

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

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*"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.*

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*"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).*

## SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

### COMMENTARY ON PHILIPPIANS (Installment 12)

By Richard W. Ebler

Chapter One (cont.)

(vs. 18-21) "What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

The key to this whole passage lies in the foregoing context. Verse twelve says, "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." Paul goes on to expound and interpret the marvelous, mysterious, and all-wise providence of God in using his imprisonment as a means of furthering the truth. In the first place, Paul's imprisonment gave him converts within Caesar's household where he otherwise would probably not have had much fruit (ch. 1:13, 4:22). The populace, being much influenced by the king's court, was also touched by the truth of Christ's death and resurrection so that fruit was borne "in all other places." Many good and godly brethren waxed confident by Paul's bonds and were much more bold to speak the word without fear. His imprisonment also provoked his religious rivals to preach Christ out of motives of envy and strife, supposing to add afflictions to Paul's bonds by gaining converts to themselves. They foolishly thought that Paul was just like themselves, i.e., a religious opportunist and "denomination-builder." Yet in spite of all of this, Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached in pure doctrine so that God could overrule the impure motives of sectarian preachers to the salvation of his elect. Thus we see how Paul correctly evaluated his providential circumstances to the great increase of his own personal joy. This was because his affections were set on things above, so that he set the highest importance upon that which was indeed of eternal value and viewed his circumstances in the Spirit with the mind of Christ and not with carnal reasoning. Instead of bemoaning his own deprivations, he rejoiced in the increase of God's kingdom in the hearts of men as the truth prevailed.

In verse nineteen Paul says that he knows that these circumstances will turn to his salvation through the prayers of the brethren and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ. At first sight this expression seems odd, but this is only because churches today do not speak in words which the Holy Ghost teaches (1 Cor. 2:13). God has given to his apostles and prophets a heavenly nomenclature that perfectly expresses spiritual reality. We must learn to adopt the language of Scripture

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## The Word of Truth

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in its pristine purity until such a time as we are able to rise up to the level of spiritual experience which it is describing and then be able to know the reality first-hand, speaking of the things which we have seen and heard. Indeed, this is the only course left to us if we are going to approach the Scriptures honestly without trying to twist them to fit some pre-conceived mold. In this immediate context Paul uses the word "salvation" to refer to the boldness that he anticipated from the Lord as he was about to bear witness to the truth in the face of death itself. This is elsewhere called being a "partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" (II Tim. 1:8). Such boldness would save him from denying the Lord or from bringing shame upon Him by a timid, fearful witness (Eph. 6:18, 19, 20). This inward victory over a truth-hating, wicked world would come through the prayers of the saints and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Thus Christ would be magnified in his body by his boldness of faith whether the outcome be martyrdom or otherwise. In Christ he would be victorious one way or another; for Christ was gain to him in life or death.

The word "salvation" is also used in a similar sense in I Peter 1:8, 9. Here we read that by believing on Christ whom we have not seen, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the **salvation** of our souls. When the soul is boldly rejoicing in Christ, it is saved from the defilements of fleshly affection and strengthened against temptation, as it is written, "the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). It is in this sense that the gospel will save us if we keep it in memory (I Cor. 15:2). The truth that is in Christ Jesus must be held in the mind in order for it to be believed in the heart. Thus we are told to receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save our souls (James 1:21).

This is not to imply that such a salvation has no eternal significance as some teach today. On the contrary it is written "he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life **everlasting**" (Gal. 6:8). As we expand our appetite for the things of God in this life, we will enlarge our

## Divers and Strange Doctrines and Their Unstabilizing Influence

"Be not carried about by divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace. . . ." — Heb. 13:9

"Doctrines" — that is a dangerous word! Why? Because it is plural, multiple teachings! When speaking of wholesome instruction, this word is used in the singular by the Holy Spirit, never in the plural; "My DOCTRINE shall distill as the dew. . ." (Duet. 32:2); "My DOCTRINE is not mine, but His that sent me" (Jno. 7:16); "Thou hast fully known my DOCTRINE" (II Tim. 3:10); "and they continued stedfastly in the apostle's DOCTRINE" (Acts 2:42); "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for . . . DOCTRINE" (II Tim. 3:16-17); "Speak thou the things that become the sound DOCTRINE" (Tit. 2:1); "Count them worthy of double honor . . . that labor in the word and in the DOCTRINE" (I Tim. 5:17); "Take heed unto thyself and unto the DOCTRINE" (I Tim. 4:16); ". . . the DOCTRINE of Christ. . ." (II Jno. 9); ". . . adorn the DOCTRINE. . ." (Tit. 2:7); "give attendance to . . . DOCTRINE" (I Tim. 4:13); "ye have filled Jerusalem with your DOCTRINE. . ." (Acts 5:28); "But ye have obeyed the form of DOCTRINE. . ." (Rom. 6:17), etc. **There is a singularity to true doctrine and a diversity and multiplicity to false doctrine!** These doctrines are "strange" in that they are foreign to the sphere of reality and are not themselves united. The "apostle's DOCTRINE", on the other hand, deals with the propounding of truth which is a composite and harmonious whole, intra-related. **At no point does truth contradict itself, because it deals with reality.** All reality has a common origin — Jehovah God, Who, in creation, departed not from His own unchangeable attributes. **Hence, reality bears the uniform and singular attributes of God's character.** By the very nature of the case true doctrine cannot be "divers" in the sense of the text. Even as the universe in which we live bears an intimate intra-relationship, so does truth. The sun, moon, stars, earth, atmosphere, firmament, etc., all are intra-related; they have a bearing upon one another. The universe is an invisible whole, though its expanse is broad. So it is with the truth! Truth does not merely bear upon segmented circumstances and isolated situations — it is larger in scope than that. It brings together what seems to be diversity and blends it in a structural and intentional wholeness that glorifies the Lord.

**Now doctrine — true doctrine — sets forth in language the truth; it takes reality and gives ex-**

capacity to enjoy them in eternity. As we suffer for Him in witnessing we also heap up rewards. In this way we can lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Indeed, nothing that transpires in time is without eternal significance. Therefore, let us also have this earnest expectation to always magnify Christ by bold, joyful believing as we bear witness to the truth.

pression to it. Because truth is singular, doctrine must of necessity also be singular.

There is one sphere of reality — all others are false and only appearances. The center of truth is Divine purpose, and the circumference is the Lord Jesus, so that the more an individual is in Christ the more He is in the truth, and the more He is in the truth the more he becomes acquainted with Jehovah's eternal purpose which He hath purposed in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:9). Truth stands as a whole, not as unrelated segments. As soon as one is "joined to the Lord" (I Cor. 6:17) he comes into the sphere of reality. To the degree that this individual's doctrine proceeds out of his union with Christ it is true doctrine. Everything that extends beyond that union eventuates in false doctrine, and there are no exceptions to that principle. It is "false" because it is beyond the limiting circumference. It is "divers" in its sundry proclamations because there is nothing COMMON to which it can be related. False doctrines, on the other hand, are perpetrated out of purely carnal objectives — they result from and in a life lived in disassociation from the Lord Jesus Christ. They are "strange" because they cannot be fitted into framework of "the truth as it is Christ Jesus" (Eph. 4:20-21) nor are they centered in Divine purpose and will. These doctrines actually militate against faith and obscure reality, though they unanimously purport to declare such things as make for strong faith.

#### These "doctrines" carry men about

These "doctrines" carry men about, making them their slaves and subjects. They lead anywhere and everywhere but to the Savior and saving truth. Those that submit their hearts and minds to these "diverse and strange doctrines" are not stable, for the doctrines themselves are unstabilizing in their effects. This "carrying about" speaks of a "to and fro" movement and is elsewhere referred to as "being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14). The image of a helpless soul on mirky raging waters is given; waters that have no solid substance, no foundational basis, no security, no stillness. The Scriptures speak of that which is "unstable as water" (Gen. 49:4). Water has no form or shape, it changes with the wind, with the environment that surrounds it. Frigid air makes it hard and cold, warm air makes it warm, varying winds make for varying shifts and wave patterns. So it is the soul that is carried about by these doctrines that conform not to reality. **There is change but not growth, movement but not life, excitement but not satisfaction.** The doctrines of which I speak are suited to men's tastes, and since man by nature is fickle and foolish, such doctrines vary and fluctuate according to men's fancies and temperament. **The act of being "carried about", therefore, actually speaks of becoming the dupes of mere men, whose doctrines are as divers as their imaginations, as varying as their moods, as insipid as their character.** This is why Paul addressed the Ephesians concerning the same dilemma in such language; "... be no more children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, BY THE SLEIGHT OF MEN, AND CUNNING CRAFTINESS, WHEREBY THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE" (Eph. 4:14). See, then, how that the un-

stabilizing influence of false doctrines is not impersonal in its cause — **it is traced to the men that perpetrate them!** False doctrines cannot be disassociated from men, because men are the instruments through which Satan and his evil hierarchy promulgate them. Men — false prophets (prophets that the Lord hath not sent) become the tools of Satan whereby he sends forth the "flood of waters" (Rev. 12:15) — false teachings — which is expressly designed of Satan to so shift men as to thoroughly obscure the truth and root them in the earth. Because these doctrines, therefore, are in substance the products of human imagination that has been inspired by the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:1-3) and carnal misconceptions, they tie men to the flesh, causing the "fear of men" which "bringeth a snare" (Prov. 29:25). Men are honored above that which is written, and a trust and delight is had in men, in whose legs the Lord doth not delight (Psa. 147:10). **Myriads there are, indeed, whose only reason for cleaving to their damnable heresies is because they fear the propagators of them, to whom they have subjected themselves.** I know of several myself who acknowledge the delight that the truth brings to their heart, but for fear of "the rulers of the synagogue" they have relinquished what their heart has told them was good in order to eat the garbage of the religious institution, thus staying in good graces with men whom they suppose to love the Lord and desire to please Him — all the while speaking that which the Lord (they profess to love) hath not declared! These people confess that the matters that their religious organizations have taught them have not been **perceived** by them — they cannot **discern** truth in them, their heart has not **grasped** them — and yet they cling tenaciously to them solely because of their leaders. Oh how tragic that mortals should thus be subject to mortals, oblivious of the glorious rest and thorough satisfaction to be found in the bosom of the Lord.

#### We are established in grace

Grace, on the other hand, "establishes" the heart by bringing it into the sphere of ultimate reality. It thrusts us upon the Lord who "leads us in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake" (Psa. 23:3). In grace EVERYTHING is intra-related — all has a common foundation, a common purpose, a common origin. Everything is seen as coming from God "with Whom we have to do", being wrought through Him, and redounding to His glory. As it is written; "For all things are of Him, and through Him, and to Him" (Rom. 11:36). "Doctrine", in contradistinction to "doctrines", is like a jewel with many facets; while "doctrines" are as a group of many oddly shaped and valueless dull stones or rocks. The jewel is Christ, the facets are His glory, the accessibility is grace. **Grace will bring us not only into the general proximity with the truth, but will give us the ability to see and to realize it; to partake and imbibe of it; to become conformed to it ourselves.** Grace lifts irrespective of nature; it does not take into account merit, or ability, but deals with us according to God's character, not ours. "Doctrines", on the other hand (here set in con-

trast to grace) bring men to a place of trust in self and merit. Not always is such misguided trust apparent—sometimes it is very illusive—but it is nevertheless true! **There is no establishment in “doctrines”, for they have no stabilizing effect upon the heart. Rather, they uproot the affections from heaven and plant within the heart the roaming spirit.** Grace, on the other hand, firmly implants within the heart the aspirations of the Lord, and thus roots us deeply in the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The reason for this is because **grace deals with us according to the good pleasure and eternal purpose of God; it thrusts us into His good and acceptable will** (Rom. 12:2). There, in the good pleasure of our Lord, there is nought but establishment, for that is unchanging and eternal, unaffected by the earth and its downward trend. **The establishment of the heart has to do with faith, with the spiritual vision and apprehension of the things of God! Without this experience of the opening of the eyes of the understanding (Eph. 1:18) there can be no establishment, and with it, there can be no more to and from movements of the soul!** The text which we have chosen to expound (Heb. 13:9) is preceded by an admonition relative to our attitude toward them that have the rule over us; “whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:7b-8). The growth of our faith (II Thess. 1:3) will bring about an establishment of the heart, and therefore we are to devote ourselves to those things that make for strong faith, thereby “building ourselves up” (Jude 20).

#### Conclusion

Beware of false doctrines! They deal with surface issues; they expound superfluous matters; they bind men’s hearts and minds to the inconsequential. Let none be so naive as to think

#### A Hymn For Penitents

Modern hymnals do not contain many hymns that speak of lamentation for sins, or that summon repentance toward God. But saints of past ages were given to the writing and singing of such hymns—hymns that expressed the sorrow that floods the heart when the realization of transgression is swept in by the power of the Holy Spirit. One departed brother Beddome wrote the following hymn which may be sung to the tune of “Amazing Grace.”

Why, O my soul, why weepest thou?  
Tell me from whence arise  
Those briny tears that often flow  
Those groans that pierce the skies.

Is sin the cause of thy complaint  
Or the chastising rod?  
Dost thou an evil heart lament  
And mourn an absent God?

Lord, let me weep for naught but sin!  
And after none but thee!  
And then I would—O, that I might!—  
A constant weeper be!

they are excluded from this admonition of the Holy Spirit. It is the single eye that is blessed of the Lord (Matt. 6:22), and the single eye may only be fed and nourished by a single doctrine; “the doctrine of Christ” (II John 9). **Christ is the hub upon which all true doctrine turns; the centre point to which all true teaching gravitates.** The objective of the doctrine of Christ is to leave the mind occupied with Him, His work and His merit. Anything that does not do this comes under the general classification of “doctrines” and will carry about the heart, working spiritual devastation. In the quest to maintain purity in these matters there will come times of great opposition and trial; but be not weary in well doing, and “keep the faith.” Our labor is not in vain in the Lord (I Cor. 15:58).

#### Grace

When once the soul has tasted of true grace,  
Nought of this fleeting world doth satisfy.  
The tinsel cheap which shrouds its crumbling  
walls

Has no attraction anymore.  
Beyond the sensible, eternal things are seen,  
Unshakeable reality that rules the nether-world.  
Such vision quick dispells the anxious thoughts  
Which rise when earth doth dominate.  
The heart enravished with this contemplation  
high

No longer sets a value on the temporal,  
But rather sucks from flinty rock  
A honey soothing to the aching soul.  
What! Shall grace be now exchanged for that  
Which militates against the knowledge of the  
Lord?

Shall I, a child of grace, retire to the miry clay  
To lay in filth and squalor?  
Nay! I sore disdain such putrid places  
Filled they be with stench of earth and vileness  
Twice condemned by God:  
Once in His fiery Law these things denounced,  
Once more when grace didst teach me them to  
deny.

That my flesh is prone to such as I do hate  
I readily confess with element of shame—  
But, tis not I that follow after such as that!  
I loathe such things as tend to hide the real—  
That quick obscure reality that frees.  
And yet, that grace which teaches me to hate those  
Things, doth also grant that sin be not imputed,  
Though in my members it doth now reside.

#### Thy Church

Thy church, my Father, stands a stalwart band  
of pilgrims called by Divine Grace.  
Such ones are rescued from the pit—  
Dugged forth as by Omnipotence—  
Assembly beautiful!

I see them all with measures divers had,  
Of grace filled up with faith and love,  
Their imperfections quite well loathed  
By them, their own chief critics, yes—  
Though upheld by Thy grace.

Oh Lord, I cannot but soar above their faults,  
Mine own surpassed by none of theirs.  
In them the mirror of Thy Face  
Is seen charged thereto by Thy Spirit  
From glory to glory.

## The Necessity of Religious Separation

I am more and more coming into the fuller realization of the absolute necessity of total separation from the nominal church-world. **When the truth is registered upon the heart and conscience of an individual by the Holy Spirit, his first obligation is to sever relationships with spiritual Babylon — the systematized form of religion that pervades virtually all churches.** One of the marks of such systems is the building of theological fences around denominational dogmas and limited concepts. The Scriptures are thus viewed in association with the "church" (so called) and not as the bulwark of truth themselves — apart from any institution. **The effect of new-found truth has been lost in many a life simply because of a carnal refusal to separate from denominational Christianity.** But the Word of God is not vague or ambiguous on this point. Disobedience here constitutes and manifests definite and basic enmity and rebellion against the Lord within the recesses of the heart, however sincere and docile external actions and works may appear. How plain does the Spirit witness to us on this point, and let all that name the Name of the Lord see to it that they take heed to these things: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come ye out from among them, 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 we shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 4:14-18). **The intention of this exhortation is to awaken the people of God to the incompatibility of heaven with earth.** The child of God is not to become intimately identified with those that are guilty of hating the Lord (II Chron. 19:2). The scope of our understanding here is not to be limited to that which is apparently anti-God. **The vast majority of the religious world (professing Christendom, I mean) are actually unbelievers and infidels.** They have the spot of the world upon them and are guilty of loving and dwelling in unrighteousness. For the child of God to become affiliated with such systems and orders is an express transgression of the Word set before us. **None but a fool would deny that most fundamental churches are absolutely plagued with people that stand aloof from God, know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God, and whose lives are living representations of their gross infidelity and unbelief.**

God's edict concerning affiliation with such is, "separate." He does not say to stay and convert them, He commands that **withdrawal** take place. There can be no affinity between those that are righteous and those that are unrighteous! No alliance can be made between those that are believers and those that are unbelievers. There are no excuses offered in Holy Scripture for such an

alliance, and therefore none is to be made. **It is not necessary to become affiliated with carnal religious institutions in order to preach the Gospel — that is an error that has been perpetrated by the prince of deceivers himself.** Away with such stupid notions; "come out from among them" as the Lord hath commanded, or else forfeit the blessing and reception of the Lord! This is no small matter, and there is no minimizing it. I am cognizant of the fact that many of our readers are in the precarious position of identification with religious institutions that they are well aware dwell in no proximity to the God of all the earth. It is my duty before God to warn you, therefore, that you are living in **active rebellion** against the Lord and His Christ, regardless of the motives that you may claim as an exemption. Obey the Lord and see His blessing. You are "**unequally yoked**" if you are officially identified with unbelievers! **The flourishing of unbelievers, unrighteous, infidels, and those that dwell in darkness within the very confines of these churches is abundant demonstration that no "true worshipper" of God ought to be found identified with them.**

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove (expose) them" (Eph. 5:11). **Any works that do not eventuate in fruit toward God are "unfruitful works of darkness".** No child of God is to engage in participation in them, that is clear! The "church schemes" of religion bigots and opportunists do exist, and there is no **immediate** evidence that they are ceasing to exist. But the believer is not to have any form of fellowship with these works! His influence is to be exerted toward the exposing of such spiritual debauchery, making manifest the vanity of it. Especially is this true in relation to one's spiritual affiliation. If, for instance, a believer is associated and identified with a religious institution that is engaged in all sorts of carnal programming and appeals to the flesh **he becomes partaker of the curse of God upon these things.** We are told to come out from among Babylon that we "be not partakers" of her "plagues" (Rev. 18:4). **That is one of the chief means of exposing or reproofing the unfruitful works of darkness — coming out from among them.** Programs and ingenious plans of men that detract from our Lord and Savior and lull men into spiritual complacency are not approved by the Lord; He fellowships not with them and is not in their "solemn assemblies" — neither should His children be! The Lord commands us "be not partakers of other men's sins" (I Tim. 5:22). **To become identified with them is to be partaker with them.** Many people find great delight in being called a Baptist, a Methodist, a Presbyterian — etc., etc.; but in so doing they have distracted men's hearts from the "one and only Potentate" (I Tim. 6:15) and are "delighting" in the "legs of a man" (Psa. 147:10). **Such unlawfulness cannot be exposed from within the walls of the institution; only from without! Therefore, let all that name the name of Christ "come out" as the Lord hath commanded!**

Paul further develops this great truth to young Timothy as he spoke of those that deal in "vain babblings", "striving about words to no profit, to the subverting of the hearers" (II Tim. 2:14-16).

## Korean Issue Of The Word Of Truth Forthcoming

The Lord, having blessed us, has made possible the publication of THE WORD OF TRUTH in the Korean language. The first issue will be published next month, and we are looking to the Lord to create receptivity in the hearts of the Koreans for the message which He has graciously given unto us. We enjoin our fellow brethren throughout the country to enter into prayer for this ministry, that the Word of God might have free course and run and not be hindered.

If you have had your heart inclined toward this ministry, we encourage you to fellowship in it with your gifts of love. The Lord has promised that they that sow bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Here is an area where many brethren may receive an abundant ministry, who are otherwise discouraged about their inabilities. "Let him that giveth do it with simplicity," says the Lord, encouraging a forthright gift of worship unto the Lord in the interest of His enterprises. Your gifts will be acknowledged, and they are also deductible on your Federal Income Tax.

We now commend this new ministry unto you for prayer and deliberation.

Their words are those that "eat as a canker" and increase unto more ungodliness (v. 16-18), even "overthrowing the faith of some". These false teachers and perverters of truth, while posing a great threat to men, do not, however, upset the election of God, for that "foundation" standeth sure, having this seal; "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (v. 19). These beguilers, however, are in the presence of God's people often — that is true; they are like "vessels of wood and earth" that are in a great house; vessels unto "dishonor" (v. 20). These are men that instruct in things that they understand not, who "intrude into things that they have not seen" (Col. 2:18). They speak traditionally, and are mouthpieces for an institution rather than prophets of the most high God. What is to be the relationship of the believer to these men? Is he to tolerate them, remain in their presence, and generally affiliate in the circles wherein they traverse? The word of the Lord is strong on this matter; "If a man therefore **purge** himself of **these**, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Tim. 2:21). **Those, therefore, that sustain an affiliation with those whose mouths are unbridled, and whose lips give forth the uncomely sound of Babylon are unfit for the Master's use; primarily because they are living in active rebellion to the King of kings!** Our lives are to be purged from the influence of those teachers that know not the truth, and as we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ our obedience to this precept is also to grow; "If a man **PURGE HIMSELF** from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour!"

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Tim.

3:1-5). Here once again the command is clear! **Those that have outward forms** (or any other types of form) **but are devoid of the power of God are not our companions of glory!** From such we are to "turn away", knowing that "evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Cor. 14:33). **By "turn away" it is meant that we are to remove our ears from the sound of their false words, and our hearts from sympathy and carnal connection with them.** The fact that they may be congenial people, friendly and pleasant is not to affect our judgement in this matter (II Cor. 5:16). If they have merely a **form** of godliness but deny the power, refusing by an act of their will to submit themselves unto the Lord, they are not to be our companions. We are to "turn away" from them, reject their formal fellowship and refuse identification with them — that is the edict of God Almighty! These are the type that lead captive those that are as the "silly dove" (Hosea 7:11; II Tim. 3:6). These are they that are "ever learning, and never ABLE to come to the knowledge of the truth" (verse 7). The "things of the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2:14) always have a strange sound to him. You may speak of things in traditional or sectarian tones, and these know whereof you speak. Let such words as "evangelism", "soul-winning", "missions", "Sunday School", "crusade", etc. be found in your lips, and at once you have the ear of these sophists. But speak in words that the Holy Ghost teacheth (II Cor. 2:13), such as "regeneration", "justification", "atonement", "redemption in Christ Jesus", "sanctification of the Spirit", "the spirit of faith", "the mind of the flesh", the "election of grace", "predestination", etc.; and suddenly the veil is over such men's eyes, and they are unable to enter into the joy of these things. They have a "**form of godliness**"; their appearance bears some similitude of reality — and yet, it is not real. The command — "from such, **turn away.**" Their religion has never touched their lives; they live in abject disobedience to the Lord of lords. **The words of the Scripture too often contradict their manner of life and their general deportment; to say nothing of their heart.**

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things (concerning the end of the world — vs. 10-13) before, beware lest ye also, being led away WITH the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (II Pet. 3:17). That is the note of alarm to the age in which we live. "The error of the wicked" has filtered into the very inmost portion of the church. Myriads have been so carried away with it that they have fallen from their own stedfastness. I speak not altogether of regular attendance in assemblies, calling, or other various external involvements, which of themselves are right. I am persuaded that Peter is speaking of the stedfastness that touches the **heart** of the believer. The Psalmist referred to this type of stedfastness when he spoke of those whose spirit was not "stedfast" (Psa. 78:8). Paul spoke of a **hope** that was "stedfast" (II Cor. 1:7).

It is also witnessed by the Holy Spirit that there is a **confidence** that may be held "stedfast" (Heb. 3:14). Also, there are those that are "stedfast in the faith" (I Pet. 5:9). The early church continued "stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine" (Acts 2:42), and the Colossians were com-

mended for the "stedfastness" of their "faith in Christ" (Col. 2:5). There is hardly a child of God that does not begin with these traits. His appetite for the Word is virtually insatiable. Every sermon seems good, he cannot get enough of study. The Scriptures live to him, and he is enthralled with the message that they bear to his spirit. He confidently lives unto the Lord day by day, and the Lord Jesus is not divorced from anything that he does. But, alas, he gets involved in the "church program" and soon falls from his stedfastness. His reading of the Scriptures is brought down to a minimum and is all too often merely perfunctory, he operates too much without God in his thoughts, and his heart is no longer ravished with the thought of personal communion with God. What caused this to come about? True, he still retains a form of godliness. He is involved in numerous religious activities — there is no end to them. But he has been caught up in the "error of the wicked." The "error" tends away from the "truth as it is in Christ" (Eph. 4:20-21). It has a certain appeal to it, but it is to the carnal nature — the Adamic part of man. We are to beware of all such communications; that is the solemn warning of the Lord. Some of these basic and fundamental errors have the appearance of humility, some of spirituality, some of miraculous power, others of precise Scriptural orderliness — but they all tend away from the bosom of Christ wherein the spirit of the believer is hid.

#### Why Does Babylon Flourish?

One of the reasons (I speak now as a man) for the flourishing of Babylon is the tenacious hold it maintains over those that have seen fuller light. Were all of the spiritually informed to obey the Lord, as they are enjoined, and "come out from among them", many of these institutions, if not all of them, would cease to be so influential. In view of this, those that maintain fellowship with inferior denominationalism (in comparison to the freedom which is in Christ) when they have once been apprised of the truth, shall become "partaker of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4ff). Ignorance of this sphere of disobedience is not minor! Error is fostered, truth hindered, Christ reproached, and the admonitions of Holy Scripture ignored. Who in such a case as that shall be able to abide the day of the wrath of the Lamb who came to "destroy the works of the Devil"? (I Jno. 3:8).

Come, you who have been subjected to truth that militates against your church beliefs! What will you do when you face the Lord? How will you defend your unseemly conduct and your ungodly disobedience to His Divine summons? Why do you insist on being identified with schisms and factions? Why do you devote the Lord's money and dollars to the propagation of sectarianism? The Savior shall not long abide such insolence — such flagrant ignorance of His Word. This is a day and time which calls for true soldiers — those that are willing to "quit themselves like men" (I Cor. 16:13) instead of being characterized by a cowardice that leaves them affiliated with that which is condemned. Will you answer the summons? Is your heart tender toward the Lord that you profess to love and follow? "Ah", you

say, "You should not speak with such harshness toward us. We are trying to influence these people for Christ." But ought soft and easy words to be spoken to such as you? to such as have disobeyed the Lord God of hosts, have trodden under foot the commands of the Savior, and ignored His demands upon your life? Does such conduct merit repeated soft and palpable pleas? Is it not time that you were apprised of the case as it is? Are you not weary of your spirit being famished? Do you not acknowledge that there is a pitiable deficiency where you are at? Or have you come to the place of cursing as Jehosaphat of old; "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord" (II Chron. 19:2).

O, I summon you to run with swiftness of foot before God brings down the walls of that high and revered Babylon. Rest not in system, pilgrim of God! Lean not to an institution? Give no allegiance to that which is empty and void of life, where dead men flourish and religious politicians pacify the hearts of wicked men. "Come out from among them and be separate." Take the same stand against these as our Lord takes. Admittedly, you will probably have to forfeit a lot of the religious pomp and splendor that you have come to hold sacred. But there are blessings ten thousand times ten thousand in the Lord Jesus' bosom. Small bands of believers are scarce — but they are here and there — disassociated from denominations and institutions, just seeking to worship the Lord in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. They are not well known, and often have been known to "wander about" having no certain dwelling place. You may not be able to explain satisfactorily to religious bigots where you "go to church" — but what matter is that? Is Christ there; does He gather there with the saints? Is there inward peace, joy, righteousness, and communion of the Holy Ghost? Is the mind there molded in the image of the Lord? To that, my brother, I summon you!

### The Utilitarian Usage of The Truth of God

There are at least two ways to handle the word of God; proclaim it, or use it. By proclaim I mean to set it forth in the words that the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual with spiritual (I Cor. 2:13), with no aim to personal acclaim or advantage, but out of a love for God and the truth of God. By "use" I refer to the uncomely activity of making the Word of God serve personal purposes; using it to facilitate humanly conceived ambitions. The first is rendered out of service to God, the second out of service to man. Using the word is the utilitarian use of the Gospel, and it is not fitting of a child of the King! Words of Holy Scripture are used to facilitate church programs and institution-building. We hear of "faith commitments", "love offerings", "Missionary day", "calling campaign", "spiritual emphasis", etc., fortified with pleas to submit to the Spirit, to have great faith, to let the Lord di-

rect, etc. Those who use these programs usually sustain no genuine interest in the promotion of the Lord's Kingdom and the propagation of the truth **for the truth's sake**. It is an institution that they are building, and they take those segments of Scripture which best serve their ambitions while disregarding the rest. The **"whole counsel of God"** (Acts 20:27) is not declared simply because it does not serve the purpose of the organization. For instance, what institution can be built with such truths as election, predestination, the foreknowledge of God, the determinate counsel of God, the eternal purpose of God, the acceptance of the saints in Christ before the foundation of the world, etc. (Eph. 1). In what way would such passages as: "For whom He did foreknow He did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:29-30) serve to increase the nominal church program. How would the expounding of: "as many as were **ordained unto eternal** believed" (Acts 13:48) serve to build an institution? Why are not some of these great truths expounded from the pulpits of the land? **It is because they are not utilitarian — they do not serve the purpose for which these institutions have been built — therefore, they are cast aside.** Why are not the "prophets" expounded today, being as they are a part of the foundation-layers of the church (Eph. 2:20). How is it that the vast majority of avid church members do not even sustain an acquaintance with the names of most of the prophets, and have never read their books? What of the Psalms? Are not the vast majority of churchmen totally ignorant of them? Why? **Because they have no bearing upon the religion which they have embraced!**

There is a curse upon such as "wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:16), and it shall not go well with them. Using the death of Christ and the atonement of His blood as an arm-hold to accomplish the "work of the church" is a most dastardly sin! Let men view the Word of God as the food of the soul, that by which they live (Matt. 4:4). Our spirits are sustained, our faith built up, and our confidence strengthened by "every word of God" which is

given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16). The purpose for this is that the "man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work" (v. 17). **This being an accurate affirmation of the truth, the conclusion is simply that the nominal churchmen is not perfected in this sense, nor is he even casually prepared unto every good work.** The church of our day is in a useless condition; **there is actually no place in God's economy for it, and it is to be abandoned with holy vigor.** Its relationship to the truth is not proper for it is more earthly than heavenly. The Word of God was not given in order to induce men to bolster one another's programs. Nor is it meant to become a part of earthly activity! It is designed to summon men upward, into the heavenlies, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. It sets forth truths not attainable by flesh and blood; truths that cannot properly serve any system of earth. The only way to make them utilitarian is to "wrest" them, and that is done to the "destruction" of the one who wrests them.

I urge you to sustain a holy and proper relationship to the word of truth. Receive it as from God, and feed upon it, for it is able to "save the soul" (James 1:21).

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## A Word From an Aged Member of Christ's Body

Dear Brother in Christ;

Should one so poor as I feel myself to be at this moment the raised above the material things of this world? Words cannot express the joy, the sweet rejoicing within my heart after reading your great message "The Distinction Between The Soul and the Spirit." I am old in years and have been a member of the ..... church more than 50 years. This subject of the soul and spirit has been a long study for me. But O dear brother, you have explained the facts and I have no more worry over the subject. I thank my precious Lord you have written and I so freely received. It makes me realize more the words spoken by our Lord; He knows our needs even before we ask Him. O how I can see now why so many of the Lord's dear children let themselves be led so far away from the truth. I try to read and study my Bible every day, for I feel like it is as if the Lord was talking to me. Please remember me in your prayers, and may God bless and keep.

Mrs. C. G. Myers  
Neshoba, Miss.

Such letters as has been related above give us great encouragement in the work of the Lord. For the servant of the Lord, there is no greater reward upon earth than the receptivity of the truth that he has been given to declare. To assist the people of God in seeing with greater clarity the things of the Kingdom — that is a work most pleasant to my heart, and I desire to publicly thank this beloved sister for her good words of encouragement. May the Lord sustain her in faith until she shall depart to be with the Lord forever.