of Christ, with its rage against the police and all authority, and will revile heaven and the Lord Jesus and

the people of God as no one has ever done, with great bravery and boldness, appearing most winsome to the hell-bound perishing as satan fills the air and unprotected hearts with his madness. Many will *love* the beast for his ferocious stand against Christ and the saints, and his verbal reviling of them.

Then will the visions of the artists, such as made *I Am Legend*, and *World War Z*, come to be realized, not in these intuitive fantasies, but as the crazed hordes of Christ- and Christian-haters go “up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city” (Rev 20:9), killing and looting the world around, much as Haman thought to do to Mordecai’s people in ancient days. It is at this juncture that the Lord will appear in heaven with a shout to call His people up. The wicked remaining on the earth, already terrified, will yell “to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev 6:16, 17). And it will be over. We will go through it. Prepare your hearts. Cultivate your intimate walk with Christ, and help your families and friends do the same.

An eschatology that won’t sit down and keep quiet has made itself known, upending things thought sure. It won’t speak with words, but with happenings worldwide, confirming what God has spoken—we seeing it with our very eyes.

A Closer Look at Some Details

Revelation 19:11-21 shows “the battle” of the great day of God Almighty at the end of the age (cameos of this battle—also known as Armageddon—shown many times in Scripture); aspects of this same battle can also be seen in Rev 20:8, 6:12-17, 11:7-12, 13:7, 16:12-14, and 17:14, to mention only the NT data.

In Rev 19:20 we see the beast and false prophet cast into the lake of fire at the end of this battle, and, in Rev 20:8-10—the very same battle seen from a different “camera angle” as it were—we again see the destruction of the armies opposing the King of Heaven, and now the devil cast into the lake

of fire. So—compiling these two visions of the final battle—we understand that the deceptions of Satan, beast, and false prophet are working in tandem, who also are, at the denouement of the same battle, together cast into the lake of fire.

What we see here is the *parallelism* operating through much of the Book of Revelation; the same events are re-shown from different vantages and with different emphases. Mostly what is shown are not events but dynamics—such as tribulation / persecution of the church, warnings, and then judgments as they occur throughout the church age—a recapitulating in different visions God’s dealings with man, and man’s rebellion.

I do *not*—as our premil brethren and friends—see progressive events of history taking place, in chronological fashion, as some see in the Rev 19 and 20 battle visions. Though there *is* a dramatic progressive intensification of rebellion, idolatry, and judgment as the very end of time draws near, and the increases of wickedness and resulting judgment are shown from seals to trumpets to vials, though some commentators have slightly different takes on the parallel activities depicted by seals, trumpets, and vials.

That said, there may be seen in hindsight prophesied events occurring in time, as the phrase “which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year” (Rev 9:15) indicates God manifesting in time His specific “woes” upon earth—here referring to the massive judgment of the sixth trumpet, which is an outgrowth of the profound, vast deception loosed in the fifth trumpet.

Regarding the deceiving activity of Satan both during and after the amil’s millennial period, some ask how can he deceive if he is bound in the abyss spoken of in 20:1-3? John spoke of this deceiving and receiving the mark of the beast in Rev 13, so this deceiving activity has been happening even in the time of John’s writing the Apocalypse. There is a general ongoing deceiving, not *yet* overlapping with the specific final period of deceiving spoken of in 20:3, 7-9 (and 16:13, 14, 16), which latter deceiving pertains strictly to the time after the thousand years are ended (Rev 20:3, 7). This latter deception involves not the general deceiving of individual souls throughout the

thousand year NT church age but instead the nations qua nations *after* the thousand years (as the power of the gospel being preached the world ‘round had prevented it, but the gospel preaching was then suppressed, commencing the “little season” of Satan’s final deceiving of nations).

So there is the general deception of individuals, which Satan is allowed, and the latter deception of nations, which he is *not* allowed until the very end. 19:20 speaks of the general deceiving *as well as* the nations’ deceiving. 20:3, 7-9 speaks only of the nations’ deceiving. Where the two mentions of deceiving in these respective passages run parallel is in the preparation and execution of the final battle; Rev 16 and 20 pertain strictly to the nations, though 19:20 includes the entire church age (the 1,000 years), *and after it* (the “little season” Rev 20:3, 7). The former do not include the thousand years.

The activity of the beast and false prophet take place throughout the thousand years, and after it—from John’s day till the very end—until they are thrown into the lake of fire. But they, like their infernal head, the dragon, do not have power to deceive *over the nations as such* while the gospel is going forth breaking the powers of darkness across the world. They do, however, have power to deceive individuals during the thousand years, and this is their activity in that period. Now when that 1,000 years is finished, and the dragon is loosed for his “little season”, they have power with him to deceive nations.

They—this hellish “trinity”—are working together to gather the nations to the battle against God, and the form it takes is the persecution and killing of His people, the church—in which He dwells. Yes, the persecution of God’s people has happened all through the church age, but at the end it will be global, and an attempt at final, total eradication. This occurs during the “little season” of Satan’s being loosed. The “he gathered” of 16:16 refers to the Lord, bringing all His opponents to “*the battle*” to face their doom, and then eternal judgment.

POET OF THE LORD – TAKING A STAND, USA 2016

WALKING DOWN

*the hill in the deep
dusk
my daughter
in my arms
in the midst of the ancient
aeon of man
I stand
a strange
thrill
in my breast
something about the eternal
weight of evening
on this hill
something about the sorrow
and glory
of man
as I hold my diamond-eyed child
in my hands
high above this treacherous
and terrible land
and I know
I know*

*I must
make my stand.*

-1975

You may glean from the following how it is I stand. A few moments ago I read Kenneth Rexroth's essay on Patchen, "Kenneth Patchen – Naturalist of the American Nightmare", and I ponder how I should now sing, who carry the torch of Patchen and Henry Miller (as in his book, *Time of the Assassins: A Study on Arthur Rimbaud*). Nuances of this stand, vis-à-vis these men, and some others, abound in this book I write.

A good image is Tolkien's, the Shadow of Mordor casting its pall about the globe like a plague-infested shroud, spreading darkness and death where it falls. This is beyond politics, beyond mere human savagery, beyond the vision of the poet-prophets – Ferlinghetti, Kerouac, Corso, Ginsberg and howling company – this is a *dark* time, masquerading as normal life, but we all know something's so wrong we can't even clearly think about it, for whose vision is broad enough and deep enough to contain and see it for what it is? The multifarious madness seems *beyond* all containment.

Looking through the eyes of ancient Hebrew seers to discern and spot the fallen monster inflaming the living dead (we've talked of zombies previously) into warring against the robust living and their outlawed king (in Death-World Jesus' truth and name are forbidden). You also have a beef with that name? Then eventually you'll join the ranks of the nightwalkers and be berserking your way through the dark. When that Light shines terror will strike you down, save you seek His mercy while it is given. Although it eludes the notice of many, we really are players in a story of the greatest horror, and there is a great saving *from* it.

Of course there is also political evil afoot, and this is at the influence of that same horror – the *real* "he who must not be named", though we fear not to name the demon shattered at the bloody tree – and all across the world the bane of his failing breath yet hardens hearts and steels bloody resolves of

oppression and blood-thirst, and as it is the powers *behind* the visible that count, here the stands one takes also count, for one side or the other.

Can a follower of Jesus Christ *take* a cogent, credible stand among poets and seers in these days of our – *humanity's* – deepest trouble? If any hear my voice and see my vision and just one soul turns *from* the endless horror abyss nearing and *to* the Light that shall bathe New Earth and Heaven and is here even now before that wondrous time, my stand will have been worth it. But one soul! Though I think there may be more than that. And there is more than the abyss of eternity to fear—there is the white heat of an anger, a fiery indignation, of the infinite dignity and majesty despised and offended.

The thing is, I'm not a religious type, but a desperado occultist-poet warrior-priest rescued from that abyss in the Void, and from the fierce anger, and rescued again from the house of feeble, broken preachers and “the thinnest of soups” they served, to the open street, cathedral sky, and robust fare of hearty bread and wine.

*Where are Whitman's wild children,
where the great voices speaking out
with a sense of sweetness and sublimity,
where the great new vision,
the great world-view,
the high prophetic song
of the immense earth
and all that sings in it
And our relations to it –*

Ferlinghetti said those words (emphasis added), and now (2016) he's 97 and right on the edge of eternal regions, and I have called out to him with my own high prophetic song and great new vision, though I say it is not mine but the Christ I serve – valid and true *and crucial* for especially this age of the early 21st century.

And my old dear friend and elder brother, Dylan, whose voice early on taught me of my own voice, and how to sing – but a year older than I – Hey,

Bobby, which way you goin'? The Day is coming soon, and only the blood of the Passover Lamb – you know, the Lamb of God John cried of as He walked the river bank – will hold off that angel of death. Which way you goin' – over to glory? – where the young and eternal King is the light of the city, *He* the majesty we ourselves shall partake of when the river of life and ever-new love flows into all His bride's heart that will pale all the notions of paltry glory and love this dying earth afforded.

You on the train bound for glory, friend? For a long while I didn't know—had my doubts—but reading that book, *The Political World of Bob Dylan*, I came to believe you are. Which does my heart good, seein' as all the good you did me (and many others) bore fruit.

There are terrible times coming, and torment unspeakable for those who give their hearts to the dark lord. The Glad Tidings are that Christ bore that eternal torment for us, but only if we be one of His loves, and if you're faltering, please turn to Him right quick, as the time is *really* short—as you can tell from this book, if one falls into your hands. Thank you, Bobby, for all your heart and songs!

Taking a stand with a voice speaking true. No man of letters, I – a simpleton come out of the wilds up behind Woodstock in the mountains—Overlook and Indian Head—but with the Spirit who hears the heart that cries,

....Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me.... (John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I, 17-19)

Instruct me that I see what is, what is coming, and how we should meet it, those who trust in Your name, You who are the strength of our hearts.

Though I be old now – a young 74 – grant me the courage and the wit to bear a good witness to what is true, and eternally enduring, even in the face of threat, blood, bars, pain, death – whatever the devil and his tools throw my way.

May I not sully that name which is most excellent in all the earth by my life, words, and death! May my stand reflect Yours, reflect *You*.

CRY OF THE POETS FOR A POET — IN THE TOWER OF VISION

Louis Simpson wrote in his poem, “The Redwoods”,

*O if there is a poet
let him come now!*

And Lawrence Ferlinghetti in “Populist Manifesto”,

*Where are Whitman’s wild children,
where the great voices speaking out
with a sense of sweetness and sublimity,
where the great new vision,
the great world-view,
the high prophetic song
of the immense earth
and all that sings in it
And our relations to it . . .*

And Henry Miller in his study on Rimbaud (circa 1946), *The Time Of The Assassins*,

Art is something which stirs men’s passions, which gives vision,
lucidity, courage and faith. Has any artist in words of recent

years stirred the world as did Hitler? Has any poem shocked the world as did the atomic bomb recently? Not since the coming of Christ have we seen such vistas unfolding, multiplying daily. What weapons has the poet compared to these? *Or what dreams?* Where now is his vaunted imagination? Reality is here before our very eyes, stark naked, but where is the song to announce it? Is there a poet of even the fifth magnitude visible? I see none. I do not call those poets who make verses, rhymed or unrhymed. I call that man poet who is capable of profoundly altering the world. If there is such a poet living in our midst, let him declare himself. Let him raise his voice! But it will have to be a voice which can drown the roar of the bomb. He will have to use a language which melts men's hearts, which makes the blood bubble. (pp 37, 38)

What are we to make of such sentiments? Truly there is the acknowledgment that a Poet – capital P – has not been around for a while, one might even say centuries – and this bespeaks a humility in those quoted. For who is sufficient for such things?

Ezra Pound said, “Artists are the antennae of the race”, and as this is about poetry let's stick with them; *are* there any with

*the great new vision,
the great world-view,
the high prophetic song*

Ferlinghetti called for? Antennae are figurative for seeing, sensing, that which is, or is coming. *This* what is cried for. A poetry of vision – of the human condition, past, in this moment, and to come – of prophetic sight, a genuine seeing what is real.

What *is* the human condition? What *is* the nature of our existence? I mean, are we (as some say) just skin-and-bone-bags of liquid and chemicals and

our consciousness but the effervescent froth of electrical-chemical exuberance, on an earth red in tooth and claw in a random universe – our own selves red in tooth and claw with regard to our fellow men and women? Then poetry were for nought, save trifling distraction.

I have elsewhere said that a Poet, one whose antennae work, a Laureate, must be triple crowned: of the people's love, of the muse's favor, and God's crown of immortality and righteousness. But there are problems with all three.

The people's love? Which people? All? The world 'round? Henry Miller *did* take Christ's name on his lips, yet I doubt he would love a poet who *belongs* to the Lord Christ, and faithfully holds forth *His* vision and commands. I mean, when Jesus was on earth He was *hated* by many, and His faithful people were much *hated* throughout the ensuing centuries. And, as Miller put it, a poet who "makes the blood bubble" – but bubble how? With excitement, awe, and love? Or killing rage?

Which people? Well, for starts, those who appreciate true speaking from deep places within the human condition, from the reality of authentic consciousness even if dark yet seeking light.

Or those who love the Light of the world, even if the darkness threaten such sacred affection with menace and wrath. So what people's love? That humanity which shall endure the cleansing fire of holy vengeance when it consumes those who destroy us for our love and loyalty to God and His Christ, and destroying also His Earth. What, loved by only *Christians* (and those godly patriarchs and Jews before their Messiah came)? If indeed Christ is the Creator of heaven and earth, and as it is written,

**The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof;
the world, and they that dwell therein (Ps 24:1)**

then those who love Him, both ancients before Messiah's time in the flesh and those, Jew and Gentile both, *after* He came, these are indeed the new and redeemed humanity (redeemed from eternal ruin, and from the power

and guilt of sin), and the love of these shall crown that Poet who sings best the Lord of glory, of the days we are now in, the days that are to come – *and our lives therein*.

I have seen those, even true saints of God, who say we cannot know what is to come with any specificity, only in vague generalities. I differ, and the proof shall be in the terrible pudding (some of it in vision served herein)!

The “muses’ favor”? This means simply the Poet knows how to sing, and sing well, who prays from the heart as Milton did:

....Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me....

–John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I, 17-19

One whom the Lord of poets has gifted with “heart-music, and true speech” sufficient to thrill the hearts of His people with courage, faith, and love in times of disaster and suffering. With truth in the time of strong delusion and wicked deception. With fidelity even if it costs *the* cost.

“God’s crown of immortality and righteousness”? What’s that? Simply that any Poet truly called such, capital P, has God’s Spirit dwelling within him or her, and His word illumining his mind; has eternal life; has the friendship of Jesus; walks according to the commandments of God the Son, availing himself of the blood of cleansing for failure in moral perfection (who doesn’t so fail?); sees by the prophecies of Scripture things that are coming, and with sanctified wisdom understanding the times.

A lot of stuff has to fall in place all at once for these three to converge on a soul, rarity upon rarity. Nor could this be a goody-two-shoes unfamiliar with the profound failure that makes an antihero cut a swath of darkness across lives of loved ones, yet rescued and redeemed from this dark way, and in turn shedding forth this redeeming light.

WILL EVER A GREAT POET

visit this earth again?
And if so
what will he/she be like?
Will they be ignorant
of drugs
and the places our heads go
thereby?
Will they be ignorant
of the road
and this generation of pilgrims,
ignorant of the rape
of our earth
by the “respectable,”
ignorant of true speech
and heart music,
ignorant of how we yearn
and suffer,
how we are besieged by madmen
in costumes,
how we love
at grave peril
to our hearts?
Will they be academic stiffs
too dry to swallow,
or will they be loved
by us?

Why must an antihero, rescued from darkness, really from archetypal depths in the abyss of the heart, have that background to qualify for the Laureate crown? First, ‘cause that’s the way it is; second, ‘cause he that is forgiven much loves much (see Gospel of Luke 7:36 ff.); third, ‘cause it were needful that the depths of the human heart be exposed, and seen in all its wretchedness; fourth, ‘cause no one else wanted the job; and last, ‘cause

how else could we understand from what great depths of eternal misery we – those who love the light and come to it – were redeemed, as well the unfathomable ransom price given for our souls?

★ ★ ★

O who can sing in these days of blood, mayhem, and lies
where our sacred humanity – however demon distorted –
is put through the meat grinder of hard-hearted religionists
and others whose god is avarice
and those who love the thrill of power
each to fashion the world according to their foul fancies?

I remember what Bertolt Brecht said,

In the dark times, will there also be singing?

Yes, there will be singing.

About the dark times

So these are indeed grist for the mill, yet also
there is light and glory
– not seen by all – but so much the more
needful to sing it

and this song especially is hated
calling for adherence (as it does)
to the laws of a *sacred* humanity

and many hate all law save that warranting
lawlessness
and when lawlessness *is* law
many will be the law-abiding

How weird it is when to sing the glory of Jesus Christ
draws sentences of death
brutal muggings and executions
or imprisonment on desolation row

still and all, the High Priest and King
looks upon His creation
to see who love and serve Him
and who hate Him and His people
that faithfully hold to His laws

of Him it is well to sing, even if
it means going from this world in a storm
of blood and pain

for so He also went
and we who follow Him
may do likewise
if so called.

It is not always popular being a Poet!
Or witnesses to the God of glory and love.

★ ★ ★

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY OF THE IMAGINATION

“Our imaginations are contested ground, pulled and wooed and shaped by competing stories about ‘the good life,’ tempted and attracted by affective pictures of what counts as ‘flourishing.’ The way to our hearts is through our imaginations, and the way to our imaginations is story, image, symbol, song...

“But because we miss the affective, non-conscious way that we ‘get’ stories—and the ways such stories can incorporate us into disordered social bodies—we will tend to simply fail to see where the battle lies. The irony, Budde concludes, is that ‘the commercial “orchestrators of attention” ... are winning a contest that church leaders scarcely recognize as underway.’³⁴

...

“The formative power of cultural narratives cannot be adequately met or countered with mere didactics. Counterformation requires countermeasures that capture our imagination and don’t just convince our intellect. (*Why should the devil get all the best stories?*)” [Emphasis added]

—James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, pp 162-3

There really is a battle raging, for the most part below the awareness of many; I know people – who profess a living faith in the story Scripture tells of Jesus Christ – whose imaginations are in captivity to the marvelous tales

of Babylon, and they live in rapturous thrall to the excitement of these stories. As far as *the true story of Earth* goes, it doesn't do much for them, heart- and thrill-wise. To the reality of what goes on spiritually within them and in the world around them they are mostly dead, or at least deadened.

The imagination is like the stomach; you feed it rich fare till it is sated, and it has no more appetite for a while. When we *continually* take in the high-tech-enhanced sagas of earthly (or unearthly) prowess, genius, drama, and glory, what room is there for the lower-key but immeasurably potent and heart-rending *true stories* of lightbearers wending their painful ways through the gauntlet of demon-infested societies as they aim for the City of God, presently off-world?

I have to admit I also love the sci fi and fantasy genres – whether in book or film – yet I love more the presence of Him who gives me vision to see where I'm going, and heart to stay near Him, reflecting His Spirit and vision to those I encounter on my pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage. This ain't my home. Well, it will be, when death, tears, illness, toxins, and evil are done away with, and Earth filled with such high glory that the power of His love in it would be hard to bear did not the King give us new hearts to receive it. But now it's a hold of devils seeking to fulfill the old agenda of a Christ- and Christian-free earth so they may have the dark prince worshipped with all manner of blasphemous and foul wickedness.

Those saints caught up in the Babylonian arts and their thrall are full, sated, and with bloated hearts struggle across increasingly mean streets, troubled deep in their own souls. The *increasing* meanness of said streets will so crush them they will find no comfort or joy in Babylon's arts, but turn to the font of eternal joy, giving their hearts – and their imaginations – to revel in the way told by the hobbits: lowly, quietly – without fanfare – going about their lifesaving quests. Not in *Tolkien's* stories, but the Story *beneath* even his, though the mirage he painted so truly reflected what was happening on the ground!

The use and good of the furnace of affliction is to take off the dross from the gold that it might be purified and precious to the Assayer of souls, whose

approval and seal we all need to stand confident when “the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven” (Malachi 4:1).

And it is true that the muted glory of the true heroes and heroines, in their often broken bodies, is far better than the futile dreams and fantasies of Babylon’s sorcerers, for they walk steady among angels and demons, watched over by the King of New Earth-to-come, who wields the scepter of unassailable power, and accompanies them to their eternal homes, He at their sides, albeit unseen.

Even the Hobbits, and adventures told by the master of Middle Earth, weary me now, but dreams amid the high-velocity troubles that afflict our waking lives. Where can we find the courage – the heart – to continue on against the stream of death and pain we ford to the far shore? In the heart of our King, His eyes ever upon us, and ear keen to our cries, His presence will sustain us when nothing else can.

Bilbo told Gandalf on their way home to the Shire after the slaying of the dragon, “... our back is to legends and we are coming home.” Our own faces set like flint to Celestial City and its Lord, our true home, and we leave the world and its fantasy legends behind us. Why eat and drink what cannot sustain us, and lulls us to the surrounding dangers?

We have wondrous wine and bread from Heaven, and a Friend with us who lends a saving hand.

★ ★ ★

³⁴ Michael L. Budde, “Collecting Praise: Global Culture Industries,” in Hauerwas and Wells, *Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, 125

★ ★ ★

THE POWER OF MARTYRDOM

Before I proceed with my own remarks, I want to enter a couple from two of Richard Bauckham's commentaries on the Book of Revelation:

John carefully takes up Jewish expectations of a messianic war in which God's people are to fight and win a military victory over their enemies, *and reinterprets them, substituting faithful witness to the point of martyrdom for armed violence as the means of victory.*" [emphasis added] (Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*, p. xv)

* * *

Thus what John foresees of history before the End itself is that there will be the great conflict, the life-and-death struggle between the beast and the church, in which God's secret strategy for the followers of the Lamb to participate in the coming of God's kingdom is to take effect. Of course, even *this is less a prediction than a call to the church to provoke and to win the conflict by persevering in faithful witness.* . . . [emphasis added]

Throughout the period [of imperial Rome's persecution] martyrdom played a major role in the success of the Christian Gospel. Of course, the historical evidence is not available to weigh it against other factors. But *it is clear that not only was martyrdom frequently the way in which the claims of the Christian God were brought to inescapable public attention, but also*

that the fact of the martyrs' willingness to die and the way in which they died were seen to cohere with the nature of the religious message they believed. Moreover, John's own prophecy played a role, as it was intended to do, in providing the church with the vision that made martyrdom possible and meaningful. [emphasis added] (Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, pp. 150, 151)

This is radical, yet traditional, being of ancient standing—*radical to us on Easy Street!* We might as well ponder it—put it in our pipes and smoke it, as the saying goes—for such times may come upon us. Who do you think is in charge of our days, of the days of every human? The Almighty, of course, the Lord of Providence. And that which He counts as precious—His peculiar gold—He refines in furnaces that sometimes separate body from soul, and soul from spirit, dross of unbelief from the gold of faith.

Hear these words again:

Substituting faithful witness to the point of martyrdom for armed violence as the means of victory a call to the church to provoke and to win the conflict by persevering in faithful witness martyrdom frequently the way in which the claims of the Christian God were brought to inescapable public attention

To hear the man, or the woman, or the child, say to the crowd or the judge or the executioner, *I am not afraid to die, or to suffer, for the name of the God I love, and for the Saviour of the world, His Son Jesus Christ. This Jesus died for the sins of humankind, to gain for us forgiveness, and eternal life, and He receives all who come to Him, and shows them mercy. I will not deny so worthy a One, who is the Almighty God, and my King and Friend. I urge you all to make peace with Him—to “kiss the Son” as Scripture says—and enter the everlasting Kingdom of His glory. Flee that Hell which holds those who wrongly hate Him!*

This confession coming at the moment of looming death, from a living voice and heart, a real human in whose heart lives (and speaks –Matt 10:19-20) the Spirit of Christ, such a profession—such a witness to what is real to that soul at the moment of truth—cannot but sear into the dark recesses of those hearts who have a love of the truth, who have hearts open to the light of life.

So do not fear that which the LORD has ordained the witness to touch those hearts He has written in His Book of Life from before the foundation of the world, to wake them up to His Spirit. As Paul put it, “*So then death worketh in us, but life in you*” (2 Cor 4:12).

Even if that witness be you. Or me. It is already so all over the world, save in the “civilized” West, and I think our time is near to hand.

★ ★ ★

APOLOGY FOR CHRIST'S SECOND COMING IN WRATH AGAINST THOSE WHO DENY OR DISDAIN HIM, AND AGAINST THE PERSECUTORS OF HIS PEOPLE

To start off this piece I'd like to quote from a well-known journalist, social and political observer, and opponent of orthodox (small "o") Christian faith, and its Bible. This is from, *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America*, by Chris Hedges (graduate of Harvard Divinity School, and award-winning former NY Times reporter).

After railing against the conservative Protestant view of the Bible, Hedges says,

The book of Revelation . . . appears to show Christ returning to earth at the head of an avenging army. It is one of the few places in the Bible where Christ is associated with violence. The book . . . paints a picture of a bloody battle between the forces of good and evil, Christ and the Antichrist, God and Satan, and the torment and utter destruction of all who do not follow the faith. In this vision, only the faithful will be allowed to enter the gates of the New Jerusalem. All others will disappear, cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14-15) . . . It is a story of God's ruthless, terrifying and violent power unleashed on nonbelievers . . .

There is enough hatred, bigotry and lust for violence in the pages of the Bible to satisfy anyone bent on justifying cruelty and violence.

Hedges continues,

Church leaders must denounce the biblical passages that champion apocalyptic violence . . . This literature in the biblical canon keeps alive the virus of hatred, whether dormant or active, and the possibility of apocalyptic terror in the name of God . . . “Unless the churches, Protestant and Catholic alike, come together on this, they will continue to make it legitimate to believe in the end as a time when there will be no non-Christians or infidels,” theologian Richard Fenn wrote. “Silent complicity with apocalyptic rhetoric soon becomes collusion with plans for religiously inspired genocide.”* (Hedges, *American Fascists*, pp. 4, 5, 6)

Hedges’ apparent solution is this (from the epigraph of the first chapter, “Faith”, p 1),

Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them . . . we should claim the right to suppress them if necessary even by force; for it may easily turn out that they are not prepared to meet us on the level of rational argument; they may forbid their followers to listen to rational argument, because it is deceptive, and teach them to answer arguments by use of their fists or pistols. We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant. We should claim that any movement preaching intolerance places itself outside the law, and we should consider incitement to intolerance and persecution as criminal, in

the same way as we should consider incitement to murder, or to kidnapping, or to the revival of the slave trade, as criminal.

—Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 1:263.

* (Richard Fenn, *Dreams of Glory: The Sources of Apocalyptic Terror*, p. 60).

* * *

Some of Hedges' views in his book referenced above have arisen from his awareness of Christian Reconstruction, R.J. Rushdoony (and his book, *Institutes of Biblical Law*), and what is called Dominionism—a desire to have the U.S. government so infiltrated and influenced by Christians that its civil and criminal laws legislate a Biblical morality, with *severe* penalties for trespassers. While adherents of such aberrant views are in the great *minority* among Christians, Hedges paints almost the entire community with this broad brush, thinking such are the core beliefs of the Christians. It seems to me quite probable that the Reconstructionist / “Theonomic” / Dominionist agendas will elicit a strong backlash against the entire Christian camp.

I do not have a problem with Karl Popper's views of tolerance and intolerance, if this latter be used to incite violence. Jesus Christ commands His true followers—and humankind generally—not to return evil for evil, but to overcome evil with good. Yes, we may defend our selves, families, and our nations against aggressors, but apart from such legal and moral defense we are not to be aggressors. Take note, you professing Christians with your itchy trigger-fingers and militant agendas! Did not your Lord say that those who live by the sword shall die by it? And would you wickedly include me into suffering the backlash your unbiblical agenda would foment?

Yet, contrary to Chris Hedges' view, the righteous wrath and intolerance *of deity* is not on a par with the wrath and intolerance of man, the corrupt creature. Of course, it is true that Mr. Hedges does not believe the Bible is the inspired and actual word of God, but rather the creation of man. So

he would read it as though man were projecting his own desires and ideas upon this created “god”. But this is not so.

The God who is real—the God who has revealed Himself in His book, the Bible—being the Creator of not only Earth and the larger universe, but of humankind, and possessing rightful authority over it and them, rightfully declares His laws as to what is in accord with His holy character and the well-being and designed flourishing of all in His creation, including humans. For *Him* to come at the end of the age to punish the wicked, the destroyers of His world, and the persecutors of His people (those who truly keep His commandments) is far different than if *humans* were to take “apocalyptic” violence in their own hands and wreak their corrupt havoc upon the world and its inhabitants. God has the right, and humans do not—and He has stated this in no uncertain terms in His revealed will. This despite Hedges’ disbelief in Him.

In responding to these things I should say I have also pondered how to make a concise and cogent distinction between militant Islam – with its aim to subjugate or destroy all who will not worship / submit to Mohammad’s Allah – and the Bible’s teaching that upon Christ’s return at the end of the present age all who are not true children of God keeping His laws of life and love will be judged unworthy of eternal life on New Earth, and will be cast into everlasting Hell which was prepared for the devil and his angels. What’s the difference between Mohammad’s Allah doing it and the heavenly Father and Christ doing it? I will try to make this as brief and understandable as I can. And in so doing answer Chris Hedges as well.

According to the Biblical record of the Hebrews, God (also known by His covenant name, Jehovah) created the heavens and the Earth, and all life upon Earth, humans included. It is this record—which is a legal testimony given by God and vouchsafed to His people to the end of delivering it to the peoples and nations of the earth—that is the basis of what I have to say. If you do not acknowledge this as an authentic record of God speaking to humankind, then we can really have no meaningful conversation, but in this apology—defense—I will make my case nonetheless, for it needs to be made clear.

Through the lawgiver of the Hebrews (and first author of their records), Moses, God gave the commandments that are the basis of life and love so that the people of earth may live, and not remain in the spiritual death that befell them when the entire race became alienated from God through the disobedience of the race's first parents.

The Jews didn't do a good job either keeping His laws or delivering them to the nations, and were disciplined by Him as a result. The Father sent God the eternal Son to take upon Himself a human nature—through His incarnating as a man in the womb of a Jewish woman chosen to be a mother to Him, according to His humanity. This is the one known as Jesus the Christ, or in Hebrew parlance, Yeshua Ha'Mashiach.

Even at this time in the development of humankind, there were many religions in the world, though they were not of God, but rather human attempts to either reach a divine state of consciousness, or communicate with other spirit entities (known as devils or demons, though some thought them deities). These were false religions, and many others have sprung up since then. They did not reveal the true God, but rather false gods or spiritual and philosophical systems.

Although Jesus the Messiah came through the Hebrew race and religion, as was prophesied of Him, the Jewish leaders and the religious machine that rabbinic Judaism had become turned Him over to the Roman authorities for execution, as they did not believe He was who He said He was, and—truth be told—they were envious of His increasing hold on the hearts and minds of the common people, who loved His teaching, courage, love, and miracles of healing lavished upon all who sought these of Him. They were also amazed and grateful for His stand against the oppressive false views the religious machine sought to impose upon the people. He was killed—by Gentiles and Jews both—and God raised Him from the dead, for by His death He had made a sacrificial, substitutionary atonement for the sins of whomever would believe in Him and come to Him for mercy and eternal life. His sacrifice was accepted by the Father, and remains potent throughout this age for the saving of whomever would seek it of Him.

Messiah, as the King—and Creator—of Israel, removed the spiritual kingdom that had been interwoven into the ethnic nation of Israel and its rulers and priests, and—as the new High Priest Himself—incorporated into His own mystical body (He is the God-man) all those Jews *and Gentiles* who came to Him in faith, the new people of God, the newly reconstituted Israel, the old civil Israel forfeiting their status by rejecting Him.

So we have multitudes of false philosophies, religions, and gods, denying the sovereign rights of the true God over His creation and His creatures. Throughout the history of the people of God, especially in the New Testament era, the nations have persecuted His people. True, those who named themselves “Christians” committed atrocities, though often they were Christians in name only, as most of the Catholic church were (at least their leaders); even if they were true Christians, if they obeyed not the law of Jesus Christ, they betrayed Him and His teachings.

Now in our 21st century, it appears the scene—the very zeitgeist—is turning strongly against God’s children, and that primarily because they are zealous to keep His law and to deliver the teachings of it to the respective nations they are in. It is clear that in America they are no longer liked—as a result of not compromising their testimony to the American people regarding His law and His saving mercy for all sinners—breakers of this law—who turn from their sins, and cleave to Him for forgiveness and eternal life.

It is written in the Scriptures of the Old Testament *and* the New that as the present age winds down, there will be a sustained and violent persecution of all God’s people in Christ (they are so intimately united to Him, the image of Husband and wife is often used). This angers God. The people of earth also give themselves over to drug use (certain kinds of which are termed sorcery, and involve being aligned with and under the influence of the demonic realm), the killing of unborn children by the tens of *millions* for sexual and economic convenience (almost **58 million** by April 2016), economic exploitation of other, weaker nations, increasing crime, physical oppression of weaker or gentler people, flagrant disdain for and disregard of God’s holy Person and laws, choosing instead to give their love and service

to *things* in and of the world, whether material goods, sex, career, entertainment, the esteem of others, ethnicity, beauty, etc etc, all of which—as ends in themselves—are termed by God as idolatry, and a grievous affront to His infinite majesty and dignity as Creator and Sovereign.

If we were subjects of an earthly kingdom ruled over by a great and powerful king, to disdain him and his laws would evoke from him wrath and punishment, as the world has often witnessed. But we have to do with an infinitely great, holy, and *good* King, and how much sorer the penalties for disdaining *such* a one will be!

Mohammad was not a true prophet; his teachings deny the Scriptures of the Hebrews and the Messiah, Jesus; Islam is therefore not to be submitted to, nor are any of the other man-made religions. The only revelation of the true God to humankind is made through the Hebrews, and through their Messiah and His appointed apostles and writers of Scripture. The supposed “justice” of Mohammed via his demon-inspired Koran is a horrendous *travesty* of justice, being the bloodthirsty whims of an unclean spirit executed through bloodthirsty men, a brutal might-makes-right regimen that disgusts those with a sense of the sacredness of a humankind made in God’s image.

The true God, on the other hand, is infinitely just, as well as humane, seeing as He—through the person of His son—*Himself* suffered the penalty of our breaking His laws of life and love so that we would not have to suffer it; in other words, Jesus Christ bore the eternal torment we would have borne (trespass against an infinite Being merits an infinite penalty), and this mercy is given *all* who come to Him for it—it is freely given simply for the asking. This is not only true justice, but astounding mercy, underserved favor.

This is the legal testimony the people of God deliver to the children of men, that all who believe from the heart in this God and in His Christ will be saved from the destruction that awaits the devil and all who heed his spirit of lawlessness, evil, and wicked unbelief, which is increasing as the end of the age draws near, and which will climax in the global attempt to utterly exterminate His people who cleave to His Son, Jesus, King of the Jews and all humankind.

So to Mr. Hedges who hates the report there will be violence and the wrath of Christ against the ungodly and unbelieving at the end of the age, I say this: Christ's wrath will not be unprovoked, neither will it be undeserved, all your protestations to the contrary notwithstanding. The blood of His bride soaking the ground will call it forth, as will the demon-filled rebellion and rage against the holiness that is His heart, and the hearts of His true people.

I think the primary objection Mr. Hedges and his earth-only (God and His heaven excluded) comrades have is that He has spoken in His book, the Bible, and they hate this, deny it, and would destroy both it, the people who follow it, and Himself if they could.

It will become very clear, the hatred Hedges and his fellows have for God and those who are His. The blood of the saints and the howls of murderous rebellion cannot be overlooked, nor will they be unavenged by Him. He has told us, Do not avenge yourselves—vengeance is Mine, saith the LORD.

The Days of Vengeance depicted in Revelation refer primarily to the very end of the age (although there are judgments upon humankind prior to that), when evil shall be rampant and God's people trodden underfoot . . . *though note:* there is the wondrous mercy of forgiveness of sins and eternal life given to whomever will come to the ascended and enthroned Christ simply for the asking it of Him.

Those who spurn His mercy will have no one but themselves to blame for the punishment of their sins.

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SHIFTING ZEITGEIST: WOODSTOCK TO BABYLON, AND THEN TO ARMAGEDDON

I was walking down an avenue in my NYC neighborhood some months ago when I saw a man who looked like an aging hippie, thin, white hair, bushy white beard – 50 years ago we might have thought him a mellow sage – but this man half a century later was intense, focused, looking hard-nosed as he energetically made his way up the avenue, seemingly impervious to his surroundings. And I pondered the change in the times – in the zeitgeist – these five decades have wrought.

Back then it was as if we were pioneers in a dangerous paradise, *adventurers in a spiritual wonderland*, and – at least in certain areas and neighborhoods – there was a joyousness, tranquility, and ease of being among fellow members of the Human Tribe (as we called ourselves), whose values had been transformed by what our teacher-seers said were the sacraments of the glorious new psychedelic age: grass, acid, mescaline, ‘shrooms, etc, which gave us visions of the sacredness of life, of consciousness, of our bodies, of other humans, and a sense of communion with others, and with all of life. There really was a sacredness – a sense of holiness of sorts, even – to our lives, and in our communities. Sharing and caring were bywords, and we felt safe going into new neighborhoods or cities where there were congregations of the Tribe. This was even before Woodstock, that being just the culmination of seven years or so aboard the Yellow Submarine of the Beatles, and the groovin’ of Simon and Garfunkel, Dylan singin’ his visions and

voice, the acid-rock bands, the plenitude of Be-ins, and bein' on the road. Yes, there was occasional violence among us, but we thought these anomalies, exceptions rather than the rule, for our peaceful values were widely accepted among us.

But now . . . in 2015, times have changed, and this man I saw on the street brought that home in a peculiar way. Today I know few places of wonderland, those usually small gatherings where communion of hearts, minds, and spirits joy in the presence of *genuine* holiness – which seems rather déclassé in these barbarous times.

*Thou, O Spirit, Instruct my tongue to sing, heart to feel, and vision
to see!*

And so these writings somewhat reflect the changing times, the spirit of the age as it has been the milieu of my life – of *our* lives on this darkening planet, as though the shadow of Mordor had come to life in the bad dream of these days.

I know, for some of you it is a brave and bright new world; but not all see it that way. And there *is* beauty – but it comes from off-world, not indigenous yet to Earth. What *is* indigenous to Earth shall be making its horrendous appearance, announced in the *Apocalypse*.

I recall in *Lord of the Rings* there were writings – runes – unable to be read and interpreted by most; so it is with John's *Revelation* – not all can interpret what is written of what is coming, though it is of vital importance*. Armageddon is the gathering of Earth's tribes against Heaven's.

Of such I sing.

* (elsewhere in these pages I have given a bibliography of sound interpreters: in “The vital importance of the Amil view”, and in “The Fate of Babylon”)

* * *

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?

Yes, we know economies are failing (the impacts will be drastic), yes, we know we have a ruler (this is 2016) who does not like America as she once was, and he's whittling it into a shape he prefers, yes, we are a nation no longer liked by the rest of the world, and it will get worse, yes, we are in reality a rogue state and have done great evil to other lands, only part of which is having seduced them with the prospect of wealth, advanced culture, and stunning technology. But this is just political, economic, and cultural stuff.

What else is going on in this world? There is an urge to violence taking hold of many hearts, and that within entire ethnic, as well religious, groups, seeking to *eradicate* groups who differ with them. There are politicians – supported by their people and governments – hungry to annex and subdue other weaker lands for political, military, and economic gain. Yes, this is the way the world always has been, but now these violent urges are accelerating and intensifying, and with the advanced types of weaponry at hand, from nuclear to chemical to biological, as well as cyber, the risks of enormous conflicts and casualties increase.

But there is something else, which some people – both religious and not – are perceiving, and that is the arising of massive evil intent. Oddly, a fierce stream of hostility from various sources is being directed against those who name themselves Christians because of their views of others and of the structure of the universe. But these are only one target of the evil arising.

Those with vision – able to discern forces and entities others cannot see – perceive things that look like what some of our science fiction movies

and books envision: potent creatures from another dimension – invisibility-cloaked – pouring forth into human hearts their rage against humanity, so that blood runs like streams and cities crumble in many places. These creatures, mighty, cunningly intelligent, and fiery-eyed with malice, infuse the mental realm with hatred for order and justice, and love for that which causes chaos and the unraveling of the social fabric. They plot massive destruction of vast human domains.

But there is more: over all there is a supreme Being, far mightier even than all the monstrous ravaging beings combined, who has a love for humankind, for those who hold life sacred and seek to protect both it and the planet itself. But this Being is against those humans who give themselves to be instruments of the invisible destroying demonic entities, and against even governments and nations who defile the planet with blood-soaked ground and the ruined lives of their victims, and this Being is guiding even the massive demons to fulfil his good purposes despite their horrid plans, overriding their wills so that his will is done – for the benefit of those who love justice and mercy, cleaving to him in the hope He will rescue them and the planet.

Those humans who love him, weak and vulnerable though they be amid the violent currents that increasingly rage against them, he will preserve even though they die (for he has the power to bring them back to life – even our fantasy movies and books intuit such power), so that the conflagrations that envelop the world ‘round do not truly harm them – they will emerge unscathed when the destruction is finally done, and the great day of resurrection dawns.

There are evil lands in parts of the world – those where law and order are strong by the power of advanced states – which are not yet experiencing tumult and disorder, but the Being has power over weather and sun and wind and storm, and famines will take hold of some advanced nations causing riot, and natural disasters will carve out great craters of desolation, the very world seeming to have lost its bearings, its careening foundations shaking civilizations to the dust. Advanced states may themselves cause havoc within them by enacting laws that oppress and criminalize those citizens

who cry out for justice and righteous dealings. Such states may *legalize* the same sort of gangsterism that arises in primitive nations.

These are the birth pangs of a new order of things – things which prophets and seers having spoken of for centuries and millennia – finally coming to pass: that which is corrupt and toxic will be cleansed by fire; those that are evil will pass away too (and who is of such purity to stand before the great Being?).

Earth-only-dwellers, and even the lovers of the Being and his coming Paradise, are so loath to think of the End close at hand, enamored as they *all* are of their little lives and plans, thinking things will go on as usual for a long time to come. “Peace, peace”, they say, and lull multitudes into slumber when they should be awake and prepared for when terrible tribulation pours in like a flood.

The world is ending. The jeers toward those who hold the signs reading, “Repent, for the day of judgment is at hand!” will be swallowed in anguish by the jeerers. The Being will hold all to account for their lives, and none can stand in his presence but those he enables to be cleansed of their sins.

And then the New Earth will emerge, more glorious than any science fiction dreams of paradisiacal realms, and the lovers of the just and pure Being will be given new bodies that do not die, and all their remaining evil and impurity and illness will be removed, and the earth will be a paradise of wonder and glory, for the Being will be with them, and be a father to them, without end. Even the high-tech movies cannot envision the glory and wonder of the age to come, nor the destruction soon to take place that ushers it in.

A number of spiritual paths and their visions have foreseen the upcoming tumultuous reordering of things, though only one is clear and certain, the others mirage images dimly reflecting the truth on the ground. That which is clear is spoken of in these pages. This book may be outlawed at some point, as it names the name of Him who is Himself the true path: Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, and Messiah of Israel.

THOUGHTS ON “ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE”

This topic is big in movies and books today—and I myself take it very seriously. When you see how I define zombie and apocalypse you can understand why.

The classic definition of zombie is “the living dead”. But is there a *real* thing which may be described as such?

Are we born only to die, pregnant with death all our lives, at the end delivering ourselves into the dirt, leaving grief all about? Or are we meant to go beyond the grave? Indeed we go beyond it, but in what state do our *souls* go—alive or dead? We are made to last forever, but what will our forever be?

If one does not possess eternal life, and the vitality of union with the divine nature, *now, in this life*, then one is of the eternally dead, even though temporarily possessed of an animate human body. Further, there are *imitations—counterfeits*—of life / divine union which deceive multitudes. Union with Christ—according to the Biblical pattern—is the only authentic life, and *eternal* life.

I will speak straight and plain as some I am talking to are true seers. We have the revelation of Jesus Christ, which says that those who are unregenerate (not born anew of His Spirit) are the living dead, and save they drink from the water of life He offers they shall be the undying damned when their time in this world is done. These living dead, who have not the life of God in them by the Spirit of Christ, are the true zombies, the arts and makeup and tales of Babylon to the contrary notwithstanding.

The genuine zombies don't look any different than those who have the eternal life in them. They laugh, play, think, sing, and can even act like the children of God. And they are beautiful, for their wondrous skin-coverings conceal the living death that animates them.

We have the idea (from movies and books) that the walking dead are barely able to think; the truth is—given the view I show of them—they are capable of operating the most advanced technologies, and have among them brilliant theorists and strategists, geniuses in other fields as well.

The Apocalypse: the term comes from the Book of Revelation; in fact, “revelation” in the original Greek is the word *apokalypsis*—the uncovering, revealing. In the Bible it refers to the entire age between Jesus Christ's first coming into the world until His second coming, and the Book of Revelation reveals dynamics and events—in the world, and in the heavens—during this time period, including the very end of the age. At the very end—or near it—Satan will be fully loosed for “a little season” (Rev 20:3) so as to deceive the entire world into attacking Christ's people—His *true* people—and instilling in these hordes a murderous rage against them. The term “zombie apocalypse” brings up images of the rampaging darkseekers in Will Smith's *I Am Legend*, or the hordes in *The Walking Dead* and *World War Z*, although *TWD*'s creatures are unrealistically slow and witless!

I have often thought that science fiction, horror, and fantasy intuit realities far better than so-called realism. The killing berserkers of the walking dead don't go after merely “living humans”—though we do love to project out into the fantasy genres the real horrors of the human condition—in reality they are those who hate God and His Christ, filled with satanic rage, going after the true and *eternally* living—Christians—at a time nearer the very end than we are now, though not that far off. In Revelation 20:7-9, it is put this way:

“ . . . Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on

the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about . . .”

It is also written that the beast who rises from the abyss will make war on the saints (Daniel 7:21; Revelation 11:7; 13:7) and overcome them. In one sense the killing has been going on since Jesus was killed, yet it will become universal and unrestrained at the end. The Christians do not fear death because they will triumph over it in the great resurrection.

Zombie Apocalypse? It is the slaughter of the saints (the New Testament word for any genuine Christian). Better to be one of the despised and killed saints, than one of the killing zombies!

So films like *The Walking Dead* etc. distort what is real, and many are deceived by them, thereby inoculated against the testimony of God concerning their true state. Even the saints become deluded, and dulled in their spiritual discernment.

In fact, the horror of the real is worse than the fiction! It is, for the present, far more subtle and easily not seen. The Babylonish arts confirm the delusion that all is well in Babylon, and many are taken in the thrall of her fantasies. But her judgment approaches, just below the horizon.

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“Zombie Viruses”? Isn’t this Old Stuff?

The zombie, one who is dead yet possessing animation and intelligence, is an ancient phenomenon, and it walks the pages of world myth and literature, its presence in contemporary media likewise frequent and robust.

There are variations on this “living dead” theme. It is ever a popular creature in horror movies, although often upstaged by what actually are its children, the vampire and werewolf, as these latter appear more “lively”—energetic—than mom and dad. But this is a false perception.

The zombie theme has recently been making the rounds. In *I Am Legend* genetic engineering leads to a virus being loosed that turns 95% of humankind into zombies of some sort, ghoulish cannibals—darkseekers—attacking those few living left on earth. It was also touted as a possible future in an episode of the old TV show *Supernatural*, a virus loosed by the devil that “turned people into monsters” ravaging those unaffected.

The zombie is more *generic* a monster than its flamboyant offspring. It is the *first* of the monster line—in the human sphere—and its nature is the essence of those begotten by it, vampire and werewolf. This has been spoken of elsewhere in these pages.

A baseline for discernment is: if one does not possess eternal life, and the glory of union with the divine nature, *now, in this life* then one is of the eternally dead, even though temporarily possessed of an animate human body. Further, there are *imitations—counterfeits*—of life / divine union which deceive multitudes. Union with Christ—according to the Biblical pattern—is the only authentic life. But there are counterfeits in that realm also—is it not clear that we are a species under horrific assault?—and deception is a prime weapon in the vast warfare.

The actual “zombie virus” is not a virus (though that is a good analogy), but a state of being we as a species were brought into by our primordial ancestors. It is a *fait accompli*, a done thing. The task is to find the antidote, the cure! And there is one.

You will find it spoken of often in this book.

★ ★ ★

STRATEGIES OF SEDUCTION: DISTRACTION & DECEPTION

The stuff is so well done, so many genres to appeal to so many tastes, it'll get a hook in multitudes! Aliens, vampires, heroes, heroines, monsters, fantasy, sci fi, prowess, courage, beauty, raw power, rage, 21st century romance – now on the Big Screen (or smaller screens if you prefer, made for your phones or tablets as well). Books will also do!

Exotic lands, planets, creatures, villains, superb weapons and strength – just sit back and relax, enjoy yourself.

In the meanwhile the invasion of planet earth continues, our extra-dimensional adversaries know how to use those already in their power – the artists, filmmakers and producers, writers, actors and actresses, FX wizards – and your attention is arrested, you are lulled for the hit. You never knew it was happening; you likely never will until you wake up on the other side of death: the horror! You have been taken, you have been had in a horror beyond what you ever thought possible – certainly the movies in whose thrall you were lulled never portrayed *this* reality! You are dead and you are still awake; you see your body lying there and you aren't in it, and there are creatures here – besides fellow humans in the same boat you're in – who are terrors to look at, and their amused malice rippling across the currents of fury welling up in them now that they have you in their hands! Why weren't you warned of this! Why weren't you told this was coming? How can it be!

But wait, you *were* told, it just didn't strike you as true or real. You just couldn't be bothered with those jerks who told you you were morally accountable and that there was a God to answer to, and a spirit-world filled with devils and angels. You actually *hated* those who talked – or even preached in the public places! – of Jesus Christ giving His life to pay for your sins so you could be forgiven them (for the asking!), and of His being raised from the dead so He could be your Savior and Shepherd from the throne of power in the Heavens to watch over you and protect you as you lived your life in the demon-infiltrated world. You *hated* this kind of talk, and now you see it is true.

Everything was a lie! Everything you believed in, *wanted* to believe in! And the *real* heroes and heroines – the ones with genuine power and wisdom – were those you thought fools and jerks: the ones who walked with the God of Heaven and earth, the Creator God, the God who so loved the world that He gave His only Son the Christ to save the perishing – *and now you are perished!!!*

Although you indeed have a terrible adversary – known as Lucifer the prince of demons – *you* were your own worst adversary, for you loved this world and its diversions and deceptions more than the truth; and you did know it was the truth, you just hated it, and suppressed the knowledge of it so you could get on with your pleasures, and with being the god of your own life – “to Hell with these preachers and their God!” was in your heart, but now it is you who have awoken in Hell.

Strategy #1 in the arsenal of Hell: Divert the fools from considering the reality they are in; deceive them with delicious and fantastic dreams; keep them lulled until they are dead and in our hands, and we will vent our rage on these vile humans who have usurped our place in the favor of Heaven, who are creatures of the great Enemy on high! Keep them distracted! Never let up!

THE BABYLONISH ARTS AND THE WAR ON THE SAINTS

The beauty of Babylonian art (2/20/14)

Just saw *Man of Steel* tonight (I occasionally review the arts of this world). Action-packed, kind of hokey, quite diverting from the high-velocity action going on in reality. Oh? *What's* going on “in reality”? You expect to see demonic powers invisibility-cloaked wreaking global havoc? What's going on varies: in some nations violent fundamentalists' hearts and minds are inflamed with hatred against the quiet *light-bearers*, and they ravage them, leaving blood and wailing. In the “white, wise, and wealthy West” it's different, here (where I also live) it's the seductive beauty of visual stories that captivate the children of Babylon, stories of love, adventure, battle, heroics – all high-tech decked to arrest attention – and we are drawn in! So many stories! So well done!

Or the music, the arts, books, dance, what heights of culture and technology to enthrall entertainment-refined souls!

And we are blinded to the glory of the living God radiant across all the world, His kindness revealed in the true and living Story of the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth:

*In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers 'round its head sublime*

Babylonish arts don't much like to speak of the Son of God bearing "the sins of the whole world" upon Himself (1 John 2:2) – actually taking the punishment for them in our stead – that we might be forgiven, 'cause this goes against the grain of our independence and pride.

We have all these movies of immense prowess, wisdom, and courage warding off impossibly great disasters befalling the human race, while, invisibility-cloaked, we are the laughing stock of demons taking us at their will, blinded, ignorant, into an eternity of hell. We just don't want to hear about repentance – turning from our sins against the Law of God – and embracing the Saviour of humankind, who is bringing all who cleave to Him through the gauntlet of Time and in the age soon to come to dwell upon New Earth where Heaven and God now also dwell with us, and where is no death, suffering, evil, or tears, but glory in new bodies and an alive earth (released from the fetters of death imposed upon it in this age), and the Creator, Jesus the God-man, walking in our midst.

To look upon Him, who flung forth the billions of galaxies, who is the fount of all pleasure and beauty, is to be transported into the heart of the infinite majesty and dignity of His presence . . . and then to see His love in that stripped-away moment of the heart of God laid bare: for love of us bearing the eternal wrath against our ruinous sins (are we not ruined, is not our earth ruined?) that we would not have to bear them in eternity, for love of us to rescue us from our own wicked hearts, and this evil age. But no, we won't have it, don't want to believe it, would rather whittle away our ever-shortening time in love with Babylon and its passing lovely dreams.

Even saints spend more time intoxicated with the wine of whorish Babylon, than the living waters that flow from the Throne of God, alas!

World War Z (3/26/2014)

Picked up the DVD for this a couple of days ago at the library (it's free to loan). As may be apparent I focus in on the zombie genre, seeing as it is a distorted but related aspect of what is real.

This movie and Will Smith's, *I Am Legend*, both draw upon the Armageddon archetype, that is, they are images of the final battle spoken of in numerous

places in the Book of Revelation (and well known in the world of spirits, both the evil and the holy), where those who are not children of God in Jesus Christ, are filled with an insane rage to destroy those who are. The idea of global pandemics of virus-like contagion turning normal humans into subhuman promiscuously bloodthirsty monsters bent only on killing those not infected with – and this is an interesting thing – in reality not a virus but *a spirit*, an infusion of *demonic* rage accompanied by the thoughts that those possessed of Christ's eternal life are enemies of humankind deserving to die, and die horribly, cruelly.

Imagine, normal people – possibly even former friends or dear family – now so enraged as to be beyond reasoning with; this is the masterpiece of satanic deception: turning “normal” humans into psychopathic haters of God and of His people. The problem is, “normal” humankind is utterly vulnerable to such satanic “infusion” of malevolence; they have no defense against it, regardless of the bluster with which they deny it, for the satanic powers are beyond the comprehension of those devoid of spiritual life and discernment.

At any rate, when I see the nightstalkers of *Legend* and the zombies of WWZ, I know that these are mirage images of the time to come. Actually, one can see precursors of this very thing in Muslim or Hindu lands as the fundies among them pursue the Christians with mad frenzy and violent hatred. The difference is that at Armageddon it will be global and the “civilized” West will be as bad or worse than the more primitive varieties of living dead.

But at the moment of destruction, when many have already been killed in this manner, the Lord our Champion shall return with vengeance, and with fire from the fury of His countenance shall devour the ravagers, and He shall call His people back to life, and raise them up into the heavens to be with Him.

*Revelation 11:7, 11, 12 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.
 . . And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God*

entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

Revelation 20:7-9 *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

The Walking Dead (3/30/2014)

This saga is perhaps the worst, as it draws you in to the macabre stories – a zombie soap! – and you crave more. . . . and more. . . . possessed of seeming relevance in these strange apocalypse-haunted days in which we live. It's similar in some respects to Cormac McCarthy's horrific novel, *The Road*, replete with roving bands of cannibals.

But it's all just Hollywood hoke geared to those raised on vamps and wolvens and zombies – camera, action, cut, it's a wrap! and then it's packaged to sell. It's all fake to sell you on a story that is not real (big bucks advertising in this), and beneath the *human* motives are the demonic, to lure you away from thinking on the *real* living dead, just long enough till you can no longer dig that *you* are the zombie, that *you* are without the Water of Life which turns the monsters descended from the death of Adam into the living, the *eternally* living. Who gives that Living Water? The Gatekeeper to *heavenly* Zion (that's its name), and many – *multitudes* – are *deceived* into thinking they have a pass to get in the City of Eternal Glory, but when they see Him, and hear His words, "I never knew you, depart from Me you that work iniquity!" they realize they truly have been the living dead while on earth, and now, on the other side, the undying damned.

Many say to Him (panic coursing through them), "I *believe*, I even talk to You, and keep Your commands!" and He says, "You did not keep them, for

I said to join yourselves to My people, and hear My words explained by My servants that you might receive My Spirit through them and have life, but you would not, and like a coal out of the fire, you grew cold and died, and the fire you thought you had, was not of Me.”

The evil of Babylon’s arts is this, that they lure souls into these quicksands of fantasy attraction, one after another after another – it adds up to *years!* – and all their “lives” they are distracted from the Book of Life, in which dwells the Spirit of Life, and from whom issues the Waters of Life which flow from the throne situated in a realm not of this world, though it shall come down upon the earth after the resurrection, and eternal life shall commence with the great feast, the holy party, the marriage supper of the Lamb, where the glory and the power of the Son of God, where the love He bears to all who love Him and stay true to Him even unto death, flows through His Bride, and the glory of His presence they live in henceforth is as the air of Heaven they breathe, now in new bodies which have no death, or weakness, or disease, or sin, but power and majesty and joy as the daughters and sons of God the royal Father, and Jesus the elder Brother and King of New Earth.

The Babylonish arts tend to illusions and death, distracting the soul away from the necessary consciousness of God and Christ, which is needful to resist the intoxicating wine of the great whore, Babylon the murderer of saints, and of the people of earth who follow her.

There is a fearsome thing written, that will apply to our days not very far off:

Amos 8:11, 12 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.

But those who have their hearts set upon the God of life have these promises:

Psalm 33:18, 19 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

Psalm 37:18, 19 The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

The days are coming which will be dark; yet many will say, “No, this is light, not darkness!” and confusion will reign in many lands, and the children of God will find themselves outlaws as the Shadow of Mordor (a figure for the shadow of Satanic influence) blights the earth.

Malachi 3:16-17 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

There are so many souls who, trusting in their own wisdom and goodness, disdain those who seek the straight and narrow path Jesus, Messiah of Israel, said must be traveled to arrive at Celestial City: join His people, take His word to heart, receive the prophetic comfort and counsel of the gathered saints.

The day shall come, when either He returns or we die and enter eternity before that, that shall be a day of unspeakable horror (for the deceptions of many are profound – the apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:11 calls them “strong delusions”), *or* unspeakable delight and gladness. So many are careless, even silly with their so-called “faith”, and will be shocked beyond repair to find their hopes of Heaven dashed, and the undying damned of Hell, along with the devil and his foul spirits, their eternal companions in the fiery displeasure of the Almighty.

Yet Heaven's floodgates of mercy are still flung wide open, and the forgiveness and love toward all who seek Christ Jesus are mighty to save, even as He says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37), and "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Why should I not speak plainly? For the days are evil, and quickly growing worse.

★ ★ ★

In my focusing on the horror / fantasy / sci fi genres, I do not mean to imply that the more aesthetic arts may not also be Babylonish, i.e., that they do not divert the attention, and the heart, away from God, and *to* man and his culture instead.

As a man on a houseboat going down the river of time about to go over the falls at river's end (death) into an eternity of pain, anguish, and horror, spending his days looking at the paintings on his walls, or luxuriating in the music filling his house, to what end is this art? A little joy and beauty when all Hell is about to engulf him in its unceasing horror?

Seeing as this is the case with the overwhelming majority, those few who think on these things – things the prophets of the ages have pleaded and cried about in love for the perishing – would do well to ensure the salvation of their souls and not assume all is well. (This is called "false assurance of salvation".)

When I have views on the things of God, and the things of eternity, I submit them for peer review among pastors, elders, and the wise of Messiah's people, to see if they are sound enough to withstand careful scrutiny and examination, by those whose judgment is informed by God's word.

You who think you are Heaven-bound, who think you are acceptable to God in what you consider your discipleship to Christ, will you not seek out His people to see if you are considered sound and healthy in your spiritual

lives by older saints likewise on the pilgrimage to Glory-land? I mean, find a Bible-believing church with a godly pastor and people, and see if you fit in; and if not, what you need to change *to* fit in. This ain't no joke, friends, for you never can tell when death will spring upon your path, or the paths of those you hold precious and dear, and take you or them away from the world of this life.

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? (Jesus, in Luke 6:46)

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Jesus, in Matthew 7:21-23)

★ ★ ★

BABYLON ART, 2010, 2015: DEMONIC MASTERPIECES

‘Mircea Eliade, in his book *The Sacred and the Profane*, suggests that popular entertainment, especially imaginative literature and film, serves a religious or mythic function in a secular culture. When God is driven to the periphery of the public square, the human spiritual capacity longs for exercise, and it often finds it in the “suspension of disbelief” and activity of the imagination that are available in novels and movies.’ – John Granger, commenting on the *Twilight* series.

(touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=22-08-024-f)

I see many of my friends very attuned to current television series and to movies, to the point that these are the jewels of meditation one turns over and over in the mind, savoring the beauty and excitement of the multifaceted dramas. These are the cliff-hangers they’ve got to keep abreast of, these the characters of highest interest, to whom one pays the most attention.

Likewise with books. We’ve seen Harry Potter, now the *Twilight* series – to name but two of multitudes – and they keep getting churned out, enthralling millions and millions. The worldviews in these fictions are more appealing than what purports to be reality in actual life.

There would be nothing at all wrong with this were the human condition not in extreme danger, but as it is, these diversions could have lethal consequences, for they distract us from seeing what’s coming down the pike.

Thoughts in July 2015

It continues apace, the deluge of demonic masterpieces designed to draw souls into them. They're not overtly harmful, not blatantly sinful, and tech-wise are masterpieces of vision, imagination, and story-telling. The only thing is, they're illusory—unreal—and are *meant* to lull souls into the joy and pleasure of these fruits of truly advanced cultural products. Whore Babylon is no slouch when it comes to seducing—even the saints!

What will wake us to the danger, and to the *genuine* glory? Are there no masterpieces from Heaven to enthrall us, and win our attention? Are works from Heaven too dull? The protagonists boring?

What about the fight to walk in Heaven's light, to break free from the mighty tentacles of Hell gripping us both body and soul? *That's* not boring as it's a combat every single one of us must wage if we are to escape eternal horror, and land on New Earth where is no more death, or pain, sorrow or sin, and where eternal joy and beauty and pleasure await the daughters and sons of God.

Jesus is the Gatekeeper to this Paradise. Is it boring to seek Him? Well, sometimes it's not easy, but the fight for your eternal soul is worth it, even if it be arduous, as it entails walking through the gauntlet of days dealing with all the stratagems and wiles of the Deceiver and Murderer. Jesus *did* say, "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt 24:13). When the stakes are eternal hunger, thirst, misery, and torment, or being eternally enraptured by beauty, delighted by pleasures in the holy kingdom of God the Father of light, and astonished by the love of Jesus Christ the Creator of all and Redeemer of humankind—this deserves our attention and utmost care. Arts that lead to Hell, or to Heaven on New Earth? Choose ye this day which ye shall delight in.

★ ★ ★

SPIRITUAL STORIES

Or one might say psychic, though that doesn't exhaust the broad genre I am thinking of. I'll note some movies (or their books) to better get across some of the stories I have in mind:

- Lord of the Rings
- Harry Potter
- Twilight Saga
- Star Wars
- Matrix
- Shannara Chronicles
- Marvel superheroes
- X-Men

I'll go on in a moment, but what I am trying to convey are those stories that deal with supernatural powers and abilities, whether they be psychic or telekinetic or any form of ability that is not *commonly* natural to human beings (I realize some folks do have psychic abilities of various sorts). I suppose I am using the word in the title—*spiritual*—loosely, so as to include

those things that may *substitute* for spiritual ability, which is really distinct from psychic, but for now please let me go on. I would like to add a class of movies that portray some form of the demonic, even if it not be of the Biblical sort, featuring villains such as in,

- Predator
- Alien
- I Am Legend
- WWZ
- Lestat
- Dracula
- and other vampire, werewolf, zombie, and assorted horror movies

For the creatures in these films do depict a kind of diabolic (even if occasionally winsome) nature.

What I am getting at is that these stories which fill the collective imagination portray a panoply of worlds and orders of being, many of them quite entertaining, and at the same time satisfying a hunger we have for life and adventure beyond mere pedestrian human existence and limits. We can draw near to tasting immortality, omniscience, and omnipotence in some of these marvelous stories. Along with high—and exquisite—drama!

I call these spiritual stories. They hang about us in the zeitgeist as a beautiful tapestry on the walls of our collective imagination, and we often dote on them as jewels of our creative prowess and depths.

Yet is it possible—I speak rhetorically—that this tapestry is really a curtain keeping us from seeing what lies beyond it, beyond our human sphere? I

say that it is, as we overlook the one genuine spiritual story for this plethora of fantasies. This one story is indeed rife with terrible villains—demonic to the nth—possessing supernatural powers, and using these to blind and destroy us. In this *true* spiritual story there is a supreme Being, and we are creatures He actually created, and to whom we owe loyalty and honor. What He requires of us pertains to our moral attitudes and conduct, and we are generally loath to let *anyone* tell us what we should do and not do—even a Creator! So we disdain and disregard this spiritual story that comes far too close to home for our comfort. In fact, those who seek to press the urgency of believing and heeding this story for our eternal safety, we *hate*, and seek means to silence them, whatever it takes.

This one story stands out above all the rest, for it claims to be true, requires our attention and devotion, and warns us of a danger more terrible than *any* horror stories tell if we reject it—and Him—the Being it tells of. Some spiritual stories are hated because they are true. And require something of us besides our passive enjoyment.

When we live in the dreams these fantasies charm us with—we are lulled to what is real—and slaughtered in our sleep.

★ ★ ★

AN ANTIDOTE TO THE BEAUTY OF BABYLON

We need an antidote to the power and allure of the entertainment industry – the Babylonish arts – and what shall that be?

Where do we live in our minds? In our thoughts what images and scenes do we play over and over, turning them as one would a jewel to catch the gleaming beauty in its many facets? In short, what do we meditate on, and contemplate, what are our minds busy with?

I won't go into this at length, having already spoken of it in "Battlefield of Beauty", though I will say there is indeed an antidote, but it must be sought and desired. Imagine, a beauty greater than the greatest beauties the world has to offer, a wine of rarer vintage than the finest of earth—from the very vineyard of Heaven!—what glories can these things portend?

They speak of a Person, whom to know is laying eyes upon (the eyes of the heart) the Creator—the font—of all beauties and pleasures in the universe, *but more*: the Redeemer who gave a ransom price for the souls of men bound under the infinite curse and wrath of outraged Justice, that they might be loosed into a paradise of eternal joy—I say, laying eyes upon this One whose love and whose majesty exceeds comprehension, yet may be apprehended by those who enter His presence with meekness and reverent love. His name is Jesus (the Lord), and He says,

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for

I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

I have known beauties of the earth, but nothing even approaches Thee, whose light causes the holy angels at Thy throne to shield their eyes, and saints to fall prostrate before the gaze of Thine all-seeing yet still loving divine heart, for You love us despite our wretchedness, and cleansed us that it be so. Lord and Saviour, grant the readers of these words—those You desire to draw to Yourself—to have a sense of Thy glory and love, Thou Lamb slain and now ever alive, Thou Rescuer from the pit of wrath and foul stench of demonic evil lifting us into Thy tender care and ineffable splendor. Do—please—what I cannot do, which is to reveal what Thy love is, for that is Thy Spirit’s work, to reveal Thee. O Saviour, have mercy on us!

* * *

WHEN DESIRE DOES NOT TROUBLE THE SERENE WATERS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

. . . the very act of desiring rippled the still waters of perfect union: the *effort* of our souls to *obtain* the object of our desire was incompatible with the perfection of ontologic-erotic union, and thwarted the realization of it. In the realm of spirit whatever we strive to grasp eludes us! It seemed that the souls must each – and together – be in a state of perfection before they could join in a union of perfection. It was beyond me, and I did not know the laws of being so as to attain this.

–From “St. Louis Blues to Conversion”

I

I had had those thoughts back in 1967 when I was on the road (from the earlier story, “St. Louis Blues to Conversion”), hitchhiking from the macrobiotic community of Michio Kushi in Roxbury, Mass, to destinations unknown, landing for a while in St. Louis MO, staying in a counterculture crashpad, and meeting a young woman.

But is it true – as is commonly understood in Buddhist thought – that to desire nullifies the ineffable tranquility of spiritual Enlightenment? And

that to attain Illumination one must transcend all desire? This must needs require the laying down of our personhood on the altar of the Void, so that the *I* – the ego, the *je sui* (I am) – is subsumed in the All, the vast uncreated Being.

But I reject this view of personhood vis-à-vis true Illumination. The One whom I accept as the genuine, full, and sole manifestation of Godhood is Jesus Christ. The Light that is in Him is the very source of Illumination or Enlightenment, and if we follow His teaching regarding life and love we may enter into union with another person – *a spouse* – and desire does not trouble illumination, but enhances it, for our humanity is not to be denied but fulfilled, as He, our Creator, meant it to be.

Thus it comes to pass that two persons, a man and a woman, each in a perfect union with the Lord our Creator, partaking of *His* Illumination, may join one another, and this union of male and female itself is a union designed and blessed by Him, and desire fills it with holy joy, pleasure, and passion, and is a dim reflection of the marriage union Jesus has with *His* bride, the community of saints, which is a mystery to be realized – consummated – at what is called the great “marriage supper of the Lamb”. This is when we, His followers among humankind, are *fully* united to Him both physically, with respect to our human natures, and simultaneously partake of His divine nature, He filling our infinite emptiness with the fullness of His own heart throughout eternity, with a heart-rending passion of love and desire for us that would knock us off our feet did He not give us strength to stand and receive the glory and power of heart-union with Him. Thus shall commence the unending – eternal – honeymoon of deity and humanity.

* * *

II

I was suffering as I realized what I desired – ontologic-erotic union of love with a woman – I could not experience, as I was impure, and one must be pure for such union. I thought I needed this union to live, as to live without love is not true life. I had written this:

But it was so clear to me that to desire a woman, to seek to “grasp” her into my being, to exert any effort to this end, would irreparably trouble the still waters of effortless union, and break the perfection I sought. This may not make sense to some, but it hit me like a death-blow. It meant that I was alone, seeing as I could not effect such union as I sought by any effort, and my heart was too needy for love to acquiesce in that state. I was in the Void, absolutely alone, and without the illumination that gives Life.

It was a frightening moment of realization. I went to see an old girlfriend, but she could not be of any help to me. In the realm of spirit I was in – the realization of it – there was nothing. This was not the classic Buddhist insight into *Dukkha* – the source of suffering – as I did not see attachment to the desire for a perfect love a thing to cut loose from to attain enlightenment, but rather to be sought as essential *to* enlightenment. But being impure it was not to be had by me, and thus I was lost – a living being unloved. As I had put it, “Alone in the Void.” I was calm in the Void, but I knew this was death. There was no Light or Life in this place.

It was at this point on my spiritual path, realizing the ineffectiveness – nay, *impossibility* – of an impure being desiring a union of pure love with another being, that, thanks to the mercy of a genuinely illumined person telling me of – introducing me *to* – the source of pure love, light, and life, I was saved from this deathly ontologic Void. And that source? The Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, raised from the dead and ascended into Heaven. Manifested to me.

When I saw Him I loved Him – as He loved me first, revealing His glory and heart of love to me – and I desired to be united to Him forever. And He has promised in His word that it will be so.

So the Buddhists err when they say we must be unattached to any desire – neither attached nor unattached – and that to be attached and to desire binds one to illusion, that which is empty of real essence, and thus ultimately unsatisfying. For they overlook the presence of God in the person of

Jesus Christ, Messiah of Jewish prophecy, and, as He is called in the prophet Haggai (2:7), “the desire of all nations”. To desire Him is to desire the living God. As a confession of Christian faith says, “The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

We do not venerate the Void of supposedly uncreated Being, the delusional nirvana of the Buddhists, for we were made to be robust beings, full of divine life, desiring God with our whole hearts, and being made whole and pure by Him, and it remains to be seen what manner of beings we shall be when He places us on the cleansed New Earth, He walking in our midst, and ourselves His children made in His image, full of desire purified and filled with glory, clean and right in His sight, world without end.

This gives the lie to The Five Skandhas, aggregates of human existence, said to be empty of self, or rather, that the self is an illusion, the realization of this said to be enlightenment. For this peeling away of everything human in search of that which is permanent – uncreated and unending – is the desire of the godless man for rest from the turbulence of life apart from God.

But there *is* a God – the *true* Uncreated Being – eternally “permanent”, and we His offspring, created in His image, given a consciousness that is *real*, eternally permanent, created to *desire* the infinite glory, majesty, and love of Life . . . and what is that? That’s Jesus, our enlightenment in His presence.

Buddha – lord Gautama – tried to find rest and reality (so to speak) by his keen spiritual insight, but it is the refuge of the man without God, a false spiritual path outside the City of God, New Jerusalem on New Earth to come, and that refuge shall fail, for to be without God in eternity, and among other God-less spiritual and human entities, shall be a realm of torment.

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III

Desire – and attachments to it – is not the cause of suffering, and to be transcended, but the absence of God is, and wrong desires emanating from this absence.

It is said of Nirvana there is neither suffering, desire, nor sense of self, the person freed from karma, death and rebirth, but it will be seen a most cruel satanic delusion when death comes. For Jesus Christ came to *save* personhood in its robust humanity, cleansing it from sin, and enlightening it with His glory by utter union with Himself, for the perfection of man is not Nothing but the love of his God.

★ ★ ★

“LEFT BEHIND” – IN HELL

This'll be quick and to the point. One objection I have to the premil Dispensational view of the rapture is that it lulls many souls into thinking that they need not repent of the “fatal ease” they indulge in now – putting off wholehearted obedience to Christ – because after the main body of Christians are supposedly raptured just prior to the Tribulation and appearance of Antichrist, *then* (they think), during the exciting times when Antichrist wickedly begins to take over the world and the “Tribulation saints” take a stand against him, *then* they will turn their hearts to Christ and follow Him.

The problem is – and it is an *eternally fatal* problem for some poor souls – the true rapture comes *after* the final Tribulation, and is the calling of both the righteous slain and those believers still alive from the ferocious persecution which killed many of them (though their spirits went to be with Christ upon their deaths).

“And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them” (Rev 11:12). These “two witnesses” symbolic of the church’s legal testimony during the NT church age. *Not* two Old Testament prophets reappearing on earth.

Failure to understand the symbolism of Revelation will not be fatal to the born-again follower of Jesus, but it will to the one who, with a hardened heart, puts off heeding His call to receive mercy – and follow Him *for real* – while there is still time.

Dear friend, you think you will be one of those “left behind” and will have a second chance to repent? You will be left behind in Hell, for the door will be shut upon all those who have not the sacred oil burning in their lamps when He comes.

This problem will increase with the new movie coming out, as the fleshly allure and excitement of it will imprint it on many unguarded minds and hearts as being true stuff, which it really is not.

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WHAT'S THIS DARK SHADOW STEALING OVER US?

There's something happening in this land that bodes ill for humans, animals and plants. For air, water, and land as well. We are being watched as never before, and monitored. Our ideas, orientations, information, and world-views are kept track of in some huge electronic storage bank, our names and addresses included.

A lot of ordinary people, and many respectable people who have served our country well, and a lot of older police and military personnel – even high brass – are alarmed at what the government is becoming, and is doing.

Conspiracy advocates are having a heyday – there being so much material available of government lies, aggressions, and discerned evil intents. Yet many of those alarmed are not conspiracy buffs, but ordinary citizens with ears to the ground and eyes open.

There are growing piles – *mountains* – of munitions, more than any war we've been in recently could require, and these in the hands of civilian paramilitary government agencies. There are growing reports of detention centers, our very own version of Gulag Archipelago, sized to handle vast numbers of the American people.

I don't from whence it will come, the hands of men or directly from God, but catastrophes will begin to pound us here on our own soil. *Minor* catastrophes (relatively speaking), and not the final ones. When I use the word, "catastrophes", I refer to events of Biblical proportions; and I think of the word "plagues" in Revelation 18:8. In the original Greek the word is *plēgē* (pronounced play-gay'), a *stroke, calamity*, from the word *plēssō* (pronounced place'-o), *to pound, flatten, inflict (calamity)*. These are just words—but there will be realities.

Biblical proportions, as in the electric grid being taken down nationwide, or the economy failing, banks, credit cards, and eventually cash no longer good, or the transportation system halted. These could happen from cyberwarfare or from solar storms and flares, or from changes in world market configurations, or any number of events.

Of course this would lead to food riots and violent domestic unrest, especially in the major cities. Eventually the government with its heavy firepower and massively armored vehicles would enter into the cities to protect at least some high-value areas (unless it proved not cost- and effort-effective). At some point, likely with great cost of lives, relative order might be established.

Just the beginning of troubles, though. Be really good to have an adequate refuge in the overwhelming flood when all around our lives gives way! It's one thing when mere men are after your blood, but quite another when it's the wrath of God.

The shadow of Mordor is bad enough (except to those who scorn the terror-mongers), but the cloud of a holy brow angered to the nth, righteous bolts of world-shattering force, heat of flesh-and-stone-dissolving fury from His eyes lookin' right at you, who can bear *that* ? Be a good time to be able to sing the hymn,

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
my beauty are, my glorious dress,
midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,

with joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in Thy great day;
for who ought to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved through these I am
from sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

When from the dust of death I rise
to claim my mansion in the skies,
ev'n then this shall be all my plea,
Jesus hath lived, hath died, for me.

It is time to consider the writing on the wall, so to speak, and take into account matters of life and death—*our* lives and deaths!—and what shall become of us when we enter eternity still conscious, aware of the great pit of evil, and the glowing realms of glory, and ourselves unprepared for such realities, bellowing our anguish, fear, and rage.

It is time to consider the dark cloud of these times, and the promise of forgiveness of sins and eternal life spoken of by those voices heralding the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Day of Judgment soon to come. Fools rush by where angels love to linger and listen; fools rush by hurried along by demon whisperings in their ears, “Fanatics! I’m too busy about my business to listen to nonsense!” Multitudes fall into the abyss where the Devil awaits his eternal companions in everlasting misery, yet some do heed the warnings so obvious and compelling, and seek Him who saves from such horrors our sin drives us to.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” –Jesus Christ, in Matthew 11:28, 29.

★ ★ ★

SUPERHEROES

They're all around us – if movies, TV, books, graphic novels, and comics count, and they ought to, as our imaginations are filled with them and their exploits, and we dwell upon them, turning their deeds over and over in our minds.

What attracts us to them are the extraordinary powers they possess and wield, as well the unnaturally gifted and powerful villains they must face.

And we like that they are human, partaking of our condition, and often dealing with the very same issues we ourselves deal with.

Technology, superhuman strength, genius-level intelligence – these some of the weapons in their arsenals.

They strike a chord in the intuitive faculty of our hearts, for we know (those who *do* know) we are indeed surrounded by malign predators of genuinely supernatural power and wisdom, and we rejoice in the battle of titans, even if in fantasy. It does our hearts great good.

Yet, even as we rejoice in these wondrous tales, we overlook – or at least minimize – *actual authentic* heroes and heroines who are truly possessed of gifts and powers beyond the natural, but their exercise of them is very low-key, perhaps *occult* being a better word – used in the neutral sense of *hidden from view* (from its Latin root, *occulere*), as in occult blood in the stool, or occult carcinoma – for their mighty acts are generally not seen in the realm of the eye, nor are their implacable enemies visible either.

With a micro-manic tendency (as opposed to megalomaniac) these who are called Lightbearers – after their Captain and Champion – often greatly underestimate and consequently undervalue the nature of their divinely altered beings. Once they were ragamuffin demon-spawn (even the greatest among them, princesses and kings alike), fit only for Gehenna, dump of rotten souls, but they were redeemed from this fate by a ransom of infinite price, and adopted into the royal line of the Son of God, made partakers of His Spirit, whence their abilities spring.

So many among them understand not that their simple words carry prophetic power greater than those born merely of woman (Luke 7:28), and that the power of death and life is in their tongues (Proverbs 18:21). By their occult (unseen) activity they may tear down demonic strongholds, as they call upon the Master Warrior in whose life are their lives hid. The words they speak to their fellow humans, those yet demon-spawn walking captive to the evil one, may bring the entrance of eternal glory into their darkened breasts as the Saviour of the world is held up before them in His majesty, love and power. Those who have ears to hear, will hear.

Those angels who have keener discernment than movie producers observe the human scene. “Ahh! There goes one of ours!” they exclaim, “See how she has her eyes on Jesus, even though she cannot see Him in the flesh? See how she calls to Him in her distress, and receives the ‘glorious power which strengthens her unto all patience, and longsuffering with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the Father’? Now she carries herself like a queen, though she be harassed and afflicted!” “And look at that one! See, he is about to die from loss of blood and crushing wounds, but the name of the King of Heaven is on his lips, and the sound of it wafts into the ears of those standing by – *even his killers* – and the merciful One is granting some of them life and faith by it, and they are being made new even as they watch the blood of the brother they have broken seep into the ground. See, now their hearts are anguished, and they cry out to Jesus for mercy for what they have just done. Truly it is as dear Tertullian said, ‘The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.’ How exciting it is to watch these children of the King do their precious exploits against the prince of villains! How wonderful it

will be to fellowship with them when they are all present in the Kingdom and everlasting glory!”

More like Hobbits, these, than the modern warriors of Hollywood, with their muscles and steel and weapons of death. But braver than the strong-men of earth they are, as toe-to-toe they stand against the dark angel, overcoming him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they love not their lives unto the death (Revelation 12:11). More soldiers of the cross, than soldiers of glory (the women too!), for the King has taught them what manner of Spirit they are of.

These are exciting to watch and contemplate also! And such we are.

* * *

The Avengers vs. the Saints

I visited a friend’s home a while back and we watched *The Avengers* movie (first time I saw it). The following are some thoughts on it – from the point of view of a son of God in the days of the Apocalypse.

There were some battle scenes, bad guys from off-planet, both aliens and Loki, Thor’s foster brother, and a developing rapport between the good guys (*and gal* – Black Widow). All these good guys have special powers or “skill sets” that make them super heroes – a cut way above ordinary humans. And Hulk / Banner – he’s special in his own league.

We’ve had Marvel movies in the past, and a slew of them coming up. And they grab the interest and imaginations of multitudes. If one gets into it, there is a whole world (worlds, really) of characters and stories.

But in this movie the heroes have both prowess and intellects of genius. They prevail by their strength, wit, and courage.

Makes the saints of Christ pale in comparison, right? From the world’s point of view – indeed. But how valid is the world’s viewpoint?

For one thing, the world is in love with fictions, and not what's real. The movie is just fake Hollywood stuff – fantasy. Okay, a good story is a good thing, but if reality can challenge it, and show it harmful, then its “goodness” becomes relative, and maybe *not* good in a different light.

Saints fight demons – real demons – in the power of Christ's Spirit and word.

* * *

We are being lulled to sleep by adversaries in the arts – the film and literary arts – and are being bound and slain as we doze. Antichrist has sent his armies throughout the land – especially the land of the mind – and while the darkness of wicked unbelief is being established and enforced throughout the world system, we, the Lightbearers, are distracted – nay, *seduced* – by artists who have prostituted their gifts of story-telling, stories designed to capture especially the people of the Lord.

Awake O people who *say* you are of the LORD, flee the dreams of Babylon for the visions of eternal glory. Sure, one may look upon these fantasy dreams of heroics – there is no law of God against that – but to *dote* on these false dreams, forsaking true vision for love of them, preferring them and their excitements over the presence of the Majesty on high, does seem to belie your claim to possess Him and His eternal life. He does not suffer rival loves kindly, the preferring of others to Himself in the giving them time and loving attention to the virtual exclusion of Him.

This is for real – and so that you are not found bellowing in Hell in anguish and self-loathing rage – and as the heart of the great King is open to cries for mercy, and the floodgates of divine favor and love are yet open . . . for a while . . . avail yourself *now* of the opportunity to seek and find Him!

When the electric grid goes down – and it will, sooner or later – there will be no more fantasies to indulge the unregenerate heart in its mystical-loving imagination, there will be only plain reality with no smart phones or tablets or screens of any kind, only silence and darkness, save for that of the world and the sun.

Seek what is real and everlasting, the God who is present, even in time of trouble.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)

The entrance of thy words giveth light;
it giveth understanding unto the simple. (Psalm 119:130)

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;
and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (John 6:37)

★ ★ ★

SUPERHEROES – AND GOD

A publisher's blurb I saw recently said we have become a culture that craves fantasy and illusion, and there's a good bit of truth in that. What is it in us that becomes so captivated by stories and powers and feats of superheroes – including of course mutants, characters such as Neo, and plain humans who take on monsters we saw in films like *Predator 1*, *Alien*, and such?

For one thing, it is the cinematic technology that can make these things real, which they seamlessly are in the world of the film, though in books the imagination is sufficient to accomplish this in *their* worlds. The array of Marvel characters – one sector of the genre – are, many of them, being brought to life, a modern panoply of demigods! Other genres as well, with monsters such as vampires and werewolves, fluctuate on the scale between antiheroes and superheroes, endowed as they are with superhuman powers and abilities, sometimes waxing evil, and sometimes good.

We vicariously live through some of these heroes in what *appears* to be a decidedly unheroic age, in these stories overcoming powerful evil, and against great odds. All of which are fictional, though we do know – if only intuitively – there *is* great evil afoot in our world, *real* evil, some of which we can't even put our finger on, to trace its cause or understand its nature.

Where does God fit into all this? We have become bored with the life and activities which pertain to Him. It's all so humdrum and, well, *religious*, in a time where religion is passé in a world which does not recognize its relevance. Oh, it may serve us as a fire insurance for the worlds to come, but what interests us in *this* world is power and excitement, that which awakens

our imaginations with intimations of glory and mastery we can enter into vicariously identifying with its heroes, even if they are imaginary.

What it comes down to is the power of human imagination and technology vs. the power of God's kingdom. For the people of the world this is understandable, but the people who are not of this world, God's people, what can be said of them?

It's not that God is a negligible Being – His infinitely majestic attributes are renowned – it is that we have lost the sense, *the awareness*, of His presence, and wander in the sumptuous wasteland of 21st century Vanity Fair, allured by *its* wonders and beauties, fair game for its hunters of souls.

It is written that strong delusion shall take hold of the people who do not know Him (2 Thess 2:11), God even choosing their delusions (Isa 66:4), causing them to err in their vanities (Isa 30:28) – for the prophetic Scriptures are well acquainted with this phenomenon, *intensifying at the end*. But God has an everlasting love for His people (Jer 31:3), and those who are His He shall wean from their worldly attachments, if not by kindling love for Him in their hearts, then by pain, crying for His aid and comfort, as He did with His people in ancient times.

It's not in the title of this piece, but *saints* are part of it. I don't mean *religious* characters, but simply those who know God and walk with Him in reality, though they may appear quite *irreligious*.

Truth be told, this world we live in is filled with supernatural powers: demons with their abilities to deceive and counterfeit to the minds and perceptions of many; the ability of men to call upon the Almighty for aid, for strength, for vision – what some call prayer – gives humans immense power over demonic forces. And yes, there is a battle, it is just not such as the world depicts the battles *its* heroes war in.

Were we to get rid of the Entertainment we fill our hearts and lives with, our perceptions might clear a little. It is granted, there is a true power to the stories of the superheroes, much like there is a power to drugs, or to unlawful sexual pleasure, but whatever takes our thoughts and affections

captive to the exclusion of the King of Heaven and earth must be dumped. We shall be weaned from turning the feats of these heroes over and over in our minds – like precious jewels – to turning over those things that pertain to the kingdom of glory: the character, the words, and the works of our God.

The saints just mentioned are those who shun the glories of Vanity Fair, who free their minds that the presence of God may have no rival in their hearts and perceptual fields, that He may richly dwell in them.

The powers of the saints are all too human, yet strengthened by being in the presence of Christ: patience, kindness, endurance, joy in suffering, peace while in tumultuous surroundings, and so forth. Like their Master and Champion, they forgo retaliation and physical violence, but give their lives, if need be, for His cause of testimony to the Kingdom of God and the Gospel of Christ. They adorn their testimonies with gracious, faithful lives, loving the poor and powerless, feeding the hungry and clothing the naked.

Needless to say, this is not the way of the world, but it is the way to eternal life, where – in that glorious kingdom on the New Earth upon which Heaven has come down and made its home among men – God's people will be filled with powers and abilities the imaginations of this life cannot conceive.

Cut your ballast, saints! Clear your minds and hearts of the powers of those imaginations which are at war with the Kingdom of God. Without the discipline to do this we are sitting ducks for invisibility-cloaked hunters of our souls—if you lack what is needed, call upon Him who equips His men and women with trusty armaments and shields, such as will avail in the occult warfare now open upon the end-times earth. It is fight or die—and the death is not done and over, but goes on eternally—so call on Him *now*, that you might live and prosper in the Paradise to come, a taste of which He will give you as you draw near Him who is our Champion.

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SUPERHEROES FOR THE UNHEROIC

We love superheroes because *we* feel so *unheroic*; we love their powers and intelligence because *we* feel so ineffectual in impacting our world with its rampant evil and suffering. We vicariously *live* through these characters the lives we wish we could live. Like in the *Matrix*, we are plugged into illusory lives – voluntarily in our cases, as our own are often boring failures and frauds – truth be told.

But is this right? Okay, for the worldling it makes sense, but for the son or daughter of God? There is a crying need for understanding our identities and thereby resisting the easy way of vicarious heroism.

Every one who has united his or her heart with the heart of the Son of God and thus received His Spirit into theirs, giving them a new life principle and force, is a new creature – unlike the merely natural human – with powers and strengths given by the Almighty Creator.

But the heroism of the children of God is not like the glory the world loves, smiting and overcoming in our own strength, but in our weakness relying on the presence – the Spirit – of our Lord to sustain us in . . . what? Great conflicts against great adversaries? Yes, but not as the world sees it, for our adversaries are demonic, undiscerned by the world, and our weapons are by the words of our mouths the shattering of the satanic spell by testifying to the reality of God and His kingdom, the mercies of His Christ, and the coming judgment unto eternal glory or eternal torment. Our weapons also words – silent or spoken – to the Lord Himself asking for help in various struggles, and *He hears, and answers!*

We are sustained in this ongoing testimony – by word and by our lives – by the Spirit of our God, upheld in the suffering this stand brings upon us, upheld to be joyful and thankful with patience and longsuffering. *This* is heroic in the eyes of Heaven. This is the enduring that is *truly* superhuman and noble, but in the eyes of the world it is despised and hated. Spat upon.

We have to make a choice at some point, which heroism will we opt for? The heroism that the eyes of Heaven love, admire, and rejoice in, or that which the eyes of the world esteems?

I see the Lord Christ's superheroes all the time, but it does not yet appear what they truly are, for their glory is hidden, even as their Champion's was while He walked in this world. But their glory is known to the mighty angels and to the King of Heaven and earth. Their prowess is not physical, but of the spirit and the heart, and with quiet might they tread down the kingdom of darkness, releasing its captives into the Kingdom of light. These are the heroes and heroines *of the ages*, of whom songs shall be sung in the Glorious World, for they followed the Lamb, the meek One who is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Mighty One.

★ ★ ★

I CAME OF AGE

I CAME OF AGE in the early sixties when the thrill of open spiritual vision was afforded us by the sacraments of the Native American Church and the potions of our wizards and mystics. From the age of 19 – almost 28 years ago – I traveled the paths of the spirit world in search of illumination, adventure, and love, not infrequently running into more than I bargained for.

I generally traveled alone across the land – taking heart from my brothers Kerouac and Dylan – Park Avenue far behind, my wealth the joys and sorrows of the open road, and the poet's pen that wrote with pure drops of heart. The Rainbow Tribe didn't exist by name in those days – the Woodstock Festival hadn't even happened yet – but we were all the Tribe, the Human Tribe, and a wild and woolly and sacred lot we were. On the one hand the Doors would sing of us, "A Roman wilderness of pain, where all the children are insane," and on the other Tim Leary would school us in the Tao by the rare spirit of Lao Tse. Dylan's reality was a comfort to many of us amid the phantasmagoria of the American Nightmare, and the hype and jive of the vulgar culture. We had a sense of holiness in those days, of freeing ourselves from the corruption of a society that was diabolic, that danced a death-dance while we danced naked-hearted and vulnerable among our lovers and friends. We had hope for the species and the planet, great hope.

Over two decades later, what's happened? I posit the view we have been overcome. A threefold victory has been accomplished against our sacred citadel: we have been seduced and impregnated by the spirit of the culture (the fruit of this union is death); our very own self-ness (ego) has risen against our loves, thus hindering union of hearts and leaving us each stand

terribly alone; and lastly an influx of spirits have poured into the human arena purporting to be angels of light, and we have embraced them against the warnings of the prophets of the sacred blood.

We are in the mud, boots on our throats and blades poised over our breasts, mastered by the lords of the abyss. The days of our pure dancing and joyous loving and hopeful vision-questing are over. We are overcome by what Christ called the world, the flesh, and the devil. Caught up in illusions of movement and life we refuse to believe we are undone, ravaged.

Along comes the Woodstock branch of the Rainbow Tribe and makes like the old days are still with us, and on top of that claims to be spirit kin to the prophets of that blood! Myopic, reactionary, ostrich-stance pseudo-visionaries! You think we're all dodos out here?

Steve Rafalsky

Woodstock, 1/6/89

[Published in *Woodstock Times* 1/6/89]

★ ★ ★

THE ANGUISH OF JOSEPH, OUR BROTHER (GEN 42:21; 37:24-25)

At ease in Zion, and not grieved for the affliction of Joseph

(Amos 6:1-7)

To the people of God in Amos' day this was said by the prophet to those well off, luxuriating in comfort, pleasures, ample food and drink, while their brethren were suffering want and various distresses. The prophet – *the LORD speaking by him* – likened it to Joseph's brethren having their lunch while the young lad howled with fear in the pit they'd cast him in (Gen 37:25).

Does this not speak to us in 2016, these near 3,500 years later, when our brethren in other parts of the world are being hounded from their homes and forced to live in the jungles and forests (India, Vietnam, Laos, etc), where our sisters in Christ are raped, kidnapped, forced to marry cruel Muslim men (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, etc), where to attend church is to suffer arrest and long-term incarceration (Iran, North Korea, Eritrea, China, Vietnam, Laos, etc), where to attend church is to likely suffer grenade and automatic weapons attacks (Nigeria, Iraq, Egypt, etc), where to attend a worship service is to suffer beatings, woundings, arrests, trashing of one's property (India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Egypt, etc). And we in the meanwhile have full plates and cups, enjoy the entertainments and pleasures of our relatively affluent lives, with deaf ears and empty hands toward them.

In so many parts of the world where the Christian faith is in the minority – Hindu lands, Buddhist, Communist, Islamic, animist, atheist – our brethren suffer greatly, and the majority of us neither pray for them nor send money, food, or clothing through various ministries to ease their sufferings. Of the professing people of God in Amos' day – aloof from the anguish of Joseph – He had this to say,

Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive,
and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.

The LORD God hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts,

I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces:
therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein (Amos 6:7, 8)

If it is true that “judgment must begin at the house of God” (1 Pet 4:17) is it not likely that this prophetic warning is aimed at us as well? We hear so little of our brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, little ones and their extreme sufferings, and our call to minister to them, if only with prayer for the Lord's Spirit to draw near and comfort them (for not all of us have money to spare) – for prayer is so urgently needed that God's Spirit sustain them in their extremity, that they may endure patiently the trials that befall them. But no; we rather relax with the Tube, and tune *them* out.

It cannot but be that *our* time of affliction draws nigh; we who have not learned how to pray for our grossly abused brothers and sisters the world 'round, we will have trouble praying for ourselves and our own families and friends when our distress comes suddenly. How does one pray for an imprisoned pastor who is regularly tortured, his keepers seeking to get him to renounce his faith? Or his wife or daughter, likewise imprisoned, but tortured in other ways?

The Christian families in Syria, caught in the crossfire of warring emissaries of cruelty, often fleeing all they own for safety's sake, languishing in refugee

camps, hungry, cold, weakening, terrified at the threats of Islamists to take their children and women for their own pleasures – do we seek to succor them in their need?

The anguish of Joseph is *much* on the Lord's mind.

We in the West, especially America, have been secure under the strong arm of a once-friendly state; safe from enemies abroad, and from enemies within. Do you not know that our condition is an anomaly as regards historic Christian experience? Do you think it will go on forever? Will the pampered Bible-collectors and book moguls remain at ease in their libraries? The watchword for us shall surely be,

**Let goods and kindred go
this mortal life also**

Let us come to the aid of Joseph, that we may learn to empathize with what shall be *our* lot in the days ahead; that we may be confident the comfort with which we comforted them shall be given us in our own time of need.

This isn't "hot air"—it is a warm heart for both us and for others of our eternal family in Christ. We'll be seeing them soon enough!

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PEACE AND PROSPERITY

Well, if we live in these for a long time, if we get used to them – get so used to them they become the life we expect will continue – we may well forget there are issues that way override these in importance, issues that the LORD of Heaven and earth insists must matter to us if we are to be His true people.

Peace and prosperity may lull our souls into a complacent apathy and a desire for continued affluence so to maintain the comfort and enjoyment we are accustomed to. After all, we are Americans, we work hard, we have earned our pleasures and our peace, these but our due – so we say.

Do not think it strange if He bring these things to an abrupt end (you *were* warned often enough), and you commence a life of suffering. You and your loved ones. Then we will learn anew to pray to Him who is able to relieve our distress merely by His presence.

Peace and prosperity have slain far more souls than trouble and pain.

JOY

**is not the absence of suffering
but the presence of GOD**

★ ★ ★

PART VII

ARMAGEDDON

*We now draw nearer the end of this book, and nearer also to the subject of the end of the age. Armageddon has been written of a lot in the previous pages, so I trust the reader has some understanding of it, even if only a little. In a nutshell, it is the final **global** assault of the ungodly—those inspired by the spirit of Satan—upon the children of God, which assault will be interrupted by God when many Christians will already have been killed. It will be a terrible time for the followers of Christ, but they are trained and warned and prepared to endure the horrors of this war against them, seeing it as a furnace that purifies the gold of their trust in their Lord. When God does return to rescue them and call them up to Himself, He will be very angry with those who have so awfully hurt them.*

Jeremiah 50:28 The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance of his temple.

There are many popular ideas as well as movies and books about the topic of Armageddon, but what is written here is the Biblical, hence authentic, meaning—the reality—of the term. It is my wish to both encourage and strengthen the believers to help them endure it, and to warn and urge those who are not believers and who will thus be subject to the “strong delusion” of Satan to go after the believers, to now turn to Christ before it is too late, for the killing hatred that shall overcome them will be too strong to resist once it has gotten hold of them. If they but have a “love of the truth” in them it will work so “that they might be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:10)—and to this end I write, to win a few hearts by giving them

understanding, along with a vision of the saving power and love of the Son of God. For He is renowned as the mighty One who yet shows mercy, who is willing to save even those who have been His enemies, and the slayers of His people. May some of you I speak of come to love Him, and us His people!

IMAGES OF ARMAGEDDON

Going right to the undiluted source for starts, which is the apostle John's *Apocalypse*, or *Book of Revelation* as it's also called. There are other images in the *Apocalypse*, but these should suffice.

Revelation 11:7-12 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

Revelation 16:12-14, 16 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the

dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty...

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

Revelation 19:19 *And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.*

Revelation 20:7-9 *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

Two movies I've seen have images which strike me as figures of the great battle: in Will Smith's *I Am Legend*, and Brad Pitt's *World War Z*. *The Walking Dead* and the like are sort of lame, as *true* zombies can move quick (some of the best athletes, and dancers, actually), look beautiful with their glamorous skin-coverings, and be brilliant of mind, even though the first two mentioned are lame as well, for the living dead there are shown to *look* monstrous, whereas in truth they may appear beautiful and bright.

I'll try to keep this short.

I've spoken many times in these pages of what the real zombies are—those without eternal life, with but *animal* animation giving the illusion of true human vitality—the living dead, soon to become the undying damned, save they seek and receive from Jesus Christ the Spirit of life and are “born again”. That's no dumb religious jive, but the crux of eternal life or eternal death, as we shall all see with our own eyes.

It will come to pass that a satanic rage will fill the living dead with blood-lust toward those who refuse to deny the name of Jesus Christ. Far-fetched? Paranoid? The changes in the zeitgeist these past five years may be miniscule compared to what we see in the *next* five (or less) years. When sorcery is involved (I speak of the psychedelics, *including* the new potent marijuana, and derivatives thereof) the intensity of psychic force in human consciousness increases exponentially. Things unspeakable now (as some things now were five years ago) will be commonplace then.

In non-Biblical language (but still true to it), there will be a global hatred for those who stubbornly cling to Christ and His words in the Bible, in large part due to a renowned individual—a world leader—who openly, mightily, and winsomely blasphemes the God of Heaven, His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and those on earth loyal to Him, and by his reviling rants sets the new standard of what is acceptable and right to the earthlings who then come to loathe even the idea of Heaven and those who dwell therein, even those of Heaven *on* the earth but not *of* it. This person with his speech against Christ, the Bible, Christians, and God, will be seen and loved as *a hero* by those tired of talk of sin, coming judgment, and mercy for the repentant sinners. He will be famous, honored, and *heeded* when he says to go after the Christians to destroy them.

There will be a brief, enormously violent, unrestrained global *purge* of all who name the name of the Biblical Christ. Even dear family members will turn against their own in this time of strong delusion, for the living dead will have no resistance to the power of Satan and his main man, this demonic world leader with a golden tongue inspired from the pits of the Abyss.

Some of the truly living will hide underground, so-to-speak, and many others will be martyred in this “final solution” to “God’s people”—these who courageously bear witness to the law of God, the coming Judgment and Resurrection of all the dead to stand before His great white throne, and His saving mercies to any and all who, *while in this present life*, call upon His name for forgiveness and eternal life. There will be *molten hatred* for these.

When it seems—for the Christians—all is lost, then Christ Jesus shall appear in the heavens for all eyes to see, His face bright and terrible with fury

for the hurt wrought upon His beloved, the power of His might and anger so great that the earth and its mountains and seas, the stars and the cosmos flee away from His presence, all things dissolving before the majesty of His appearing in wrath (2 Peter 3:10-13; Rev 6:14-17), terror striking the murderers, as He calls His people to arise—their dead bodies coming to life, standing on the earth before their killers (these thoroughly horrified Rev 11:7-12)—and He calls them up to join Him in the clouds, both the yet living *and* the dead, *all* the blessed dead, and the wicked are destroyed in the fury of His wrath, and then resurrected themselves (the resurrection of damnation, John 5:29, cf Daniel 12:2) to stand before the great throne of Judgment, to await the sentencing to eternal torment in what has been called “the lake of fire”, and hearing His words, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41), thence they will depart.

Armageddon is this last great battle against God and His people by those who are the living dead, and God coming to His people’s rescue with *divine vengeance*. Those who are alive on earth, both the “zombies” and the “living” shall see these things. Odd how some artists are given to intuit what is to come! Even though not with clarity.

Hang on to your seats—watch the world change before your eyes. Seek the mercy of God before you are locked into the devil’s web. Sinners Jesus will receive.

★ ★ ★

SCI FI, FANTASY, AND THE APOCALYPSE

There are real things happening in the world, events in the occult realm having great impact on the physical planet and its people, yet many folks—including those who know better, having access to reliable information on these things—prefer to bury their heads in fiction-holes. Nothing wrong with fiction, but when it crowds out the real world that spells danger!

For the record (and I repeat this throughout the book), when I use the word “occult” I use it in the neutral sense, as in spiritual activity simply *hidden from view*, and not the popular meaning of strictly the demonic region and *its* activities. In my usage it may refer to the spells of a satanic adept *or* the prayer warfare of a warrior priest and saint. It may also refer to judgments from the throne of Heaven for the wickedness of earth-dwellers, affecting the environment, health (both mental and physical), conflicts between ethnic groups and also nations, economic crises, and cultural deterioration. Unseen influences, even those coming from the throne of Heaven, are within the category of the hidden—the occult, strictly speaking, despite popular misuse.

A while ago a movie came out, *Avatar* (many of you may be familiar with it), and folks who are actually enlisted to inhabit the New Heaven and Earth after the resurrection nonetheless became so enthralled with the beauty of the *Avatar* world, Pandora, and the bodies of the native Na’vi in their exquisite adaptation to that world, that these citizens of New Jerusalem longed to have Na’vi bodies and live on Pandora! Granted, it was a cool scene—

but think! The hero, Jake, was found praying to a tree—a mystical tree to be sure—that contained the life force of Pandora and the Na'vi, and what is this but Pantheism, an ancient *idolatry*, an affront to the King of New Earth!

About the New Earth and Heaven. A good dose of that would cure the Pandora blues! Let me riff on this. While we do have a tree of life in the new world (another time for that wonder), more important is presence of the King, and His Father, who share the throne, and light the world with their glory. The King, our Jesus, is of infinite dignity and infinite majesty, and to look upon Him is to dwell upon the very source of glory and beauty, and will be so world without end. He will have given us bodies incomparably more wondrous than the Na'vi's, in the prime of health, and with a strength and with powers we have no idea of yet, for it is written, "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

New Earth will be united with the New Heaven, with all evil and discord *forever* banished from them, the New Heaven coming down to be part of the Earth, God the Almighty—*El Shaddi*—dwelling in our midst, our dear Father, and His Son, Jesus of Nazareth, divine Husband to His greatly loved Bride. The glory of God—the presence of His majesty and love—will be as a river of life flowing through all our hearts, illumining us with the brilliance of His holy joy, and giving life to all the creation, the animals, the trees and flowers, the waters, all made alive in the fullness of their potential, a more wondrous environment than fictional Pandora, that lame paean to Pantheism (as one movie critic called it).

It will be a kingdom wherein is no death, suffering, or anything that offends the Holy One, and we will have work according to our loves and skills. Although I cannot see the actual land, I know, by His word, that the things He has prepared for those who love Him exceed our present ability to imagine them, and that includes imaginary worlds such as Pandora.

For *this* place, and for *this* King I long while I am in this present world of death and disappointment. I will not be allured by any beauty other than His. I may ponder the creations of men, but I will save my love for that which is worthy of it.

THE REAL HORROR STORY

I'll say it again, I'm certainly no opponent of good fiction – be it TV, movies, or books – as I love a good story, and in many genres. But when it crowds out, denies, or distorts the true story – the Story underneath all stories – that is a great danger.

We have the vampire and werewolf stories of the day, apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic tales, science fiction and fantasy, and some of these are really well done and grab the interest.

What I say now will be dismissed by some, but others will hear. Life on this planet is not as it appears. The world of spirits is not perceived by us and yet angels and demons are involved in our lives, as are God and the devil.

Neither are we aware of the reality of our own states of being, or of those around us. We were interested when we saw Will Smith in *I Am Legend* seeking to coexist with the zombies, and alarmed when they came after him. A fictional zombie is an animate humanoid creature that does not have *human* life, but something hostile to human life, demonic in nature. Can these two vastly different natures actually be seen in our world today?

The *real* living dead are those beings who possess unending existence but do not have unending *Life*, existence illumined by that love and glory which marks the difference between Hell and Heaven. When I say the living dead, I mean *humans* in *this* life *now*. That would include the majority of humankind. We are so filled up with the pleasures and activities of this life, our plans and dreams and thoughts, that we do not take proper inventory of our states of being. If you do not have *eternal life* consciously and solidly

in your possession you are not what we may properly call *alive*. And when it is your time to leave this life you will perceive the horror you really are. No matter you have a beautiful skin-covering concealing what's inside.

We're happy human beings? The monsters are "out there"? Who knows C. S. Lewis' saying,

It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that even the dumbest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare.... There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations – these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit – immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. (The Weight of Glory)

The seed of what we shall be is at the heart of what we now are. If we *are* the living dead, we *shall be* the undying damned. The doctor who does not diagnose truly will never give a true cure.

Jesus Christ is the one who gives new life – *the* Life – to the living dead who come to Him for it. Though he is the almighty God come in human form – possessed of infinite majesty and infinite dignity – He is gentle and welcoming to all who seek forgiveness and new life from Him.

It is written in the Book of Revelation that at the very end of the age – *before* the resurrection and judgment of all who have died and the appearing of the New Heaven and Earth – that the living dead on the planet will rage against, ravage, and slaughter those who are alive in Christ – hordes of them will swarm the earth, very similar to the end of *I Am Legend* – and this will be a horror God's children will have to endure. It will be a purifying fire such as His people *have* had to endure – though not on such a large scale – all through history. This horror will be short lived.

The next horror will be for the living dead, now – that is, after the judgment – become the undying damned. Christ's people will be on a paradisaical new earth with their God, comforted for their loyally suffering for His name's sake. But the damned will suffer an eternity in the company of demons, in what Christ called the lake of fire. Eternity. That word is the epitome of blessed wonder or of horror beyond imagination.

You who lose yourselves in fictions (or other diversions), who forget to strive for awareness of spiritual realities *in Christ*, there is a storm of fire coming just below the horizon and it will catch you unprepared.

Yes, there will be smaller storms before the **big** one – economic collapse, food riots, famine, domestic upheavals, wars, deadly pestilence – and you are snoozing your lives away in dream worlds?

Sorry to come on so heavy, friends, but what kind of poet would I be if I did not speak of reality, ignoring the tsunamis of fire on their way? What kind of friend would I be?

★ ★ ★

AFTER THE ELECTION OF 2016 (I DIDN'T VOTE)

Things have both changed, and not changed: Even though Clinton did not win, we remain a nation under judgment, descending into Hell (more on this in a moment). Now we just don't know what it will look like!

I agree with a friend who said that we have a reprieve—we, the church of Jesus Christ—to proclaim the Gospel of the Saviour as we have not been doing, and to live in a radically godly way, however the Lord shall lead us. We have not yet been silenced. The LORD did this.

Please, friends, do not be deceived that all will be well, that “Trump the savior” will heal our national wounds and cancers. He is no “repairer of the breach”. He has but slowed our descent into ruin for a brief moment. And who knows what trouble he will bring upon us?

Whether our “reprieve” will be for four short years, and then a great backlash, or less—with judgment from on high disrupting our national life with disasters of Biblical proportions—the things we have done as a nation are too great to make reparation for.

We have impoverished many countries, wasted many cultures and peoples with our greed and insatiable consumption of their resources, by means of our “economic hit-men” and government muscle, for we ourselves are now broke, and could not give restitution if we would.

We have polluted the world with the filth of our “progressive” agendas, aborting babies' lives, promoting ungodly sexual and identity chaos, and

the psychedelic drug culture of fifty years ago, which opened the human realm to the demonic through sorcerous potions and smokes.

The world's life is winding down, the powers of darkness ascending, their hour come, sorcery gaining in legality (the potent marijuana of the day), as the more that get “high” and tune in to the spirit of the age the louder the channeled voices of Hell into the life of the world will be.

It is the wisdom of heaven, this reprieve, to lull the fool into showing his colors, but to the wise a brief respite from the elite's agenda, our voices still able to speak as heralds of the Almighty King, holding back the devil's little season, not his time to be fully loosed—not quite yet.

So let us make good use of this *our* little season, for the Gospel door of mercy shall be shut shortly, and those who seek to keep it open put away. We seek the better resurrection of those who love the Saviour's smile on us, even if it costs our lives—seeing as we rise again with Him.

* * *

LIKELIHOOD OF JAIL FOR PASTORS

While many scoff and deny this will occur at some point (though minds may be changing as the times grow darker), and while such confidence in and reliance upon the status quo is the conventional wisdom – or common sense – I do believe these are far from normal times and our culture’s common sense will give way to the underlying hatred toward God and His people as it becomes clear that what we are announcing is not only “moral preferences” of “just another religion” but an ultimatum from God to humankind to repent from unbelief and wickedness, believe in His Son, and walk in His righteousness, or perish in eternal torment for despising the infinite dignity and majesty of the Almighty. That is, give up your sinful lifestyles *completely*, seek forgiveness from Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, and keep the holy commandments of God, which He will enable you to do, for all those who come to Him in truth and sincerity.

Our services of worship do not sufficiently constitute the bearing witness to the nations we are called to do, so when we are brought before rulers and magistrates for our “crimes” against the ungodly – *wicked* – laws of society, this will afford us the opportunity to testify against the world, that its deeds are evil, and God requires righteousness.

I think we should prepare for this: prepare our families, our churches, our legal resources, and ourselves for hard times to come.

I think, though, that these “hard times” will not only affect us – the pastors and their flocks – but there will come great judgments on our societies, bringing in immense hardships upon them, and when these do come, and

when it is seen that the people of God in Christ really have hearts and care for the hurting even to their own hurt (as was the case in the ancient Roman Empire, where many were won to Christ through this), many may come to Christ through both our witness and our mercy.

If one is in a very rural area, and among traditional and conservative folks, it may be different than in more suburban and urban “progressive” areas, at least at first.

We should not look for “common sense” to prevail, but for the “strong delusion” the unregenerate world will be swept up in. Twenty years ago no one could have foreseen these days, and five years from now who knows what will be the “societal norm”. But our God and Saviour governs all these happenings from the Throne of Power (Revelation 5), and He will be glorified in His faithful people, despite all appearances to the contrary.

★ ★ ★

PROVOKING THE BEAST— BY ARMED RESISTANCE

This matter is very closely bound up, for Christians at any rate, with what is called the “lesser magistrate doctrine”, which, in a nutshell, is that a subordinate government official may, in order to preserve the life and liberty of a people, revolt against the reigning government and its ruler—a king or president—who are tyrannically oppressing the people and violating both civil and Biblical law.

Lesser magistrates, when faced with overwhelming opposition from tyrannical rulers, could—according to standard military strategy—order their troops to adopt guerrilla tactics rather than open confrontation; an “asymmetric” type of warfare. So one could have many small bands or lone fighters instead of massed troops.

What I am speaking of is lesser magistrates *in America*, and specifically our situation in this land. I am not a pacifist. I can see where I could fight under a lesser magistrate. And I can envision other nations having different approaches according to their circumstances. I can also imagine Christians of other nations lending their hands to endeavors to change their governments. Lesser magistrates may well play a part in such things: feasible political options involving force, including organizing armed civilians to redress actions of a government promoting lawlessness, perversion, and persecution of good citizens. But in America our situation is unique.

We have movies coming out promoting heroic revolt, and much talk in various media of armed opposition against the madness of an out-of-control

rogue state, that fuel the notion of “lesser magistrates” bearing arms—interposing for the people—against the government. Christians have till recently played a large part in such discussions of principled opposition. *However*, our steadfast adherence to the law of God and *His* definitions of sin in these times is changing that. We are no longer accepted in our culture—in our own country—and the tide has turned.

For there is a growing consensus to specifically designate the Christian sector as *the* source of hate speech and ideation leading to inhumane and criminal discrimination—seeing as the word of our God dares to prohibit and condemn sexual freedom to love whom one will. So that what we are going to see is not primarily political and societal deterioration which we decry along with a large segment of society, but rather our marginalization and the designating of us—the faithful followers of Jesus Christ nationwide—as criminals, and the actions that would result from that designation.

The lesser magistrates (sheriffs, police chiefs, mayors, governors, even generals) who would speak in our behalves—and are vocal even now—are being noted and monitored by appropriate government intelligence and will be removed as things progress. There will come a time when there will be no lesser magistrates to speak for the Christians, as they also will be deemed part of the new criminal element.

The rogue government that shall do such heinous things will not be against the people generally—for “the people generally” are who voted them in—so there will be no lesser magistrates left to oppose this regime; they will all be on its side. In fact, the wickedness of “the people generally” brought the judgment from God of having wicked rulers over them, causing their society to sink down into Hell under various catastrophes.

There will be no lesser magistrates in America that shall side with the Christians, for they shall be cast out of office and thrown into the same pen with the criminals.

Yet even before the “sidelining” of the resistant Christian community takes place, it is well-known that zealous unbelieving patriots *and* loyal American Christians using armed force against an oppressive state is a topic floating around these days—in the movies and TV, on the internet, in books, and just word-of-mouth among many. Perhaps surprisingly to some believers, a lot of Christians are very fond of firearms, and open to the romantic idea of fighting a tyrannical state and its officers.

Some envision going up into the mountains and forests and waging guerilla warfare—perhaps in collusion with a “lesser magistrate”—thinking they have warrant to bypass Jesus’ words in John 18:36,

My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

The relationship of this spiritual truth to politics and righteous men is complex and debatable. Nonetheless such “envisioning” could unhinge some “well-meaning” professing believer into taking drastic steps which would backfire on us all. These are dangerous times, with passions running high and hot in many quarters. We do not want the government to consider us a threat by the attempted overthrowing of it. We are already being slated for loss of citizenship rights on other grounds.

Apart from my remarks above on our being cast off by the larger culture that could unite under a lesser magistrate, there are other factors to consider:

Even given an (unlikely) legitimate “lesser magistrate” rising up, it must be kept in mind that the technical capabilities available to military, police, and intelligence units in locating, isolating, and targeting even remote bands of resisters in the mountain wildernesses are fine-tuned and potent. In populous areas government power would be even more prevalent and intense. The firepower—and other forms of weaponry—possessed by the 21st century Beast would overwhelm even large-scale opposition. Were a governor of a rebellious state—say, Texas—to mount a threat to the federal government, the use of tactical nuclear weapons should certainly not be ruled out,

but might not even be necessary considering the array of high-tech weaponry and abundant personnel the feds could muster.

One certain result of any mobilization to such an end would give the government warrant for rounding *us* up through painting even the peaceable Christians with a broad brush, targeting us also for either internment in detention centers or termination as co-belligerents. I do think it a satanic delusion and ploy to ensnare and expose to slaughter the Christian population in the U.S., this talk of our resisting such a state by arms.

We are to use the weapons given us by the Lord in 2 Corinthians 10, which are not carnal but spiritual: primary is the testimony concerning the coming Kingdom of God in power—both to save those who will submit to its King, the Lord Christ, and later to judge and destroy those who oppose it when the great Day of Judgment arrives at the end of the age. This testimony in itself will bring upon us the wrath of the satanic powers-that-be, but at least we will have given the message of God as proper ambassadors of His, and not loose-canon men endangering all our kin for naught.

Be not deceived by men puffed up in self-confident bravado and deluded visions of worldly military glory, for our warfare is not against men, but against spiritual wickedness in high places, seeing as “the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). When we testify to the Kingdom of Christ we speak to the principalities and powers behind and empowering the earthly rulers, condemning them all—and those who bear this witness “overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Revelation 12:11).

Let us do things God’s way, and not man’s, however apparently noble the latter may paint itself.

Richard Bauckham in his, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*, p. xv, shows what is God’s way for these particular times and this particular place we are in:

[Chapter 8—‘The Apocalypse as a Christian War Scroll’—shows] “that John carefully takes up Jewish expectations of

a messianic war in which God's people are to fight and win a military victory over their enemies, and reinterprets them, substituting faithful witness to the point of martyrdom for armed violence as the means of victory." [emphasis added]

We need to get back to this understanding of what constitutes true military might. This is the example of Jesus' military victory through martyrdom. He bore witness to the Kingdom of God, then overcame death, and the dominion the devil who had the power of death (Heb 2:14). Resurrection changed everything! It does for us as well.

In the Greek "witness" is *martus* / martyr. The act of bearing witness in the face of earthly or satanic power, is displaying the raw power of God as it manifested in Christ. We scoff at bullets and beheadings, imprisonment, torture, and abuse, disenfranchisement and homelessness. Kill us and we rise again! The world *still* is not worthy of us.

What is the true image of the child of God, one heroic in bandoliers of ammo and high-powered weapons while picking off stalking officers of the state, or the man, woman, and youngster whose open testimony is refusal to pledge allegiance to the wicked state outlawing the name of Christ and His Bible, and bravely accepting whatever they threaten? Which is conformed to the image of Christ?

We are not guerrillas hunting stealthily for enemies (for the massive power of the state—replete with tactical nuclear weapons—precludes open confrontation), but still—in accord with the Nazarene's command—fishers of men's souls, harmless as doves and wise as serpents.

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THE HEBREW SEER, AND THE PAGAN MYSTIC

These are two different breeds of spiritual being. Although both human, their respective spiritualities are different in kind.

This will be brief – distilled.

The key to the Hebrew is what he or she sees. This is unique to this school, and often disdained by the others. He sees the world that YHWH – Jehovah God – created, and most particularly the spiritual realities. He or she gains this vision from revelation in the prophetic writings, those of Moses, the prophets, the Messiah, and His sent ones, the apostles.

What is seen is the heavens as created, and the beings created, both the good and those who, having free will, went bad through pride and desire for power. What is seen is the beatific vision of YHWH, the One who is three in glory and power; one who decrees, one who accomplishes, and one who illumines and quickens it all. Three centers of consciousness in one Being, working in perfect unity and harmony—one God.

On the earth, the special planet YHWH made for his humans, the bad angels through deceit usurped control of the realm and all in it. They entrenched themselves in the hearts and minds of the humans, and even some of the animals. They wrought havoc through physical disasters, meteorological and geological, although YHWH retained absolute sovereignty, yet allowing the free will of creatures to serve His purposes.

And YHWH instilled faith – trust in and love for Himself – in some of the humans. These followed YHWH rather than the devils, who were headed by their prince, Satan.

When seers were appointed by YHWH to deliver His words, revelations, and commands, they could see the spiritual realities of the besieged realm, and the oppressed conditions of all humankind, those with faith and those without. These seers were spiritual warriors and not mere mystics. When the Messiah came, the Christ, Yeshua or Jesus, He was spiritual warrior *par excellence*, and by wisdom and might overpowered Satan, effecting the liberation of all who had trust in Him.

The pagan mystics were not much interested in the spiritual realities of the Hebrews, as the way they saw the unseen worlds was as presented to them by demons with mastery of spiritual illusion; their primary focus was not on loyalty and love to YHWH (whom they did not know, though they were aware of Him and feared Him), or on that moral purity, righteousness, and justice in the community of humans that was YHWH's great concern, but rather on states of consciousness to be attained, through their own austerities and efforts, or those of select teachers and spiritual masters. It was common among these mystics to hold to the transmigration of souls, or the reincarnation of them, while they learned through suffering how to be better.

Some of these mystics were selfless in their care of others, and devoted their lives to their betterment. Still, they knew not YHWH, and had not His life and glory, conditioned as they were not to approach Him or believe in Him. Though appearing righteous, they had not the righteousness—*moral perfection*—respected by God and fit to enter His presence or His Paradise. Theirs was a false righteousness, and they lost souls, for all their vaunted holiness.

For all the light they obtained through the fallen spirits – and powers as well – they were not the true light and power, and the source of their spiritual lives was, ultimately, darkness and evil deception.

The Hebrew seer comes a warrior into a demonically besieged world full of such deceptions, and he or she is ready to give his life for the cause of the Christ and His love for humankind.

The devil also has his martyrs, but they do not see truly, and die in vain, leading vast multitudes to eternal ruin with them.

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THE LAW THAT LEVELS ALL HUMANKIND

It may well be perceived that in this world there are many elite who are exempt from difficulties, and from the laws and expectations levied upon regular citizens or residents of this land, and such is true.

There may be gross injustices meted upon many, and for which there seem to be no remedy, as the powers-that-be have dominance from intelligence capabilities and force of arms.

Yet this world – even this very life – is not forever, neither is death final, for when the great, final trumpet of God sounds we are *all* called to stand before His judgment throne, and then the law of justice and mercy will prevail.

I say “the law of justice *and* mercy” making the two laws one, for such they are in God’s Christ, who bore the justice due us (exhausting the wrath) that mercy may rightly be given to the undeserving.

No one shall escape answering for the deeds done in this life when we stand before Him – and stand we shall, before Him who said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt 24:35) – and those who have found His mercy while still in *this* life shall fare well, while those who have not shall not.

This is the Law that levels all humankind: Do you know the Lord, and cleave to Him for mercy and life, or are you a stranger to Him? If the latter this may be remedied, for He has said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and

are heavy laden, and I will give you rest . . . and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (Matt 11:28; John 6:37).

These things may be called, The Law of the King, and all are leveled in His sight. Those who love Him and His law will flourish, and be exalted by Him; those who hate Him will eternally perish (terrible even to think of), cast off as refuse.

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SPEAKING MY MIND ABOUT CHRIST WITHOUT RESTRAINT

When the day arrives that all pretense of civility about God and His Christ is done away with, and the life-or-death issues brought to the fore by His faithful witnesses, then one may speak freely of Him and His doings, even if the penalty is loss of freedom or life, for the importance of the truth which is subversive to the evil powers in authority must be told in clarity and force:

There is freedom from the whip and chains and gallows of the oppressor in the presence of Christ, who gives eternal life to whom He will, and this sets free from the fear of death and pain.

Why should I restrain my thoughts and speech about the things that are to come to pass? Shortly (I do not know the day or the hour, or the year) the Lord Christ shall appear in the heavens and every eye shall see Him, for it is the day of His return—with love for His beleaguered people, but fiery indignation and wrath for those who hate and persecute His people, and oppose His coming—it is the Day of Vengeance for those earth-dwellers who bear the mark of the beast upon their minds and hearts and blood-stained hands!

Should not I warn those I love of these things soon coming to pass? And if they disbelieve I am in my right mind and but spout delusion to them, scoffing at my words? That is on them; I'd rather they curse me now, than when we all stand before the great throne of judgment to curse me then for having failed to warn them of this terrible event that shall see them cast

into the lake of fire with the devil and his angels for eternity. Curse me now rather than then!

For love I give you all the warning note of judgment to come, that you not be unprepared. Even now the floodgates of mercy are flung wide for whomever will avail themselves of Jesus Christ's tender forgiveness and undeserved favor, for He has said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest... and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (Matthew 11:28; John 6:37).

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CONSPIRACY THEORIES

There are a lot of things we probably won't know the truth of – or the *full* truth of – till Judgment Day. There are some significant unanswered questions with regard to 9/11, JFK's assassination, the beefing up of DHS's ammo reserves and military capabilities, along with alleged FEMA camps, and other gov't preparations for what seems like civil unrest and disorder. It does seem like only those with blinders on cannot see the U.S.'s impending financial crisis – and I don't think gov't officials are blind in that respect.

With regard to the first two (JFK, 9/11), I probably won't know in this life; the other more current things we may have occasion to learn of. I am very skeptical of both the gov't *and* its opponents/detractors; I trust the sincerity and forthrightness of neither. How discern reality then? Authenticated documentation helps (though there is much forging), as do reliable witnesses.

There are both evil and benign conspiracies (*conspire* derives from a Latin root meaning to *breathe together*): there is a satanic conspiracy to harm and to deceive not only the world, but the saints, and the church; there is a divine conspiracy whereby the Almighty designs to work all things together for good to those who love Him, and who are the called according to His purpose. He enlists angels, men, nature – indeed, all things which exist – to care for His people and thwart plans designed for their ruin. He has also decreed that “strong delusion” shall take hold of the multitudes of the wicked especially at the end. Could that be at work even now?

I think it appropriate to ask the Lord for discernment with regard to the times, and also for possible self-deception (which we are all prone to).

With regard to FEMA and DHS conspiracy theories, I will say that their military presence and activity would be far preferable than looting mobs. Though they could run amok too, especially if they targeted Christians as enemies.

If the Lord has determined judgment upon the wickedness of America, there is nothing can stay His hand. Ultimately, all that comes upon nations, whether of blessing or of calamity are at His decree. This does not, of course, exculpate the wicked for their actions – as in the LORD using barbaric heathens to execute His judgments in Old Covenant times.

The Goshen—place of safety—for God’s Israel in *New Covenant* times is in spirit; as we abide in the place given us not a hair of our heads will perish, nor shall our souls suffer harm, even though we may be as lambs for the slaughter. The wise will understand. The resurrection changes everything!

With 58 million babies sacrificed in four decades on Babylonian altars in our land, shall we fare better than the nations of Canaan who did likewise? And that is but one of our many national atrocities.

Are the Chinese conspiring for the takedown of our electric grid when it will suit their need? If the LORD is against a nation, who can protect it?

Is there a conspiracy of silence among God’s seers with respect to danger and tumult in the wings? Or is it merely ignorance and naiveté?

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THE DEPTH OF THE ZEITGEIST INSIDE US

Zeitgeist is a German word for what we in English might call “the spirit of the age.” I would broaden—and narrow—the term a little to say “the content of our culture’s collective consciousness.” I am talking of America here. We are the undiluted pure wine of whore Babylon (Cf. the chapter, *The Fate of Babylon*).

Spirit of the age has taken on new meaning and depth since we have borne the fell title, *Age of sorcery*. Those who have read my views earlier in the book can track with this. Those who haven’t I suggest you do if you care to understand the psychic aspects of our society’s transformation.

I was walking down the street the other day with a friend and we remarked on how intense the sensual aspect of people had become. And last night walking home on the street an awareness dawned on me that a spirit—a psychic power—had entered into our perceptual fields—somatic *and* psychic—to heighten and enhance our experience of our own and others’ *beings*.

This is not what folks used to call a “contact high” from the drug use of others, but rather that the sorcerous / psychedelic drug use culture-wide has allowed a spiritual or psychic power into the body politic the affect of which is the energizing of our sensual awareness, and the expanding of its capacity.

But there is more to it than that. More to the extent of psychic affect than only sensual enhancement; it also enters our souls, so that our hearts are

being energized and influenced by this spirit of the age. This “spirit” is not a mere impersonal psychic force; I will not say it is just *a* spirit, that is a lone entity, but rather the combined influence of a vast number of evil spirits working their various malicious and destructive influences in people the world over—these then manifesting them in their cultures. Some of these human vessels of satanic influence are in positions to powerfully and deeply affect the culture through numerous institutions and sectors—law, arts, entertainment, education, police, military, politics, academia, medicine, publishing, etc—and slowly the atmosphere of society is transformed. I repeat what I have said elsewhere: the age of sorcery is not some benign activity of “good wizards” as we might see in certain movies, but an influence that comes from a conference convened in Hell, and projected into our human thought-lives and hearts.

It confirms—and is in accord with—what is naturally in the hearts of men and women. And what is that? An opposition to the presence of the *holiness* of God in Jesus Christ. An aversion to the pure Law of God in the Ten Commandments—the laws of life and of love. Societally it may be latent, and not openly operating in everyone’s consciousness. But it will out as the zeitgeist intensifies, and as God’s righteousness versus man’s native “righteousness” contend one against the other openly, and displayed in the media.

God says the spirit that indwells man is deceitful, “for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14), and makes himself out to be—and humanity with him—servants of righteousness. Yet it is written in the book of Heaven that “the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19), and that when truth is spoken the evolving “outrage machine” will seek to silence it. Therefore opposition to Christ, Christians, and the Bible will be the plumbline of discernment. Dispute this as some may, this is the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 19:10): it is the very “spirit of prophecy”.

The thing is, the intensifying *evil* spirit is not only “in the air” of our society—it is *in the hearts and minds* of us who are not sealed by the Spirit and word of God, which sealing is given a person when they come to Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sin and eternal life. The Scriptures speak of said spirit like this:

...the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience . . . the god of this world (Ephesians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 4:4).

This pervading spirit of our age like an alien presence will enter and take us over, and like the fictional “zombie virus” will rage within us against those who possess the true and eternal life. The *power* of this spirit to captivate the mind with its “reason”, and the heart with its irrational hatred, will transform the world into a wild place.

Not by a medicine, or some other cause, but by *sorcery* (laughed at and scorned by many!) will the intuitions of discerning artists be realized: the reality beneath *I Am Legend* and *World War Z* will be appearing in a neighborhood very near you in a ghastly and macabre manifestation of what truly lies in the heart of man as he opens it to the spirit who rules the age, his spiritual father the devil. This prince of demons has a plan, and he is being *allowed* to realize it by the almighty God of Heaven, in order to bring judgment on Satan, and those who follow him in his evil work. After this judgment the earth will be cleansed and made new.

The only inoculation, the only antidote, to this *possession*, is the sealed presence of the holy Spirit of Jesus Christ inside a man or woman. Get this (ask Him for it!) while it is yet day. For the night is coming when an eternal door will be closed. His great and terrible love is still available to the living dead, and the Water of Life He gives transforms the ontologic monsters into a new and glorious humanity—for it is from the actual fountain of eternal youth located at the Throne of God in Heaven. Jesus says, “him [or her] that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out” (Gospel of John 6:37). Come! Flee the wave of evil that shall flood across the earth, and the wrath of the holy One that shall follow it, executing vengeance for the harm done His beloved children. Seek the eternal refuge of His beloved children.

These are life and death times, with only the blind and foolish oblivious to it. At great risk to ourselves we bear this testimony to what is real.

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TO THE POETS WHO LIVE IN THE DAYS LEADING TO ARMAGEDDON

What are you all talking about?
Can you see what's going on?
If you really are the antennae of the race
you would know the times we live in.

Can you see God?
Are you aware of the devil?
Can you see the Beast
upon which great whore Babylon rides?

Do you know the prophecies that reveal
the dynamics of the age we are in?
Do you know who the good guys are
and who the bad?

If friends come to you in fear
of the pounding catastrophes
laying waste their lives, loves,
homes, and this very land

can you guide them to a state
of peace? Can you
enable them to die well
and not fear death?

Can you tell them what lies beyond the grave
with absolute certainty
so that even your dearest loves and your own
selves will not fear?

If you can answer in the affirmative
to all these things
you must be a seer of the Lord Christ
for He and His alone can.

If you can't, please hang it up
for souls don't need more jive
in times of life and death
they need poets alive

whose voices can reach into Heaven
like true priests and priestesses
able to bring God's breath to your hearts
that you may have eternal life

Poets who can endure the billowing flames
and storms that will close the apocalypse
ushering all souls to their eternal destinies
and from whose hearts and songs

issue those streams of living waters
pouring forth from the Gospel of Christ's
great salvation – Heaven's floodgates of mercy open
from the heart of the Saviour of the world.

Don't know this stuff?
I would suggest you hang it up
and seek out those hunted seers who do
for even in the ol' USA things are gonna get rough.

Enough of poets who can't see
whose hearts cannot open
spreading forth the table of feasts
able to sustain the soul

such that death has no power over.
One name alone can sustain us.
You who know it, speak up!
You who don't, are fodder for the Beast.

Jesus is the Name
a simple word for the Being
of Him who is the fountain of life
a sip of whose water

gives *eternal* life
that death cannot extinguish.
Anything less
is death.

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“NEW YORK CITY: CAPITAL OF THE WORLD”

I saw that written on someone’s T-shirt while waiting for the 7-line subway in Queens NY, and it occurred to me it was a dangerous title, implying as it did NYC is the target for the weapons of divine justice against the 21st century manifestation of Babylon, that symbol in John’s *Apocalypse* of world culture against the God of heaven and earth, and against His people.

Not that NYC – or the U.S. generally, world Babylonian *headquarters* – has morphed into its full stature yet (as of early 2016), as it has not yet fulfilled all the prophecies said of it, and which must happen before the vengeance is loosed.

It took fifty plus years for the fifth trumpet’s accelerated darkness and deception to turn into the sixth of killing where “one third” of humankind die, and how long it will take to turn into the sixth vial (bowl) where its terrible judgments turn universal is unknown, as hindsight is really the only way to see these end of the last days prophecies fulfilled (Vos rightly noted), and by then *the* end will be quite near!

“NYC: Capital of the World” is *not* an enviable title, as the *finale* of the final war – that between the rulers and people of the world against Heaven, *its* King and people – will take place after Babylon’s headquarters’ horrific destruction. We 21st-century folk love to see the movies with their pounding excitement of the adventures and prowess of superheroes and villains who shake and shatter the earth with the weight of their personal might and awesome weaponry, but nothing shall compare to the day the King of Heaven

appears on the scene at that moment His bride is mostly slaughtered, laying mostly butchered on the street of the great city of man (He shall then raise her up from the dead in glory!) – for He shall rend the very fabric of the universe with the fire of His fury, the vast heavens – the universe as we now know it – being dissolved, and the earth shaken with a quake and then billowing flames it can not survive.

That T-shirt – and the like thought in many minds – spoke of a bulls-eye for the wrath of impending outraged justice aimed and waiting for the moment of its release. There *is* mercy to be found before then, but the time is short.

Sinners Jesus will receive (the title of a hymn), for He says, “Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden [with the lethal guilt of your sins and the troubles of this life], and I will give you rest [that is, forgiveness of sins, peace, comfort, and eternal life with Me].” (Matthew 11:28)

Flee the wrath to come, forsake your allegiance to Babylon America with its fearsome threats and tantalizing rewards, and instead give it to the Kingdom of God, and the King of Heavenly Jerusalem (capital of New Earth and the wondrous *real* never-ending story), Jesus of Nazareth. The great Shepherd of the sheep loses none who come to Him for mercy, forgiveness, and eternal life.

This city won’t be called New York on New Earth, it’ll be incinerated radioactive dust way before that, and the rest of the world toast before the End, for its violence toward God’s people, out of hatred to Him. For in the world to come there will be no evil, no toxins, no rebellion, no death, no pain or sorrow—but rather everlasting joy, gladness, and the immediate vision of God our Father in Christ His eternal Son, who deigns to dwell among us, in our midst, and we His beloved children, adopted in Christ Jesus as the inheritors of His eternal love and glory.

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DISAPPEARING INTO AMERICA'S FEMA GULAG

Of course this is – at this point – a supposition, though where billows of smoke arise one might well suppose a fire somewhere.

We have reports of such happenings in other lands – the former Soviet Union, today's North Korean concentration / work-to-death camps, and numerous repressive regimes the world 'round – but hearing from so many (and not only conspiracy buffs, but older law-enforcement, ex-military, and respectable types) of the building and equipping of large FEMA centers across the U.S., as well the arming of numerous government agencies and enormous stockpiling of weapons and munitions, so that we have a burgeoning non-military *civilian* standing army, which could easily complement the various police agencies and military and intelligence services.

Who could people such places? If the country falls into difficult times through failure of the electric grid, the economy, or other critical infrastructure, and there is great civil unrest, certain sectors of the populace could be sent there; it would be made less attractive than “three hots and a cot” lest some seek respite from the domestic chaos in such. Or, in a different scenario, an ideological sector who are deemed a threat to the state's national security – or the maintenance of its imposed social order and acceptable speech – could be shipped off for removal and rehabilitation (or disposal) for the good of society.

Fast forward to my concern: if the children of God are assessed a threat to the state and its society, and are being removed and shipped off, don't let

this terrify you, for “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb 4:13).

The sovereign Almighty has His eye on every one of His beloved children, and not a one of them is apart from His knowledge and care. I would suggest you bring – should you be allowed by Him to be sent to such places for standing true to Him – some *memorized* Scripture passages with you, that you may refresh yourself and others with the power and light that inhere therein.

Fear not what men can do to you, but rather fear Him who can cast both soul and body into Hell. Men, after all, can only hurt the body. Do not fear them; the light afflictions of this present time cannot compare with the glory that shall be revealed in us who are His.

Fear not for your friends and families, those who are His are also in His almighty care. We need to rest upon the knowledge of His sovereignty, and His Providence in our behalf. You are not alone! Not bereft! “When you go through a trial, the sovereignty of God is the pillow upon which you lay your head.” –C.H. Spurgeon

We may have disappeared from the eyes of men, our loved ones included, but surely not from the eyes of Him who sees all, and apart from Whom not even a sparrow falls to the ground. So proceed bravely on the path and tasks your Saviour has appointed for you. Even in lockup, including solitary, you may be useful to Him. If not witnessing or encouraging, you can pray. Prayer to the Almighty *is* mighty. Even the whisperings of the weakest of us is heard by Him who loves us with an everlasting love!

And you who have lost loved ones to the Police State and the new Gulags, I say the same: they are cared for, not forgotten, and precious in His sight. You who are Christ’s will see them again at our grand reunion. Go bravely about His business; fear not – for you serve the High King who rules Heaven and earth.

THE END DRAWETH NIGH

. . . the Captain of our warfare will see to it we do well in the days to come, for all who are of His Spirit will rise to the evil occasion, whatever camps they are of. . . one King, one people.

Something tells me things are near to changing, be we ready or no (no prophet I — but *Poet* of the Lord, of the hearts of men, discerner of the times), and it matters not if others see as I see, for all saints shall be swept up anyway in the wave building, brought by it to stand before the world and testify that its deeds are evil, by the power of the One in whose name we speak.

You say I should tell a tale of this? An exciting adventure we may be drawn into? Should *I, Fiction Slayer*, do such a thing? The story is in the air, is being told everywhere, the blood of our brethren crying it out from the ground! It is in the streets, on the news, in the songs — it is being told such that I could not keep up with the telling. *This* is the great drama of the ages!

It is the final conflict between darkness and light, and the denouement comes together in a thousand strands, nay, millions, to climax the cry, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Revelation 6:10), and in answer He comes, first to call them up, then to execute vengeance — the *beginning* of vengeance — on those who hurt His beloved and dissed His majesty.

If we do not hear the story, we shall, for it will get louder, it will drown out the TVs and movies, the partying and leisure, the social networks and fun

fellowships, for we will hear in our own ears *our* roles in the story, *our* Job calamities, *our* being carted off to prisons and camps – there shall be no getting away from it, not for those who refuse to keep silent as to who *their* Lord is, not the lords of the world, but LORD of Heaven and earth.

The story will be opening near you, in short order, brought to you by, no, not the state, nor the persecutors, nor sundry evildoers, but the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Writer of the script of days.

We will see friends and beloveds fall to the ground, or taken to prison gulags to disappear, ourselves uprooted from homes and families, goods and neighborhoods, once again the wretched of earth (beloved of and marveled at in Heaven). The Story will be too vast, varied, and close-to-home to tell it save in these brief lines.

High drama and suffering to replace the humdrum (and oh so pleasant pleasures) of our lives, but we will realize the worth of it, and the rightness.

Of course it will help initially to be prepared for the loss of everything, whether it be sudden or by increments, but all who are His will indeed rise to the occasion, for *He* who is our indwelling life and power *will rise*. Those who say things will get better, and those who say we'll be taken out before the great suffering, all will finally be on the same page, and will stand among their brethren in one spirit, for the Lord knows how to bring about the unity of the faith where it is beyond us. Flame distills, leaves what is of essence, and in this we'll stand.

Our prayer half laughter, half tears
 our hearts rent, bereft of all
 save Him who cannot be taken from us
 and He sufficient,
 present in our hearts
 and weeping joyous prayers.

THROUGH THE WINDOW OF SCRIPTURE

Through the window of Scripture we see God's hand in the heavens reaching to the earth and moving its inhabitants as He will, with His eye specially on His beloved, the faithful church.

Through this same window we may make sense of what we see developing, and occurring, all about us in the world. This is given us that we may be as "the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chronicles 12:32).

I will say right off the bat that *for Christians* to resist tyranny in *this* day – here in the U.S. (or even the U.K. or Europe) – will provoke Babylon's lust for the blood of "Christian revolutionaries", so that we shall see her "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Revelation 17:6), delighting to crush those who take up sword against her, painting us all this color with a broad brush. So think twice, professing Christian hot-heads! Don't drag us *all*—wives and children included—to the bloodletting you foment!

A prime objective in the giving of our witness to the nations is to reveal or present the character of God as He is seen in Scripture, His word, and His works, that the world may know He is to be trusted and loved, if one but receives the love of the truth, that they might be saved (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

We need to answer the issues of free will – man's responsibility – and God's electing certain and not all – God's freedom – so that men's destiny is in

their hands (their hearts), to love Him or hate Him. To bow the knee or to rage.

We will understand when we see the violence directed at us simply because we love our Saviour and His word, for we are aware that the devil is come down among humans, having great wrath, knowing his time “on the loose” is short (Revelation 12:12). We will comprehend when we are hounded, bereft of homes and property, of liberty and lives, and when we see the social-political mechanisms for the accomplishing of it it will make sense – as we have been forewarned. Yes, there have been many contradicting voices with alternating scenarios, but when it goes down as we have heard it will make sense.

Through this sacred gift window we can actually see.

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PART VIII

PARADISE

There is not a lot I am going to say about the Paradise we are going to when this life is finished, the Resurrection and Judgment are over, and we hear the words of our King,

“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt 25:34).

We have a few places in God’s word which do speak of that Paradise. Further below I will share a little of that.

THE POET'S CONTINUING STORY

As noted in “Down from the mountain” he left NYC and moved to Cyprus (in the Mediterranean) to help his wife care for members of her aged and ailing family. While there he planted a church with the help of others, pastored it for five years, and by God’s mercy it continues to this day (April 25, 2016), now with a permanent godly pastor. After pastoring those five years he returned to the United States. Nine years altogether they lived in Cyprus. In 2011 they returned to NYC.

They lived in an apartment in Jackson Heights, Queens, NY, seeking to find a church that was sound Biblically, and a genuine spiritual community. They finally found one. His wife worked part-time taking care of children for families in the church, and he taught classes on Biblical topics, mostly Revelation, end times, cults, prayer, and communion with God. He sought to be useful to the Lord’s people, reach out to the lost of the world by public / open-air preaching, and worked as much as he could on finishing this book, getting it ready to publish.

So far the culture, although less friendly to Christians, was still a place most Christians could live in without a problem (though some, in more public businesses, suffered economic ruin due to their loyalty to Christ).

I’ll be adding on to this while finishing the book, so as to give a sense of my actual life

As can perhaps be discerned, my outward life is basically quiet and ordinary—though, especially in my younger years, there have been times of adventure and high drama—and where the real action is in spirit and vision of what is or what is developing and soon to materialize. The person who walks with the Almighty God, Sovereign Ruler of Heaven and Earth, in a land under the power of demons, is bound to come into conflict with them sooner or later. If not the demons directly, then those humans they use as instruments of their agendas.

I'm presently looking over this book, polishing and ordering it, getting it ready to send out to some friends to look over and suggest changes to better it. When you hear no more from me on this page, that means it has been given wings and is on its own, only the Lord Christ watching over it!

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Wed April 27, 2016

Went over to Holygroove and Reb's place to see *Star Wars VII, The Force Awakens* this evening, as all I had was a BluRay disc and they had a player.

I'm writing this with lightbearers in mind, not earth-onlies. I realize many of us grew up with this saga, and it's in our blood and hearts. What we have now is questions, such as who's Rey's mother (pretty clear Luke's the dad). I liked *VII* a lot—yes, even *Fiction Slayer*! And the saga does continue—and holds us.

Some things to consider: *we are in our own—real—cosmic battle*; here in the U.S. (U.K. somewhat similar) things are not generally *perceived* as terrible, but the water's getting hotter; it will be by *law* we are silenced and done in. I say done in because we will not be silenced. And here's the point: the way things are accelerating we may not be around—that is, free—by the time Dec 2017 rolls around. That's twenty months. Our own actual saga—in the satanic wars—may be so rife with disruption by then we will not be able to see the movie, and may not even care to if we could. Reality has a way of drowning out fantasy, even archetypal ones.

This is where I'll be keeping up-to-date in the book until I loose it in the world.

★ ★ ★

May 18, 2016

In my view the politics of this land this year—the coming presidential race—have all the marks of judgment from the LORD; the one will send us further down into the pit of national depravity already accelerated by the present throne, the other would provoke other nations and leaders to violent retaliation for offenses. Death by venomous serpents or outraged grizzlies—which do you most deserve, America? It's your vote.

★ ★ ★

May 19

I'll be sending this off very soon, today or tomorrow, if I can. Those who have followed me thus far, thank you for giving me a hearing. I hope it has benefitted you. Eternally.

★ ★ ★

WHEN I DIE

I know most of you'll be sad
and grieve
my presence no longer among you
— not that I was so good
but rather
the Saviour lived in my heart
and gave me grace
to be His brother

And when the day actually comes
I want you to remember
this poem
and the attitude of my heart
toward death,
for it is not an enemy to me
but a friend
and the entrance to Heaven

for Paul said to be absent from the body
is to be present with the Lord,
and that when we depart
we go to be with Christ,
and I trust this will be the case with me
for I cleave to the Saviour
as to my very life
and all my righteousness

so when I breathe my last breath
and my heart finally lies still
(having beat so strongly
with such fierce blood
all these years!)
I will fairly quickly appear
(either by angelic lift, or God's decree)
in the Land of glory and light

and I will be in my spirit-body (the resurrection
of our bodies and New Earth yet to come)
astonished, standing, rejoicing
at the beauty God has prepared
for those who love Him
and I will kiss the ground of Heaven
and worship the Holy One
my faithful Shepherd

and I will likely be very busy
getting oriented to my heavenly home,
visiting old friends and family,
seeing the sights
of the City of God,
talking with the men and women
whose lives we saw in the Bible
and who touched our hearts all through this life

and
dare I
say it,
setting my eyes upon
and conversing with
His Majesty Himself
the Almighty God, King of Heaven and earth
Jesus Christ my dearest friend

So when I am gone
from this life to the next
grieve my absence if you will
but remember with joy
that I walk in newness of life
in City Celestial
and with all your hearts
lay hold upon the mercy of the Saviour

that you yourselves may join me
in an eternity of wonder and bliss
in the Everlasting Kingdom
of the people of God;
so get hold of His Book
and forsake all that would keep you
from walking with God
in the way of His Son

And to my beloved Pola,
wife and friend and fellow pilgrim,
I will await your own entrance here
to your eternal rest and great reward,
and please know how grateful I am
to have had a companion like you
to walk and lie by my side
in the world of this life.

★ ★ ★

NEW EARTH PARADISE

This will be, in ending this book, a glimpse of the beginning of a new life for those of us who have trusted Christ to secure our eternal well-being. This story began in New York City, and then Woodstock NY, and after a bit of traveling, back again to NYC. If my wife and I shall end our years here in the City, or the Lord has elsewhere for us to go, I do not know. If we are to end our earthly lives in the destruction of Babylon as I have envisioned it in these pages, so be it, for death is nothing but the entrance to Heaven and Christ's presence for us.

In this visionary journey we have seen depths of the abyss in the human soul, and the horrors of existence apart from the life of God; then, after the rescue from that place and into His care, an awareness of the great whore Babylon as our new external locale dawned upon the poet's mind. Then came the troubles that started materializing—domestic disorders, critical infrastructure failures, chaos, real suffering—before the main events leading to the dread days of Armageddon: weapons of mass destruction loosed unexpectedly on major global players, after which global war was declared on the saints, precipitating the Lord's return.

But Paul says in Romans 8:24, “we are saved by hope”, which does not negate being saved by grace through faith, but rather gives us a vision of where we are going when this age is finished, and upon which hope we anchor our souls, however rough the seas are between here and there.

The vision? It is both of a Person and of a place. For those who have not studied the Bible carefully the thought of an afterlife is simply eternal life in

the immaterial heavens. Yet the clear teaching of the Resurrection is that all of our bodies will be raised again in a glorified, immortal condition. John says this of it:

“Beloved, now are we the sons [and daughters] of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he [Jesus] shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

There is indeed mystery to this, as we are so used to our perceptions and states of consciousness in this life, but there everything will be different. “There”? I refer to New Earth Paradise. John, at the end of the Apocalypse, in chapter 21, writes of the vision he sees,

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful...

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God... (Rev 21:1-5, 9-11a)

This is the country—the *heavenly* country—that is spoken of in Hebrews 11, which also says that all the saints, Old Testament and New, were strangers and pilgrims while they lived on this present earth, waiting for that city whose builder and maker is God. What John sees coming down from Heaven to be upon the earth is *that* city.

The city refers to two things, a community of people, and a literal city. In verse 9 New Jerusalem is said to be “the bride, the Lamb’s wife”, which is the church. And then in verses 10 and following we have a description of a physical city. Very clearly much of the “physical” description is symbolic, but not all of it. When Jesus told the disciples in John 14:2 that in His Father’s house are many mansions, and He is going to prepare a place for us in which to dwell, no doubt He was speaking of real dwellings. But the dimensions of the city, 12,000 furlongs or stadia (about 1,400 miles / 22,000 kilometers) cannot but be symbolic. Of this New Jerusalem we are told, “The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal” (Rev 21:16), making it a perfect cube of extraordinary dimensions. Is there any other perfect cube to be found in Scripture? Yes, in 1 Kings 6:16, 20 we see that the holy of holies is such a cube.

What this is telling us is that New Jerusalem on New Earth is itself the holy of holies, the place of God’s abiding presence. The community of glorified saints is New Jerusalem, yet it is also the city proper, wherein is the River of Life “proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev 22:1), along the sides of which are the trees of life and their wondrous fruit and leaves. Are these things symbols of glorious realities? Yes, though I believe they are at the same time actual fruits and trees with marvellous properties.

It is most likely that New Jerusalem, home to millions upon millions of God’s elect children, comprises the entirety of the renewed earth, so that the entire planet, on which live all the saints, is the holy of holies. Greg Beale, perhaps the premiere commentator and scholar on the Book of Revelation, says that the entire renewed universe is the holy of holies, as even the heavens have been cleansed of all evil and corruption.

Isaiah 65:17 refers to the same real new heavens and new earth as Revelation:

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth:
and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

2 Peter 3:10-13 likewise:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

After the wonderful marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19:7-9 (how blessed it will be to attend that great celebration, where we are the honored bride of our King and Lord), and we settle down to the eternal honeymoon of joy in His care and love, living in the homes He has prepared for us, and, I believe, going about work that will be sheer delight, as Isaiah 65 talks in somewhat archaic language (the prophet speaking in terms he was familiar with to convey truths of our lives in eternity) of our building and planting. Other places the Lord speaks of some ruling over cities (Luke 19:17-19), i.e., administrative services of love and grace in our practical lives.

Perhaps the most astounding thing will be that God will be there in our midst, for He has promised He “will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor 6:18), and He will be there with us, wiping away all tears from our eyes, in this new world where “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev 21:4). In the next verse it is written,

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

We will surely lay our eyes upon Jesus there, the King over His vast and glorious kingdom, and He knows each of us by name (John 10; Isa 43:1), and loves each of us beyond what we can know. We will have many intimate occasions to be with Him—and this throughout all eternity! He will dwell with us, He will live with us in our midst, as a father watching over and caring for and delighting in His beloved children.

Revelation 21:21 through Rev 22:6:

And the twelve gates [of the city] were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but

the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true...

A few comments on the verses above. There will be nations in the kingdom, and with this I believe we will all have our respective languages (each language has its own peculiar beauty), yet every person there will be given to perfectly understand every other language—and it is likely our cultures will differ also, yet all will honor and glorify our great God.

There is no temple there, but God and the Lamb are the temple of it—but then, as members organically united with Christ's body, *we also* are the temple, containing the presence of God. The river of the water of life flows from the throne of God, but not only in the riverbed—I believe His Spirit of life and love flows through our hearts and bodies communicating (sharing) the divine love and power within us, quickening us with a glory and joy beyond words to tell.

Rev 22:4 *We will see His face*. Imagine, the One who flung out the billions of galaxies in the immensity of His power and wisdom, the One who creates all the pleasures and joys life holds, the One who is the Source and Fount of all beauty, the One who is possessed of infinite majesty and dignity, the One who made His soul an offering for our sin, bearing our punishment for very love of us—it is *His* face we will look into. What can I say? I better be quiet here, for this is holy ground.

Is not this the *blessed hope* Paul speaks of in Titus 2:13, that we shall be with our Jesus, and the heavenly Father, and the Spirit of truth—our one and great God—on the New Earth He has made for us in which to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever?

So by the aid of His Spirit we set our faces like flint (Luke 9:51), and call upon Him to enable us to arrive safely in Celestial City, quitting ourselves like godly men and women who bear His precious name, holding forth the word of life in a crooked and perverse nation.

FINIS – WRAPPING IT UP

If I'm going to put it into print this story has to end somewhere even though the denouement isn't yet clear in the details (though in the overview it is), but I will tell what I see, despite the tale continuing to unfold.

So far the American Police State hasn't morphed into its final shape, neither has it spilled the blood of the saints on this soil. No calamities of Biblical proportions have pounded us yet (though 9/11 was a light tap of warning), and life goes on pretty much as usual in these American states – as of 4/25/16.

Yet I have a sense of urgency in getting this book ordered and polished so as to get it out into the world and into the hearts and minds of those it is meant to go to.

I will sell it for the bare minimum, 99¢ on Amazon and free elsewhere (unless a publisher wants to buy it to make a real print book, and deal with permissions and fees, etc, but it'll still be cheap for those who need it so). As it stands all my quotes fall under Fair Use, as they are used to educate.

Who knows, maybe it'll be too much of Christ for the folks of the world, and too much of the world for the Christ-followers – though it could be the other way, enough of the world for those thereof, and enough of Christ for those of Him. I desire to be true to Christ, as well as credible to – and resonating in – the hearts of those to be called.

As you read this I may still be living (but who knows how long till it gets in your hands) and going through whatever is given us at the Almighty's hand.

Remember this, they endure who trust Him, who know He loves them even though all around our souls gives way, and pain comes – sometimes really awful. Many of our brothers and sisters – and even their children (you’ve seen the news, no?) – have suffered awful abuse at the hands of those that hate them and Him, and we may as well. I will not lie to you about the possible suffering you may know, but it is written,

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Romans 8:18).

Again, it is said,

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:17,18).

Do not be afraid for a brief, bright flash of pain. He is with you. Those who are His know that gold must be melted in the furnace to bring the dross up and skimmed off, that it be purified. Those who abide in His love cleave to Him the more when earth offers nothing but horror and anguish, finding in Him a power of love that sustains, upholds. Keep these words of Martin Luther’s hymn close:

Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
the body they may kill:
God’s truth abideth still;
His kingdom is forever.

Have a song in your heart, not only to share with the perishing, but with your own self, for He inhabits the praises of His people.

* * *

There is a spiritual vision of what the Lord is doing, both in the world and among His people; and the vision of what is going on in the world – making sense of the madness, injustice, and wickedness sweeping the globe – and how all this fits into God’s plan, both for judgment and for salvation, is vital. I think it takes a knowledge – with comprehension – of God’s word to be able to sort things out so that we can understand (to some extent at any rate) the direction of the times, and be able to interact graciously and wisely with our world, and its people.

* * *

If I am taken captive for being a Christian, and silenced so that I cannot speak, these are the words I would say:

I have lost my earthly liberty for the testimony of Jesus Christ, who saves *all* those who seek forgiveness of sins and eternal life from Him, as He paid *in full* the debt we owed to Divine Justice outraged at our sins. I remain in His presence, whether I still live here or have gone to be with Him in the kingdom of His glory before it manifests on the New Earth, and is this not real freedom, to be in God’s care and protection while He prepares our dwellings in eternal realms? Even in the midst of suffering, is it not joy to be in the presence of the Saviour, the Holy One by whom all that exists was created, who Himself is the fountain of all joys and pleasures?

Grieve my loss, sure, but rather make certain you close with Him on the matter of forgiveness and eternal life (He is available, seated on the governing throne of glory), and His words remain to encourage you, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest . . . and him [or her] that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (Matt 11:28; John 6:37).

Grieve instead for those who have taken my liberty or life in this world, for they are in danger of eternal torment and death – please pray for them, that the Lord grant them the gift of new life and faith that they may turn to Him, be forgiven, and start fresh.

To the rest of you my friends, see you soon enough, in the realm of wonder and glory, *His* realm! And soon enough all creation shall be rid of evil and death, and His presence shall illumine it all.

Adieu!

Steve Rafalsky

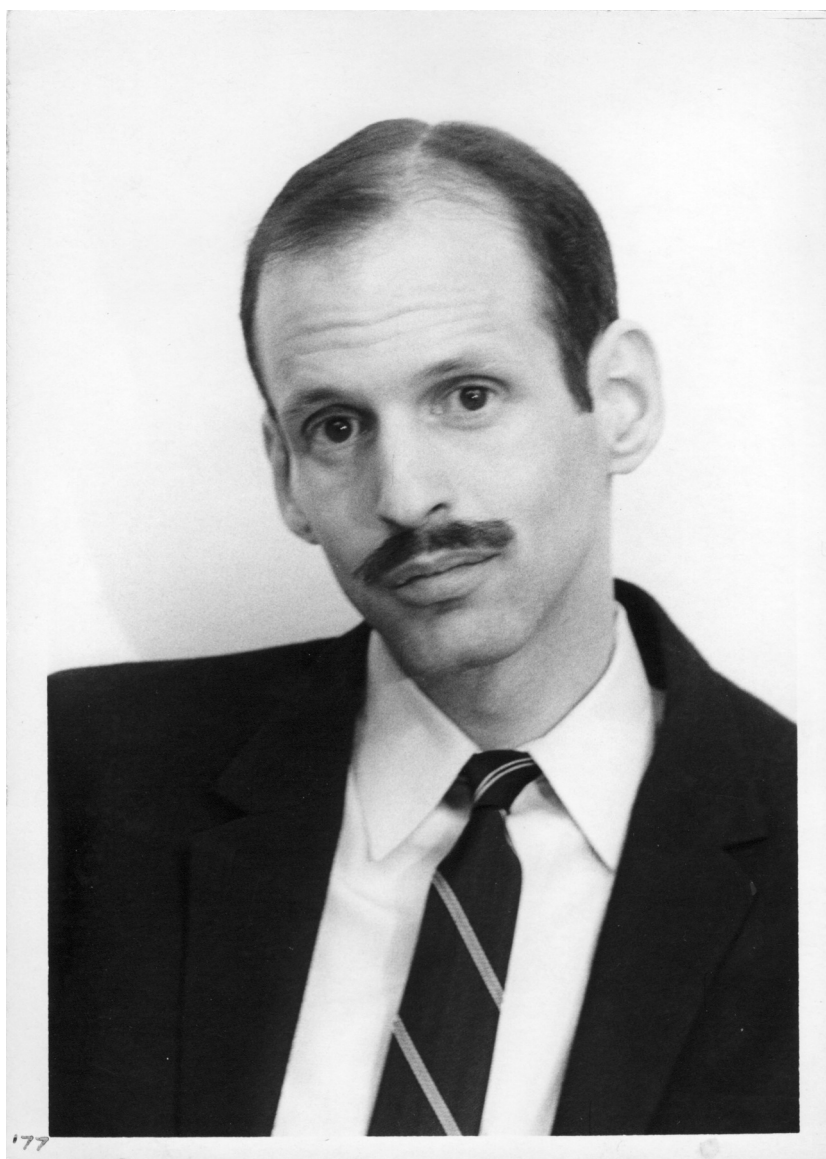
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Dedicated to, with gratitude:

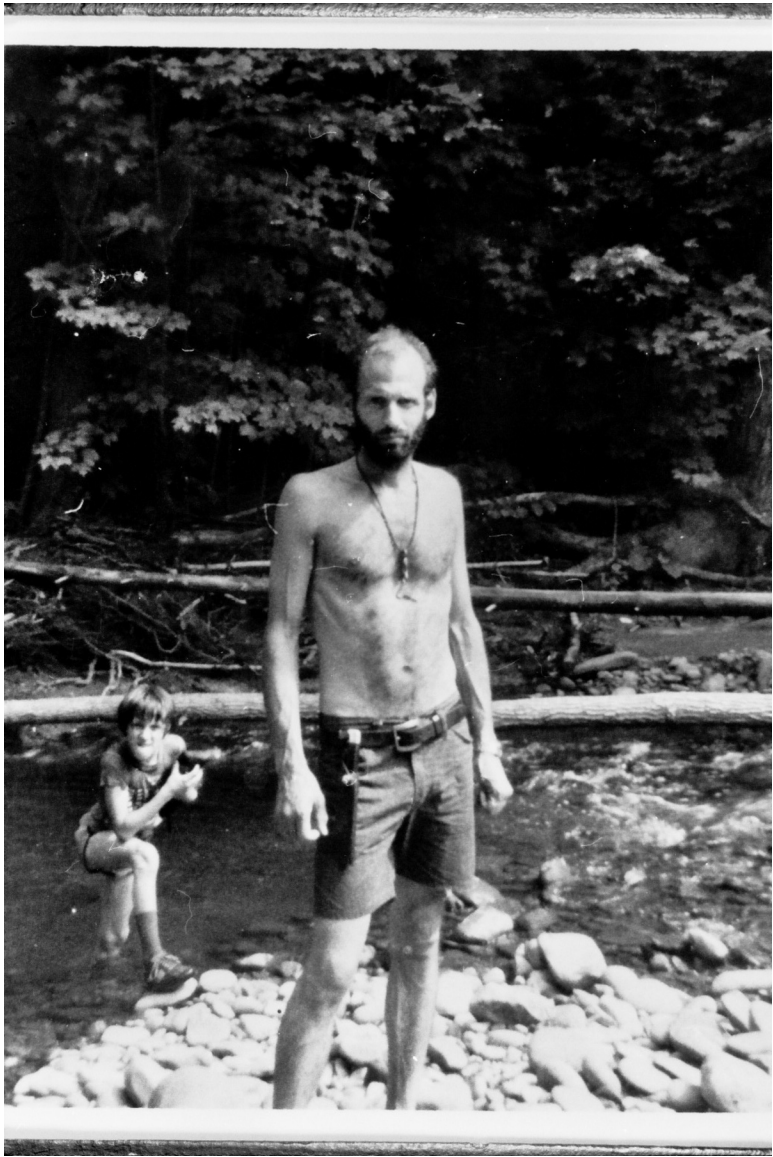
Lea Kivisalu, who introduced me to Jesus Christ
Bob Dylan, who first taught me about a poet's voice
The God of Israel, a father and mentor to me
when I had no others
Jesus, my high priest and friend
Pola, my better half
Bob, my friend, the first to read much of this,
and a great encouragement



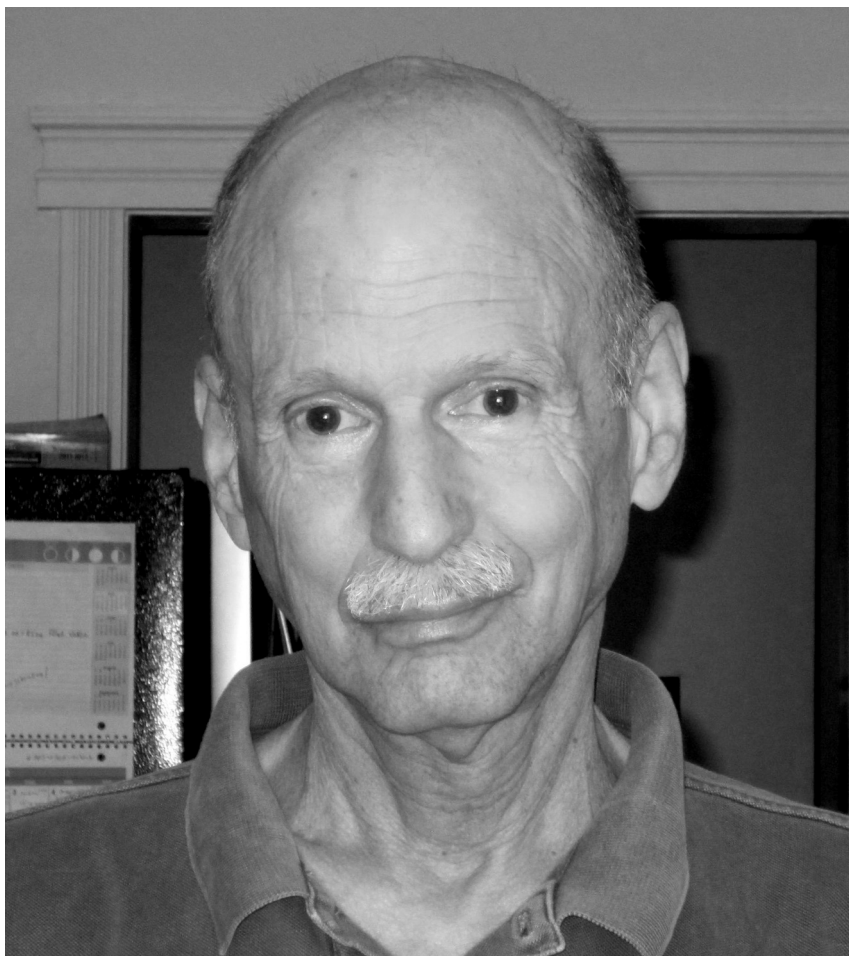
DOB 3/21/42 Photo around 1965



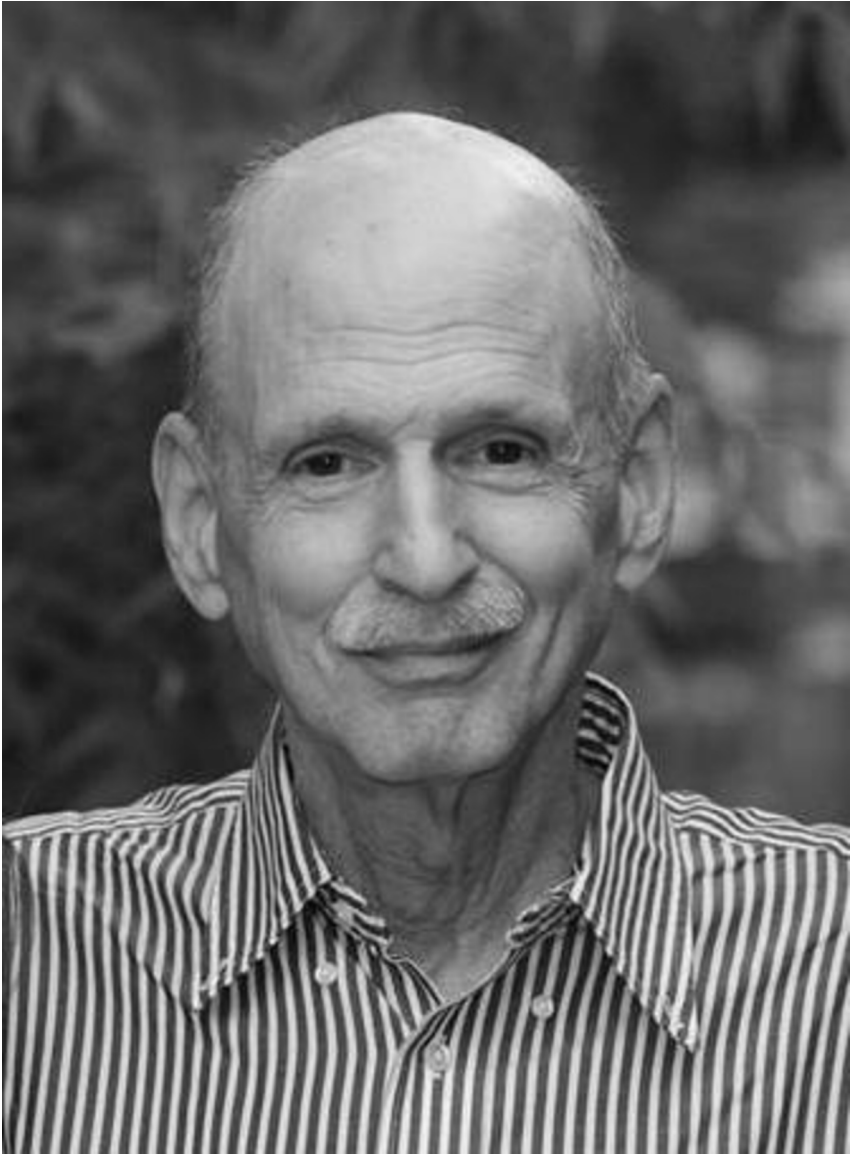
Around 1977



Around 1980



Around 2012



Around 2014