

# STRAIGHTWAY

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"And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" [Mark 1:18].

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## CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

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## THE RETURN OF OLD SADDUCEEISM: 150 YEARS AGO

by Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, Founder & President  
Foundations Bible College

There is a Jewish trilogy of groups that came into existence during the birth of Christianity and became its lasting enemies. They are somewhat different but all three contribute to the preservation of the Jewish apostasy that crucified the Lord Jesus. They are: Herodianism, Pharisaism, and Sadduceeism. The first was a political power; the second a conservative power; and the third a liberal power. More pharisees were against Jesus in the Gospels than sadducees; but in the Book of Acts the sadducees were more active against the Apostles. Evidently, many pharisees had become Christians. The liberal sadducees built many half-way houses. The ecumenical spirit of church history and protestant liberals practice the same.

The Jews have not always had a direct political power, but this power when present, has always opened the door for the flourishing for the two other powers. In the times of Christ,

the Jewish herodians prepared the way for the advancement of the antithetical rabbinical teachings of the two great schools, Pharisaism and Sadduceeism. Once the political foot has been placed in a crack in the door of dealing with nations, the Jews once again embark upon the establishment or reestablishment of these two sides of the coin of their religion. We have seen this happen as far back as Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, leaders the Jews admired; and Antiochus Epiphanes and Herod, leaders the Jews hated.

The return of the old Sadduceeism to our modern and postmodern Jewish world, is marked with great care by a very famous Jewish speech delivered by a Jew, an American judge, Mr. Noah. The title is "M.M. Noah's Address," delivered at the Hebrew synagogue, in Crosby Street, New York, in the mid-1850s, on our National Thanksgiving Day, in an effort to aid in the erection of the Temple at Jerusalem. It was

reported verbatim for the "New York Tribune," and was published some short time after that in the "Jewish Chronicle," in London. The Editor of the "Jewish Chronicle" spoke of it as a "most eloquent and powerful speech delivered by the patriotic and talented Judge Noah, and we believe the article deserves a reprint in our time with an appendix of thought for our readers.

The following article, of some length, is given as a validating record of the fact that the Jewish people, under the initial leadership of the liberal (Sadduceeism) group were indeed envisioning the breakdown of orthodox religion around the world, as an ecumenical movement to pave the way for the state of Israel to be born.

To occasion in the article was marked in the celebration of the hope of building the Great Synagogue just a few hundreds of yards away from the Mosque of Omar, with an invitation permission given by the Sultan of Turkey. This was a message given almost 150 years ago by an outstanding Jewish American Judge. Every fundamental, conservative Christian should read this article and see that which Satan devised as a scheme for his workings many years ago through the

building of a liberal movement in the earth.

After describing the afflictions which for more than eighteen hundred years have rolled like continuous billows over the heads of Israel, the speaker thus proceeds:

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"At length a sign is given; the thunders begin to roll all over Europe; the cry is every where heard in despotic governments—To arms! The people are at war with their kings, and the kings are overthrown; priestcraft and fanaticism are overthrown; the sun of liberty begins to rise; the chains of the Jews are unloosed, and they are elevated to the rank of men; the fires of superstition had burnt out, and the age of reason had revived. The Sultan of Turkey, following the march of civilized nations, says to the Jews in his dominions, 'You are free; you have my permission to erect a Synagogue in Jerusalem'—and messengers are dispatched, as they were in the days of Solomon, to ask for aid from their brethren throughout the world, to erect a magnificent place of worship, the first that has been erected in the Holy City since the advent of Christianity.

"Friends and brethren, do you understand the Sign? Is it not pregnant with great events? Is not this another seal broken? We can erect a Synagogue and build a Temple here, and it excites no attention; but when the trumpet sounds from Mount Zion, every ear is opened, every heart throbs. I know full well, that there are many Jews throughout the world, who look upon the restoration of their brethren to the Holy Land as a possible event in the great changes which may hereafter occur, but they take little interest in the signs of the times.

## **STRAIGHTWAY**

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**O. Talmadge Spence, Editor**  
*Founder & President*

**Foundations Bible College**  
**P.O. Box 1166**  
**Dunn, NC 28335**

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Happy in the enjoyment of every comfort here, they only think of their brethren in the Holy Land when their charitable feelings are appealed to; but when the great events of the restoration which are to fulfil the prophecies are talked of, they cling to the home of their birth, and the country of their adoption, and say, My destiny is here. Be it so. I do not blame them; for great sacrifices of life and treasure await the first movements of restoration. We are safe, but let us feel for those brave hearts, who will not forsake their ancient heritage—who cling with ardent devotion to the sacred soil, and who turn their eyes of hope toward Zion, and say, ‘The time will come, the hour will arrive.’ Let us furnish them with the means of living until the trumpet again sounds on the walls of Jerusalem—let us aid to erect a Temple worthy of their faith, their devotion, and their constancy....

“There are some who may consider the permission extended to the Jews in Jerusalem to build a Temple, or a magnificent Synagogue, a concession of little importance; but taken with other extraordinary signs of the times, it has a most important bearing. *We* may be unmindful and indifferent in relation to those signs, but there is a Divine hand which directs, a Divine agency which controls those movements; there are Divine promises yet to be fulfilled, Divine attributes which are yet to be made apparent to the unbeliever. Since the establishment of Christianity, the world has not seen a revolution equal to that existing at the present moment in Europe; one hundred millions of people are in arms against their sovereigns; it is a struggle indeed for Liberty and Human Rights, but Religious as well as Civil Liberty;

the blow is equally aimed at priest-craft, at that powerful union of Church and State, which for centuries has kept the world in bondage. The allied Sovereigns may succeed in overpowering the people and maintaining their thrones and sceptres, but great concessions will be made to the wishes of the people to avoid a hurricane of frightful outbreaks;—the people are no longer in chains. To the Jews, this great revolution has been a wonderful manifestation of God’s providence and watchfulness; it has made them men, citizens, a people, a nation—it has given them rank, position, power—it has elevated them to the highest offices. Look back 1800 years on Rome, the proud mistress of the world, and see the Jewish captives in chains, following the triumphant car of the victorious Titus; see them sold in bondage; see them the architects of the Coliseum and the Pantheon, the servile labourers every where. When Rome fell, and Christianity arose, see them even more fiercely persecuted, the inmates of the dungeons of the Inquisitions, and the victims of the *Auo da Fe*; see the chosen people, whose only sin was their belief in one God, locked up at night in the Ghetto, like animals in a cage, and look at them now in Rome: declared to be free by law, and possessing equal rights with their fellow citizens. See them in France and Germany, and in every country in Europe, filling the highest situations in the governments, the proudest elevations on the benches of law and science, and diffusing every where the lights of their deep philosophy, and the fruits of their close and ardent study. And has this great advent been brought about by human agency? I believe it not,—it is part and parcel of those

promises—the first step in the fulfilment of that great event which is to manifest to the whole world the power, the unity, the omnipotence of the Lord God of Israel, one God, and the God of all creation, and that He alone is the King of kings, Redeemer of the world, and the sole Judge of the earth.

“Other great revolutions are also in progress—quietly, slowly, but securely—the age of Reason and Philosophy among Christians. In every direction, there appear to me evidences of a progressive, but mighty change in the fundamental principles of that faith, which it is our duty and our interest to watch, as developments of the deepest importance to our future destiny as a nation. I have noticed the liberal feelings every where evinced toward the Jewish people, an interest in their spiritual character, as much as in their temporal welfare: I see every where a change manifested toward us as a Sect; there are closer affinities developing themselves among Christians. They are gradually unloosing the chains of a religious prejudice against us, and feel a deeper interest in our fate and final advent. Few adhere, at the present day, to the spiritual restoration of the Jews, while the multitude admit that this restoration must be literal. The promises of God to the chosen people are now more fully recognized, and evangelising them is postponed until after the great events contingent on our restoration as an independent power. Reason and Truth begin to resume their empire as the shackles of ecclesiastical power become weakened, and man defends his right to speak, to think, and to act freely and openly, upon all matters appertaining to the Christian faith.

“The result of this religious feeling

manifests itself in gradually withdrawing from the great founder of the Christian faith, the divine attributes conceded to Him by his disciples and followers. Since the Reformation, this change has been gradually unfolding itself; but professing Christians did not dare to express their doubts even to themselves; they were unbelievers ever, but only in the deep recesses of the heart; but now Reformers, Socialists, Communists, Philosophers, openly express their doubts. All Germany is deeply tinctured with this belief, and other Luthers are springing up, declaring their unchanged belief in the sublime morality of Jesus of Nazareth—their entire confidence in Him as an eminent and illustrious reformer, teacher, prophet, brother; but eminent and illustrious reformer, teacher, prophet, brother; but denying his divine issue, his participation in the Godhead, and his right to share with the Almighty the attributes of divinity. The Jews are deeply interested in the extension and preservation of Christian morals; to us and to the world it would be a deep calamity to see *our* laws, *our* doctrines abrogated, which have been so beneficially spread throughout the world, under another name. If we were enfeebled and broken down, and had not the power to enforce and carry out the doctrines of our faith, still, happily, they have not been lost to the world, but flourish under another denomination. ‘Do unto others as you would desire others to do unto you love your neighbour as yourself’—deal justly with all men, honour your parents, be faithful to the governments that protect you, be merciful, be charitable, and love God with all your heart and soul—these are *Jewish* precepts, advanced as such by a great

Jewish reformer, and engrafted upon the religion adopted by his followers and friends; but their divine origin is unchanged.

“If it is asked why has not Judaism preached against Christianity, when Christianity has, for 1800 years, been incessantly preaching against Judaism, the answer is this: Our cause is in greater hands; in good time, the Lord will open the eyes of all who would confer on a mortal the attributes of his divinity; He will give to the world the unmistakable evidence that He alone is the Great Redeemer, and that salvation is alone with Him. Our unwillingness to preach against Christianity grows out of the fact, that in pulling down the land-marks of that faith, we would assail and endanger many of our own cherished principles and doctrines; and although disbelieving the divine attributes claimed for Jesus of Nazareth, we could not deny or reject his principles, for they were our principles, and He always avowed the faith which we avow.

“Without wishing to unsettle any of the principles which sustain the Christian religion, we have asked what would be the effect of separating from the character of Jesus of Nazareth the divine characteristics claimed for Him? The world would become Unitarian Christians, and we are the head of the Unitarians; men would openly become converts of that belief with sincerity, as their hearts would be thereby released from harassing and perplexing doubts; and Christianity would still be Christianity, in all its high moral attributes. There is enough in the character of Jesus to give Him a rank among the highest practical moralists, divested of all faith in his divine attributes; more, much more, than in

the character of Mohomet, who claimed none of those attributes. Jesus declared that ‘God was a Spirit, and those that worshipped Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth;’ we declare no more.

“We must watch these changes closely as they occur; whatever doubts may shake the faith of Christianity, those doubts can never reach us; we are now as we ever have been, as we ever hope to be, one God, one faith, one people. We have no mysteries, no revelations which are not natural and reasonable. In this position we have stood for ages, and it is a platform which will endure for ever, and on which all religions can stand. We must seek, however, to take advantage of the times and the changes throughout the world, as they may relate to our temporal prosperity. We cannot at this moment tell what important results may grow out of this permission to build a magnificent Synagogue in Jerusalem. One right conferred, one prejudice removed, leads to the enjoyment of other rights, to the removal of other prejudices, and finally the nations begins to lift up its head; education completes the great work; and the Jews of Jerusalem, the great defenders and expounders of the law, become enlightened and liberal citizens, qualified to be entrusted with higher powers.

“Let us not believe that, although our faith is admitted to have a divine origin, salvation is for the Jews exclusively. Salvation for the Gentiles is equally included; He who made the whole earth will protect all the children in it. We are the altar of the Sanctuary, on which it is said, a fire shall burn, which never shall be extinct; but that fire shall animate and revive all creation alike—the Gentile

shall stand before its light, and rejoice in the warmth which it imparts. Had it not been for Christianity and Mahomedanism, which sprung up upon the ruins of our nation, and raised aloft our prostrate banner, Paganism would have flourished; every god would have been worshipped but the true and living One; the heathen would have triumphed at this very day, and all would have been darkness and desolation. From among a few of our own people God raised up a new sect, which with the descendants of Joshua maintained in part his divine attributes, and did not surrender his divine precepts. This intermediate power, though intolerant and persecuting, has still stood between us and utter destruction, and now eight millions of the chosen people—the same people who were at Sinai, at Babylon, and at Zion, stand forth in the presence of all the earth, the miracle of God's providence; and Christian and Mussulman will march before them in the great advent of the Restoration, surrendering their trust, giving up their guardianship, and crying aloud with our great Prophet, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God,' and this advanced guard will bear on their banner as they pass beneath the triple walls of Jerusalem, that verse from Scripture which has ever been our guide, 'Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no God but me: *for their is no Saviour besides me.*' Oh, children of Israel, you know not the great destiny which is in store for you! Study to deserve it, study to meet it, and to merit it, by the practice of many virtues, by toleration and good faith, mercy, charity, and forgiveness.

"The world calls us a proud people.

If there is nobility on earth; if pure and unadulterated blood, descending from such ancestors as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon, which courses through our veins, gives us a claim to national distinction, we have a right to be proud of such ancestry; but that pride should be limited to imitating their wisdom, and cultivating among ourselves that nationality which alone embraces the elements of our restoration. The designs of the Almighty are brought about by human agency; He inclines the heart of men to execute his great purposes on earth; wars, revolutions, changes in the political world, the dismemberment of nations, the downfall of kings, the elevation of the people, the light of knowledge, the march of science, and the triumph of liberal opinions, are all his work through his inscrutable decrees.

"This permission to lay a cornerstone once more in Jerusalem, to erect a magnificent Temple to his honour and his worship, by his ancient and faithful people, and which we are this day called upon to aid, is another great sign of his divine power and will, foreshadowing the great promises hereafter—the assurances that we shall yet be independent, and worship Him on Zion in freedom and tranquility.

"But I have often heard my co-religionarians say, painfully heard them say, that the promises of restoration, though repeatedly made, are surrounded with many difficulties; that the land so remote would never repay the sacrifices in reassembling the people from the four quarters of the earth; and that when assembled, bringing with them the languages and usages of many countries, it would be greatly embarrassing to organise the

government, and we should be subjected to neighbouring wars and internal difficulties—in short, that we were content with our present condition, and required no change. Such sentiments I know do prevail, but not among all; it is the fruit of toleration, of comfort, of ease, of wealth; but there are ears which are yet to be touched with the pure love of liberty, and hands strong enough and willing enough to strike a blow for that liberty, when the time arrives. But the work is not to be accomplished by us; our will, our wishes, our doubts, and our scruples, are empty and evanescent: there is a higher Power, and a stronger Arm, which will direct the movements of the great advent, which will show us the path; our Cloud by day and our Pillar by night. Are we not his chosen people, has He not blessed us, when shadowed beneath his protecting mantle, and punished when we sinned, separated and dispersed us when we forgot his holy ordinances, and do we not await his promises of final national regeneration? How can we doubt the future, in contemplating the past? Has He not said, ‘I will settle you after your *old estates*, and will *do better* for you than at your *beginning*, and ye shall know that I am the Lord?’ Has He not said, ‘For I will take you from among the heathen, and will gather you from all countries, and bring you into your *own land*?’ But you shrink from the desolation of Judea, and fear that the land will for ever wither under its ancient curse. Even there we have been anticipated by the mercy of divine forgiveness. ‘I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive *no more* reproach of famine, and they shall say, this land that *was* desolate is become like the

garden of Eden; I the Lord have spoken it, and I *will* do it.’ Shall we ourselves become infidels, and doubt the promises of the Almighty? God forbid. Let us therefore prepare for that great change, which will fill the whole world with wonder and astonishment. Other nations, in breaking the yoke of the oppressors, and becoming rulers in their own land, bring with them their national characteristics. An ignorant people cannot make an enlightened government; but when the trumpet sounds for us on Zion, every country on earth will give up its great men among the Jewish people, and a combination of talent, wealth, enterprise, learning, skill, energy, and bravery will be collected in Palestine, with all the lights of science and civilization, and once more elevate those laws which Moses had consecrated to liberty and republican forms of government. Let us commence the great work, and leave its consummation to our great Shepherd and Redeemer.

“I hope you will agree with me, that it is a privilege to be permitted to contribute our mite to the erection of this great Synagogue, near the site of the temple that all Israel should aid in its completion. It will possess one advantage—it will be orthodox. The Jewish religion should never change its original form or type. Reforms create schism, and promote divisions, besides impairing the unity of our faith. Religion is of the heart; there must be the seat of devotion; forms and ceremonies are all empty without sincere piety.

“I must confess that I should like to see some changes in our ritual and ceremonies: while admiring the beauty and sublimity of the Hebrew

language, I should still be gratified, if we could introduce in our prayers a portion of the language of the country, in order that we may better comprehend the great responsibilities of our faith. We might also curtail many repetitions, and introduce some beneficial changes: but where are the limitations and boundaries to these reforms, when we once introduce the pruning knife? Where is our authority to change or modify these forms and ceremonies, the native purity of our faith, which we have sustained for four thousand years through the severest sufferings and privations? There are great dangers in all innovations on an established religion; and it is preferable to pursue the plain beaten paths so long adopted by our ancestors than to venture upon unexplored regions, and carry out reforms, which finally efface the landmarks of our ancient faith.

“Yet if this is pursued by other congregations, we shall be gratified to know, that there is one congregation in Jerusalem which will never change its ancient laws and customs; and therefore we can more cheerfully and more liberally extend our aid in the erection of this new synagogue, under the conviction that it will be founded on a rock, which will last for ages. The accommodations to the pious, which a new and extensive place of worship will afford, will attract a greater number of our people to Jerusalem from the surrounding countries. Admonished by the signs of the times, and by the expectation of important events, we find the aged Jews, with some little means, coming down the Danube, from the Red Sea, and over the mountains of Circassia, journeying toward Jerusalem, there in holy meditation and prayer, to spend the

remnant of their days, and to sit under the wall of the Temple, and pray for the peace of Israel, and when they die surrounded by the learned and pious, to be buried in the consecrated earth, near the ashes of the great prophets, the sublime Psalmist, and the illustrious of our fathers and ancestors. If there is any consolation in the last hours of life among the truly pious of our faith, it is knowing that they are to be buried under the shadow of mount Zion; to be near when the trumpet shall arouse the quick and the dead, at the day of the Great Atonement. I never hear the name of Jerusalem, without thinking of that mighty man, whose consecrated fingers struck the wires of his ravishing harp, and gave alarm to the hosts of Heaven—that beloved of God, that Warrior, Poet, King—stern in his friendships, sublime in his orisons; he whose whole heart melted in love and adoration of the Lord—the good, the great, the illustrious David. Who can read his Psalms without feeling all the pride of religious faith in knowing that he too was a Jew? What a privilege it is to stand by his tomb—what a blessing to lie near him even in death!

“I have said that the building of this new Synagogue in Jerusalem would be considered throughout the world as a remarkable sign, particularly among a people who, though separated and dispersed in the four quarters of the world, are united by the most extraordinary bonds of sympathy; like the magnetic shock; it reaches every extremity, like the flash of electricity which conveys intelligence in every direction, the Jews will hear of it and see the handwriting on the wall.

“We have been preserved miraculously for great and startling events;



God's dealings with his people have been most wonderful; we have passed through the promised punishments; shall we not enjoy the promised blessings? When and how this great advent is to be brought about, is still in the heart and hand of that great Spirit, who depresses and raises up, who breaks down thrones and elevates the oppressed and persecuted; as the great French historian has said, 'Providence moves through time, as the gods of Homer through space—it makes a step—and ages roll away.' To the Christian world, which has a common origin with us, and still clings to the Jewish nation as the favoured and chosen people of God, this little expressive sign will not be without its impression—it is one blast of that silver trumpet, which at the dawn of day was sounded from the eastern portals of our Temple. Here is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in which Christians offer up their pious orisons to the memory of Him, who, while on earth, deserved all that the best feelings of the heart could bestow; there are the Minarets of the Mosque of Omar, built on the site of our Temple; and there, in simple grandeur, in one corner of Mount Zion, is the new synagogue of the Jews—the parent and his children, all were happy on the same spot, all wafting their orisons to that heaven where sits in divine majesty the Lord of Hosts and the God of Israel.

"It is not the least curious in the erection of this new edifice in Jerusalem, that we can direct the builders to the spot where all the materials of Herod's Temple yet lie in silent grandeur. Beneath the Mosque of El'Aksa, the great chambers, the immense granite pillars, the magnificent marble columns with exquisitely

carved tops and bases, the richly ornamented gates, the reservoirs still filled with water, in which the Priests and Levites bathed, are at this day to be found, not crumbling in ruins, but erect and majestic, and have been explored within the last two years by one of our people, now a resident of this city, proving, beyond doubt, the error of that prediction which declared that not one stone of that Temple shall stand upon another. At this particular crisis of affairs in Europe, this small sign will arouse the Jews in every direction. They have been busy amid these revolutions. It was not to be expected that a people of their literary, political, and commercial influence—the bankers of Europe, the merchants of England, the statesman of France, the philosophers of Germany, the agriculturists of Poland, the poets of Italy, the artists, mechanics, and soldiers everywhere could see these mighty events developing themselves on the Continent, without participating actively in their progress and results. They too will hear the distant sounds of that trumpet, whose notes will float around the horizon, and will know who is moving in the great work.

"The laying of the corner-stone of the new Temple will attract an immense number of the faithful to Jerusalem to witness the ceremony; it will not be built as the old one, on the return of our people from Babylon, with the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other. The building and the builders will be protected and assisted by all religious denominations. For many years I have cherished the hope that I might have it in my power to visit the Holy City—that my country would enable me to say to my people, with the prophet Isaiah, 'Hail

to the land shadowing with wings which lies beyond the river of Ethiopia, which sendeth ambassadors by sea in vessels of bulrushes;’ hail to the house of the Jew, as well as the Gentile!

“It would be to me the proudest day of my life, if I could be present at laying the corner-stone of the new Temple of Jerusalem if I could realize all the associations which spring from the spot, where Daniel and Solomon lived—where Isaiah prophesied, and where the Maccabees conquered.”

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Mr. Noah, in the middle of the nineteenth century gave the classic, speech from a model example of Sadduceeism. His liberal position brought the titular return to old Sadduceeism, so necessary for the powerful presence of the Jews in all their modern groups. Thus, today, there is the Reform Jew, the Conservative Jew, the Orthodox Jew, to say nothing of the Zionist movement itself. But it must be observed that the return of the old Sadduceeism first built a half-way house of ecumenicity with world politics and religions, including Christianity. Mr. Noah delighted to see the break-down of anything orthodox, giving way to a union of compatibilities to produce the old liberal Sadduceeism of his own people.

Since then, the people of the world have proceeded headlong into a union of global politics, and ecumenical religions, including protestant denominations as proceeding back to Rome.

The hope of Mr. Noah’s building of a synagogue in Jerusalem or a Temple was caught up in the spirit that the world was changing and each political and religious entity would finally give way to the glory of union. This is what

Nimrod sought at the Tower of Babel.

Although the Temple has not been rebuilt for the Jews, yet their Great Synagogue, just hundreds of yards away from the Temple site, was raised in the 1980s.

In all of this we can see Mr. Noah’s harmonizing of Judaism and false Christianity, and many an other evil thing in Jerusalem. The Jews’ return to the Land, in the state of Israel in 1948, has brought an impulse to the world, and has caused civilization to spread with lightning rapidity, through the ruined countries of the East.

We find many now who have the tendency to relax the rigidity of Judaism, along with other religions, to mention the name even of Jesus with respect, but it is only latitudinarian liberalism—the Sadduceeism of old. This is an evidence that the generation of Sadducees has not yet passed away. Or, that Sadducean liberalism has died in many parts of liberal Christianity. But one day they will look upon Him whom they have pierced and remember the power of that fountain that was opened in the Blood of the Lamb for sin and uncleanness. But in the meantime, more and more, their national prospect is not so.

This old root and return of old Sadduceeism would also be transplanted and grafted into neo-orthodoxy and neo-evangelicalism, but their faces would be different than the Jews. Neo-orthodoxy is simply neo-liberalism; and neo-evangelicalism fellowships liberalism. This is just another return of old Sadduceeism again.

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Note: A portion of quotations in this article was taken from the book *Babylon*, by B.W. Newton, published in 1859, Houlston & Sons; London.