

STRAIGHTWAY

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

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

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“PROMISE KEEPERS”

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(A Reprint By Request)

Another luminous light, so-called, has come upon the horizon of the Christian world. In the language of astronomy such a phenomenon is called a “nova.” Some have thought that this word indicates the wonder of a brand, new star in the universe skies. However, the definition, in reality, is “a star that suddenly becomes thousands of times brighter and then gradually fades to its original intensity.” There is a companion word, “supernova,” which has also been extravagantly misunderstood. The “supernova” is “an extremely bright nova that emits from ten million to a hundred million times as much light as the sun, estimated to occur in a galaxy about once every 600 years” (Webster).

Examples From Nature of the Apostasy

In both the “nova” and the “supernova” we are not viewing a consistent star; we are viewing abnormal light,

changing light, a light that is not dependable to its original purpose in the creation of the universe.

Jude sets forth five examples from nature revealing the apostasy: (1) hidden rocks in love feasts, (2) waterless clouds, carried about with winds, (3) autumnal trees dead in fruit and root, (4) raging waves of the sea, foaming out shame, and (5) wandering stars on aimless, hopeless courses. From these figures, we can see the apostasy in selfishness, helplessness, fruitlessness, shamelessness, and hopelessness (vv. 12-13).

In the twentieth century, we have seen not only an increase of the apostasy which the Bible predicted, but also an increase of the artistry of the presentation of the apostasy. We have been headed for the “nova” and “supernova” condition of the apostasy of our time.

The most current is identified as the **Promise Keepers**.

This is a presentation of men like

Bill Bright, Edwin Cole, James Dobson, Tony Evans, Bill McCartney, Luis Paulau, Randy Phillips, Gary Smalley, Jack Hayford, Wellington Boone, Howard Hendricks, E. Glenn Wagner, Gary Oliver, Dale Schlafer, H.B. London, Jr., Philip Porter, Al Janseen, Gordon England, Larry K. Weeden, and others.

Another New Thing

The presentation of the **Promise Keepers**, formed in 1990, carries with it an impressive, high-finance support which has passed on through the **nova** condition and is reaching the **super-nova** proportion and continues with the former apostasy brought on by the charismatics and the ecumenical movement, leading the neo-christian world back to Roman Catholicism.

This new ministry remains a part of the neo-evangelical and neo-pentecostal movements and has simply escalated its influence and given new face to the neo-phenomenon of easy-believism and cheap grace. This movement is superbly organized and has tremendous financial resources.

This movement has watered down the Word of God into "Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper," which is

the title of a book published in 1994 by "Focus on the Family," Colorado Springs, Colorado, and is distributed in the United States and Canada by "Word Books," Dallas, Texas. It is easy to see that the Word of God has been reduced to these humanly designed "seven promises," which center around their teachings of the Holy Spirit, getting the brotherhood of their own doctrinal identity to assist them; to set forth an agreement of a moral code as individuals and their families, along with loyalty to their particular preachers and pastors, seeking unity across all peoples and denominations, and using these areas to foster the Great Commission (cf. Mark 12:30,31 & Matthew 28:19,20). This certainly sounds like much good.

Eight Grave Dangers

However, the greater emphases are upon unity, unscriptural charismatic teachings, induced with a large dose of psychological approaches, neo-interpretations of the Bible, evangelism without the great emphasis upon burden of the Christian life. This is another modern desperate effort to include other local churches which formerly have been separatist and fundamental, or had not made up their minds yet to join any crowd.

In 1994 alone 278,000 men gathered for the advancement of these concepts, with studied plans for 600,000 men in 1995.

This article is presented at this time setting forth eight reasons why we should beware of this movement as it grows in this decade.

First, it is a new name for a movement comprised of men from the old apostasy which has been with us for almost 50 years, since the 1942

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National Association of Evangelicals and birth of neo-pentecostalism in California, in 1960.

Second, it is a unity movement; it is an ecumenical movement, seeking to advance the previous underlying efforts of the older and more formal ecumenical movement, currently leading Protestants back to Rome.

Third, its "Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper" has truncated many other promises of the Word of God which implies the exclusivism of these other promises as well as those Christians which do not agree with their seven presuppositions.

Fourth, it is a movement "for men only," believing that "men are more apt to hear and receive the full instruction of the sessions when they are not inhibited by concern for a woman's response." What about children?

Fifth, it is a new organization with a new name which is presented as something less than the full biblical definition of the separation and fundamental teachings of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sixth, it is identified with other neo-evangelical movements such as "Campus Crusade for Christ," as well as neo-evangelicals and charismatic personalities.

Seventh, it has completely ignored the presence of the twentieth-century apostasy and believing, as all ecumenists do, love is the element more needed than truth.

Eighth, as an extant movement, it will weaken the local church and its pulpit as it endeavors to draw away its people and divide their loyalty away from the Word of God.

The greater damage will be done in its condensation of the Word of God to an adopted abbreviation of the

promises of God. But the movement will rely upon love and their peculiar teachings of the Holy Spirit. In our time, the erroneous teachings of the Holy Spirit have been separated and weakened from biblical doctrine, and the teaching of separation in sanctification from the fundamentals in the Gospel. Just as so many of the new English translations, in our century, were proposed earlier for the common man by writing a bible that would be related to modern society, so such a movement as the "Promise Keepers" have made another organization capable of reducing doctrine to new definitions of easy-believism brought to America by her homegrown evangelist, Billy Graham. This new definition of christianity is a far-cry from the New Testament church and historic christianity wherever and whenever any people in history have embraced the faith of their forefathers. We are somewhat surprised that Dr. James Dobson, who has been such a spokesman for the family, would gravitate towards a male audience. I assume he believes it would strengthen men. Years ago in Sunday School Workshops and Publishing Houses, there was a movement to provide graded materials for children thinking that some passages in the Bible were not appropriate for children. However, the entire family needs the whole Bible. It is more and more obvious that the neo-evangelical is becoming a part of the solid front for fellowship with charismatics, ecumenists, and Rome.

Urgency: Unity or Union?

There is an urgent need for a genuine biblical revival, when a sovereign God comes upon the scene

removing human spirit-forces and re-announcing the old biblical truths so deeply ingrained in the Word of God, bringing **unity** to the church. The modern, so-called “awakening” and “renewal” of the Charismatic and Roman Catholic ecumenists are not a part of a biblical revival at all! Rather, it is a **union** for the apostasy.

More and more we will no doubt hear that it does not matter which church you belong to or what doctrine you believe; the criteria belongs to “spirit,” “praise the Lord,” “people who praise,” “brethren who keep.” The nearest thing in our immediate past similar to the “Promises Keepers” are the “Shepherd Ministries” of the 1970s, who were pledged to a pact as “keepers” of each other.

Shifting Sands and Shaking Stars

The world must move back to doctrine, to the fundamentals, to truth, to the genuine Word of God. The world, presently, is “carried away” with modern dumb idols (I Corinthians 12:2), as well as “giving heed to seducing spirits” (I Timothy 4:1b), like children “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:14b).

Preparing the Theatre

Have Christians forgotten that God’s Word prophesied that the world will finally accept, before the Millennium “Spiritualism?” (Revelation 9:1-21; 12:7-17; 13:1,11; 16:13-16; etc.). The stage is set; the actors are gathering in the wings; and the words of “spirit,” “love,” “filling,” “voices,” with spooks, spurts, and spirits are in the script. At least “three sisters”

are on stage: Romanism, Ecumenism, and Charismatism. A fourth sister would like to unite; she is called “New-Ageism.” But we see no Protestant on the stage or suggested in the script. We must note the audience too; there is a staircase from their seats to the stage; actors’ guilds are being formed; men like Chuck Colson, Bill Bright, E.V. Hill, Benny Hinn, Billy Kim, Luis Palau, Chuck Swindoll, John Wesley-White, and others are there. All of the actors in this drama, unlike the Reformers, are in complete fellowship with each other; there are no checks and balances there; everyone wears the same mask.

The Bible Pastors must rise from their knees, return to the power of the preaching pulpit because this modern, worldly, religious theatre is seducing our people away from their pews, away to the romance of “spirit,” “fellowship,” and musical “entertainment.” The pressure is on; the modern Christian must follow blindly the blinding new “nova,” and the “supernova,” and there must be no voice to raise a question to protest against this world-wide **union** which does not have biblical **unity**. Just as there is the true **drawing** power of the Gospel when Jesus Christ is lifted up (cf. John 3:14-16 & 8:28-29 & 12:32), so there is the counterfeit **drawing** when “men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30).

The Final Battlefield

The final battlefield of this generation will be fought off stage on the battlefield of biblical separation and sanctification, rather than where lip-service for biblical inspiration, and infallibility are uttered. Yea, our

biblical separation must be administered through our need of **wisdom** rather than the mere **knowing** of orthodoxy. Please do not bend this statement away from the author's train of thought; neither can we be wise if we do not indeed have biblical **orthodoxy**. But orthodoxy must be maintained by daily orthopraxy in the power of the Holy Spirit wisdom. Therefore, both ecclesiastical separation and personal separation are companions for the fundamentalist for his way of a sanctified life in exalting the Lord Jesus.

Fundamentalists have fought on many different battlefields and most of them have been honorable and necessary. We must not think, however, that all future battles will be fought in the same fields. Neither should we continue to shoot dead dogs with cannonballs. Nor should we use peashooters for live lions. As one of the unpretentious fundamentalists, I see certain problems ahead of us that we must become more aware of towards the twenty-first century. What some might think as problems, others might not agree, and all of us need to be very prayerful in our search of sanctification, through the grace of God, on what battlefield the Lord would have us fight. We must not choose any and every cross that might be available, but only the cross of our Lord Jesus. Personally, I believe that too many passions and personalities are becoming a part of the landscape of the battlefield, and we need to look in another direction for the Lord. There remains many good fights for the Lord, and many other joys and pleasures we should experience to His glory.

Seven Fundamental Areas

I would close by outlining seven areas in which we believe, as Fundamentalists, must keep our promises to God on our own most important battlefields. Everyone of us, on these battlefields need a true unity with each other, forgetting our **distinctives** but bonding our **fundamentals**. We need to view our triumph and victory in Christ Jesus through another dimension in our relationship with each other. These areas are seemingly the present skirmishes and battlefields which too often sidetrack us from the main battle, and it is possible that what we think as priorities must be considered in a different manner, yea, even unnecessary. Let us note them. All of these center around an individual view of the fundamentals.

1. Inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures itself is not the problem, it is the definition of inerrancy that has become the problem. All true fundamentalists believe in inerrancy.
2. Infallibility is not the real problem, it is a peculiar definition of Infallibility as we define it that has become the problem.
3. The King James Version of the Holy Scriptures is not the real problem, it is the individual definition and exact presentation that seems to be the problem. I do not know a fundamentalist who does not preach from the King James Version.
4. A Fundamentalist is not the problem, it is his ethics and manner and spirit that is often the problem.
5. A Denominational identity is not the problem, it is the definition

of its place in the Body of Christ that is the problem.

6. Separation is not the problem, it is the definition of separation that is the real problem, unto the glory of Christ.
7. Orthodoxy is not the problem, it is the individual's definition of it, or lack of its practice that is the problem.

Sanctification is Needed

Assuming that we are separatist, fundamentalists, and we have to agree that we are if we say we are, the definition in the unity of the brethren, will be solved only in the wisdom of a sanctified heart. We cannot afford to continue battles against each other, unless we believe a fundamentalist is a liar when he says he is a fundamentalist.

Could it possibly be that some brethren do not truly know their brother, and what they believe and practice, having never gone to him and personally and lovingly enquired either with their affinities or their differences? With such practice, do we then proceed to fill in the blanks by our own conclusions without accurately reporting and knowing and quoting what our brother believes and practices? Do we betray confidences in our conversations and correspondences?

Keeping Our Promises

It is not the purpose of this paper to provide a full definition for each of these terms, but it is partly the purpose of this paper to write on the subject of "keeping our promises with each other." We must keep all the promises we have made to God as Fundamentalists. Our promises in-

clude all that is revealed in the Bible. We need much prayer and purity of heart before we proceed headlong to define these precious truths in the limited sphere of our knowledge. Before we can truly write such definitive papers against each other, we need to call a moratorium on further gossip, evil surmisings, distorted conclusions, and uninvestigated half-truths against our brethren. All of us need a sanctified view of these areas, bathed with prayer and love, with an honorable practice of Matthew, chapter eighteen, verses 15 through 20. This is sanctification, too.

Yes, this is a call to sanctification in the practical areas of all of our lives, individually, and with all the brethren who have fought so bravely for us and with us in the past. As one individual, I am persuaded, that much disagreement and division results not from the fact that we do not believe in inerrancy, the King James Version, Fundamentalism, unity, separation, and Christian orthopraxy, but that we tend to overemphasize one aspect of these terms within the statue of limitation of our own individual knowledge. Others may be speaking with a larger scope of the terms and the area with a more sanctified and appropriate knowledge and wisdom.

The Holy Spirit

In our time of the charismatic apostasy we are often asked, "How may I be filled with the Holy Spirit?" The answer is exalt the Lord Jesus in all that you do and the Holy Spirit will anoint you because He came to glorify Christ.

Also, we are asked in this time of the charismatic apostasy, "What is a spiritual or sanctified Christian?" The

answer is two-fold: “A Christian is one who has a right relationship with Christ;” and “a spiritual Christian is one who also has a right relationship with the Holy Spirit.”

For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

If false and compromising men are seeking to keep promises in their

Union, we, as men who for the blessing of the Truth must keep our promises and fellowship in the unity of the Lord Jesus.

Brethren, we must always make a distinction between Lucifer, the luminous nova and supernova, and the Lord Jesus, the light of the world. No matter how super-spiritual some luminaries are in this age, Jesus alone, is the Greater and only constant Light.



A LETTER OF CONCERN TO A DEAR FRIEND

Dear _____:

In an age that is permeated with Humanism it is a joy to greet you in the Name greater than our own, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It has been some time since I have heard from you. In recent days you have been upon my heart especially since I have indirectly received word of your possible attendance to the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. At first I could not believe that such a move would be made until I was able to confirm it. Yet, when acknowledged the matter to be true my heart increased with grief. And now, I have been compelled in conscience before the Lord to write you and express my deep burden for you in this matter presupposing there is a lack of knowledge as to this infamous Seminary which has aided in the destruction of the Southern Baptist Convention. I trust God the Holy Ghost will accompany my words as they spring forth from a heart that loves truth and desires to save any

young man from the subtle but powerful forces of the apostasy.

A number of concerns flood my thoughts at this time which produce great questionableness of such a life-altering move, especially in the light of your professing to be called to the ministry. I believe I am correct in observing the fact that your dear father **left** the Southern Baptist Church some years ago. Even since his departure the Southern Baptist Convention has drifted into the quicksand of open apostasy. There may be (for the public image sake) a “pseudo” battle going on within the Convention between “liberals” and so-called “conservatives” yet that is all it is: a “pseudo” battle to pacify the compromising moderates of their own failures. Your dear father should be able to tell you of this. The true Fundamental heart, along with biblical separation, are gone from the Southern Baptist Convention. Though the presidency of the Convention seems to swing back and forth annually, you must understand

that the term “conservatism” (a rather semantical term) used by them in their conversations is a thorough-going Neo-Evangelicalism. Even the Reverend Charles Stanley from Atlanta, Georgia, who is “viewed” as a conservative, is as thorough-going a Neo-Evangelical as is Chuck Swindoll, the Moody Bible Institute group, the Promise Keepers, and the list is ever growing. If a Christian has done his homework on the American Christianity scene he will have seen the clear evidence of this. In the years of your dear father's Bible studies, I am confident he has seen this, as he has Roman Catholicism, and warned his flock in his preaching. For a son to return to what his father left is a “selling out” of a birthright and a capitulation to the enemy. I see NO spiritual hope for the Southern Baptist Convention; the die has been cast, and what “conservative” tag is used is simply to ease the conscience of a few who are liberals in heart and practice in actuality. As for Louisville Seminary, I spent a FULL day on its campus in June 1995. I traveled some 5,200 miles in 23 days to visit a number of Bible Colleges and Seminaries with the purpose of researching their archives as to their beginnings and the changes that have come in their history. At Louisville I interviewed the archivist and several leading members of their faculty. They all admitted that the Seminary has changed. But in the interviews I realized they had no way of measuring the extremity of the change because they personally were thorough-going Neo-Evangelicals. You must keep in mind that THIS Seminary is the home of the Billy Graham School of Evangelism. Dare we say it: Billy

Graham has done more to destroy true Christianity in the world than any other man of our century? The reason why Billy Graham chose THIS seminary of the SBC (of which he is a member) is because of its diversification of doctrine in the classes. And it must also be stated: The Bible in the Louisville Seminary is taught from a Neo-Orthodox position (existentialism). And what so-called “conservatism” is there is the Billy Graham persuasion (which the mixing of truth and error is the greater enemy to Scripture than just plain error). The SBC Seminary does NOT believe in the inerrancy of Scripture! It has not believed in this for a number of years. Oh, yes, they mentioned to me of a new president coming in the Fall of '95 a so-called “moderate” who was against abortion, communism, and sodomy. Well, so are the Roman Catholics! So is Pat Robertson, so is Jimmy Swaggart! So is Jerry Falwell! This is simply a smoke-screen, again I say, to pacify the compromising conscience of the moderate liberals (yet there are truly no degrees in the denotation term of liberalism; a liberal is a liberal). The hermeneutical classes at Louisville still hold to the Bultmannian interpretation and the various mutating facets of Neo-Orthodoxy. Pragmatism is the norm of its policies; this was overt in their presentations; principle is not regarded as a premium. There are NO standards as to their dress and religious preference of students. The Charismatic movement is openly accepted as are other apostate movements. Modern, contemporary music is the norm of their music classes and worship. And these few observations of mine are

not the full compendium of the heartaches that permeate this bastion of the apostasy of the SBC. I do not know of any young man in the past 15 years who has graduated from that school who was not sucked into the vortex of its paralyzing betrayal of truth, who left this harlot of the Baptist legacy not being a compromiser of truth in his own ministry.

My dear brother, the thing I cannot understand is that in the light of all your dear father speaks of the glory of Christ and the uplifting of the message of the Puritans, how can you attend a school that is bent on the destruction of that very message?! It would be better for a young man never to enter the ministry than for his teachings and preparation for that ministry be found in the camp of Bible enemies. For such a young man's ministry will be a deterrent to righteousness and godliness rather than an assistance to it.

This may be the last time you will allow my voice to be heard in your presence. But my heart is clear before God in the matter of my soul and calling. I do trust your dear father is pleading with you not to cast your lot with the American, apostate Christianity of our times. You may say, "I am strong enough to withstand their subtle wares;" but dear friend, the very intellectual approach they will take to enter your mind and heart will be so smooth that by the time you detect it the damage will have already been done. We are called upon not only to preach Christ, but to preach Christ in the light of our apostate age. We must fight against the falling away with all our might; but if we do not, we are NOT honoring Christ! Preaching the "Glory of Christ" WITHOUT

taking a stand against the apostasy is a mere sham. I give the words of the great Reformer Martin Luther:

"If I profess with loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the Devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."

I plead with you dear brother in Christ! You are "preparing" for the ministry of the Christ of Scripture. Why go to Goliath's camp to learn the ways and ministry of God? Check your step before the choice is executed! For it may be a path from which you will never return. And if such a choice is made, there may come a day we both will find ourselves on the battlefield, on opposite sides, facing one another. God forbid that it should happen.

Please, dear brother, I write this letter today as a friend. I warn you of the path that is ahead. Some young men have convinced themselves (or allowed others to convince them) that it is alright to go to ANY seminary, including a state college or university and take their classes on "religion" or "theology." But this cannot be. For the enemy has a way of manipulating an entrance into the mind and heart with its contemporary philosophy and ideology. I am forty-seven years old

at the time of this letter: if I had a son going into the ministry, and he chose to go to such a seminary as Louisville Seminary I could NOT bid him God speed, assist him financially, or help him in any way. For the Louisville Seminary is an academic and spiritual contributor to the American Apostate Christianity.

I have written this letter in Christian Love, desiring the Spirit of Scripture to accompany it. The Lord has placed a deep love in my heart for you, your family, your dear father and mother. Because of this I cannot sit

idly by without "warning the righteous" of what I know to be the truth. If you have chosen The Louisville Seminary in ignorance, may God use this feeble, but honorable defense to draw you back to a path of right. Yes, may God help you to see where this decision will take you and what will be its conclusion.

June 27, 1996
In Christian Love,
In His Majesty's Service,
Dr. H.T. Spence
Vice President

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