

# THE DOCTRINE OF PROPHECY

by

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Text :

"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"

(Rev. 19 : 10)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS**

The angels are fellowservants of John's brethren who "have" or "hold" the testimony of Jesus. When John fell at the feet of the angel who had interpreted the prophecies to him, the angel said "See thou do it not : I am thy fellowservant, and (the fellowservant) of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus : worship God : for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy".

We understand accordingly that John and his brethren, or the Christians of the Church age, are the custodians of the testimony of Jesus. They "have" this precious testimony; it is their responsibility to uphold it and account to God for their stewardship of this holy charge. As the Church acts in this capacity, the angels who "desire to look into" this mystery (1 Pet. 1 : 12) are the fellowservants of the saints, for they are also "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1 : 14).

The angels have been specially prepared to help the saints as they bear the testimony of Jesus, for when God was manifest in the flesh and justified in the spirit, He whose name is "Wonderful", fulfilling the "mystery of godliness", was "*seen of angels*" (1 Tim. 3 : 16).

These considerations account for the relationship between John representing all Christians of the church age and the angels of the seven churches and it accounts for the help given to John by angels in understanding the wider matters of the revelation of Jesus Christ which concern the testimony of Jesus.

### **THE KINGDOM AND PATIENCE OF JESUS CHRIST**

In the introduction to the book of the Revelation we are informed that the revelation which God (the author of all authority) gave concerning Jesus Christ to his servants by His (God's) angels, and which He "sent and signified" to John, concerning "things which must shortly come to pass", came to him (John) while he was in the spirit on the Lord's Day, and while he was in prison on the Isle of Patmos "for the testimony of Jesus Christ".

But further, the part of the testimony of Jesus Christ that John was involved in, related to "the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1 : 9). That is, it was that part of the testimony of Jesus Christ that related both to the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

### **THE KINGDOM OF JESUS CHRIST**

The Lord told Pilate that He was a king, but that His kingdom "was not from hence". The full quote from John 18, 36 is this "Jesus answered, 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".

Notice the word “now”. Christ’s kingdom in which He was king was not of this world, “*now*”; but the implication is that at some other time, it would be of this world also, and of course we know from other Scriptures that this is so. Thus in Rev. 11 : 15 we read “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The Kingdoms of this world *are become* the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever”.

Of those kingdoms which were not formerly His kingdoms — not when He spoke to Pilate, and which are still not “*now*” His, it will one day be proclaimed that they (the kingdoms of the world) “*are become*” the kingdoms of our Lord.

## **THE PATIENCE OF JESUS CHRIST**

The period in which the Lord awaits the assumption of this authority is called “the patience of Jesus Christ”.

Here we enter into the secrets of dispensational teaching. John’s service and our service relate to the testimony of Jesus Christ limited to the era and conditions in which John and in which we are called to share the patience of Jesus Christ with Him. Our testimony relates to a period in which He does not rule the nations as their king but in which He patiently awaits while the grace of God operates in kingly rule in a spiritual kingdom of “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14 : 17).

Until Christ takes up His rule or reign over the kingdoms of the world, conditions and teaching apply in many matters which are different from those that will apply thereafter.

## **HIS PATIENCE**

How patient He was with Pilate !

How patient on The Cross !

How patient with you and me !

We are called to share this patience of Christ’s and to “be patient toward all men” (1 Thess. 5 : 14).

## **THE PURPOSE OF HIS PATIENCE**

“The Lord . . . is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish” (2 Pet. 3 : 9).

## **THE PROMISE OF HIS PATIENCE**

“Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come and will not tarry” (Heb. 10 : 36-37).

## THE PERIOD SET FOR HIS PATIENCE

“When iniquity shall have an end”, when that “profane wicked prince of Israel” (the man of sin) is revealed and his “day is come” (Ezek 21 : 25).

“Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown : this shall not be the same : exalt him that is low and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it : and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it him” (Ezek. 21 : 26 - 27).

## THE DAY OF CHRIST

“We beseech you”, says Paul, that ye be not troubled . . . as that the day of Christ is at hand”.

For “that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition” (2 Thess. 2 : 3).

## DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (fifth edition), a “dispensation” is *inter alia* a “distributing, dealing out; *ordering, management, esp. of the world by Providence : arrangement made by Nature or Providence; special dealing of Providence with community or person; religious system prevalent at a period* (Mosaic, O.T., Christian dispensation)”.

It is in this sense that the word is used in this treatise. In the New Testament the word is used thus four times, and the meaning of the word in the original Greek agrees fully with this usage of the word “dispensation” in English. “A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me” (1 Cor. 9 : 17). Paul speaks about “The dispensation of the fulness of times” (Eph. 1 : 10), and “The dispensation of the grace of God” (Eph. 3 : 2) and “The dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God” (Col 1 : 25).

The subject of dispensations of God pervades the whole of Scripture and certain sections of Scripture are particularly devoted to it, such as Romans Chapters 9 to 11.

There is a sense in which God never changes. He is the same, yesterday, today and forever. His holiness is always the same. In His moral quality, His perfection, His power and essential deity, He is changeless.

But the Lord from heaven was not always Man. There was a most significant change when He did become man, and He was born of a virgin at Bethlehem Judah. A different manner of ordering God’s very godliness was manifested after the birth of Christ from that which had obtained previously. His death, and then His resur-

rection and His ascension all produced similarly differing dispensational consequences. So will His coming for His Saints when with a shout He catches them away in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (1 Thess. 4 : 13 - 18) or when He sets up the Millennial kingdom at "the Day of the Lord" (1 Thess. 5 : 1 - 5).

First there was no heaven, earth or time. Later "in the beginning", the era of these things took up position dispensationally and will conclude at the appointed time when "the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (2 Pet. 3 : 10). The first dispensation of things physical will give place to another of "New heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3 : 13).

But even within the wide orbit of the first creation of things physical, distinctions are easily seen. The Flood is a divider primeval. Who does not know to distinguish "before" the Flood, and "after" the Flood ?

In the world of spirit beings first there was no sin, but then since Lucifer fell, what a change there has been ! How far-reaching are the repercussions !

In the world of Adamic life on the earth, how different the God-man relationship before and after the Fall !

Consider Mount Sinai. Today any man who braves the perils of the waterless desert and the hazards of the Arab-Jewish strife, may climb the mountain and God will not visit him with the terror of His presence. But was there not a time when God had to say "Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it . . . let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the Lord, lest He break forth upon them," (Ex. 19 : 23 - 24) ?

Accordingly, there was one period when God decreed that men should not be permitted to set foot on Mt Sinai, and now there is another period in which God does permit it.

Similarly there was a period when God required the sacrifice of beasts, but now He does not require it.

There was a time when those who were in a special relationship with God were required to have their males circumcised and it was forbidden them to eat a wide variety of meats.

Nowadays God has no requirement for the present circumcising of males and blood is the only thing that must not be taken as food.

Accordingly God who remains ever the same of Himself in essence and in moral character, nevertheless adjusts His rulings or dictates for men according to the requirements of the times. These different times in which God so rules or directs differently are worthy of special study, and the name or word by which we designate these diverse ways of dealing in different times, we call "dispensations".

It is only dispensational study and teaching that will help us to understand why at one time God directed that a whole nation, i.e. the Amalekites, should be exterminated, while today no servant of God has any warrant for warfare at all. Why Joshua was directed to draw the sword, but Peter was told to put it up.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **THE PROPHETIC PERIODS**

#### **From 1970 to the Millennium**

##### **I. THE MAJOR CHANGE FOR THE EARTH**

In the Millennium Christ rules the Earth personally "with a rod of iron".

Prior to the Millennium He does not so rule.

Accordingly we have two widely differing dispensational periods in which the earth is held by God under different dispensational orders, and the climactic or changing event is the Advent or the "Day of Christ" (2 Thess. 2 : 2) when He comes to judge the nations and set up His kingdom on earth.

##### **II. THE MAJOR CHANGE FOR THE CHURCH**

At present the Church has a mission to all nations acknowledging that the kingdoms of this world are not now the kingdoms of our God, but that "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5 : 19), and all Christ's servants have been first delivered out of "this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1 : 4).

The Change for the Church occurs suddenly, "in the twinkling of an eye". "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them *in the clouds*, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4 : 16 - 17).

Thereafter the Church is "with Christ" and its mission on earth has ended. Hence a dispensational period in which the Church has shared the patience of Christ in service on earth ends in its translation "to meet the Lord in the air", and to "ever be with the Lord".

##### **DOES THIS EVENT OCCUR AT "THE DAY OF CHRIST"?**

The answer from Scripture to this question is a thorough negative. No, the translation of the saints and the resurrection of the dead in Christ, occur prior to "The day of Christ", and there is a further period between the two events.

SCRIPTURAL VERIFICATION that the Coming of the Lord to the air for His saints, precedes the Day of Christ and His advent when He comes to judge and rule on the earth :

1. "The Day of Christ" shall not come "except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2 : 3).



Having referred to the son of perdition, Paul then reminds the Thessalonians of something he had told them when he was yet with them. He had told them about "what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time". Then he says clearly that "He who now letteth (hindereth) will let (or restrain) *until* he (that restrains) be taken out of the way" (2 Thess. 2 : 6 - 7). The Word of God continues and the next verse says "*Then*" (when the restrainer is removed) "Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming".

Accordingly,

- (a) Prior to the Day of Christ the man of sin is to be revealed.
- (b) Prior to the revealing of the man of sin, The Restrainer is to be removed.

Accordingly,

- (a) There will be first a dispensational period when the Restrainer is at work, and during this period the man of sin cannot be revealed.
- (b) Then there will be a *second* dispensational period after the Restrainer has been removed in which the Restrainer will not act as formerly and in which the man of sin will be revealed.
- (c) The Day of Christ shall not come "until that man of sin be revealed" (Verse 3) and when the Day of Christ comes he "That Wicked" shall be consumed by the spirit of Christ. There is then a third dispensational period in which Christ reigns over the earth having first consumed the man of sin who had been revealed in the previous period after the Restrainer had been removed.

#### THE RESTRAINER

The Holy Spirit of God indwelling all the children of God who together constitute the Church of God is the Restrainer who through the children of God acts as salt to purify and restrain evil in the earth today. When the Church is translated, exchanging mortality for immortality, then the Holy Spirit of God who is ever at work, nevertheless as the Restrainer in the Church will have been "taken out of the way".

God has set bounds to evil in this present age which are more restrictive than will be the case in the period that is to follow when the Restrainer is removed and the man of sin is revealed.

#### THE RESTRAINER IN THE CHRISTIAN

The Holy Spirit has always been at work in this world among men. He did so work in days of old — for instance in the days of

Moses and of David — and He will again cause the knowledge of the Lord to cover the earth in the Millennium. But he was “sent” to the Church in a *special* way.

Christ said He would “send” (John 16 : 7) the Comforter to do certain particular and distinctive work, in and through Christ’s followers. It is accordingly easy to understand that when the work for which He was “sent” is completed, and the Church itself is removed to meet the Lord in the air, that He the Comforter would not be required any longer in this special capacity and that He should be “taken out” (2 Thess. 2 : 7).

He was “sent” at Pentecost in this way and shortly, at the call of Christ He will be “taken out of the way” when the Church has been led as it were by the Spirit from the far country through the wilderness to her Isaac’s very presence. The servant of Abraham did not need to stay in the wilderness when he had brought Rebekah to her bridegroom and Lord.

That the Holy Spirit acts as a restrainer today is clear from the Lord’s words when He announced why the Holy Spirit would be sent in this special way:— Christ said “And when He is come He will *reprove* the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment”. From the passage in Thessalonians we understand that it is not possible for the man of sin to be revealed while the restrainer is thus still reproving the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. This is because at present “greater is He that is in you (O Christian) than he that is in the world” (1 John 4 : 4).

2. Paul states clearly that “The Day of Christ” is *not* “at hand”, and it cannot occur until certain things first happen.

On the other hand the Thessalonians were taught that they were to wait for His (God’s) Son from heaven (1 Thess. 1 : 10). Paul said “Don’t look for the Day of Christ”, but “comfort one another with these words” — to wit, that we “shall be caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4 : 17 - 18).

James confirms this in the words “Be ye patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh (is at hand) (Jas. 5 : 8).

3. The Christian goes “to meet” the Lord in the air. It is clearly as a separate movement that the Lord returns to earth “*with* His saints” (Jude 14).
4. This order is fully in view in Revelation 19, for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is first to be held in Heaven, and then the Lord will issue forth, from Heaven, to execute judgment and to engage in the events spoken of elsewhere as “The Day of Christ”.
5. THE TIME OF JACOB’S TROUBLE

A whole section of Jewish prophecy is to be fulfilled at the time of the revelation of the man of sin. The period for the Great Tribulation requires that the coming of the Lord *for* His saints

must appreciably antedate his coming *with* His saints.  
*All* the Scriptures relating to this unequalled time of trouble for the Jews refer directly to the Jews enduring it and there is no reference to the Church of God being involved in it. On the contrary, in the one place where the Church is addressed with reference to the Tribulation, it is with the promise that she will be "kept out" of that hour which shall come to try the dwellers of the earth at that time. The verse reads: "Because thou hast *kept the word of my patience*, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them which dwell on the earth" (Rev. 3 : 10).

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **WHERE ARE WE NOW PROPHETICALLY?**

The servants of God must be always "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2 : 15). The ceremonial law relating to the worship in the temple does not now apply to us as an institution and code to obey. We are not required to celebrate an annual Day of Atonement, because we live under a completely different dispensation and order of worship and service.

Similarly we are not in the Millennium, for the Day of Christ has not yet come and accordingly the conditions of that rule and order do not apply today. It is not that dispensation.

Also we are not in the period of the Great Tribulation which has particular reference to the Jews, the man of sin, and a world under judgment from which the Church has been "caught up" and the Restrainer has "been taken".

Where are we then? We are in the period of Christ's patience, still, and we are "in the last days" when scoffers walking in their own lusts say "Where is the promise of His coming?", not realising that "the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3 : 3, 4, 9).

We are in the last days of the period of Christ's patience, in the last phase of this period, just prior to His coming for His bride the Church to call her to meet Him in the air. We know this because our Book has much to say about this final phase of the present era called "the last days".

All the conditions of the last days are being fulfilled everywhere about us, and we need have no doubt as to where we are, both dispensationally and prophetically.

Let us first check the signs of the times, and then seek to order our lives and our service in the light of the Word which is ever a lamp to the feet in all dispensations.

### **THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

#### **1. THE SCOFFERS**

"There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lust, and saying "Where is the promise of His coming for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. 3 : 3 - 4).

The scoffers have well near scoffed up all of Christendom today. They fill the pulpits and most of the theological chairs. They scoff at Christ in every way. Not only do they scoff at the promise of His coming again, but they deny He came as God at Bethlehem. They scoff at His Virgin Birth, they deny His deity, they laugh at the people who believe He really rose from the dead and they joke about

immortality as a malaise of religious thought.

The universal scoff and gibe of scoffers today is an indication that we are truly in the last days.

What course should we adopt with scoffer Professors and Ministers and others? These people are railers, ridiculing vital and holy truths and the things most dear to God Himself. We should then follow the direction of 1 Timothy 6 : 4 - 5 where the course to take with railers is clearly stated. "*From such withdraw thyself*".

And if men like William Franklin Graham refuse to withdraw themselves from railers as the Bible directs them to do, let us not be disobedient and foolish ourselves, but let us do what the Bible says.

## 2. RIOTS

Ever since Cain there have been fierce and incontinent men in the world.

But an extraordinary feature of "the last days" is that they will coincide with "perilous times" in which men who have a form of godliness (but deny its power) are both fierce and incontinent, are truce breakers, false accusers, without natural affection and despisers of those that are good (2 Tim. 3 : 1 - 5).

Behold here the character and divine estimation of the rioters who in the name of Religion or of Christianity fight for "civil rights", for Protestantism or for Roman Catholicism, for or against involvement in this cause or that.

And what course should we adopt with people like this who would lead to incontinence and fierceness and rioting in all or any of its forms, The Word of God leaves no doubt: "*From such turn away*" (2 Tim. 3 : 5).

## 3. DEMONISM

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4 : 1).

Demonism has always been a feature of paganism and of the worship of idols. But now, not only has paganism and demonism erupted everywhere in so-called Christian lands, but subtle seducing spirits have with doctrines of devils stumbled many truly Christian people. Thus we have alleged healings and layings on of hands, and modern Pentecostalism with and without excesses, with masses believing that when they talk in a tongue that they do not understand, they are experiencing the energy of the Holy Spirit of God. They have been seduced to eat devil food.

In this connection readers are referred to the companion booklet "The Doctrine of Tongues" for a fuller exposition on this subject.

The Scriptural directions for dealing with people so seduced are twofold:—

- (a) "Put them in remembrance" of the things that a true servant of God should be engaged with in "words of faith and good doctrine" (1 Tim. 4 :6).
- (b) If they will not accept good doctrine but continue in the doctrines of devils, then "after the first and second admonition, *reject*" them, "knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3 : 10 - 11).

And even if Bill Graham, contrary to what the Bible says, does not reject men of this category, but instead lends his name to modern Pentecostalism by such acts as opening Oral Roberts' Pentecostal University and by having such men serve with him in his preaching conferences and campaigns, then, notwithstanding this, let all those who fear God *do* what the Bible says, and reject all who have been subverted by this seduction.

Remember that doctrines of devils is something that the Holy Spirit has spoken about *expressly* in relation to the latter times.

## CHAPTER 3

### OVERLAPPING EVENTS

There are certain prophecies which will not be fully fulfilled until the time of the Tribulation but which have a commencement in earlier times and a great quickening in the last days of the present dispensation. Thus we are able to discern something of the shape of things to come. These events confirm further that we are in the last days, and they carry most salutary lessons for wide-awake Christians. These prophecies fall into three major groups :

1. Relative to the Nations.
2. Relative to the Jews.
3. Relative to the Apostasy of Christendom.

#### 1. THE NATIONS

Our present period of wars and rumours of wars was foretold by the Lord, but He said "the end is not yet" (Matt. 24 : 6). He said "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places" (V. 7).

He indicated that there was much more to follow, for He said "All these" (the conditions He had just described and which we are now experiencing), "Are the beginning of sorrows" (V. 8).

What message is there for the Christian in the light of these events? Just one word from the Lord Himself : "*See that ye be not troubled* : for all these things must come to pass" (V. 6).

Christ says, expect it, note it when it happens, but don't be troubled, for His purposes are being fulfilled among the nations.

#### 2. THE JEWS

In prophetic imagery the Jewish Nation is the fig tree and the Lord has told us to watch for the fig tree to put on her leaves. Not only the fig tree, but "all the trees" (Luke 21 : 29). That is, when the Jews and the gentile nations also all begin to show the signs in them that prophecy has foretold, then we may know that the end of God's purposes for this age is near. The generation that sees these things will not pass away before all is fulfilled.

The teaching for those who understand the signs of the times in this context is "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and *cares of this life*, and so that day come upon you unawares" (Luke 21 : 34).

If the Devil cannot make a man a drunkard or a glutton or incontinent in any other way, and if he cannot seduce him with any of the doctrines of devils nor stumble him by pride into fellowship with unbelievers or infidels, then for the Devil's purposes, the cares of life

are the next best thing. The Christian must on the one hand honourably discharge his obligations and provide for his own, while on the other hand he should beware of becoming over-committed and he must learn to cast off unnecessary weights that war against the soul. Christians should be "like unto men that wait for their Lord" (Luke 12 : 36).

### 3. THE APOSTASY

Two things must precede the Day of Christ — The revealing of the Man of Sin (after the Restrainer has been taken away), and the "Falling away". "That day shall not come *except there come a falling away first* and that man of sin be revealed the son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2 : 3).

The man of sin is quite likely in the world now, but he will not be *revealed* as the Man of Sin until the period of the Tribulation.

Similarly, the falling away will be fully developed and finally judged in the Tribulation, but it is with us in wide proportions today, and it abides as a compelling sign of the times. We know that the apostasy that is observable on every hand today in the professing church or in Christendom will widen and deepen. It will increase and not diminish until after the Restrainer is taken away. The whole system of the Apostasy will reach its full maturity of evil and will then be judged as is recorded in Revelation 17 and 18.

In full cry the Apostasy is seen prophetically as a complete religious system which is the very antithesis of all that is godly and holy. It is called "*Mystery, Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth*" and it appears in the vision that John beheld as a woman clothed in purple and scarlet colour and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication . . . drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. 17 : 4 - 6).

This is the final state of the Ecumenical World Church. Joined with the abomination that is Rome will be the abominations that are dead atheistic Protestant Modernism, seduced Pentecostalism, Pagan Mormonism and all the guilty cults as well as the abomination that is the fifth or last generation of worldly, godless Laodicean Brethrenism, and the Baptist and Congregational and Church of Christ and Salvation Army and Independent Church abominations when they have finally sold out and true believers have been translated away from them to glory at the coming of the Lord.

As we see this world Church of the Apocalypse forming today we may know we are in the last days.

What is the action required of those who fear God and have their eyes anointed today? The Word is fixed and final; "Come out of her my people that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18 : 4). She is unclean, is she not? Then "*Come out . . . and be ye separate, saith the Lord,*



and *touch not the unclean thing*; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6 : 18 - 19).

Despite the failings of the Protestant denominational system, God has in the past been able to honour many of His servants who have been so connected, and much and mighty service has been achieved under denominational banners where God's Christ has been upheld as the only Saviour of Sinners and the Sustainer of Saints and where the Scriptures of Truth have been acted upon as the Word of God.

But now as each denomination, each group of Churches, this Independent Church and that, "fall away" from the doctrine of Christ and from the authority of Scripture, they accept the ecumenical embrace of similar groups who have similarly "fallen away" and so the ground is prepared for the emergence of the World Church, Babylon the Great.

As they enter and advance on the abominable course towards a part in a system to be called "The Abominations of the Earth", God can no longer accompany them at all and He calls on any who are still loyal, holy, God-fearing, and who still accept the authority of His Holy Word, "to come out" of it all, and to "be separate".

Accordingly for God and for His loyal servants this is a day of smaller things. The Last Days are days of separation, of restriction in service, of humility but of victory and triumph and hope for those who are rightly activated.

Whereas formerly God's servants were called to lead or be engaged in great forward movements of God, now the word is "having done all to stand", "Hold Fast that which thou hast", "Be separate", "Come out", "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold I stand at the door and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His Throne" (Rev. 3 : 19 - 21).

And Christ's final word to His Own of these last days is this : "Surely I come quickly : Amen" (Rev. 22 : 20). And His own reply, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus".

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE DUST OF SHIMEI**

The rebellion of Absalom was a great test for David and for those truly loyal with him. This was a day of poor and small things for a great man and for a choice servant of God. He had to get out and away from the main concourse of Israel and this was God's course for Him at that time. Now David's God and our God, always enveighs against despising "The day of small things" (see Zech 4 : 10).

But while fleeing in his day of small things, David was beset by a man called Shimei who threw dust into the air and cursed David.

Now the world-wide pose of the Co-operative Ecumenicalists is that they love all men and that love is the principal thing which should cover everything else, even doctrine.

But a man who seeks to follow the directions of God's Word and to come out from among them and be separate, quickly finds that the alleged love of the Ecumenicals stops well short of him. The urbane bland platitudes freeze to hate and spite towards the Separatist.

And to every Separatist, My Lord Ecumenical Co-operative of Babylon the Great becomes a scratchy Shimei and he throws dust into the air and curses the Separatist.

Have you seen the dust of Shimei, brother? Then if not, Come out from among them and you will come to the place of the curse, where Christ is also, outside the Camp.

### **ANALYSIS OF DUST OF SHIMEI**

Unlike Moon-dust, Shimei-dust is germ laden. The virus it carries is intended to unnerve the Separatist as he treads his narrow and difficult defile. It is a germ-laden dust in a strategy of nerve warfare. The antidote is a mixture of equal parts courage and faith. David applied the right mixture, for he said "Let him curse . . . it may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day . . . and the king and all the people that were with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there" (2 Sam. 16 : 11 - 14).

"Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart. Wait I say, on the Lord" (Ps. 27 : 14). "I will trust and not be afraid" (Isa. 12 : 2).

## CHAPTER 5

### CO-OPERATIVE CLAP-TRAP

The recent sudden acceleration of the surge towards apostasy is largely attributable to mass movements which are commonly referred to as Co-operative Evangelism. W. F. Graham has become the arch-exponent of this new evangelism though his own campaigns are only a part of a movement which involves Coffee-Bar evangelism, World Evangelism Conferences, Youth Camps, Ranch Camps, rapprochement with Roman Catholics, Pentecostals and Jewish groups and a thousand and one entirely new methods of working and relating with non-Christian Church people as though they were true Christians.

Many of God's people, who 10 years ago would never have thought for a moment of acting in these new ways, now find themselves involved, they hardly know how, but the main reasons appear to be twofold.

- (1) They have become Will Graham's fans to such a degree that they cannot resist, because if "Billy" does it, they could not object without condemning him and this is unthinkable.
- (2) Specious doctrines have been disseminated which purport to justify the course taken.

It is with the doctrines rather than with the man or men, that we are most concerned. This chapter is devoted to consideration of the doctrines accordingly.

#### THEY SAY:

- (1) That Gamaliel's advice should be followed "If not of God it will come to naught", and that as it grows and gets bigger and appears to prosper it must be of God. That its success proves it is of God.
- (2) Judge not that ye be not judged.
- (3) That the parable of the Tares teaches we should "Leave them alone till harvest".
- (4) That we should love the Modernists as Christian Brethren.
- (5) That Separatists are Legalists and Pharisees.
- (6) "Touch not mine anointed".
- (7) "The Lord accepted the co-operation of any who did not oppose Him".
- (8) The Lord's method was to proclaim the Truth and to ignore the Error.
- (9) The Lord mixed freely with Publicans and Sinners.
- (10) That anyone who consistently quotes from the Bible accurately must be doing so as of God.

## 1. THE GAMALIEL PROPOSITION

Gamaliel said to the Council of the Jews about the apostles "Refrain from these men, and let them alone : for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught : But if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found to fight against God" (Acts 5 : 38 - 39).

Gamaliel was an unconverted man who gave this advice and he was speaking to and as a member of the Council of the Jews who had already taken the responsibility of condemning the Lord to die and who bore the moral responsibility for His crucifixion.

The part of the advice which is at error is that it is not necessarily true that counsel or works of men will come to naught, and this is the part the co-operatives rely upon. They say, in effect, that their works are prospering numerically and in world-wide effect and acceptance, and therefore they must be of God, because if they were of man they would come to naught !

The absurdity of this is easily demonstrated. The Council of the Jews had already crucified Christ, and yet God had not brought that counsel and work to naught. Of course there was a sense in which God allowed these wicked men to work their evil purposes with Christ. But their evil work and God's work were very different.

Hitler led his nation into a terrible war. Surely this was of man, and yet God did not bring it to naught.

Is Roman Catholicism and the Papacy of God or Man? If of man then God has not brought it to naught though it has continued for 1500 years.

What about Mohammedanism? Must this be of God, seeing that it has not come to naught?

What about Free Masonry? Is this of God, seeing that it has not come to naught?

Gamaliel's advice though recorded in Scripture is not sound. The reverse is the case. The apostasy is not of God, though God is allowing it to spread. It is of men, and not of God, and the wide movements of ecumenical co-operative evangelism today are similarly allowed but not approved of God.

## 2. "JUDGE NOT THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED" (Matt. 7 : 1).

The Lord *did* use these words and of course they are infallible in the context and sense in which they are used. But they are being used today to deter men from judging and criticising and showing the error of co-operative evangelism with modernists and the like.

Now the Word of God also says "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matter?" (1 Cor. 6 : 2). And in 1 Cor. 14 : 29 the Word says "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge".

How is it that Paul says "Judge", and the Lord says "Judge not"?

But then there is a wide group of Scriptures which relate to reproof, admonishing and carrying out of admonitory directives which are impossible without the use of the critical and reasoning processes which produce judgments.

We find that there are very few places in Scripture where the critical faculties are discouraged as in Matt. 7 : 1 but very many places where we are required to develop and use them.

Clearly the one set of precepts does not cancel out the other. There are places where we should not judge, say, the motives of another, but there are many more places where it is our Scriptural duty to judge and reprove.

For instance John says "Try (judge) the spirits whether they are of God : because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4 : 1). This is the sense in which it is our duty to consider and try and judge all effort that claims to be done in God's name.

Is it of God, done in His way or not?

If we are not permitted to do this, then we must hold the Mormons and Mohammedans, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Roman Catholics as well as the Jews, the Billy Grahamites and the Ecumenicalists, all without question of any sort.

What does the Word of God really say with application to the matters in question? It says this : "Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4 : 2).

### 3. THE PARABLE OF THE TARES (Matt. 13 : 38 - 39).

New Evangelicals interpret this parable to mean that the Lord anticipated that Fundamentalists and Modernists should work together until the end because it is said concerning the tares which an enemy had sown among the wheat. "*Let both grow together until the harvest : and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them : but gather the wheat into my barn*" (Matt. 13 : 30).

It seems strange that the New Evangelicals should want us to view the Modernists they work with as the Tares which later are to be tied together in bundles and burnt !

This parable is quite unintelligible if followed into ecumenical evangelism in this way. It has no connection with the Church or evangelism at all. It relates to the Nations and the peoples of the Nations prior to and at the Day of Christ. "The field is the world", and the reapers are angels. (See Matt. 13 : 49).

### 4. THAT WE SHOULD LOVE THE MODERNISTS AS CHRISTIAN BRETHREN

They say that the Bible has more emphasis on love than on separation.

This is true but only a half-truth for it infers that love would

not separate itself in these circumstances.

How should true love manifest itself towards the Modernists who deny the virgin birth, the resurrection and immortality and who are clearly heading for a Christless and lost eternal state? Here are the two courses to adopt to such a man :

- (a) To pretend he is one with us, ask him to open in prayer at a Crusade and leave him to assume we consider him to be in no danger.
- (b) To make it clear to him that he has no part in Christ and refuse to allow him to participate in Crusades, while lovingly warning him of his danger and pleading with him privately as opportunity offers.

Which of the two is the way the love of God should operate in a Christian worker?

#### 5. LEGALISTS AND PHARISEES, THEY SAY

When the Ecumenical Evangelicals run out of other arguments a usual line is to turn and say that those who will not accept their position are more concerned about the letter of the commandments than getting people converted, and that they are Pharisaical in objecting to the work of others while not doing much themselves.

This turns the debate to a questioning of the credentials of those who oppose co-operative ecumenical evangelism in its association with modernists, Pentecostals and Romanists.

Well, call them what you like, brother, but when the Word of God makes it clear that righteousness and unrighteousness can have no fellowship together, and that a believer can have no part with an infidel and it gives a simple and clear directive "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers", what should they do, brother?

I must take it that when God says this, He means it, and I must simply do it, no matter what anybody else says or does.

The Pharisees were the people who did not believe the blind man when he said "One thing I know". Later the Pharisees cast this blind man out, and Jesus and he became companions as outcasts of the religious system of the day. The blind man became a separated believer in Christ. More believers are needed who are so simple and straight that the Ecumenical Stars of the age may be ashamed and confounded.

#### 6. TOUCH NOT MINE ANOINTED

They quote from Psalm 105 : 14 - 15 where David says of Israel "He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved kings for their sakes; Saying, touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm".

They submit that because God thus honoured His anointed and His prophets, that no man should today criticise or rebuke or question,

any of the Ecumenical Notables of today, especially Bill Graham.

It is true that God still has a way of honouring His true servants who do His own work in His own way. But Christ Himself is God's anointed one for our age. As to the true bondservants of our Anointed One the right Scripture to quote is Isaiah 57 : 17 "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord".

7. "THE LORD ACCEPTED THE CO-OPERATION OF PEOPLE WHO DID NOT OPPOSE HIM", THEY SAY.

This proposition is based on Luke 9 : 49 - 50 which is as follows : "And John answered and said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not : for he that is not against us is for us".

They say that this means that Modernists should be allowed to work with Evangelicals as servants of God.

One would think they were only joking to draw such conclusions, but this proposition must be answered because some appear to have accepted it.

The man the Lord told the disciples not to forbid was doing exactly the same work that they were doing and he was doing it in the name of Jesus.

Well, if the Pentecostals are reported to be casting out tongues and all the wickedness of this evil service, then let us forbid them not to so cast out their evil.

And, if the Roman Catholics or some of them should be reported to be casting out their demon-inspired Mass, idols, crucifixes, Mariology, Confession boxes and general spiritual humbug and return to service only in the name of Christ, then let us forbid them not to do it.

Or, if some modernists should commence to repent of their former stand, and commence to preach and prove the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection and the Immortality of the Soul, certainly true servants of Christ will not only not forbid them, but they will embrace them in the name of the Lord.

What would Christ have said if they had reported that the man was inducing demons to enter into people? Or if he had been teaching them to worship idols or to call a priest "Father" in a Confession Box or had been saying that God was dead, and that there is no resurrection or eternal life?

8. THEY SAY THAT THE LORD'S METHOD WAS TO PROCLAIM THE TRUTH AND IGNORE THE ERROR

The Lord did not always deal with error in the same way, and neither should we. The circumstances, nature and degree of the error

are factors which in accordance with the Scriptural instructions for dealing with error should be weighed and considered.

But the Lord *never* sanctioned or approved of error and he never remained in its presence or vicinity without showing clearly he was separate from it. Scripture *requires* us to do this and in so acting we have the Lord's example.

The Lord *did* proclaim truth and so should we. The Lord did *not* ignore error and neither should we. He denounced the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, the Sadducees for their error about the Resurrection and life after death, the Herodians for their hedonism and Peter for being an emissary of Satan to Him.

How absurd to suggest that our Lord would have had a conference on evangelism (or anything else) with say, Annas, Caiaphas and Gamaliel, (representing the Establishment) and Herod and Herodias (representing dissident groups) and Peter James and John (representing the new independents) with Pilate and his wife (as observers) !

Our Lord was the spotless Nazarite, who trod a course "separate from sinners".

"Such an high priest *became us* who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7 : 26).

And it *becomes us* to be like Him.

#### 9. THE LORD MIXED FREELY WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS

Of course He did, and so should we, to bring them to repentance, as He did.

So, if the Modernists and Romanists and Pentecostals are the sinners in view, let us go to them with the intention and purpose of showing them their error and of bringing them to repentance.

If it is the masses who more truly represent the publicans and sinners of our age let us go to them also, as Christ did, without the encumbrance of those who do not believe that all men are sinners who need to be brought to repentance and to be saved by the blood of Christ and without the encumbrance of those who do not believe that Christ was God, Virgin born, and is now risen from the dead.

#### 10. THAT ANYONE WHO CONSISTENTLY QUOTES FROM THE BIBLE ACCURATELY MUST BE DOING SO AS OF GOD

We must remember that all the false cults are continually quoting Scripture and this does not mean that God is pleased with the Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists and Pentecostals and the dozens of others who take different teachings from the same acknowledged passages of Scripture.

The workman that God approves is one who has nothing to be ashamed of, and who is "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2 : 15). That is, he is one who has learnt how to relate Scripture with Scripture, and to understand the times and circumstances in



which each passage is properly applicable, and the relation between such passages and the limits of their application. From a thorough acquaintance with the Word the servant approved of God learns not only to know the words of the text of Scripture, but the very mind and purposes of God therefrom.

The Lord showed how Scripture is rightly used in contrast to a wrong use of it, in his answers to Satan when He was tempted in the wilderness of him.

Satan quoted Scripture correctly, but he did this for evil purposes, so that while the Scripture itself was of course true, the manner of its use was to destroy truth and allow evil and error to subsist with it.

How is it that Roman Catholics can listen comfortably and happily when Dr Graham addresses them in their own institutions and colleges? Simply because he cleverly quotes only such Scriptures as will not offend his hearers and gives these Scriptures a colour and appearance to imply that the Roman Catholics themselves can accept.

How is it that Oral Roberts can safely invite Dr Graham to open a Pentecostal University, which is intended to produce Pentecostally orientated graduates? Only because Roberts knows that Dr Graham will never say anything to reprove these doctrines but rather that he will indicate his approval.

Why is it that Jewish Rabbis are free to intercourse spiritually with Graham? Because Dr Graham follows the technique of saying such things as for example that the Jews did not crucify Christ but that the Romans did. This is of course a half truth for if the Romans were guilty of the physical act of the crucifixion, the Jews were morally responsible in that the Romans would never have carried out the crucifixion if the Jews had not insisted on it.

Why is it that modernists who deny everything dear to the heart of God, will come along and sit on a Crusade platform with Dr Graham and open in prayer and generally identify themselves with the Crusades, and be reasonably happy about it all? Because they have learned to have confidence in Graham that he will never betray them for what they are nor reprove them in any way — neither them nor the doctrines they hold. That is, they know that Graham will quote Scripture copiously, but always so that there will be no offence to them.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE POINTS OF DEPARTURE

The Apostasy or The Falling Away, spoken of in 2 Thessalonians 2 : 3 will not fully develop as Babylon the Great until the days of the Tribulation when the Man of Sin is revealed. But we can see it developing very quickly today.

The Apostasy is a grossly evil spiritual position and something of this grossness may be sensed in the present day Movements which involve the fusing of Modernists and Evangelicals together in a way which is always viewed in Scripture as spiritual confusion and as spiritual abomination.

This is the main feature of the prophetic present.

However there is another factor which is important and which perhaps is of more concern to the Lord than anything else today. It affects the real testimony of Jesus, more intimately than any other feature of the prophetic present.

The enemy of Jesus is out to destroy and spoil and smear and render ineffective the actual and true testimony of Jesus, wherever it may be found.

To achieve this the Devil has a first point of entry in his attack, and that is simply to break contact in some way between the Lord and the servant of the Lord he is attacking.

Of course if a servant of the Lord can be stumbled into serious sin or immorality this is effective to this end, but it is too obvious a manoeuvre to succeed with the great majority of spiritual people. More subtle means are used.

These subtle wiles of the devil which war against the soul are the subject of this chapter. It involves Departure from the path of personal and simple obedience to the Lord Himself.

### THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST

Paul said to the Corinthians "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve *through his subtilty*, so your minds *should be corrupted* from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11 : 3).

Paul wanted to present them as a "chaste virgin" to Christ, but feared the devil might corrupt them by subtilty from the simplicity that is in Christ.

The true Christians of the true Church of Christ today are in this position and the attractiveness of the simplicity that is in Christ has largely been filched from them by the corruptive subtilty of the Wicked One.

To the Galatians Paul had to say "I marvel that ye are *so soon removed* from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1 : 6).

How Paul would marvel today !

## THE PRISTINE SIMPLICITY

- (a) as to persons.
- (b) as to churches.
- (c) as to means.

The simplicity that is in Christ is that the Testimony of Jesus is a matter of direct responsibility between each individual and the Lord and between each local church and the Lord. Anything else is not of the simplicity that is in Christ, but is a subtle corruption of Satan's engineering, and is a point of departure.

### (a) THE LORD AND THE INDIVIDUAL

The bond-servant of the Lord who like John is to share in responsibility for the Testimony of Jesus is intended to take his instructions and directions and to make his return to the Lord Himself directly, and without interference from any intermediaries. Similarly if he is in doubt about any questions relative to his service, he has right of access at all times to enquire of the Lord directly, and he should not allow anyone else to deflect him from this course.

All the servants of the Lord whose service is recorded in the New Testament acted in this way and any other mode of acting is a departure from the simplicity of Christ which is intended for the testimony of Jesus.

The right course for individual service in the testimony of Jesus is prophetically set out for us in the recorded example of Saul of Tarsus. He "conferred not with flesh and blood".

You see, God called Paul "*to reveal His Son in me*, that I might preach Him among the heathen" (Gal. 1 : 16). Paul then is careful to explain that no other person was allowed to influence him in preparing for his service to fulfil the call of God. He went into the wilds of Arabia and there the Lord instructed him privately and directly as Moses had once learnt to know the Lord God and to be prepared for a special service in "the backside of the desert". And Paul certifies this as true and says "The things (in this connection) which I wrote unto you, behold, before God, I lie not" (Gal. 1 : 20).

The Lord is still the same, and the testimony of Jesus is still the same. The Gospel is the same and the Spirit is the same. Individuals are of course all different individuals, as such, but they are all so inadequate in themselves that they stand alike to be instructed only by the Lord as to the particular work they are to perform for Him, as God's Son is revealed in them.

But what happens today?

God calls John Brown, and this John, unlike the John of the Apocalypse, goes first to the Elders of his Church (if they have Elders, which today is not always the case, in which case he would go to a Missions Advisory Board or something of that order). The "Oversight" or the "Board" would then treat John Brown somewhat patron-

isingly, make him feel something of his inadequacy in relation to the aura of their own spiritual wisdom, and advise him to go to a Bible Training Institute if it is a Board advising, or to an Assembly Bible School if it is an Oversight giving the advice. John Brown then applies to the institution indicated for application forms. He fills these in and waits hopefully that he will be considered, because he does want to serve the Lord. He is then called for an interview with the selection committee and answers a lot of questions but he finally becomes an "accepted" student of the Institute or School and he moves one up in general religious status accordingly. He then goes through a process in which his personality and his understanding of Bible Teaching are moulded to the particular pattern approved for the particular Institute or School, though he probably does not understand it just that way. He sits examinations, passes, and obtains a certificate that he has completed the course, and he passes again to another degree of religious excellence accordingly, and he will be recognised thus as a proper person to speak at meetings and to lead in various forms of "Christian Activity". He might be just the one to address the "Cum-on Inn" or the "Drift Inn" coffee bar hippies. But this is only incidental, and John Brown then goes back to the Elders of his Church or to the Mission Board, but this time with the status symbol of the completed course certificate and he feels more confidence and is treated with more consideration. If it is a Mission Board he will be recommended to fill in applicant forms for missionary or home service candidature; he will come in due course before the Candidates Committee; be recommended to the Missions Board; be finally accepted; sent on deputation work; sent to the field; come before the Field Council; be approved; and be posted to a station from which he will be required to send regular returns to Headquarters which will in turn see that he is maintained as well as possible. If it is an Assembly Oversight that he returns to, then the course is a little different in detail, but the same in principle. The Oversight will carefully consider his "case" and if it is inclined to think it a good one as it probably will if the Secretary and some member of the Tutorial Staff of the Bible school have recommended John, then John will be referred to a regional Missionary Council comprised of elders from other assemblies in the area who are reputed to have special insight into missionary affairs. John will meet these worthies and if they also approve, then John's own assembly oversight is informed, and reinforced with this approval and also a doctor's approval. the Oversight passes a resolution "commending the brother" to the Work of the Lord in some particular field that the young man "has been exercised about", and of which they also approve. The Corresponding Brother of the Oversight, or the Secretary, then writes to "the Treasury" Trustees if it is in New Zealand, to "The Echoes" Trustees if it is in Great Britain, or "The Fields" Trustees if it is in North America and the respective Trustees are advised of the Assembly's commendation of John Brown and it is requested (expressly or implicitly) that John

Brown's name be placed on the "Assembly list of Missionaries". The Trustees will meet and consider and the name will be added and provision will be made for John Brown in their money distributing arrangements. John then will be advised about suitable deputation work and when his name has appeared in "The Treasury", "Echoes" or "Fields" he will be received with the further status of an approved and properly listed Missionary in all assemblies which are on the Assembly list of Assemblies.

John finally goes to the Field overseas and meets the Field Committee of Assembly Missionaries in the area and is "advised" as to many things, including the most suitable location for his work. He will be expected to conform to local assembly Missionary arrangements and supervisions, attend an annual conference, and report progress to field headquarters and also to the Missionary Trustees in his homeland, who will insert news of his activities in their Magazine and see that he gets a reasonable share of the funds they have for distribution to the Lord's servants.

Within these restrictions the Lord will probably do some of His work through John Brown, through the Mission or the Oversight, and through the Central Trustees, and Field Councils and all the other groups — even the Bible Schools.

But viewed in comparison with the Lord's prophetic purposes, all these things are subtle corruptions of the simplicity that is in Christ, for He intended none of them, but that John Brown should be answerable to Him alone, in every matter relative to his service in the Testimony of Jesus.

#### (b) THE LORD AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

John Brown is not answerable to his Church or its elders as to the service he personally undertakes for his Lord, but he certainly is answerable to and with the local Church in many other matters. Having clarified with his Lord direct the work he is to do for his Lord in His service he would want as a matter of love and fellowship to tell them about it, and seek their prayerful interest.

The Testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy is portrayed in Scripture as being carried by individual servants of Christ and by the corporate testimony of the local Churches. This responsibility is given to individuals and to churches, but to no other corporate units. Scripture knows nothing of Missions and Crusades and Convention Committees and Christian Businessmen's associations, United Oversight or "the Blue-Jeans Sextette".

Where God's true servants become involved in such things, Christ still works through sincere though misguided individuals who work under such auspices or in such organisations. But this service is limited and restricted in that it has been removed from the simplicity that is in Christ by a corrupting subtilty of Satan's.

In the companion Booklet "The Doctrine of Fellowship", the

general doctrines relating to the Local Church are considered. Here the subject is simply the part of the Local Church in relation to the Testimony of Jesus.

The simplicity that is in Christ in this regard is that He is the Lord of the Church and that He never delegates His authority to any person or other corporate body.

But where the Church surrenders any part of its responsibility or accepts directions from any person or body of men other than the Lord Himself, then again a corruption subtly engineered by Satan becomes effective in removing the Church, to a degree at least, from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Most of the denominational churches are in this position because they have allowed a central (denominational) governing body to stand between each local Church and the Lord. Also the clerical system of Ministers and people, interposes between the Lord and the Church as a whole, while the wider system of bishops or regional authorities in a denomination further limits the relationship between the Lord and His Church. This is the working of the Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes (Rev. 2 : 15) which the Lord hates because it removes the Church from the simplicity which is in Christ.

## **THE EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN**

The various Assemblies of the various Exclusive groups have all lost a great deal of the simplicity that is in Christ by a similar subtle corruption of the Evil One.

Anyone who has studied the history of the "Brethren Movement" knows that as a result of the dispute about W. B. Newton, in 1845 the Darbyites insisted that all their assemblies must judge a dispute which rightly only belonged to an Assembly at Plymouth. The supervision of this requirement on Churches that accepted this position has resulted in a hierarchical system which interposes persons and other Assemblies or groups of Assemblies between the Lord and each local Church so that once again the simplicity that is in Christ has been forfeited to a serious extent by the Exclusives. This position snowballs and the main stream of Exclusive Assemblies today appear to accept the personal directions of Mr James Taylor of New York. Instead of each Assembly enquiring of the Lord, the question is rather what does Brother Taylor have to say on this question. If he says "sell your farms and come to the City", they all feel obliged to act accordingly.

## **THE OPEN BRETHREN**

The Assemblies not ensnared thus following the 1845 Plymouth dispute, have been generally referred to as "Open Brethren" Assemblies and until recently, in the main, these Assemblies have remained as independent separate local Churches, each retaining its autonomy of

authority, being responsible to its Lord only and denying any allegiance to any Central or other controlling body or persons. A good degree of the true simplicity that is in Christ has been experienced in these independent local Churches everywhere throughout the world.

## **THE OPEN BRETHREN DENOMINATION**

Of recent years however, with the general Apostasy of this age, a great Departure has occurred from the simplicity that is in Christ, and most of the formerly independent Churches called "open brethren" have become interdependent instead of independent, have suffered a subtle "take-over" by regional hierarchical groups, have surrendered and are surrendering increasing degrees of control to United Oversight, to Annual Regional Meetings, to United Property Trusts which give controlling powers to hierarchical groups, and to Magazine and Mission and Camp and other independent Committees which filch the powers and prerogatives of the Lord in a host of Assemblies today.

The hierarchical leaders themselves rub their hands today and rejoice in what they have achieved and openly call their handiwork the "Open Brethren Denomination" (see letter in Appendix to the companion booklet "The Doctrine of Fellowship").

They justify this in that now their central Committees can appoint speakers to take the Open Brethren radio services and appoint hospital visitors and obtain state aid for Old Peoples' Homes which the Government allows in its arrangement with the National Council of Churches to all "recognised" and official Church organisations.

*The Subtilties* which have produced this position:

### **(A) DEPARTURE IN DISCIPLINE**

The manner and side-effects of Assembly discipline of recent years has revealed departure in many matters. As far back as 1924 the case of a Mr Theodore Roberts in London revealed a trend which had obviously already become established.

The Scriptural principles from which departure has now been widely made, may be stated briefly based on Matthew 18 :

- (1) The offender should be appealed to privately with a view to recovering him.
- (2) If he will not listen then "take with thee one or two more".
- (3) Appeal to the local Church.

Beyond this there is no other provision in the simplicity that is in Christ other than submitting the matter to the Lord Himself who is "in the throne judging righteously" (Ps. 9 : 4).

In the case of the error alleged against Mr Theodore Roberts, his own local Assembly was divided on the issue and the leading brother in the Assembly who made the accusations was unable to obtain the necessary assembly action to discipline Mr Roberts.

The matter should then have been left there, in the Lord's hands, unless or until the Assembly itself should come to some clearer view

of the matter.

But the accusing brother called meetings of other brethren from other assemblies and the result is what has become known as "The letter of the thirteen" which condemned Mr Roberts' views.

This letter was sent to most assemblies in London and Great Britain. Then because of the interest created by the Letter the Local Assembly again considered the matter and on the basis of the judgment of the Thirteen other brethren, the Local Church adopted their view, and excommunicated Mr Roberts (although the view of the 13 was that the error they proclaimed, was not of the kind that should be judged with excommunication). Then the Assembly wrote to all other Assemblies, and requested that all Assemblies recognise and respect their judgment, and refuse Mr Roberts, "so that fellowship may not be jeopardised".

Here then are the results of the Exclusive Meetings' error all over again in the Open Meetings. First judgment by an outside body, domination of an Assembly thereby, and then all other Assemblies being brought into line with Denominational threats as to loss of Fellowship if the action is not ratified.

Since 1924 the same process has been seen in many places, of an erroneous exercise of discipline brought to bear by authorities that are completely unscriptural, and exercising a Denomination-making influence.

## **(B) DEPARTURE IN MINISTRY AND OVERSIGHT**

### **(1) MINISTRY**

In the early Church ministry of the Word was in the hands of those the Holy Spirit called and equipped for this service. Only *some* ministered and the others did not. It was not regarded that all members had equal "rights" to minister and that every brother should "take his turn", whether he had ability and calling to do so or not. The Lord appointed "some" evangelists, "some" pastors and "some" teachers "for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4 : 11 - 12).

When brethren returned to the simplicity that is in Christ in the mid-nineteenth century, the same order was found everywhere. Dr S. P. Tregelles recorded in 1849 that from 1835 the early church assemblies at Plymouth, Bath, London, and elsewhere all enjoyed what he describes as a "stated ministry but not exclusive ministry". By this it is understood that at each gathering there was an implicit acknowledgment that certain brethren were "looked to" to minister, because of the obvious working of gifts of ministry among them. However this group of brethren in each Assembly or area was not regarded as an exclusive group for it was always recognised that the Lord could similarly endow others for the same work of ministry who must be free to obey their Lord and to develop their gift by study, prayer and exercise of the gift.



It was the duty of the other ministering brethren and of the elders in each assembly to see that the liberty to minister was not abused by men standing up who had no calling of God to do so and no enabling of the Lord to minister. The simple safeguards of the simplicity that is in Christ were always sufficient where Elders acted as wise shepherds and where those gifted to minister, did so simply, not by prior arrangement of men but as stirred to do so by the Holy Spirit within them who also had given their enabling and authority to minister.

The Devil's subtilty has been two-barrelled. First he has suggested what is contrary to God's intention, and without any Scriptural ground, that *all* men should be free to exercise a liberty to minister, and that every brother should take a turn to preach the gospel and to address other gatherings, and that there is a spark of ministerial gift in every brother, that has only to be developed.

This brash subtilty appeals to the Englishman's democratic inclinations and generally to the pride of man. Brethren everywhere have fallen for it, and we have everywhere today a democracy of ministry in "Open Brethren" churches which has devalued the whole movement, and removed it from the simplicity that is in Christ.

This subtilty leads to the kindred subtilty of "closed platforms" at Conference and Camp meetings. The argument is that at these larger meetings "every Tom Dick and Harry" cannot be allowed to speak to such important gatherings of people (as they do in the local church) so instead of liberty being allowed here, liberty is removed completely and God's freedom to appoint Ministers is taken away. Man selects and man appoints in big meetings while every brother has his "rights" in the small meetings.

Both positions are far removed from the simplicity that is in Christ. The latter is the democracy of Laodiceanism — the "people ruling" and the former is Nicolaitanism or the hierarchical interposition of a system of clericalism.

It is still possible for meetings to return to the simplicity that is in Christ, and for individual brethren to do so.

## (2) OVERSIGHT

Churches today not only have the outside influence of the prevailing democratic stance of the times, but also of the prevailing revolt against order and discipline which characterises our era more than any other social feature.

The effect is to water-down and dilute the authority of those the Lord has appointed in each Assembly to guide and rule there.

The subtilty here is a teaching that God did not intend elders to rule but only guide and point out the way where they can. It is amazing that brethren generally today have been now "persuaded" by this subtilty, and very few will now agree that Elders should "rule" in an Assembly. But in the early Church, Elders did have this duty and responsibility and authority; and in the early days of the Assemblies

of last century it was so also.

The rule referred to is of course a delegated authority from Christ, and the Shepherd-rulers of the Churches have no personal wealth or advantage in the flocks of their appointment (1 Pet. 5 : 3), but the same Scripture that so teaches, also requires the submission of the Church to the Elders.

Paul tells the Elders at Ephesus (Acts 14 : 23) that they were "set in office" by the Holy Spirit, and the word used means "office" which is also denied today.

The form of "rule" is intended to be similar to that of a father in his own home, and as a father rules, or should rule in his home, so the Overseers should exercise a similar authority to rule in the Churches (see 1 Tim. 5 : 17 - 20).

This sad departure from the simplicity that is in Christ is the root of a great deal that is now advancing from "Departure" to the Apostasy.

### **(C) DEPARTURE IN SERVICE**

In his remarkable work "The Organisation of the Early Christian Churches" Dr Edwin Hatch has shown that the loss of liberty whereby the early Churches lost the simplicity that is in Christ, commenced in ways that seemed innocent, but which were in fact engineered of the Evil One to subtly divert the peoples of God to a Departure which became in full development, the Church of Rome of the Dark Ages.

The steps were these:

- (a) Some prominent and influential people in the Churches convened conferences to consider matters of mutual interest.
- (b) They were at first "informal".
- (c) At first they claimed no authority or "*jurisdiction*".
- (d) At first they were not binding on any one.
- (e) They made "recommendations" only.
- (f) People who did not accept these recommendations found however they were the losers in many ways.
- (g) This in turn increased the importance of the conferences, and "a confederation was thereby established, which placed the dissentients at a great disadvantage".
- (h) All the other steps that led to the darkness of the Roman Catholic system developed from this position.

### **AND THE OPEN BRETHREN DEPARTURE ?**

It is just the same in the initial stages. Authorities (well intentioned but misguided) are set up in the form of United Oversight, Annual Regional Meetings of Brethren, Camp and Conference Committees, Bible School Committees and a host of others.

These bodies set norms or standards according to their own ideas, and anyone with other ideas is immediately at a disadvantage anywhere within the limits of their spheres of influence.

A further factor that soon develops is that appointments to positions of authority within these man-ordained bodies become subject to diplomatic and political intrigue and persuasion and within the realm of such procedures the man who has money and worldly-wise standing always has special preference. Appointment is very often made by the sign of the gold ring.

This in turn brings spiritual ineptitude and a wrong sense of spiritual values within these organisations and their influence becomes more and more detrimental to the holy purposes of God for His Churches and His people.

The simplicity that is in Christ gives place to the goodwill of certain "dear good brethren".

## **REGIONAL PROPERTY TRUSTS**

Mr G. H. Lang in his work "Departure, a Warning and an Appeal", published in 1926 but now out of print, says at page 57 : "Again, lest local trustees should not properly guard church and other premises, there have been formed sundry trusts for the purposes. These also follow geographical divisions. "The Such and Such Counties Evangelisation Trust". The purpose is good, the brethren dependable, their willing service praiseworthy. But consider that by this purpose dozens, even scores, of halls, tents, Bible carriages are quietly passing into the perpetual possession and therefore control of a few persons. No abuse has yet come to my knowledge, but one of the best of these devoted brethren, a dear personal friend of mine, in answer to a question as to who could control the workers using the premises of the Trust of which he was chairman, declared, in my hearing, on a very public occasion, that if any of the ministering brethren did not satisfy the trustees, they would consider it their duty to forbid him the use of their premises ! Their legal right may be indefeasible, but when did the Head of the Church confer such right on any to dominate the ministry in scores of assemblies over a wide area, or in evangelistic effort ? Why not have a synod or a bench of bishops ? And what a potential weapon of tyranny is being forged for days of general degeneracy !"

While in Mr Lang's day no cases of this tyranny were known, today many brethren in different parts of the world can testify to the tyrannies that have in fact resulted.

## **BIBLE SCHOOLS**

In Mr Lang's day Bible schools among Assembly people were not known. But they have become a feature of the Open Brethren denominational horizon today, as the Departure removes further and further from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Only those who will bow to the Gold Ring or who breathe the right shibboleth of the local hierarchy or Bible School Committee can

hope to play a part in the teaching of the students, and of course the students all come away indoctrinated that the Bible School is right in principle and that the staff and lecturers and the Committee behind them all are wonderful people. The esprit de corps of the Bible School becomes the key-note for all the activities the students later engage in.

If Billy Black, being one of the lecturers at a Bible School, did not teach what the School Board wanted him to teach, he would be sacked.

Now while Billy Black's own assembly should deal with him if he is teaching false doctrine, no one else should have this power, and it can be used tyrannically in cases where the teacher is not teaching error that an assembly would deal with.

The remedy for this position is not to improve the conditions under which lecturers serve in a Bible School. The remedy is to return to the simplicity that is in Christ, and disband the Bible School, or, as the hierarchies never do any disbanding, the remedy is rather for each local Church and for each believer who is so exercised to express his disapproval and refuse to co-operate in any way with all that is involved in the Bible School Movement.

### **CAMP COMMITTEES**

These non-Scriptural authorities in many ways infringe on the lawful Scriptural authority of the local Churches. They create a challenge of loyalties and of discipline, if not of ministry and of life.

Here again the Committee makes rules which it binds upon the people of God who attend, and the sometimes tyrannical administration of such rules is part of the evidences of the removal from the simplicity that is in Christ that the Camp Committees and the Camp Movement generally are responsible for.

No matter how clearly it may be pointed out that a Departure is involved in such works, Christian consciences have become blurred and it is unlikely that Camp Committees will disband, or that the Camp Movement will not continue to grow.

The Departure and the Apostasy it feeds will expand and extend, and the call is to "any man" who sees the truth and is willing to act upon it for himself.

### **ASSEMBLY MAGAZINES**

In the past individual servants of the Lord have engaged in the work of publishing written ministry of the Word with most beneficial results. That some of these workers have prepared monthly issues in the form of a magazine ministry has also filled a useful purpose in disseminating truth among the people of God.

For some years now, however, in different countries the tendency has developed for a group of brethren to form a committee or a limited

liability company or a trust to "take over" a magazine that has been operating for some years, perhaps when the brother who has been engaged in this particular ministry has died, or is no longer able to continue with it. Then the influential wealthy brethren who buy out the magazine may erect a building with printery and shop or shops for selling books and expand the magazine's "service" and "appoint" an editor.

At once we have the same feature of men organising and directing others in matters of service, instead of a brother proceeding under his own responsibility to God only.

But then, with the best intentions again, the Committee sets out to give the best "service" it can to the Churches of the country. It makes lists of all the missionaries and home workers and distributes them to all Assemblies at "Prayer lists" and it collects money for distribution to missionaries and renders a "service" in publishing letters from missionaries in the magazine. It thus becomes the denominational centre for all missionary activities, and he is a brave fellow who will venture forth today either as a missionary or a full-time home worker without first having ingratiated himself with the magazine trustees and had his name duly enscrolled on the appropriate listing.

Then of course the Board makes and prints lists of the Assemblies in the country served by the magazine and the doctrine is established that these are "our" assemblies and this is "our" magazine.

If anyone has any doubts about the denominational aspect of the control of a magazine by a group of brethren, he is referred to the January 1970 issue of the New Zealand magazine called "The Treasury".

In the issue referred to, changes in the directorate of the company are referred to, there is the appointment of a new editor, the chairman of directors makes certain policy pronouncements, and it is thoroughly emphasised that the "Treasury" is to be made and held or regarded as the official organ of all the Open Brethren Assemblies in New Zealand (as per their list).

The Magazine Board is a grave departure involving a removal from the simplicity that is in Christ, and it leads and trends further to ecumenicalism and the apostasy generally.

What can we do about it? Assemblies may refuse to allow themselves to be included in the list, and individual missionaries and workers may refuse to allow themselves to be listed as such. Assemblies and workers could correspond and send funds directly and not use the "services" of the Board.

As this form of departure widens and deepens, the only course for the servant of the Lord who desires to remain within the simplicity that is in Christ, is just, simply, to withdraw from them in all denominational connection and to let them and everyone else know why he is doing this. Christian charity requires he should testify against them for their own sake, to help them to understand their position, and Christian charity requires he should help others to do what he knows to be right and God-pleasing.

## **(D) DEPARTURE IN SECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

We have been considering institutions outside the Assembly which rob it of its authority and reliance on the Lord. Sectional interests within the local Church will produce the same result. Elders, deacons, pastors, evangelists and teachers all have joint functional duties which spiritually protect, unite, edify and build up the whole body of the local church, but non-Scriptural man-made sectional groups have the opposite effect.

### **THE M.S.C. MOVEMENT**

One of the first of these to appear was the Missionary Study Class Movement. Some Christians who form part of the local Church met separately as part of another body with other connections called "The Missionary Study Class Movement".

Mr G. H. Lang refers to this in his book on Departure and has this to say at page 88 : "I know not where to find in the New Testament the principle (the practice certainly is not there) of section companies within the local assembly. It is a Departure. The child of God should cultivate ceaselessly the habit of thought that he enters every meeting of believers solely as being a member of Christ and of His Church: it works contrary to this habit of mind to develop the idea that one attends this or that meeting as a member of this denomination, this Church, this M.S.C., or any other such society. If the young people of today are unconsciously trained in false habits of thought the harvest will be duly reaped in deteriorated assembly conditions".

The whole system of holiday camps in Assembly circles appears to have developed out of the M.S.C. system of providing camps for partly holiday and partly missionary study. Mr Lang comments :

"The glories of nature, with capacity and opportunity to enjoy them, are a good and beneficial gift from God. Recreation (re-creation, of working force) is necessary, and may be enjoyed to the glory of God, but it should be provided by private arrangement; it is not a matter for joint public provision by what professes to be a Christian institution, such as the M.S.C. Movement. This is a Departure in principle from both apostolic practice and the ways of early Brethren. The rebuke, "What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God?" (1 Cor. 11 : 22), shows that there are things natural and right, but out of place in the community practice of the church. And if it be replied that M.S.C. in no wise professes to be a "church", I answer that it avows itself a corporate Movement, and nothing corporate but a "church" is sanctioned for Christians by the New Testament.

"The cause of the Lord needs seasoned soldiers inured to hardship, and I submit the considered opinion that ten young people earnest-hearted enough to give up their holiday to concentrated Scripture study, prayer and gospel testimony will count much more heavily in the interests of the Kingdom of God than a hundred who gather to

hear some able addresses plus a much larger proportion of the natural and social delights of a "holiday conference". Let me for this be deemed a misanthrope, a kill-joy, but such is my conviction. No doubt Gideon's thirty-and-two thousand volunteers made a brave and inspiring sight, but when tested less than one in a hundred were fit for battle (Jud. v. 11)."

## **YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUPS**

Today young people meet and work separately from the rest of the Church members and have their own sectional organisations, leading to their Coffee Bar entertainment form of sectional evangelism, as well as much else.

The departure is the formation of the sectional groups which is clearly rebuked in Scripture (see 1 Cor. 3). Christ is not divided, and where His Church is divided in this way there is obviously a removal from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Of course at Headquarters Magazine Board level the "service" provides a special Youth Magazine upgrading and honouring what Christ deplores, and the Youth of the Assemblies are encouraged and given new ideas for their separate enclave activities.

## **ORGANISED REGIONAL EVANGELISM**

An astounding and audacious subtility of Satan has recently opened new portals of departure.

An illustration of this has occurred in New Zealand while the writer has been engaged in preparing this booklet for publication.

First, a group of brethren who claimed special status as "Full-time Workers" held a meeting together. The first departure in immediate post-apostolic times was similar, in that leaders met together to discuss aspects of the Lord's work and these gatherings gave rise to the unwarrantable authority of such conferences and to the rise of the clergy. But here we have an incipient clergy (the Full-time Workers holding themselves as a group apart) meeting as such. The brethren who so acted no doubt did so with good intentions and believing they were doing a good work. But they have been the dupes of a subtle wile of The Enemy. This is Departure No. 1.

Secondly these brethren determined to select an area where there are many assemblies, the Waikato District, for a simultaneous evangelistic campaign in which "Full-time Workers" only would be the evangelists. This is an effort by a clerical group to persuade a number of Churches to follow a course of action designed and to be implemented by the Clergy. No doubt this also was done from good motives, but in doing it Satan ensnared them. This is Departure No. 2.

Thirdly they approached the assemblies and called a meeting of people from each assembly to discuss and implement the plan. Clergy and laity together meet independently of their assemblies. Departure No. 3.

Fourthly this loosely called meeting agreed to the proposals on behalf of most of the assemblies in the District. Departure No. 4.

Fifthly the same meeting appointed a Committee to run and manage and organise the whole campaign and they appointed the Secretary of the Regional Annual Conference of Responsible Brethren of the meetings of the area (the clerk of the Local Parliament of Assemblies) to be the Secretary of the Campaign. Departure No. 5.

Sixthly the Campaign was arranged and advertised as a united effort of "the Open Brethren Assemblies". This is obvious and unequivocal denominationalism, with a governing body for the campaign period at least. Departure No. 6.

Seventhly each assembly was allocated its Full-time Worker by the Central Committee. Many assemblies were not given Evangelists they hoped to have had allotted them and some were very disappointed with their allottees. But as they had surrendered their sovereign right to be directed by the Lord as to whom they should have minister and preach in their midst, they had to bow to the central authority and take what they were given. This is of course a necessary consequence of denominationalism. Departure No. 7.

Eighthly one of the Full-time Workers was given the position of being the co-ordinator of all the others and he was allowed a position of general superiority to the others and the others were to confer together under his leadership. He was of course the one in the group who had been sponsored as a representative of "The Open Brethren" and had attended the Berlin World Council of Evangelism as such. Departure No. 8.

Ninthly the plan developed that each Assembly should be engaged with its own allotted evangelist in its own district for the first six days, but that on the last two days, all the evangelists and all the Assemblies should gather at one central place (the Te Rapa Racecourse) for the grand finale, giving a solid denominational front to the world generally and of course elevating the Berlin Conference luminary as the final speaker for the last united grand massed assemblies occasion with three other "special" Full-time Workers taking part in the big meetings. Thus we have the laity, the clergy, the Bishops and the Archbishop all complete. In the full page newspaper advertisements calling on the public to "follow the crowds", the Archbishop's photograph was displayed in twice the size of those of the three bishops, and theirs clearly distinct from the rest of the clergy.

This writer disassociates with the Denomination concerned and with all its works. It is better to dwell in a housetop alone, than with ecclesiastics in a wide denominational house.

Let us get back to the simplicity that is in Christ, for the day of His patience has nearly ended, and it is only in that simplicity and patience that the testimony of Jesus, is the spirit of prophecy.



## **SIMPLICITY AND "SERVICE"**

Today even unconverted people are attempting to do "Christian" service. There is no lack of organisation and service and toil and activity. In every Church and assembly and under a thousand other banners and societies, young people and older people are 'doing' service. But it is done largely by people who spend a good portion of their time watching television shows and who are engaged in worldly sports and interests more than they are in their "Service". In many instances the service is not supported by a prayerful life of devotion to the living Word of God. Much service is enthusiastically engaged in by people who have enough enthusiasm for the service to do a great deal of it, but not enough enthusiasm for the Lord to spend a short time with Him each day.

The simplicity that is in Christ works differently. The servant has his eye only on his Master. He watches and listens for His voice only. He does not run with the mob, but he sits at his Master's feet, and goes on errands to fetch and carry, to do and to work only as the Master Himself directs it.

For God's people generally it is intended that they should simply be engaged in the ordinary affairs of life, but as Christ's men and women glorifying Him in every action. As they do this they will gossip the Gospel and collectively everywhere they will be deployed by their Lord throughout the world, so that in them is fulfilled the command of Christ that they should go into all the world and preach the Gospel. The Lord sends a few specially prepared servants on special errands, but this is the exception and not the rule.

The subtle thing is that today special organised service is substituted for the simplicity of being just what Christ wants His people to be in the place where He has called them.

### **(C) METHODS IN SERVICE**

We are charged with the testimony of Jesus, and this is the very spirit of prophecy for us today. It is thus a most serious responsibility that falls on the Church and on each member of it. Our own individual testimonies are important, but how essential it is that we bear His testimony aright!

Moses had a responsibility which God laid on him relative to the building of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, where the name of the Lord was to be involved in a testimony for that age, and God said to him "Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount" (Ex. 25 : 40).

It is inconceivable that the Lord should take such care to insist on the pattern for that testimony and give no pattern for the testimony of Jesus. And the Scriptures do carefully record the pattern to be followed by the servants of the Lord who do this holy service. The Tabernacle of the Church in the world is drawn to an exact divine pattern, and every part of its service, and all its methods and ways are divinely appointed. To depart from this pattern is to be disobedient,

and to act dangerously. To be involved in our own innovations, not provided for in the pattern, is to be highminded and insolent and to be not properly concerned for the true and the real honour of the Lord and for the testimony of Jesus.

The methods to be employed by the Church are given in the New Testament either by direct command, or by the account of the methods used and employed by the Holy Spirit through the activities of the early brethren. This activity, recorded thus approvingly, covered a period lasting about one whole generation of Christians, and there are no questions properly relating to the testimony of Jesus which are not provided for in the pattern given.

## **DEPARTURE IN PICTURES**

It is agreed that the movie camera and all related equipment are neither good nor bad in themselves but that it is the use of these things that is good or bad.

The innovation today is that movies are used to present the gospel through "eyegate" as well as "eargate".

Factual matters like reports of missionary activities may be helpfully portrayed by pictures, but the presentation of the Gospel involves something of a different order altogether.

Now Scripture is settled and clear-cut that "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10 : 17). The Lord said "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6 : 63).

Man's relation with God is with words, and in faith-images based on words which are simply thoughts symbolised and expressed.

Man was made to relate with God in this field and no other. This is the field of spiritual perception.

On the other hand Satan dealt with Eve through sensory perception and it is ever thus that mankind is diverted from God by a sensory use of eyegate, while the closing of the eyes is acknowledged to be of assistance in approaching God through faith to hear and perceive the word of God.

In the world, "the lust of the eye — is not of the Father, but is of the world".

We look to Christ by faith (as it were with our physical eyes closed) and thus it is that "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2 Cor. 4 : 18).

Word pictures received by the eye of faith are of the coin of heaven, but pictures held in the physical eye will never help spiritually, and usually they tend to lust or soul-spoiling, away from God and not to Him.

In the testimony of Jesus the simple sincerity of the servant is required to speak or preach (or write) the words that will bring faith and life, so that the sincerity and straightforwardness and patience of the servant must agree with that of His Lord.

But in the motion pictures, there is acting for every part, and instead of honest testimony there is dissimulation and people acting the part of others. It is all false and fake and untrue and it is neither real nor honest. The actors and their acting have the attention of the minds of the viewers, no matter what the sound-track noises portray.

It is a grave departure for the Lord's servants to become involved with anything that contains hurtful propensities, when the pattern is careful to direct that faith and life are connected with the Word of God alone, spiritually perceived.

## **TELEVISION**

For the reasons above stated, television gospel work is to be deplored.

But what of the millions of Christians today who spend their hours watching non-religious acting and shows in their homes? They are lusting their eyes on the insincere, and feeding their souls with all the things their grandmother Eve saw in prospect when the Devil showed her what was pleasant to the eyes. It leads to licentious thoughts and lust and all that the flesh is capable of. At very best, it is absorbing the world into the soul, and it is spoiling the life, minute by minute, making it less useful for the service of God and for the testimony of Jesus.

When the Lord sets up His Millennial kingdom, in the Day of the Lord, He will cast down and destroy "all pleasant pictures" (Isa. 2 : 16). The scenarios and film stars and the whole great evil industry will cease to operate for ever at the Day of Christ. Let those who seek to honour Christ today, cleanse their own homes now, of all that He will judge then.

## **ADVANCE REPLY TO CRITICISM**

In elucidating the course of The Departure, works and methods dear to many of the people of God have been critically reviewed. The reply will be made that this is destructive criticism and negative teaching. To the critics who thus criticise the criticism of some of their own special activities, it is denied that this is negative or destructive criticism that they criticise. It is their works which are destructive of the true work and purposes of God. Let them rather return to the true testimony of Jesus in the simplicity that He intended it to have.

## **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

While the world reels towards the time of judgment called "Jacob's Trouble" and "The Great Tribulation", while wickedness grows on every hand, and while the professing church groups of Christendom are channelled by the Ecumenical Movement and the World Council of Churches and the Papacy councils towards near realisation of the World Church of the apostasy, the true real Church of God is still the most

important part of the prophetic present.

The subtilty of Satan has been to beguile true servants of the Lord to remove them from the simplicity that is in Christ. He has succeeded in many ways in causing Departures which are a feature of the times. Nevertheless some Churches and individuals still retain in large measure the simplicity the Lord loves to use for the Testimony of Jesus.

## **THE CHALLENGE OF THE DAY OF DEPARTURE**

As the period of the patience of Jesus draws to a close, how should His precious testimony be carried by His servants who understand the prophetic implications of the scene of departures around them?

1. Christians who understand that a Departure is always displeasing to Christ, will refuse to be associated with any such movement or work, for every Christian's purpose must ever be to please Christ, and not to displease Him. To do His will, and not that which is contrary thereto.
2. As Christ's own patience is being tried and extended by those who engage in ways of departure, care must be taken that patience is also shown the brethren who are thus trying the Lord's patience. Also care must be taken that no damage is done to the testimony of Jesus which He causes to operate despite everything.
3. If no one disassociated with the Departure, then the change being wrought in spiritual things would have universal acceptance and the Departure would be adopted by default for want of challenge. And so the next and the further departures would follow as of course, and they also would be adopted for want of challengers.

The right course for those with a regard for the testimony of Jesus in its simplicity and purity is threefold :

1. To Protest at the Departure and seek to turn the people of God from it.
2. To refuse to be identified with it in any degree at any time.
3. To be patient with those who are beguiled.

The question will be asked: Well, if the Lord can still meet in measure with Christians who are involved in a Departure, cannot all Christians do as He does, and go where He goes? In such matters we must distinguish between the omnipotent Master and His servants. The Master alone has the quality of omnipresence and He alone is responsible for sustaining all his people at all times. The Lord also has wide responsibilities that are different from the simple responsibilities of each mortal servant. The servant is to serve, limited by laws of time and space. Unlike His Lord He is in only one place at a time, and it is his specially designated responsibility to be only in the place which is right for him. in accordance with the directions for workers given in the Word of God, and as the indwelling Spirit reveals and guides.

It was with considerations of this kind in mind that Paul said to

the Corinthians "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly : and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy : for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ". (2 Cor. 11 : 1 - 3).

## **THE QUESTION OF THE OPEN-BRETHREN DENOMINATION**

The question facing brethren who wish to please the Lord and to retain the simplicity of testimony that Christ desires, is a painful one for those who find themselves as part of Churches which formerly were true simple New Testament Churches but which latterly have become denominationalised and departure-ridden.

One hundred and fifty years ago, a few brethren, formerly connected with denominations, began to meet most simply in houses, and in small meeting places. They were not forming anything new. They just met simply and the Lord acknowledged them and worked in them and through them.

The Lord is still the same, and His rule or dictates for this prophetic period of ours have not changed. People who see that denominationalism, clerisy and the host of departures are dishonouring to their Lord, should turn and meet simply again in the twos and threes and in small companies in houses or wherever they can. They should knock out the denominational props and return from wherever the departures are leading, to elementary simplicity, and to the Lord Himself.

This process is in evidence everywhere today. The day of small things however is big in importance, for it is in the simplicity and faith of the gentle few that the Lord Himself will have His fullest satisfaction, and His pleasing will be acknowledged when His day of patience ends, as it will do, soon.

## **SEPARATION AND EXCLUSIVISM**

The call today is to separation but not to exclusivism. Let us on the one hand keep apart and separate from the apostasy and from the departures, from evil and from yokes with unbelievers in the work of the Lord. But on the other hand, surely the separated people of the Lord will welcome and receive *all* who are the Lord's and who are sound in doctrine and whose testimony is sound.

Where brethren are involved in a departure, it is only the departure that should be shunned, and of course in all other ways fellowship with these brethren should be maintained. If they have a denominational connection they can at least be received as brethren in the simple groups, though it would be inimical to join as full members with them in theirs.

While deploring the departures of loved brethren, the love may surely continue, and it will express itself, not only in concern but

in all the other ways in which brotherly love will be found to reveal itself in the circumstances.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE SHOUT OF CHRIST THE CATCHING UP OF THE CHURCH THE REMOVAL OF THE RESTRAINER

The present prophetic features will change in many respects suddenly, when the Lord comes to the air and calls away His Church from the earth.

Wickedness will then continue on the earth and the man of sin will be revealed as the apostasy fully ripens and the system of Babylon the Great matures as the Mother of Harlots and the abominations of the earth. The period of God's final judgment on all these things will commence as will also the day of Jacob's Trouble.

But what of the true Church?

The day of the patience of Jesus will have ended and the Church which has shared the trial and patience with Him will also have finished its work and it will be caught away out of the sphere of its labours "to meet the Lord in the air". The Holy Spirit, the Restrainer will have been removed with the Church, for all them with whom He has been dwelling will have departed and He with them.

What does this truth mean for the Lord's people today?

The prophetic message is "Behold I come quickly", and "wherefore comfort one another with these words" — that is, with the words that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : Then we which are alive and remain *shall be caught up* together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4 : 16 - 17).

Here, there is a cross to bear; Now there is trial, temptation and suffering for Christ; Now there is the need for patience. But the message is "I come" and "You will be caught up". "Be comforted with this knowledge".

In view of the sure knowledge of these things, the Christian should be like unto a man who waits for His Lord. He will seek to obey by shunning all connection with the things the Lord will judge — the things of the apostasy. He will seek to please his Lord by having no connection with departures which dishonour his Lord. He will stand fast in the Lord. He will hold fast to the Word and the Name of the Lord, thus seeking to maintain the testimony of Jesus in its simplicity and purity during the last days. In doing these things, the Lord's servants of the last days will be sharing in the holy work of holding and accounting for the precious testimony of Jesus in a manner consistent with the patience of Jesus.

The subtilities of Satan abound, and it is difficult to avoid them today except we live in the closest personal fellowship with the Lord Himself. But the Lord is looking for pure faith and simplicity today,

as perhaps never before. Will he find true simple faith on the earth when He comes? Yes He will find it, for the Spirit is still with the true Church and Christ Himself has given Himself for His Church "that He might *sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word*, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church without spot, or wrinkle or any such thing; But that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5 : 26 - 27).

Christ Himself has provided and will see to it that the true Church will be sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the Word, and the prophetic prospect and hope of the Lord's return is that "we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John, 3 : 2).

Christ has so determined and the corollary of responsibility is "and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (v. 3).

As Christ sanctifies and cleanses intrinsically and spiritually with the washing of water by the Word, so also let every man in his own conscious responsible experience purify himself, even as He is pure. It is thus that the testimony of Jesus will be maintained, in that pureness and simplicity which is the very spirit of prophecy.



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