

STRAIGHTWAY

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

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

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The Weighing of the Treasury

by Dr. H. T. Spence

God's Word calls His men in every generation to a threefold knowledge and discernment in order to face the horrific onslaught of their providentially appointed age:

(1) First, there must be a discernment of the power and provisions of Christ's Atonement for the soul and life, including its immeasurable ability to lead one through the darkest of days victoriously.

(2) Secondly, there must be a true discernment of the age in which one lives in the light of the Scriptures.

(3) Finally, there must be a discernment of one's historical legacy.

This three-fold need draws us to the Book of Ezra, a post-

captivity book near the end of the historical section of the Old Testament. This book is needed for young men who have been sovereignly selected to live in the end time. Israel's history leading to the days of Ezra also reflects a prophetic history parallel to our present time.

The Two Primary Captivities

Scripture reveals two primary captivities from which God's people made an exodus. The Exodus from Egypt, the house of bondage, is a type of the New Birth, a deliverance from sin and the life of sin. The Exodus from Babylon, however, marks a deliverance of His people from religious apostasy. The name of this geography in the Greek form is Babel. The initial etymology of this word is *Balal*,

meaning, “to confuse.” Later *Balbel* and then *Babel* came to mean “the gate to God.” Babylon is that unique geography in history which expresses with vividness the religious and spiritual apostasy of God’s professing people. The backslidings of such people unchecked, unrepented of, finally lead to confusion of sight and heart, causing them to believe their error is the “gate to God.”

God raised up the Fundamentalist movement in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Its needed burden also made its mark in the twentieth century. In denominations and independent ministries, God moved upon the hearts of men who saw their religious affiliations headed for moral and spiritual destruction. Compromise of truth was slowly creeping in like a virus, bringing confusion to unstable hearts and minds as well as affecting ecclesiastical policy.

For the first few years after my dear father, Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, and I made an exodus from the

Pentecostal denominations in the early 1970s, I thought the Pentecostals were unique in the pattern of their backslidings and apostasy. But in my readings of other “Christian” organizations, I have found that they have all followed the same path to Babylon. From the Methodist to the Southern Baptist, the trail to Babylon was the same. Even the GARBC of the past few decades, which seemed to have a precious legacy, followed the same footsteps down to Babylon’s system. When a careful study is made of all the denominations that have fallen away, it is evident their leaders commenced the path to spiritual captivity as if they were cloned. Common to all their leaders was the selling of a birthright. The falling away starts in the leadership of colleges and seminaries and slowly but methodically descends to the grass roots, the local churches.

The Babylonian Captivity

Historically, the Babylonian captivity involved three deportations of Judah. These three deportations reflect a progressive falling away of Judah.

In 606 BC (Ussher’s chronology) the precious possessions of God’s people were taken into captivity. These include not only the vessels and furniture of the Temple but also the children who were without blemish, well favored, skillful in wisdom, cunning in knowledge—those who had the ability to stand in the King’s palace. The loss of the precious vessels and the furniture of the Temple signify, for the Christian,

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a falling away of the heart, the loss of communion with God, and the absence of prayer, daily Bible reading, and private meditation throughout the hours of life. The concern for the sacred vessels seems to disappear: the brazen laver, for washing of the priests' hands and feet and the checking for blemishes; the table of shewbread, containing the "Bread of His Presence"; the candlestick, for walking in the light; the golden altar of incense, for praise and meditation; the Shekinah Glory of the ark found in the Holy of Holies, the possession of communion with God.

Truly, these are the first things to go on the road to Babylon. Infidelity of heart comes before infidelity of life. Communion is replaced with the church program. Knowledge of Scripture and skillfulness of wisdom and preaching are exchanged for psychology and pastoral counseling. There comes the leaning more to the human side for a solution to the church's problems rather than to God. These bespeak the commencement of spiritual death. The emphasis on less prayer and more programs begins to disguise the secret backslidings of heart. The change in worship music testifies to choruses, arrangements, and instrumentations that flirt with the perimeter of the contemporary. As Proverbs 6:26 notes, it is the adulteress that hunts for the precious life.

During the second deportation in 597 BC, a famine of bread prevailed in the city of Jerusalem. At this time the city was broken up, and all

the men of war fled at night by way of the gate between the two walls. This second deportation history reflects the next step in the spiritual captivity of God's people: a famine of sound, solid, biblical preaching. This famine is evident in the abounding of shallow preaching in the pulpit; there seems to be less time for prayer, but an increased involvement of administration. The preachers become more identified as the "joker" or the "flirt." Although some truth may be preached, it is sterile and no longer indited with freshness by the Holy Spirit. While the men of war are found fleeing during the besiege of the enemy, the people become confused about what is right and wrong. While church politics pounds the pulpit, young men become afraid to stand for what they know to be true. This tragedy is typified in the slaying of Zedekiah's children and the gouging out of Zedekiah's eyes. Yes, homes are greatly affected by this spiritual deportation: the children no longer see any principle of biblical separation and spiritually die. Sight is lost, and what light is left turns into darkness.

In 586 B. C. the third deportation took place. II Kings 25:9-10 depicts a final tragedy:

And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

Final destruction is the postlude of this falling away. How ironic that even when spirituality is gone, the facilities of God's people may continue to be beautiful and perhaps, even more elaborate; the headquarters, more prestigious; even the preachers may have the tailored, polished look and suave speech, but spiritually, the city is *dead*. At such a time evangelism becomes the greater cry than rather revival among God's own people. The pulpit gives way to psychological addresses condemning abortion and social problems of the times while the people enter into the existential, relative world of non absolutes. The new music plays on, all watered down, having no conviction. The heart continues to believe everything is all right because church programs are abounding. How soon have we forgotten the example of Jimmy Swaggart, a man who many Fundamentalists believed was the exception to the Charismatic froth, *until* his lifestyle was unveiled before the world? He was the man who seemed to be anointed, yet his charisma was the mere power of human speech and personality. God does *not* anoint carnality, ungodliness, and error!

The Return from Babylon

In light of these three tragic deportations, thank God for the returns. Amidst a great falling away, there was an exodus out of the apostate religious system of Babylon. Three returns mark a full restoration.

The first return in 536 BC involved approximately 50,000

under the leadership of Zerubbabel. Their hearts' first desire was to rebuild a temple, the center and symbol of their faith in God. An altar and temple were built; offerings of sacrifices and the Passover and Unleavened Bread feasts were revived. The people began at the center of the need and not at the circumference. As puritans in various liberal, dying denominations, the forefathers of the Fundamentalist movement knew that they had to get to the center of true Christianity. They knew that they must begin with right worship, sound preaching of Christ, and a true adherence to the fundamentals of the Christian faith that adorn their Lord. They longed for the liberty of Christ's Atonement in their lives. The fundamentals became the sentinels to protect His personage from the religious confusion of their times. We must remember that biblical separation was the guardian principle of the lives of the true men of our Fundamentalist legacy! Although it was not easy for them, they made the exodus from their failing denominations and organizations and reared up once again those fundamentals *with* biblical separation. Although they were misunderstood, persecuted, and intimidated, God's grace and Spirit were upon them. They knew it was "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD" (Zech. 4:6).

The Weighing of the Treasury

The second return brought to Jerusalem a scribe named Ezra. Although he was not one of the

founding men, the Lord chose Ezra to lead this second band of individuals to the sacred city. He besought the God of Heaven to keep and protect his band of people in their travel, placing his full trust in the God of Heaven.

Before beginning the journey, Ezra safe-guarded the transportation of the treasury to Jerusalem. He set apart twelve of the chief priests along with selected Levites. To their charge he committed several holy vessels, as well as silver and gold. Three days before they left, Ezra and these men were given to prayer and fasting. Then all the treasury was weighed to the exactness, and it was to be guarded and kept without loss. After four months of journeying through hostile and foreign countries, they finally arrived in Jerusalem. There, after three days of prayer and sacrifices, Ezra weighed the monetary provisions, finding no loss in the treasury.

Just as seventy-eight years had passed between the two returns, over a century has passed since the beginning of the Fundamentalist movement. After the many stands for right and truth by our spiritual mentors, we have come to a time for the imperative need of some young men to arise and to take hold of the treasury of the Scriptures given to them and to carry it home to heaven. Every godly preacher, every Bible minister, every father, every college leader and teacher is delivered a treasury. It is exacted to us, and one day it is going to be weighed by God in the presence of His Son. Will we have lost or given

away any of it along the journey through this hostile world?

Some of us were born in the homes of God's appointed leaders. At times the peer pressure from those trying to convince us to rebel or reject the legacy may have been intense. Some born in such a legacy may have said, "I'll never be able to do it; the mantle is too heavy; there is too much responsibility." If we view our appointed lives without sight of God, we will rebel, flounder, feel sorry for ourselves, commit certain sins, and make decisions just to prove we are our own individuals. But if God is allowed to lay hold of our lives, what furthering of the truth may be known in our generation? May we, who were born in such families, let the legacy become an asset to build upon! Those who came into the legacy later should give themselves to prayer, study, and readings. They should call upon God for a mantle and a covenant of an Elijah to fall upon them! The treasury is exacted to them as well!

It is the responsibility of the fathers to exact the treasury. As my own dear father often said, "A success without a successor is a failure." All forefathers must weigh the legacy accurately: do not bend it, do not lighten it, do not sympathize with weakness and failure; it must be exacted! I fear what the present leaders in schools and churches are telling us. I fear their backing off from stands for truths taken in days gone by. I fear how the next generation is receiving such teaching. There is no longer the exacting of these truths; *nebulous*

seems to be the name of the weighing scales. Blood sons and spiritual sons of Fundamentalist leaders, beware! Do not throw away the militant heart to simply ease the relationships with the world. Fundamentalism does not have as its goal the conversion of the world. To pursue such a goal will bring about the loss of its treasury. Ezra found God's men marrying the "strange" women of the land and producing "strange" children. God's judgment on His people would have been evident if this were not rectified (Ezra 9:14). *You cannot build God's work on compromise of principle!* The end is the destruction of the coming generations.

We need the burden of the Judah's third return as well. Some men like Nehemiah must come to the Fundamentalist movement and see the "distress we are now in." While the world and the neo- crowd are talking about building bridges to one another, we are in desperate need of walls to be rebuilt, the city, fully restored, and the gates, erected. Yes, biblical separation in its walls and gates must be part of the legacy restored, or we will be overrun by the enemy, which is camped at our very threshold.

When we stand before God (only by the grace of His Son), we will have to give an account for our lives. The pastors are the ones who will be held accountable before God in regard to the music sung and principles rendered in our churches. We certainly take this authority about who will stand in our pulpits; therefore, we must do the same in

the music. Music directors must follow the principles of the Scriptures rather than the passions of the people because the people tend to the contemporary. It is the responsibility of the spiritual leaders to keep the church biblical rather than earthly.

We plead with the music directors to take inventory of their repertoire. Has the praise theme outstripped any hope for militancy? Yes, there was needed concern in the 1980s for the message of the *Blood* of Christ leaving our hymnbooks; but we are now witnessing the *battle* against apostasy leaving the Fundamentalists' hymns. It is rare to now hear songs from Christian composers that are hitting the target, a song to be used as a preached message against our contemporary, or those hymns that teach God's people to honorably fight. Let us not be afraid to write with power and conviction rather than to write songs which are safe to be sung in any church, including the Roman Catholic Church. In the rare times that a militant song is written, the melody and accompaniment tend to soften its effective blow. By this very tactic, we lose part of our legacy; only God knows if it will return. Magnificence for Christ in both music and preaching is spiritual passivism unless there is the accompanying biblical militancy.

Conclusion

It is still the truth that every Christian, including church leaders, will have to give an account of what he did with that which was "committed" unto him. Will Christian leaders be clothed with fidelity for

this commitment? Will the Lord's response to us in heaven truly be a "well done, thou good and faithful servant," causing our hearts to rejoice at the end of the journey? Amidst our ministerial accomplishments, our published songs, and our expert talents in the church, God forbid that we would hear, "depart from me, I know you not." Let us follow the exhortation of this command:

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates (II Corinthians 13:5).

Today, we as Fundamentalists naturally long for an increase of attendance in our local churches. There is a growing burden for more buses, visitation programs, and evangelistic preaching, along with broader youth programs and ministries. But unless we prayerfully long for and experience a revival of *spirituality* among our *saved* church members, we are going to face a great deficit of consecrated preachers and laymen in the future. A number of pastors privately acknowledge their people to be walking in carnality and an unseparated life. Are we willing to preach the needed messages for spirituality and a separated life? Will we compose the music that calls the believers, including our children, to a deep, godly life in Christ? Spirituality must be sought for; it will not come naturally. Until such a revival falls from heaven upon our churches, the

tendency will be towards neutrality and a "sympathetic vibration" to the age and its spirit. Yes, the greater need, even above evangelism, is spirituality among our people. Perhaps we are afraid to prayerfully pursue such a revival in the light of what it will cost us, but I fear, unless it comes, we will witness a falling away among our own.

May God Almighty help us in this matter of music. The sounds and words of our music will be the revealing commentary of our pulpits and our churches.

This is not the time to change our name of identity; this is not the time to change our Bible version; this is not the time to change our standards of living; this is not the time to change our theology; this is not the time to accommodate a world that is pressing down upon us. There are many powers within the neo-movements today seeking to rob from us that which was weighed to us in our legacy. We must see as Ezra did:

And the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. And we came to Jerusalem . . . (Ezra 8:31-32).

May we never forget that there is a moment coming in Heaven when the treasure weighed to us will be weighed again to see if any of it was taken from us. May God Almighty help us to keep that which has been committed to us by the Holy Ghost (II Timothy 1:14).

Founder's Day

Sunday, September 29, 2002

Prayer Meeting, 9:00 AM
Sunday Bible Class, 9:30 AM
Morning Worship Service, 10:30 am
Special Prayer at the Paracleft
Church Family & Guests Noon Meal in Dining Common
Dedication of the Manse
Evening Worship Service, 7:00 PM

Founder's Day is the commemoration
of the beginning of Foundations Bible College,
September 30, 1974.
Let us make plans to be in attendance for this special day.

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AN UNDERROWER OF GOD

(Written in memory of Rev. Edward F. Dean,
By his second Pastor, Dr. H. T. Spence)

God Has A Will For Every Man!
This Will, A Man Can Know!
It's Found Within A Purposed Plan,
That God Knew Long-Ago.

In These Last Days The Lord Did Claim
A Man Who Was In Sin.
God Saved His Soul, Ed Dean By Name,
And Placed His Grace Within.

This Man Did Find God's Will In Life:
He Gave His Heart To Serve.
He Also Had A Loving Wife,
He Said, "I Don't Deserve."

Ed Dean, A Servant Of The Lord,
An Underrower True!
He Stood For God's Own Precious Word,
The Truth He Did Pursue.

An Underrower Is The Man,
When Help Is Needed Most,
He'll Stand And Strengthen All He Can.
Loyal, This Is His Post!

His Ministry – Behind The Scenes;
He Takes Care Of The Needs.
He Lives To Serve By Any Means,
With Life And Words And Deeds.

Oh God, Raise Up Such Men Like This,
Who Row The Boat To Heav'n.
His Life Of Service We Will Miss.
His Life To God Was Giv'n.

Rev. Edward F. Dean was the business officer at Foundations Bible College for over twenty years and had been retired for over five years. He passed away on August 25, 2002, age 74, after suffering from Alzheimer's disease for several years. His wife Anita, who passed away suddenly some eight months ago, was cuisine officer at the College for almost fifteen years. Their Christian lives and testimonies will be missed at Foundations.

The Interior of the Heart

(excerpt from *The Human Spirit*, Vol. I)

by O. Talmadge Spence

It might be, not including God's, that the heart is the deepest thing in the universe. We can hardly spend too much time on the heart. The heart is the very center of the human spirit.

We must enter into something of what is involved in the interior of the heart of the human spirit. We certainly will not be able to go very deeply into this matter because the heart has such a depth that it defies a complete scrutiny on our part. However, we should at least face the matters as we are able to gain them from the Word of God. We should include certain aspects as we can.

God is never the source of evil in the heart of man. The inner arena belongs to the human spirit. Neither can Satan take the heart, the way it is, away from that human spirit. Man himself is responsible for his heart and the condition of his heart.

We believe the heart is crucial to and for Christianity. We would not naturally think that the heart of the human spirit, of itself, is the source of the capacities for the impulses, passions, emotions, etc. But these things come with a heart in a human spirit—they were given by creation and natural theology, and the heart of the human spirit is responsible for the way the impulses, passions, emotions, etc., go. Some words need to be superimposed to touch this matter. The heart must have prevenient grace to be enabled to turn to God, to seek God, to believe in God, to want to get his heart right with God, to be forgiven, to be regenerated, born again, to tame or restrain the heart, to teach grace, and to deal with the heart about its great needs. Either Christian truth comes, is found for the heart, or Christianity is found wanting within its own claim and power. God's prevenient grace must always go before every man and everything he does. There is nothing in the heart itself that makes it right within itself. The heart is not beyond the reach in its identity and need; it is the very center of the moral agency of the human spirit.