

NOTICE: The following sermon is a compilation of 10 articles which were first published in our state newspaper, The Arkansas Democrat, several years ago. I thought it good to send it out again to the Bride to be given to friends and relatives in the denominational systems. May the Lord Himself bless His revealed Word. I personally thank each person who has so faithfully supported the ministry. I know the Lord has taken note of it.

Br. C.W. Wood

ARTICLE 1

In the New Testament we have a clear picture of the true early church. It was not joined to the denominations of the day. Jesus did not join himself to the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Essenes or any other sect. No doubt each denomination was prepared to present Him with their fellowship card. But Jesus was neither a Pharisee nor a Sadducee. May I respectfully say that neither is He a Baptist, Methodist, Assembly of God, or any other sect today. We can become so wrong in our thinking. I have no doubt at all that should Jesus appear today, many would attempt to bring Him into their denominations. How grieved He is at our attempts to **build our towers of Babel**. In Genesis 11:4, the people started to build a tower. They said, "**Let us make a name lest we be scattered abroad...**" But God came down and scattered them anyway, showing forever His dislike of denominational towers. A study of church history shows God's never-changing method of restoring His church. To do this, He always calls His own out of the man-made denominations of each age. In 1906, in Los Angeles, God took a giant step toward restoring His true church. There on Azusa Street, He sent a Holy Ghost Revival. The outstanding

"COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE" (Revelations 18:4)

By C.W. Wood

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characteristic of that out-pouring was that God called people from every denomination in the land and loosed them from their systems. For a short time they remained free, then, as in all previous church history, they had a desire to "make us a name lest we be scattered." So, they formed Pentecostal denominations. No doubt these precious people had a desire to preserve their deeper experiences and revelations. This desire led them to build a wall around the truths they had. One sin of denominationalism is the confusion caused by so many groups crying, "We have the truth, join us." The unchurched hardly know where to turn. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, "**For God is not the author of confusion.**"

ARTICLE 2

By "restoring" I mean a return to Pentecost as seen in the Book of Acts. God has never been able to lead man-made organized religious groups. These groups have laws legislated by men that tend to over-rule the leading of the Lord. History clearly shows how God has sent spiritual awakenings through the church ages. During these times of revival, God's method of restoration has remained the same. He always calls His true church out of the man-made sects of that particular day. History also shows that after the revival fires burn low, these called-out ones have always reorganized, attempting to build for themselves a name. Then God must repeat His process of "calling out". Let us make a survey of God's method in past years, because what He is doing today can only be understood as we see

His pattern of ages past. Let us look at God's method of restoration when He sent Jesus to start the New Testament Church. He chose 12 men who were "called out" as far as being controlled by any denomination was concerned. They chose to follow the words of Jesus rather than the traditions preached by the elders. Jerusalem was the most religious city in the world, but they were steeped in 4,000 years of man-made traditions. The announcement of Christ's birth was not made to the High Priests, but to lowly shepherds in a field. Why did it have to be a shepherd? Because, God knew that the religious systems would not receive the Christ in a barn. Did not the high priest, in later years, instigate our Lord's death? In this portion of history then, we see God's method of "calling out" in order to restore His church to truth.

ARTICLE 3

Last week we saw how God started His New Testament church through people who refused to be bound by the religious sects of that day. This was a "calling out" from the established denominations. Now, a look at more history. It always shows how God has moved. After Jesus left, the apostle Paul gave the "called out" church full revelation on what Jesus had taught. Though this early church was imperfect in the flesh, they had full understanding of God's Word. But in the centuries that followed, men did not always walk in the light of these truths, so that by the 14th century this light had slowly faded until there was only a bare flicker left. But in the hearts of a few men, God has

always preserved His mighty truths. It was so in the heart of an Englishman named John Wycliffe. In the 14th century, England's only Bible was the Latin Vulgate. The common people, ignorant of its contents, were living in great spiritual darkness. It was during this terrible darkness that God "called out" John Wycliffe. John, being an Oxford scholar, gave England a version of God's Holy Word in the language of the common people. With the Word of God once again in the hands of the people, there came a move against Rome and the unscriptural teachings of its popes. A mighty wave of new spiritual life began to roll into the hearts of those willing to come out of the systems. As the Word-starved people received the new message, the stage was being set for what God would do in the 16th century. We are looking at a never-ending principle of God, which is to "call out" His own from the religious, Word-rejecting sects of every age. In the 16th century, God "called out" Martin Luther. He shook off the shackles of Rome and God loosed him from the church tyranny of centuries. This "calling out" produced the great reaffirmation that broke over Europe. It brought into plain view the truth of justification by faith. People began, once again, to understand that true salvation comes by grace and faith rather than by works. Now God's restoration of His end-time Bible Church was in full swing, but it was by no means complete. Other glorious truths awaited those who would consent to loose themselves from the Word-rejecting systems of the day.

ARTICLE 4

Last time we had followed God in His plan to restore his church down to the 16th century and His "calling out" and separating of Martin Luther. Though thousands were being called out of denominational bondage by Luther's message, God was far from through with His restoration program. The prophet Joel, speaking for God, said, "I will restore, saith the Lord."

(Joel 2:25) By the 18th century, Martin Luther's "called out" followers had committed the usual sin of denominating. Therefore, the force of Luther's spiritual awakening was spent because the people once again built a denominational wall. More attention was given to the building of the walls than to imparting the new-life experience of justification. As a result, leaders without the new spiritual life took over, and spiritual life was at a low ebb once again. But God had sworn to restore and it was at this time that He raised up John Wesley. It was after he had preached for several years that Peter Boehler led him to salvation. Now John began to preach a new message in the same old churches and was turned out. How strange indeed that the established denominations never want God's new light (truths). Though John Wesley was put out of the churches, he would not be stopped. He took Luther's message of Justification and to it added his revelation concerning Sanctification. Not being able to preach in the established churches, he preached in open fields and on the streets. He boldly stated that persons could be instantly saved by faith and then could have the assurance of the Holy Ghost in their hearts. How very sad that men will gather inside the walls of their different sects and steadfastly deny what God is doing in their age. And so it was that the people that followed Wesley's message had to leave the churches also. In this we see yet another "calling out" by God in order to restore truth to His own. But God was still not finished. He would bring His church back to the way it was when He left Earth, and then He would take her home to heaven.

ARTICLE 5

As the world entered into the 19th century, the wave of revival produced by John Wesley was also receding. The need for another spiritual awakening was great. In 1858, God poured out His Spirit in the United States, followed the next year by a similar outpouring in

Wales and Ulster. The revival in Ulster quickly spread to Scotland and then on to parts of England. In 1859, a great revival in England caused believers to break through denominational barriers. They broke their shackles and started home meetings in an effort to be "thawed out" from sitting in the frozen churches. They did find life, and a missionary outreach resulted. As usual, the established churches were against this spiritual move of God. Once a denomination has been formed, it seems that there is a prevailing spirit that says, "We have all we need." Such an attitude closes the door to the truths that God has been constantly restoring to His church. In Revelations 3:13, Jesus said that the church systems (of the last age especially) would be saying, "We have need of nothing." Though this would be their thinking, Jesus said, "You are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." As so often before, the masses of people in traditional churches did not follow God's revival in 1859 in England. Prejudice, pride of denomination, and ignorance of God's method of calling out a people limited God. In each revival that our Lord has sent, He intended that each "calling out" would result in His people blending all His truths together into one glorious body. Instead of this, we have seen each called-out group finally denominate, thinking that the part they held was the whole. Their vision was limited to the part they held, and they quickly built a wall around their part. And so we come to the 20th century. As we have seen what God did in the past centuries, it is obvious that no movement had as yet been restored to the position of the church of Acts. But God was not finished. In the midst of all the decay around us (both of the world and in the churches) the Lord's plan to restore a book-of-Acts people will be fulfilled.

ARTICLE 6

Coming now to the 20th century, we find recorded the events of a great revival in Wales in 1904. Out of that re-

vival came the great present-day Pentecostal movement that started in Los Angeles in 1906. By 1906, God had restored to His true body the truth of Justification by Faith and Sanctification as a second work of Grace. Now He was about to take another great step by restoring the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and the resulting gifts of the Spirit. This move was meant by God to add to what Luther and Wesley had experienced and taught. A man by the name of Frank Bartleman received a tremendous burden of prayer for revival in Los Angeles. He had moved there in December of 1904. For almost a year, Brother Bartleman and others who were by now sharing his burden, prayed constantly. In his diary it is written, "I frequently groaned in prayer as a woman in travail with child." Revival fires began to blaze in Los Angeles. The Lord was preparing to visit and deliver His people once more. As usual, He would do it by calling His true ones out of the religious systems. People who came out of the dead churches now began to have cottage prayer meetings. On April 15, 1906, Brother Bartleman went to church where a group of people were meeting who had been "called out". A colored woman there spoke in tongues, which created a great stir. This happened in Burbank Hall in Los Angeles. Some of the pioneers were breaking through the religious barriers, and many were to follow. Eventually, this revival moved to Azusa Street, and there it came to be a mighty blaze.

ARTICLE 7

Though the revival on Azusa Street spread to the whole world, God had not yet finished His plan for the complete restoration of His church. The called-out ones of the Los Angeles revival did not escape the temptation to organize and try to preserve their deeper truths. Soon several different Pentecostal denominations were formed. These precious people were thought of as the outcasts of society. In those early days, established religions laughed them to

scorn and sometimes threw rotten fruit into the midst of their services. It was the genuine Holy Ghost that made the actions, dress, and lifestyles of these "outcasts" so different. Would to God that these "differences" were more in evidence today! But as time passed, these called-out ones again yielded to the desire to be popular and accepted by their peers. They began to covet a larger and more "refined" following. In order to attract these refined ones it was necessary to relax in their holiness way of living. When our desire for public acclaim crowds out our desire to see lives changed by the power of God, then we are on the road of error. Swelling membership rolls can never replace the power of God that flows through holy-living people. We need a revelation today of how really despised and rejected were those 120 people who staggered out of the upper room. Sad to say, but many Pentecostal churches today are among the most popular in their cities. Modern Pentecost and the religious people have joined ranks, and since the Bible says, "Satan does not cast out Satan." The persecution has stopped. There were about a dozen people meeting in an old warehouse on Azusa Street under the leadership of a colored brother named Seymour. Azusa Street was true Pentecost, but it did not last as we have shown. The surge of its spiritual power was almost over by 1941 and the start of World War II. When those called-out ones had also formed denominations of their own, it was again time for God to move on.

ARTICLE 8

By the 1940's, most of the people who had experienced true Pentecost in Los Angeles were gone. Much error had entered Pentecostal ranks, including tongues as the initial evidence of the Holy Ghost. A younger generation was taking over, many of whom had not received God's real Holy Ghost. Many sects spoke in tongues, shouted, and danced, but they were not true dedicated vessels unto God. But God never left

Himself without a true remnant, and as the 1940's approached, all Pentecost was not false. In 1932, a young Baptist preacher named William Branham, had stopped by a Pentecostal meeting in Mishawaka, Indiana. He was 23 years old at the time. From this meeting in Mishawaka, was created in William Branham's heart a hunger which led him to a personal Pentecostal experience. This experience caused a separation between him and his Baptist brothers who could not understand his new way of life. Now God was ready to start the final stage of the restoration of His church. Unknown to Brother Branham at this time, was his call to spearhead the mightiest revival the world has ever seen. This greatest of all supernatural outpourings is now history, having lasted from about 1946 until the end of 1965. For these years, the world witnessed all over again the mighty works of God as it is written in the book of Acts. The dead were raised before hundreds of witness. Cancers and tumors dissolved before the wondering eyes of those crowds of people. People born blind shouted for joy as they received their sight. Twisted limbs and deformed bodies became normal as God worked in answer to prayers of this humble, uneducated man. Brother Branham's life ended in 1965, but the sequence of events that God started through him will go on throughout all eternity. Please notice that this worldwide revival was brought to pass only after God had separated His chosen vessel from the established religious system. Once again it was true to God's method of bringing revival. God was not a respecter of persons, but the system would not accept this move of God, therefore the vessel to be used had to be separated from them. To refuse the true works of God has always been and remains today the great sin of denominationalism.

ARTICLE 9

We come now to God's last great step in His plan. We have seen from

history how the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles started and how its wave of spiritual life was flattened as its leaders denominated. As this wave receded, we saw how God started another mighty revival through an unknown, uneducated Baptist preacher named William Branham. We also have related how God had to separate His chosen vessel, not because God respected persons, but because the system would not accept the supernatural move of God. For this reason, God once again "called out" a people whose mind and hearts were not closed because of denominational teaching. From the time of the first great Branham meeting in St. Louis in 1946, these followers of God's great end-time move have remained free of any man-made sect. This fulfills Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:25) where God said He would **"restore the years that the locust, the cankerworm, the caterpillar and the palmerworm had eaten."** These insects referred to by God type the denominational systems that ate away at God's revealed truths until they destroyed them. But God said, **"I will restore."** He promised to bring back a supernatural, miracle-believing, miracle-working church. It would be the same kind that we read about in the book of Acts. God called and ordained a leader for His book-of-Acts church of 2000 years ago, the apostle Paul was his name. In every great spiritual restoration move of God, there have been God-ordained leaders. Noah led a revival that saved a few people out of the great flood. Moses led a revival that saved God's children out of Egypt. God sent Jonah to lead a revival that saved the teeming city of Nineveh. John the Baptist preached a revival that showed the honest-hearted who the Messiah was. Many others could be named, but can we not see that God's restoration plan includes these ordained leaders? It is not that God or we would want to elevate these leaders to be thought more of than they should. It is always the *message* that such men bring that is of utmost

importance. God worked supernatural signs through His leaders, not so they would receive glory, but so attention would be given to their message. Each such man was responsible to God to give God's message to his respective age. It was spoken in Malachi 4:5 that just before tribulation started such a one would come in our day, **"Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."** The last major prophet has come and gone, but his message continues to burn like fire that cannot be quenched in the hearts of those who receive the revelation. An important part of God's message for our day includes what will be the end of all denominational systems. To show this end has been our purpose in this series of messages. Next we'll see God's judgment on man-made religious sects.

ARTICLE 10

In this last message on the sins of denominationalism, we have come now to the most important one. We will see God's judgment that has been prophesied to come on the world's religious systems. In past weeks we have repeatedly shown how God always calls a people out of denominations before He can produce a real Holy Ghost revival. To refuse to follow God's true revivals and come out of lifeless systems was to miss spiritual life, and receive the Mark of the Beast. What actually is the dreaded mark? So much has been said concerning this controversial subject. Church people are in a state of confusion about it, but let it be known that God never brings judgment before He warns. In Revelations 13:16, the Bible says, **"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads."** This mark is directly connected with the World Council of Churches, which had its start in Uppsala, Sweden 1948. It was prophesied that in the end-time, this church would rise to such power that men would tremble before it. It is the

image of the beast spoken of in Revelation 13:14. Today its life is fed by unsaved men who call themselves clergy of Jesus Christ. We are now witnessing the rapid growth of this evil, worldly religious movement. *They teach unity, but it is only the unity that compromise brings.* To forsake the basic principles of the Bible is spiritual death. Nevertheless, God will allow this movement to climax into a giant church federation, with legal authority over all Christendom. It will be a world church with worldwide power. Already, many denominations have joined its ranks. To give them your right hand in fellowship, or agree in your thinking, is to take the deadly Mark of the Beast. (Rev. 13:16) The number one goal of this council has been to bring in the Catholic Church with her 550, 000, 000 members. Some day soon, a leader of the Roman church will be elected leader of this giant world church. This one will be the anti-christ who has fooled the masses by his preaching Jesus Christ and by his constant crying for peace. To be a part of this so-called Christian Church is to take the Mark of the Beast. It will become federal law that only those in this evil membership may buy and sell (Revelation 13:17). Can we now see why our God has said, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins"? (Revelations 18:4) And so, the end of the denominations comes before us as we read Revelation 19:14-21. Jesus comes back to destroy the beast and the kings of the Earth who have followed Him. The leverage used against your denomination, to force it's joining, will be the law forbidding to buy or sell without membership. God have mercy on us and grant us eye salve (the Holy Spirit) that we may see.