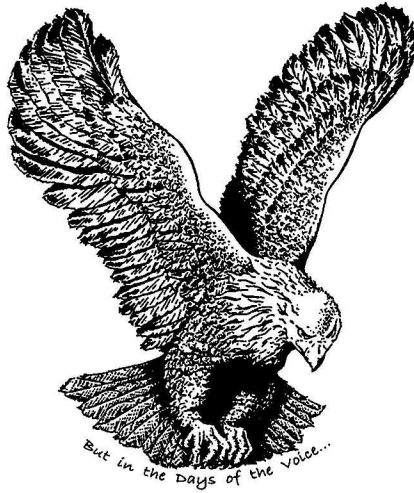


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The Spoken Word



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The Dark Ages and Saint Columba

WILLIAM MARRION BRANHAM

his direction shed more blood than at any other time except in the Reformation. It was the age of Pornocracy, the rule of harlots. Sagarius III had a mistress and "filled the papal choir with paramours and bastard sons and turned the papal palace into a den of robbers." Anastasius III was smothered to death by Marozia who was mistress to Sagarius. John XI was Marozia's illegitimate son. John XII was the grandson of Marozia and he "violated widows and virgins and was killed while in the act of adultery by the woman's enraged husband." It was the age of Papal Schism for two lines of popes (one ruling from Avignon and the other from Rome) cursed and fought each other. These popes were not only guilty of immoral sex acts (fathering scores of illegitimate children, committing sodomy etc.) but were guilty of selling priestly offices to the highest bidders.

It was the age when the light glowed ever so faintly, yet the few believers labored more fervently as the darkness increased until toward the end of the age many arose attempting reforms. Their labors were so fervent that they paved the way for the oncoming reformation. Therefore as the Word says concerning that age, "your last (end of the age) works are more than the first".

The word, Thyatira, has various meanings amongst which is "Continual Sacrifice". By many this is believed to be a prophecy concerning the use of the Mass which is a continual presentation of the sacrifice of Christ. That is an excellent thought, but it might also mean the continual sacrifice in lives and labors of the true believers of the Lord.

Surely these Thyatirean saints were the cream of the crop, full of the Holy Ghost and faith, created unto good works, showing forth His praise, holding not their lives dear unto themselves, but gladly giving their all as a sweet sacrifice unto the Lord.

(Excerpt from *An Exposition Of The Seven Church Ages*, page 213-225)

The Dark Ages and Saint Columba

Revelation 2:18-29, "*And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass;*

I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He Which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father.

*And I will give him the morning star.
He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit
saith unto the churches."*

Thyatira

Historically, the city of Thyatira was the least noteworthy of all the seven cities of the Revelation. It was situated on the confines of Mysia and Ionia. It was surrounded by many rivers, but they were full of leeches. Its most commendable feature was that it was well off financially due to the corporate guilds of potters, tanners, weavers, dyers, robe makers, etc. It was from this city that Lydia, the seller of purple, came. She was Paul's first European convert.

Now the reason that the Spirit chose this city as the one already containing the spiritual elements for the fourth age was because of its religion. The major religion of Thyatira was the worship of Apollo Tyrimnaios which was joined with the emperor worship cult. Apollo was the sun god, and the next in power to his father, Zeus. He was known as the 'avertor of evil'; he presided over religious law and expiation (means of atonement, making amends for wrong-doing or guilt). Plato said of him, "He explains to men the institution of temples, sacrifices and services to deities, besides rites connected with death and after life." He communicated his knowledge of 'the future' and his 'father's will' to men through the prophets and oracles. In Thyatira this ritual was conducted by a prophetess who sat on a tripod chair and delivered the messages while entranced.

The hold of this religion was remarkable. Its formidable power did not lie exclusively in the realm of mystery, but lay in the fact no one could belong to the guilds which offered the people their living unless they belonged to the temple worship of Apollo. Anyone who refused to join in the idolatrous feasts and licentious orgies was barred from these

their faithfulness. And as He does He also mentions their 'patience.' Now faithfulness and patience go together. In fact patience is the outcome of faithfulness, for it says in James 1:3, "*The trying of your faith worketh patience.*" There is absolutely no other way in which to gain patience. It has to come by the trial of our faith. Romans 5:3, "*Tribulation worketh patience.*" How highly God regards this outworking of our patience is seen in James 1:4, "*But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire lacking nothing.*" God's will for us is Perfection. And that perfection is patience--waiting on God and waiting for God. This is the process of character development. How highly God has commended these saints of the Dark Ages. Patient as lambs led to the slaughter, lovingly, faithfully they served God. That is all they wanted out of life, just service to their Lord. How great was to be their reward.

"I know thy works; and the last to be more than the first." This is certainly remarkable. As the darkness of the age increased; as the honor roll of the martyrs grew lengthier day by day, they worked all the harder, they served all the more, and their faith increased. How tragic it was that in the Ephesian Age love waned. And truly nothing is said of the increased labor of love in the other ages; but in this age, in the darkest of all ages, they served Him even more. What a lesson that is. There is no ceasing of this gracious service of love unto the Lord, but rather an increasing of it. That is the secret. Let the enemy attempt to thwart our service to the Lord--our reply is increased service. When the faint are crying in fear, that is the time to shout the victory.

"I know thy works, and the last to be more than the first." Now as we have already said, this age is called the Dark Ages because it was indeed the darkest period of all history. It was the age of Pope Innocent III who claimed that he was the "vicar of Christ --supreme sovereign over the church and the world," who instituted the INQUISITION which under

In those dark and dreadful years the true vine held its love for God and love of the brethren. God commended them for it.

"I know your service." Jesus said, "He that is greatest of all is servant to all." A wise man commented on that saying. Here is what he said, "Only history will prove the truth of that dictum." That man was right. All the truly great men of history have been servants. They who demanded to be served; they who oppressed; they who sought to always be at the head, have gone down in shame. Even the very rich are condemned by God when they have not used their wealth right. But look into history and you will find that the truly great were those who served others. History can never acclaim those for whom much was done, but it will forever praise those who did much for others. Now let us apply that to ourselves. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, so we are to follow that example. See Him as He bows Himself over the feet of the apostles and washes their tired and dirty feet. He said, "You don't know now what I am doing, but you will know hereafter. But what you see me doing, you ought also to do." He became a servant in order that God could elevate Him to the highest heights. And one day in the judgment of the saints we are going to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful SERVANT, enter thou into the joy of the Lord." It is hard to be always a servant. But those who spend and are spent for others will one day be seated with Him in His throne. It will be worth it all, then. "Let us labor for the Master, from the dawn till setting sun, Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care, And when all of life is over and our work on earth is done, And the roll is called up yonder I'll be there."

"I know your faith." Now he does not say here as He did to the church in Pergamos, "you hold MY faith". He is not talking about His faith now, but He is commending them for

first century unions. In order to be a part of the social and commercial life one had to be a practising pagan idolater.

A Dominating Female

It is most worthy of note that the very name Thyatira means, "Dominating Female." Thus this age is characterized by a dominant force, a force that ruthlessly invades all, conquers all and despotically controls. Now a dominating female is the greatest curse in the world. The wisest man the world ever saw was Solomon, and he said, "I applied my heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness; And I find more BITTER THAN DEATH THE WOMAN, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the SINNER shall be taken by her. Behold, this I have found, saith the preacher, counting one by one to find out the account; Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not. One man amongst a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found." Ecclesiastes 7:25-28. Paul said, "I suffer not a woman to teach or to USURP authority." From the Garden of Eden onward, woman has constantly and successfully tried to take control over the man, and right today it is a woman's world with the goddess of America being a naked female. As the female idol falling out of the skies (remember her arms were iron bars) characterized the first or Ephesian Age, so her power has grown until she has gained absolute authority, such authority being usurped by her iron disposition.

Now a woman is not meant to have an iron disposition. She is, according to the Holy Scripture, to be submissive to the male. That is commanded of her. Woman who is truly female, all female, will be of that disposition. Not a door mat. No real male makes a female a door mat. But she will

want to be under authority and not rule over the male, for he is the head of the house. If she breaks that image that God made for her, she is perverted. Any male that lets the woman take authority has also broken that image and he is perverted. That is why a woman CANNOT WEAR THAT WHICH PERTAINETH TO A MAN OR CUT HER HAIR. She is never to wear garments that pertain to a male or cut her hair. When she does she is intruding into the male domain taking authority and perverting herself. And when a woman invades the pulpit which it is COMMANDED SHE MUST NOT DO, she shows what spirit she is of. Being a dominating female is antichrist and the seeds of the Roman Catholic Church are in her though she may deny this ever so vehemently. But when it COMES TO THE WORD, Let God be true and every man's word a lie. Amen.

Let us go back to the beginning. In the original physical creation as we know it today, God made everything in pairs, male and female. There were two chickens--rooster and hen. There were two cattle, the cow and the bull. And right down the line. But when it came to man, there was only one. They were not a pair. Adam had been made in the image of God. He was a son of God. As a son of God he could not be tempted and fall. That would be impossible. So God took a byproduct of man to cause the fall. Woman never stepped fresh from the hand of God as a true product of God. She was produced from man. And when God caused her to be brought forth from man she was vastly different from the other females He had created. She was able to be seduced. No other female in creation can be immoral; but the human female may be touched at almost any time. And that weakness in her allowed Satan to seduce her by way of the serpent, and has brought the woman to very peculiar position before God and His Word. She is the type of all things vulgar, foul and loathsome on the one hand, and on the other hand she is the type of all things clean and beautiful, and

In this verse He is commending His children because they were living changed lives. Their works testified to a new Spirit within. Men saw their good works and glorified God. Yes sir, if you are a Christian you are going to do what is right. Your works will show that your heart is right. And it won't be something that you put on, for you will do His will when no one but God sees you, and you will do His will even if it costs you your life.

"I know your love, service, faith and patience." You will note that their love is placed between 'works' and 'service.' And that is the right place for it, because without love our works are not accepted before God and neither is our service. Paul speaking to the Corinthians said, "Without love, I am nothing, and whatever I do is without profit unless it is done in love." Now you can see right here that these believers weren't in that Nicolaitane class that did works as a means of salvation or to be admired by men. They did their works out of the love of God that was shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. That love in their hearts was God's love for His own. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are MY disciples, that you have love one for another." The pagans who saw the lives of the early Christians said, "Behold how they love each other". John said "*Everyone that loveth is born of God.*" I John 4:7.

I want to give a warning right here. It says concerning the last days that because of abounding iniquity the love of many will wax cold. In the Laodicean, or last age, self love, and love for material things will take the place of the true love of God. We need to guard against the power of sin in these last days. So many are getting so hard because they haven't realized the effect of this last day spirit. It is time to draw nigh to God and let him fill our lives with His love, or we will feel the coldness of the last day church, and reject the truth of God which alone is able to help us.

God Commends His Children

Revelation 2:19, *"I know thy works, and love, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first."*

Here again we find the same introductory remarks, "I know thy works." The Son of God, Himself, said, "Believe Me for the very works' sake." He put an emphasis on His own works while on earth. The works that He did were ordained of God to inspire faith in Him. It was a great part of His ministry. His Holy Spirit in the apostle Paul said,

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10.

These works were to inspire faith in Him as they would show forth that relationship to Him that Paul described as "created in Him".

Now works will never take the place of faith in God for our salvation. But works will show forth our faith already placed in Him. Good works won't save you, but they will come forth out of a saved life as fruit unto the Lord. I believe in good works. Even if a man is not saved, he ought to do good works and do the best he can. What is horrible in the sight of God is for men to do evil works and then say that they are doing the will of the Lord. That is what the bishops and popes and the hierarchy of Rome were doing. They were killing, maiming, and doing all manner of evil in the Name of the Lord. They lived out lives exactly opposite to what the Word teaches. In that evil day those true believers shone like a light in a dark place as they continually did good; for they returned cursing with blessing, and did the truth to honor God even though many died for it.

holy as the receptacle of the Spirit and blessings of God. On the one hand she is called the whore who is drunk with the wine of her fornications. On the other she is called the Bride of Christ. On one hand she is called Mystery Babylon, the abomination before God; and on the other hand she is called New Jerusalem, our mother. On the one hand she is so foul and wicked and lewd that she is summarily cast into the lake of fire as the only fit place for her; and on the other hand she is exalted to heaven, sharing the very throne of God as the only place befitting such a queen.

And in this Thyatirean Church age she is a DOMINATING FEMALE. She is Mystery Babylon. She is the great whore. She is Jezebel the false prophetess. WHY? Because the true female is submissive to God. Christ is her head. She has no word but His, no thoughts but His, no leadership but His. But what about this church? She has cast out the Word, destroyed the Bibles and worthy essays of the godly. She has slain those who would preach the truth. She has taken over kings, princes and nations-- controls armies and insists that she is the true body of Christ and that her popes are the vicars of Christ. She is entirely seduced by the devil until she in turn has become the seducer of others. She is the bride of Satan and has produced his bastard-child religions.

All through the Dark Ages she has dominated. For over nine hundred years she plundered and destroyed. She killed the arts, destroyed the sciences, produced nothing but death until the light of the Truth was almost entirely gone and only the barest sliver of light remained. The oil and the wine had almost ceased to flow; but though she dominated the world kingdoms and demanded that all men find their citizenship in her, there was a little group who belonged to God and their citizenship was in heaven, and them she could not destroy. God kept His little flock; they could not be destroyed. This Church of Rome was as heathen and wicked as Queen

Athalia who tried to destroy all the royal seed and almost succeeded, but GOD PRESERVED ONE, and of him there came more of the faithful. So God preserved a little flock in that long dark night and of their truth there finally arose a Luther.

Anyone who knows anything at all about the Roman Catholic Church and its form of worship can tell why this city of Thyatira was chosen by the Spirit to represent the church in the Dark Ages. There it is, right before our eyes.

The Messenger Columba

The Thyatirean Age lasted the longest of them all, about 900 years, from 606 to 1520. The church had long been split into two groups, Western and Eastern. Every now and then a reformer would arise in either or both divisions and for awhile lead some segment of the church into a deeper relationship with God. Such a man in the West was Francis of Assisi. Truly successful for a time, his work was finally put under by the hierarchy of Rome. Peter Waldo of Lyons, a merchant who renounced his secular life, became very active in serving the Lord and drew many unto Him; but he was thwarted in his work and excommunicated by the pope. Neither the Western or the Eastern groups had within them a man who could possibly be the messenger to this age when examined in the light of Scripture. However, there were two men in the British Isles, whose ministry in Word and deed could stand the test of truth. They were Saint Patrick and Saint Columba. It was to Saint Columba that the lot of being the messenger fell.

Though the messenger to the Thyatirean Age was Saint Columba, I want to dwell a little on the life of Saint Patrick as an example to us and also to give the lie to Rome's claim that Saint Patrick was any more one of her than was Joan of Arc. Patrick was born to the sister of Saint Martin in the little

mediator save the Son. The pope pronounces salvation through the church of Rome. But there is no salvation except through the Son of God. No wonder the eyes blaze in fiery judgment. No wonder the feet are like fine brass as He stands ready to trample into powder and dust the wicked kingdoms of this world. Thank God for those strong feet of brass. They have passed through the judgment for us. They are now our foundation for what He gained is ours. We stand identified in Him, Jesus the Son of God.

It was in this age that we witness the rise of Mohammedanism that denied the Son of God and determined death upon all who called themselves Christians.

It was also in this age that the false church defied the first commandment of Almighty God and launched swiftly into breaking the second commandment for it put its pope in the place of Jesus Christ and established and enforced idol worship to such an extent that it meant death to those who refused the icons a place within the church. Under Empress Theodora, alone, from 842 to 867 over 100,000 saints were killed because they reputed the images of no value.

Surely this age must repent or lose all. There stands the Lord of glory, God very God--His Word cast aside, His person rejected, but human hands and human hearts cannot depose Him. Let them deny Him, He remaineth faithful. "Fear not little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. And when I come with feet of brass and flaming eyes I will recompense; judgment is mine, I will repay," saith the Lord.

was known as the Son of Man. But henceforth we know Him no more after the flesh. He is no longer the Son of Man, the Great Prophet, Who in Himself gathered together all prophecies. The Only Begotten is back in the bosom of the Father. Now we know Him after the power of the resurrection. He is risen and has taken unto Himself His mighty power and is above all and over all to the praise of His own glory. His glory will He not share with another. His leadership over the church He will not surrender to any man.

He looks down upon Thyatira, and here He sees in that city and in that fourth age the honor which belongs to Him alone, bestowed upon another. His eyes blaze with the fire of wrath and judgment as He sees Apollo revered as the Son of God, when He alone is the Only Begotten of the Father. How awful must be His judgment upon the religion of the Thyatirean Age wherein the church members like the pagan worshippers of the son of god (Apollo the son of Zeus), elevate a human ruler to adoration, backed by the power of the state. For that is exactly what He saw. The Roman Catholic Church, fully immersed in idol worship based upon the rites of the sun god (Apollo) had elevated a man to actual deity (pope) through the marriage of the church to the state. For Thomas Aquinas and Alverus Pelagius formulated and stated that: "The Pope seems to those who view him with the spiritual eye, to be, not a man but a God. There are no bounds to his authority. He can declare to be right what he will and can take away from any their rights as he sees fit. To doubt this universal power leads to being shut out from salvation. The great enemies of the church are the heretics who will not wear the yoke of true obedience."

"There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (the Son of God.)" I Timothy 2:5. But the pope of Rome has changed the Word. He made it, "one mediator between God and man (not men)". So now he mediates between the mediator and men. But there is no other

town of Bonavern on the banks of the river Clyde. One day while playing on the shore with his two sisters, pirates approached and kidnapped all three. Where the sisters went, no one knows, but Patrick (his name was Succat) was sold to a chieftain in Northern Ireland. His duty was to tend to the swine. To do this he trained dogs. So well trained were his dogs that many people came from far and near to buy them. In his loneliness he turned to God and was saved. Then came the urgent desire to escape and return home to his parents. He formed a plan that put his ability as a trainer to great use. He taught the dogs to lie on him and cover his body carefully and not move until commanded. Thus one day when his owner sold several dogs, Patrick commanded the dogs, except the leader of the pack, to get into the boat. The leader of the pack to which he then gave a secret signal ran off and refused to come aboard. While the master and the buyer attempted to get the dog, Patrick got into the boat and signaled the dogs to cover him. Then with a whistle he brought the leader of the pack into the boat and on top of him. Since Patrick was nowhere to be seen the buyer put up sail and moved out to sea. After making sure that the captain was too far out to turn back, Patrick gave another signal to the dogs which caused them to riot. Then he came forth and told the captain that unless he would put him ashore at his home he would command the dogs to keep rioting, and he would take over the ship. However, the captain was a Christian, and when he heard the boy's story he gladly put him ashore at his home. There Patrick went to Bible school and returned to Ireland where by the Word and the power of God in many signs and wonders he won thousands to the Lord. At no time did he ever go to Rome nor at any time was he commissioned by Rome. The truth of the matter is that when Rome finally gained a foothold on the island and when they saw the time was opportune, they killed over 100,000

Christians who had over the years grown out of the original group that had come to the Lord under Saint Patrick.

About 60 years after the death of Saint Patrick, Columba was born in County Donegal, North Ireland, to the royal family of Fergus. He became a brilliant, consecrated scholar, committing to memory most of the Scripture. God called him in an audible voice to be a missionary. After he had heard the voice of God, nothing could stop him, and his miraculous ministry has caused many historians to acclaim him next to the apostles. So great was his ministry with the supernatural signs following that some (especially students in Rome) have thought the accounts were exaggerated.

In one of his missionary journeys, as he approached a walled city, he found the gates barred against him. He lifted his voice in prayer that God might intervene and allow him access to the people in order to preach. But as he prayed the court magicians began to harass him with loud noises. He then began to sing a psalm. As he sang, God so increased the volume of his voice that he drowned out the cries of the heathen. Suddenly the gates burst open of their own accord. He entered in and preached the Gospel, winning many to the Lord.

On another occasion when he was also shut out from a village, as he turned away to depart, the son of the chief suddenly became violently ill, even unto death. Saint Columba was quickly sought after and recalled. When he prayed the prayer of faith the boy was instantly healed. The village was then opened to evangelization by the Gospel.

The pure Gospel that was preached by Columba and his fellow workers spread over the whole of Scotland, turning it to God. It also overflowed into Ireland and over Northern Europe. His means of spreading the Gospel was one wherein perhaps twelve men under a leader would go into a new area and literally build a Gospel-- centered town. Amongst these

twelve men would be carpenters, teachers, preachers, etc., all wonderfully versed in the Word and holy living. This little colony was enclosed by a wall. Soon this enclosure would be surrounded by students and their families in their own homes, learning the Word and preparing to go out and serve the Lord as missionaries, leaders, and preachers. The men were free to marry though many did not, in order to serve God the better. They remained free from state help, and thereby steered clear of politics. Instead of ever attacking other religions they taught the truth for they believed that the truth was weapon enough to accomplish the ends that God had in mind for them. They were absolutely independent of Rome.

Saint Columba was the founder of a great Bible school on the island of Hy (off the S.W. coast of Scotland). When he went there the island was so barren and rocky that it could not bear enough food for them all. But Columba planted seed with one hand while he held the other aloft in prayer. Today the island is one of the most fertile in the world. From this Bible-centered island went forth mighty scholars endowed with wisdom and the power of God.

When I read the history of this great servant of God and the wonderful work he did, it saddened my heart to find that the papal power, lusting to bring all men into its grasp, came and eventually defiled these mission fields and destroyed the truth as it was taught by Columba.

The Son of God

Revelation 2:18, *"These things saith the Son of God, Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass."*

The revelation of Godhead to the Thyatirean Age is that Jesus is the Son of God. Once in the days of His flesh He