

# 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

### THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is no question in my mind but that a lot of selfish and carnal aims have been pursued without question simply because they were ascribed to the "leading of the Holy Spirit", or "the leading of the Lord." Under this general religious guise men have been "led" to higher pastoral salaries, more advantageous influential positions, and things generally conducive to some form of earthly prosperity. Now, I am not so foolish as to say that the Lord never leads men into these areas: He did lead Daniel and Joseph into high political positions; He did lead Abraham and Jacob into a position of extreme wealth, along with Job. Many were a possessor of "lands and houses" in the early church, and Barnabas was involved in some degree of real estate (Acts 4:34-37). And yet, they were primarily examples of FAITH, not of wealth; of righteousness, not of prosperity.

We are not to suppose that all impulses are the leading of the Lord, or that strong inclinations toward supposed advantage is of the Spirit. We are to "try the spirits" (I Jno. 4:1), and that includes inner proclivities and inclinations as well as the proclamation of teachers. Simply because doors appear to have been opened, and opportunities seem to be completely unobstructed by no means indicates that the will of the Lord is being set before us. O, that many followers of Christ were more aware of these things. *There come times in the life of every believer when he must go against his own reason, deny what seems on the surface to be the most wonderful thing that has ever introduced itself into his life.* How many have fallen upon the rocks of apostasy simply because they launched their frail life upon the tempestuous sea of life, thinking all the while that they were being led of God. It behooves us, therefore, to become more acquainted with the actuality of being led of the Lord!

#### *The Holy Spirit's Use Of The Word "Lead"*

First of all, you will search in vain for any example in the Scriptures of a believer being "led" to move to a new city, or of being "led" to make a certain decision relative to this life. *There is a specific employment of the word "lead", together with its derivatives, in the Scriptures, and it is quite unlawful for it to be employed otherwise by the child of God. Language has a purpose in the Kingdom of God, and that is to convey to the consciousness the mind of God. The concepts that are fostered by Holy-Spirit-inspired-language conform to ultimate reality or truth, and are not to be employed to imprint upon the heart and mind self-imposed interpretations of life.*

There have been prayers recorded in the Scriptures that speak of "leading". A cursory examination of them will produce an awareness that they spoke in general of a desire to be inclined toward the Lord Himself. *There seemed to be in the minds of those ancients a deep sensitivity concerning their natural inclina-*

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## The Word of Truth

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### The Leading of the Holy Spirit

(From page 1)

tion toward earth and earthly things, together with a consciousness of their need for higher and stronger impulses for eternal things. Thus did they pray; "Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness . . ." (Psa. 5:8); "Lead me in Thy Truth" (Psa. 25:5); "Lead me in a plain path" (Psa. 27:11); "O send out Thy light and Thy Truth; let them lead me for Thy Name's sake" (Psa. 43:3); "Lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139:24); "Lead in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 8:20); "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil" (Matt. 6:13); "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. 2:4).

At once you can see the uppermost thing in the heart of a true believer is to be pleasing unto God. Personal earthly advantage is not the issue with him; employment, possessions, friends, influence — this is not the primary issuance of his life. It is to stand before the Lord "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27). He desires to arrive safely at the grave, to live in such a way as not to be "ashamed" before the Lord at His appearing (I John 2:28). He reasons thusly; "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul" (Mark 8:36). Thus his concept of "leading" is different than the mere traditionalist or religious conformist. He thinks of God, of God's glory, of his own eternal presence with the Lord, and of the approval of God. He seeks anything and everything that is conducive to these aims, and craves for leading in this sphere of things!

#### One Of The Spirit's Chief Areas Of Leading

The Lord does not leave us to conjecture on this point, but is rather specific; "If ye THROUGH THE SPIRIT do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. FOR AS MANY AS ARE LED OF THE SPIRIT, THEY ARE THE SONS OF GOD" (Rom. 8:13-14). To "mortify the deeds of the body" refers to that holy work of subduing inordinate affections which reside within us; of bringing into subjection the body of the sins of the flesh by refusing to give expression to the various lusts that remain pent up in our Adamic nature.

This is the sphere in which the leading of the Holy Spirit is experienced by the believer. The Spirit is not primarily interested in directing your earthly activities and pursuits, but rather is heartily devoted to the preparation of the believer for heaven and consequent glory with God and the Lamb forever. **Anything and everything within my person that is an obstacle to that entrance into the heavenly inheritance is to be crushed by faith.** Those that are sincerely devoted to this activity are truly being led of the Spirit, for it is not possible for a carnal person to engage heartily in such work. The Holy Spirit will not only show you the "sin and weight which doth so easily beset you" (Heb. 12:1-2), but He will also show you the Lord and His Christ. It is in the vision of the latter that spiritual strength is imparted and we begin to "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord", "cleansing ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit" (II Cor. 7:1).

Now let me ask you — where are you in this matter? Are you REALLY being led of the Spirit? Are you diligent in slaying your slothfulness, your lusting heart, your covetous spirit, your pride of life, your purely earthly ambitions which inhibit your quest for eternal life? That, dear reader, tells the story of whether or not you are REALLY being led of the Spirit of God.

#### A Word To The Wise

It is fashionable in some religious circles to often speak of the leading of the Spirit in reference to decisions, inclinations, etc. It is not wise to credit God's Holy Spirit with every little whim that comes into your mind — such does border close to blasphemy. **Any thought or drawing that is supposed to have been produced by the Holy Spirit is still subject to spiritual scrutiny, and serious testing.** The Scriptures are also to be appealed to in these matters. Being authored by the Holy Spirit, they are in perfect conformity to the workings and leadings of the Holy Spirit. **Any work that is contrary to the Word of the Living God is not produced of the Holy Spirit,** regardless of the favorable circumstances that may attend its presentation or accomplishment. Any message that is said to have been given by the Holy Spirit that does not come to pass **exactly** as it was given is not of the Spirit of God. Among His many other attributes, He is precise — exactly precise. There is no variability with Him, as there is none with the Father (Js. 1:17). May the people of God receive these things into their hearts.

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## MOSES — THE SERVANT OF GOD

Few men have a wholesome appreciation for Moses, the "servant of God". It does appear that this ancient leader has no real allurements to the contemporary "Christian". But, to many of us, there is an attraction in Moses that is almost irresistible. His life was filled with experiences and encounters that transcend the average, to say the least. Chosen and ordained of God to lead the children of Israel during a very tempestuous segment of their history, he maintained his spiritual composure under the most adverse circumstances. He was opposed by his people, and his leadership was once contested by his own brother and sister. Though his wisdom was extraordinary, and his faith great, yet the people took variance with his manner of leadership repeatedly, crying out to him and blaming him for what they thought to be intolerable circumstances. Among the great things which were accomplished by him were: 1. The leading of Israel out of a bondage in Egypt which had lasted 430 years. 2. The parting of the Red Sea and the consequent leading of the children of Israel over on dry land. 3. The working of the ten grievous plagues upon the nation of Egypt, which would not let the people of Israel go. 4. A personal meeting with Jehovah God on the top of Mount Sinai. 5. The receiving of the ten commandments from God, engraven in tables of stone by the very finger of God. 6. The supervision of the building of the tabernacle. 7. The skin of his face was effected with brightness from the presence of the Lord — so much so that the people could not even gaze upon him. 8. The making of the brazen serpent which, when gazed upon in faith, wrought cures among the children of Israel that had been bitten by fiery serpents. 9. Was given to see the promised land of Canaan. 10. Was seen of Peter, James, and John on the Mount of transfiguration with Jesus; appearing "in glory". (Exodus 14; 19:3; 19:25, 20-28; 25-31; 34:29; Num. 20:21; 21:9; Num. 27:12-14; Deut. 1:35; Matt 17:3). So great a man was he, that when he died, the children of Israel mourned for him for thirty days in the valley of Moab. Let the children of God today, therefore, stand in tribute of this man of God, for, once seen truly, he shall contribute greatly to our faith.

### Commended By Apostles

That Moses was worthy of our esteem is seen in the commendation which he receives by the Apostolic writers. Consider, for instance, the repeated references made to him in the book of Hebrews. In the exaltation of the Lord Jesus, the "Apostle and High Priest of our profession", the Holy Spirit makes a comparison to Moses, as though to say; "See Moses, the great man of God. He was great, and until now, it was inconceivable that one greater could arise. And yet, in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have found one that is greater than even Moses." When our Lord Jesus is compared to any mortal, it is plain that the mortal to which He is compared is a giant among his fellows — not an ordinary man at all. Hear the words of the Spirit; "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as

also MOSES WAS FAITHFUL IN ALL HIS HOUSE. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses. . ." (Heb. 3:1-3). It is further declared that Moses "was faithful in all of his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after" (Heb. 3:5). Let no one construe from this that we are seeking to take away from the glory of the Lord Jesus — God forbid! My purpose here is only to show that ordinary men are not fit subjects for comparisons to the Son of God; that the very fact that Moses is spoken of so freely as a type of Christ the Lord indicates his high rank among the sons of men.

How frequently is his name brought up in this book of Hebrews! We are taught to link great happenings with his name. ". . . howbeit, not all came out of Egypt by Moses. . ." (Heb. 3:16), "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats . . . and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry" (Heb. 9:19-21); "He that despised Moses law died without mercy under two or three witnesses" (Heb. 10:28).

We are told that "the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Christ" (Jno. 1:17). "The Law", that indispensable part of God's revelation which leads us to Christ (Gal. 3:24), is linked with that man of God — Moses. That singular fact alone should cause us to have respect unto this man of God. Never let one of us be found speaking reproachfully of him, and speaking of him in a derogatory fashion. He had a ministry to perform — a mission given him by "the Father of lights", and we have it in the record, that he was "faithful in all of his house"; he faithfully performed the work that was given him to do. Which of you can say the same? How often is this holy man mentioned to the saints and sinner alike by the holy apostles! When preaching to the rebellious Jews, exalting the crucified and risen Christ, Peter declared; "MOSES truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up. . ." (Acts 3:22). When Luke recounted the preaching activity of Paul from his house of restriction, he wrote: ". . . he . . . persuaded them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of MOSES. . ." (Acts 28:23). Paul frequently refers to Moses, using him as a point of reasoning; "For death reigned from Adam to MOSES" (Rom. 5:14). He appeals to Moses to establish truths that are relevant to a comprehension of the Kingdom of God; "MOSES describeth the righteousness which is of the Law . . ." (Rom. 10:5). Israel, that great chosen nation of God, is inseparably linked with Moses; for "they were all baptized unto MOSES in the cloud and in the sea" (I Cor. 10:2). Even the enemies of God are so identified because of their opposition to Moses; "Janes and Jambres withstood MOSES . . ." (II Tim. 3:8). On one very notable occasion, there was a great disputation between the mighty angel Michael and the Devil himself: the subject of that disputation was none other than "the body of MOSES" (Jude 9). When the beloved John, aged saint on the Isle of Patmos, saw the heavens opened, and the saints of

all ages gathered about the Throne of God, he heard them sing "the song of MOSES and of the Lamb" (Rev. 15:3). One that has commanded so much attention by the Holy Spirit surely should be honored by those of us that have embraced the "truth as it is in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 4:20-24). Let us stand in appropriate recognition of him, giving honor to whom honor is due (Rom. 13:7).

#### The Lord Jesus Spoke Often Of Moses

Our Master Himself showed the importance of Moses in the Divine economy by His frequent references to him. He referred to him in such ways as; "Moses suffered you to put away your wives" (Matt. 19:8); "The Pharisees sit in MOSES' seat" (Matt. 23:2); "Did not MOSES command you" (Mark 10:3); "... that the dead are raised, MOSES showed" (Lk. 20:37); "If they hear not MOSES and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Lk. 16:31); "The law came by MOSES" (Jno. 1:17); "As MOSES lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (Jno. 3:14); "Had ye believed MOSES, ye would have believed me" (Jno. 5:46); "There is one that accuseth you, even MOSES in whom ye trust" (Jno. 5:45); "Did not MOSES give you the Law?" (Jno. 7:19). How can we ignore, then, one of whom our blessed Savior spoke so profusely?

The point to be seen here is not merely the frequency of the references made to Moses. Rather, we must perceive that he was so wonderfully associated with the Living God, that the Law that God gave was called "Moses' law" (Heb. 10:28); the great deliverance which God wrought when He brought Israel out of Egypt was referred to as coming out "by Moses"; proclamations of everlasting truth are said to have been spoken "by Moses." Moses, then, is seen as having a peculiar unity and identity with the Living God — a unity that causes us to view him honorably and thankfully, let none be guilty of speaking reproachfully of this great leader, for he truly was a man of God, a prophet of God, and God's peculiar schoolmaster, to "bring us to Christ." Therefore, Christ Himself often speaks of him.

#### The Character of Moses

I should suppose that Moses' meekness was his distinctive mark. The word of the Lord tells us that Moses was "very meek, above all men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). "Meekness" does not refer to timidity, or to cowardice, but to submissiveness; to a willingness to bow under the yoke of the Lord — to always do His will, regardless of the difficulties imposed upon the individual or the seeming insurmountable obstacles in his way. Moses was the champion of men in this respect — none could approximate his attainments here. **He was able to respond to the Lord faithfully, and under all circumstances.** When, for instance, the people murmured very grievously at him because of bitter water which they had encountered, he did not chide them, nor rebuke them severely, but rather "cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree" with which the waters were sweetened (Ex. 15:24-25). At the Red Sea, when passage into the land of sojourning seemed impossible and the people were shouting murmurings in his ear, he cried unto the Lord.

One notable revelation of the character of Mo-

ses is found in the book of Numbers. The children of Israel had so provoked God with their complaining and chiding that God revealed to Moses He was loathe to spare them any longer; "I will smite them with pestilence", declared the Lord to Moses; "and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they". At this point the heart of Moses was bared. Truly, he did not seek "great things" for himself (Jer. 45:5). His reply was that of a mediator and priest; "Then the Egyptians will hear it . . . and they will tell it to the inhabitants of the land; for they have heard that Thou Lord art among this people, that Thou Lord art seen face to face, and that Thy cloud standeth over them, and that Thou goest before them, by day in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.

Now of Thou wilt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of Thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which He swore unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech Thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as Thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty. . . . Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people . . ." (Numbers 14:12-19). That the plea was effective is seen in the words; "And the Lord said, I have pardoned ACCORDING TO THY WORD" (Num. 14:20). You will observe that Moses did not take the opportunity of making a name for himself; he was not the center of his own thinking, but, rather contemplated the glory of God. That, dear reader, is what constitutes a man "great" in the eyes of the Lord — to have an unwavering mind to the glory of God. Each person should seek to emulate Moses in this respect; to have more of an interest in God being glorified — in no reproach being brought upon His Holy Name — that in personal advancement. Should that attitude prevail in any heart, God shall reward it with His grace and favor.

Finally, so distinctive was Moses, that it is written; "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut. 34:10). Face to face communion; what a singular honor was this! So intimate was this communion, that even the "skin of his face" shined with the glory of God (Ex. 34:29-30). Though his words were great and many, though his leadership was unparalleled as regards length and patience, though he brought a law, the likes of which has never been seen — still his greatness lay in the fact that he had intimate and face to face communion with the living God. He was favored with the personal revelation of the Person of God. He saw His glory from behind the cleft of the rock, and retained it in his mind until the day that God kissed his soul away, forever to be in the heavenlies.

#### The Grand Lesson To Be Learned

The lesson that each of us must glean from this account is simply this: **we must place a high value upon those that have been with the Lord in special and intimate ways.** In our present day religious world, men's esteem is measured by their

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## COMMENTARY ON PHILIPPIANS

By Richard Ebler

Chapter Three (cont.)

(vs. 13, 14) "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Paul has just finished a confession of his own imperfection in the preceding verse. His present goal was absolute perfection with no compromises, even a perfection so complete that it would be like unto that obtained in the resurrection from the dead. He confesses that he had not yet attained to it, but that he continued to follow after it in order to be at last found in the presence of God, standing before Him faultless. Only those who strive after perfection in this life will find it in the next life.

Now in verse thirteen Paul repeats his confession by saying "I count not myself to have apprehended." His humility in stressing this point ought to have been enough to cause the Philippians to cease their contentions with one another and to cherish unity among themselves (Phil. 1:27, 2:2, 4:2). Paul addresses them as brethren to remind them that they had more in common with himself and with one another in these matters than they were presently aware of. Certainly they shared more similarities than differences, and by seeing this as a reality they would enjoy more harmony among themselves. Pride and a feeling of exclusiveness tends to obscure the fact that "we be brethren" (Gen. 13:8) and thus hinders the unity which is so necessary for our spiritual welfare.

Satan's strategy is to divide and conquer. In order to accomplish this he makes us victims of telescopic vision. One evil thing is focused on and magnified out of all proportion while we remain blind to a multitude of other facts that would wholly change the picture.

Also we see that striving after perfection promotes unity because it makes us acutely aware of our own short-comings. This ought to humble us until we are less apt to be harsh and unforgiving toward others. Furthermore, this personal warfare with sin will produce personal peace with God, which will help produce "horizontal peace" with man.

False teachers sometimes speak of attaining to absolute perfection in this earthly state. Paul here refutes this error. Although it is true that the Holy Spirit dwelling in us cannot sin, yet the flesh sometimes breaks through and expresses itself, even against our own will (Rom. 7:15-25). This condition is by the will of God in order to keep us humble, dependent on Himself for grace to overcome our weaknesses, and also to make us long for heaven where we will be absolutely perfect.

Paul says "this one thing I do." God knows that we mortals are simple and need a religion which embodies its profundities within simplicity. God boils our whole duty down to one thing, though it may be expressed in different ways and viewed at different angles. Paul here says that

he "presses toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," i.e. he strove to be worthy of assuming that eternal office that Christ had reserved for him where his heavenly fellowship and service would be perfect. This earthly existence is not the main sphere of either service or fellowship. Instead, it is more in the nature of a boot-camp wherein we are disciplined, trained, and fitted for our eternal ministries which await those who are "faithful over a few things" in this life. Thus David looked forward to **one thing** and sought diligently after it. He desired to dwell in the house of the Lord, behold His beauty, and to enquire in His temple (Psa. 27:4). Likewise Jesus gently reproved Martha for being **cumbered** with much serving (though serving per se was commendable) and for being troubled about **many things**. He told her that only **one thing** was needful and that Mary had chosen that good part which would not be taken from her. She had chosen to sit at Jesus' feet and to hear His word. In short, it all boils down to **one thing**: fellowship with God, i.e. Eden restored.

Notice that Paul had to forget what was behind in order to accomplish this "pressing for the mark." This would include all past victories which might tend to puff him up with pride as well as past failures which might tend to cast him down to despair. He forgot them all, for what runner can make good progress in a race who continually looks behind himself?

In saying this, Paul does not condemn the lawful use of past memories for the purpose of exhorting ourselves or of assuring our hearts of future mercies based on past blessings. These things only serve to help us see our goal more clearly and run the race in a better way. He only condemns that view of the past which hinders us.

Runners do not run well with heavy weights hanging on their bodies, therefore Paul says "this one thing I do." He casts off every impediment. He will not be distracted. Having only one thing to concentrate on is a great mercy.

Runners in a race have careful bounds appointed for their running. God has appointed man's bounds: that he should seek the Lord (Acts 17:26, 27). We run not as uncertainly (I Cor. 9:26). We stay in our course and press consciously and resolutely toward our goal. God does not permit us to wander aimlessly about.

He calls the heavenly reward a prize because of its exceeding great value. Athletes compete for prizes in this life which are temporal, but we compete (so to speak) for an eternal one. Let us run the race with patience!

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## OBSERVATION

Some people's religion is just like a wooden leg. There is neither warmth nor life in it; although it helps them to hobble along, it never becomes a part of them, but it has to be strapped on every morning. Amen!

## DAYS OF AGITATION

These are days of agitation, turmoil, and trouble; days that call for rigid discipline of spirit. Unless the heart is engaged in a fervent quest for the Living God, it shall surely be squelched by the ever-mounting activity of the Evil One in the world. This is no time for spiritual sloth, for lukewarmness, or for half-heartedness. Those that are not willing to pay the full price for glory will drop by the way side — there is simply too much pressure being exerted upon men by evil forces. No man will be able to stand unless he is wholehearted toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of these tumultuous times in which we live — there has never been anything like this in our world.

There is trouble in Viet Nam, trouble in Korea, trouble in Israel, trouble in Ireland, trouble in India, and now trouble in London. New and intense levels of wickedness are seen in the United States. Drugs and dope are increasing alarmingly in their acceptance by this generation. There are riots in the schools, riots in the prisons, riots among labor forces, riots in governmental locations, riots in the slums. There is rebellion among the youth, and rebellion in religious circles. There are financial crises, labor crises, and environmental crises. We now have polluted air, polluted water, and polluted morals. Abortion is being legalized, dope is sought to be legalized, there are moves to legalize prostitution. Marriage is being cheapened. Harlotry and sodomy are on the increase, and are now accepted as "normal" in high scholastic circles. Cities now have major theaters where only hardcore pornography is shown, and the law has become so relaxed that filth and abomination can be shown without any meaningful restraint whatsoever. Morality is now a word of the past — called "puritanical", and truth is said to be only "relative." There is change in the educational structure, change in the political structure, change in the business structure, change in the religious structure — change that is by no means constructive or good. Rulers are being deposed, resisted, and despised. Criminals are being liberated, police are being restrained, capital punishment is being abolished, and laws that were created to penalize the offender of the law are now employed to excuse such offenders. There is an alarming tolerance of crime and wickedness. Drunkenness, homosexuality, and lesbianism is now referred to as "sickness", and we are being told to feel sorry for such people. There have been technological advancements made that are beyond all comprehension. Computers, for instance, can calculate

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at the rate of one billionth of a second, and the major problem that they are now confronting is that of insufficient wiring in the computer system; wires that are infinitely small — in the thousandths of an inch in length, — are considered long, and the time that it takes for electrical current to flow through that wire is said to hold back the computer and restrain its output. Pictures can be transmitted in very short periods of time from one end of the earth to the other, from the moon to the earth, from above earth back to earth. We can now keep an individual alive under water, in the atmosphere, or on the moon for prolonged periods of time.

Socially, Israel is back in Jerusalem, in control of it, for the first time since 70 A.D. Russia has sided officially with Egypt and Syria in their alliance against Israel. China is now a world power. Catholicism has been shaken for the first time since the Reformation Movement in the 1500's. Major denominations of the country have become so liberal that even the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, together with His Second Coming, and His resurrection are being denied. Some large sects have even removed all songs, with references to the blood of Christ, from their hymnals. Other stately old denominations have renounced their condemnation of immorality and sexual vice, and are promoting a "feel sorry" campaign for those that violate the laws of God.

Now, I ask you as a sober believer — is this any time to be indifferent toward the Lord and His Word? Is this a time for slothfulness, indolence, and general lukewarmness? In the face of everything about us, should the professor of the faith be anything less than fervent, anything less than sincere and singlehearted toward the Lord? What manner of persons ought we to be? The days are short, and the Judge standeth at the door. Let each one see to it that he regularly accelerates and grows in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Separate from anything and everything that hinders your godly life; the time may very soon be here when the final separation shall be made by the King of all the earth!

### A Mood

Deep despair doth define "down" —  
dejection, double-mind  
Mind and motives mingle more,  
morbid morsels must I find.  
Feelings flitter, fluctuate  
fantasy fills my heart  
Husks and hollow horrors hound,  
hearing hinders part.  
Panting persons problems put,  
plant a bitter root  
Ringing, roaring, running sore  
See thou trouble me no more!

### AN OBSERVATION

"I used to say that civilization was going to the dogs, but I have quit saying that out of respect for dogs. Today, mankind is guilty of some things beneath the dignity of any dog."

Vance Havner



## IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

Because we are living in a very scholastic age, the contemporary church has greatly modified its approach to the Truth. It is no longer a question of whether the proclaimer of the Word knows the Lord or not, whether or not he has been sent by God, or whether or not he has the Word of God burning as a fire in his bones. Education is now the great cure-all for all deficiencies. We even have special institutions that will teach men the basic, as well as the details, of "the faith", afterward conferring Bachelor, Masters, and Doctorate degrees upon them: which degrees make them highly qualified to "sound off" on theological questions. In connection with this innovation, many questionable dogmas are fortified by quotations from "Doctor" so-and-so; as though that term should at once remove from our minds any reservations concerning the doctrine propounded.

It appears to me that Jesus dealt with this very practice when with His disciples; "But all their works they do to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi. BUT BE YE NOT CALLED RABBI: for One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23:5-8). Our Lord is teaching His followers here not to be eager for carnal distinctions, supposedly indicative of spiritual superiority. The Lord's people must not seek for distinctions or for pre-eminence, for **they are all brethren**. The cardinal rule for the "saints of the Most High" is for them to "esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3). **Our respect for men is to result from their devotion to the Lord, as well as the Grace of God that is perceived in them — not from the vain titles that have been heaped upon their heads.** We now "know no man after the flesh" (II Cor. 5:16), and to recognize carnally conferred titles is nothing more than fleshly recognition. God confers no such titles like "Beloved", "Son", "Children", "Saint", "Elect", "Brother", etc. They all refer to the filial relationship that His children bear to Himself and His Son. But what does "Doctor" comport? What relationship does it set forth? It is a purely scholastic one — nothing more. Because a man knows Greek, Hebrew, and is abundantly equipped to give historical data concerning the Bible by no means indicates that he is learned in the things of the Spirit of God. All of the Greek, Hebrews, etc., is nothing more than "the wisdom of this world" (I Cor. 2:4-8). It gives no advantage whatsoever in "things that pertain to life and godliness". **The real child of God has the distinct advantage of being "taught of God"** (John 6:45). "The Anointing" which they have received instructs them in abiding in the Lord (I John 2:20, 27), and thus are they equipped for anything and everything to which God calls them.

Let none construe this to mean that we are to consider scholastic learning to be contemptible. God forbid; God places no premium on scholastic ignorance. However, it gives no **advantage** in the Kingdom of God; it brings no further recognition from God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, or angels. Those

"spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23) do not bow in humble adoration of the "Doctors" of earth; such degrees do not set the angels to rejoicing, and they shall all be abandoned of necessity "in the regeneration" (Matt. 19:28), when God makes all things new. **What, after all, are titles but a means of distinguishing one worm from another!** In spite of great achievements in earthly learning it remains that "there is no difference" (Rom. 3:23).

**The wisdom of this world cannot clarify the things of the Spirit of God;** that is an axiom that has been buried under the rubble of scholastic idolatry in our day. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came **not with excellency of speech or of wisdom**, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was **not with enticing words of man's wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit of power: that your faith should **not stand in the wisdom of men**, but in the power of God. . . . Now we have received, **not the spirit of the world**, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, **not in words which man's wisdom teacheth**, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (I Cor. 2:1-5, 12, 13). **Rather than clarifying the things of God, the wisdom of this world obscures spiritual realities.** While it may assist men in the dissecting of the text or surface of the Bible, and give him some historical and interesting data, it will never bring home to the heart the real potency of things unseen — only the Spirit of God can do that.

Now, the purpose of this short treatise is to bring to the attention of the sheep of God's pasture that those who are eager for the degrees of earth are actually grasping for the wisdom of this world, which, though they think it to be an advantage, is really a handicap. It takes more grace to overcome that mountain of earthly wisdom than most any other obstacle. Men, therefore, will pardon us if we refuse to give honor to such as the earth honors. Only those that have walked and talked with the King are deserving of spiritual admiration; only those that have seen beyond the veil of temporality are worthy of hearing; only those that have been enraptured with the unseen, albeit eternal, world, are fit to receive our undivided attention.

**A word to those that aspire to be preachers of the Word of God.** If this is your aspiration—to communicate the wonderful tidings of the Gospel of peace—then arm yourselves with the whole armour of God. Strive against sin in your members. Become thoroughly acquainted with the Word of God, and put what you learn into the crucible of experience. If, after that, you still have a driving urge to preach the word, then you have undoubtedly been called of God to do so. Do it without regard to the requirements of men, and having only a mind to please Him that hath called you. Do not subscribe to anything that will handicap your faith, and seek only the esteem of God, His Son, and those that have been joined to them.

In the presentation of the Word of the Lord, the personality presenting it is not the real issue, but rather the message that is being presented. For instance, because "Doctor So-and-so" presents a word by no means validates that word. No man is an authority on the things of God that is not in vital communion with God. His earthly qualifications and attainments have no significance at all here.

Let each fearer of the Lord, therefore, glory in these things, realizing that our faith and hope are in God, not in men — and therein is the joy of spiritual safety and protection.

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## THE NECESSITY OF EVALUATING MESSAGES

The people of God must learn not to take for granted the messages of purported prophets. No word that **claims** to be from God must be unservedly received as from God. Many a soul has been dashed upon the rocks of futility and vanity because they followed after fleshly messages that were garbed with the guise of the proclamation of God. Especially in our day, when there has been a great outbreak of "charismatic" expressions (whether they be that or not, the Lord knows), it appears wise to apprise the people of God of their responsibility in these matters.

The Apostle Paul gave some explicit instruction to the church at Corinth concerning the "prophets" that ministered within the confines of their own assembly. Because they "came behind in no gift" they appeared to have had frequent and lengthy verbal expressions of varied sorts in their assemblies. Thus it became incumbent for the Spirit to lay upon them certain rules of conduct that were to govern their assemblies. In especial reference to the prophets and their articulation, it was said; "Let the prophets speak two or three, **AND LET THE OTHER JUDGE**" (I Cor. 14:29). There was not to be, in this instance, an overabundance of prophecy that would weigh down the minds of the believers. No more than three were to speak at any one gathering, and when they spoke, their message was to be judged and evaluated by those that were silent. Prophecy, by way of definition, is speaking "unto edification, exhortation, and comfort" (I Cor. 14:3). It is an endowment of the Spirit whereby an individual is enabled to speak the word of the Lord in a way that will build and strengthen the saints, urge them onward to involvement in the life and purpose of Christ Jesus, and settle and ease the loads that are brought to bear upon them because of their presence in "this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). Any speaking that eventuates in these things is properly identified as "prophecy" — any message that does not is not prophecy.

The believer is not to be gullible, and he is, at the same time, to give heed to those that have understanding in the things of the Spirit of God. Every message is to be evaluated by the discerning. This will result in several things: (1. It makes the saints more aware of Truth itself, and less aware of the herald of the truth. (2. It focuses attention upon the message more than upon the messenger. (3. It makes for the destruction of pride and vanity. (4. It introduces the element of submission to one another. (5. It removes pointless and vain confidence in the flesh, which thing all believers are to energetically shun. (Phil. 3:3).

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## THE OBSCURING QUALITY OF ERROR

Mistaken views cause stumbling lives  
and seeds of discord sown  
Evaluation's soon amiss  
and wrong conclusions known.

When doctrines stem from lower climes  
purporting truth to be  
And posing as profound in thought  
the truth is mystery.

Obscured becomes true meanings then  
and figures thus suffice  
Instead of buying truth alone,  
and selling at no price.

Disdain soon comes for those dear saints  
who live in higher climes  
Because they cannot thus return  
to rudimental minds.

High truths then hold no values high  
but seem to them small things  
While elemental truths become  
the source of frothy springs.

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## Moses — Servant of God

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attainments in this world. Men with large churches, great educational programs, successful campaigns of various sorts, etc. — these are considered great men. They are always those that have gained notoriety in some way; men that are well known and famous in some sense. But such is not always the case with those properly esteemed in the Lord. Paul, for example, was counted, together with the Apostles, as the "filth and offscouring of all things" (I Cor. 4:13). Moses was not honored by the very people that he led. They constantly rebelled against him, murmured concerning his leadership, complained about his supplies. Yet he was great, honorable, and to be received as great and honorable. and to be received as great and honorable. Why? Because he was favored with the presence of the Lord as few men have been. As great prophets as were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Elijah, etc., yet they come behind Moses, for the Lord knew Moses "face to face."

We declare unto you that there is still a remnant of face-to-face communicates in this world that are held to be filth and offscouring. Yet we glorify God for them — do you?