

STRAIGHTWAY

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

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

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Brother Against Brother

Dr. H. T. Spence

Throughout his ministry, my dear father, Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, asked the question, "Why are the brothers against the brothers?" Some divisions between brothers, either through dispositional clashes or honorable misunderstandings, should have never taken place. In such situations we should heed Paul's admonition in Ephesians 4:3, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." This is why the principle of Matthew 18 is important; it becomes the hope to "gain thy brother" when a private matter has arisen between the two.

Matthew Henry, the great commentator, stated he would give anything for peace, except the *truth*. In our times, it is in this arena of truth that we are

now witnessing many divisions arising among the brethren. Division results when a brother has compromised the Truth or departed from the Faith. When this happens, the departing false brother often becomes an enemy through his talk and life against the true brother who has not changed. Inevitably, the ensuing battle becomes a part of the whole scheme of the Devil in the last days to wear out the saints through so-called brethren who profess the name of Christ.

One of the greatest battles God's remnant will face in the end time will concern the confrontation of backsliders and those whom the Bible declares as false brethren. This is a critical and sobering truth that must be understood; the deepest woundings and

persecutions will come from such individuals.

There have always been divisions among those who were found in the camp of God: Cain leaving the original family because of his evil heart (Genesis 4); those who left the godly families after the Flood and went into the land of Shinar (Genesis 11); as well as Lot leaving Abraham (Genesis 13). Yet in all of these separations, God was working in behalf of His true saints; He was separating backslidden brethren from the true brethren.

And the Lord said unto Abram, *after that Lot was separated from him*, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever (Genesis 13:14,15). (Emphasis added)

Even though the New Testament tells us that Lot was righteous

(although his life ended in the mountains of carnality), God brought a division by separating Lot from Abram. We must remember the words of Christ in Matthew 24:24, that situations and incidents within the realm of the spiritual will happen in such a deceptive way that “if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

We are in the time of God’s sifting and shaking (Hebrews 12:25-29); ultimately every *professing* Christian will be deceived except for the elect. Part of God’s sifting and shaking will be found in incidents within churches where God will prove the people. In Luke 17:11 we are told “It is impossible but that offences will come.” In I Corinthians 11:18,19, Paul declares that “I hear there be divisions among you . . . for there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” Such divisions and manifestations are the result of divine providence. The word *heresies* here means, “party factions.” Originally the word meant only “a choice” into a “party”; since it is the tendency of a party to degenerate into a “faction,” the word soon acquires a bad sense.

God allows such incidents to arise in order to reveal to a church that such individuals are not of the Lord. The Apostle John was so bold to declare that such “brethren” are antichrist in nature:

Little children, it is the last time:
and as ye have heard that

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O. Talmadge Spence, Founder

H. T. Spence, Editor
President

Foundations Bible College

**P. O. Box 1166
Dunn, NC 28335-1166
800-849-8761**

www.foundations.edu

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antichrist shall come, even now are there many *antichrists*: whereby we know that it is the last time. *They* went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us (I John 2:18,19). (Emphasis added)

Consequently, such divisions then bring great persecution from the false brethren upon the true brethren even to the point of death, whether the slaying of one's body or one's character through slander. Remember, the first physical death experienced in humanity was a fratricide; likewise, Christ's death was initiated through betrayal perpetrated by "one of the twelve."

A Brother

A brother is to be found in the context of family, either one's blood physical family of earth or the blood spiritual family of God. The word *brother* (Gr., "adelphos" meaning "born of the same womb") implies a closeness, a trustworthiness, and a family bond. According to the Bible my *neighbor* is anyone who is in need; my *enemy* is anyone who rejects the truth of God and therefore rejects me; my *friend* is one who respects me for my character, but may betray me. But a *brother* is one who obeys Christ and His Word. A brother is one in whom I have placed my confidence and trust, for such a one is supposedly of the same womb as I

am, the womb of Truth, the womb of the Blood of the Lamb. However, the remnant must remember that there are all kinds of brethren residing in the church identified with Jesus Christ. There are true brethren, there are backslidden brethren, and there are false brethren. The child of God must be careful in these days for his greatest enemy could be one professing to be his brother.

The backslidden brother is one who has known Christ in union and communion, but because of spiritual neglect and sin he has fallen out of communion with his Lord. Such a brother no longer knows the power of God in his life nor does he desire to live right before God and with God's people. He may either leave the local church going into deep, open sin or he may stay within the institutional church and become an enemy to the progress of spirituality among the saints. He tends to be against godliness while promoting the flesh and anything that will neutralize the spiritual workings of God. Coldness and apathy have taken over his heart and his life is not giving evidence of the "family" spirit and bond.

There are a lot of churches making professions of some Christ today. While most of these churches are false, even biblical churches have a fair amount of backslidden Christians. Backsliding in conservative evangelical churches is now reaching epidemic proportion. Apostasy, the

falling away, is now a strong part of the fabric of the institutional church. We are witnessing within the ranks of Christianity the apostasy entering its final stage before the coming of Antichrist.

Although there are many pastors, preachers, and church leaders who are backslidden, out of communion with God and His Spirit, as well as apostate, there is a remnant of pastors who are in touch with God, with His Word, and with His Spirit. The greatest burden such a man bears is not the finances and the administration of his church; his greatest burden is the spiritual condition of his people. He never ceases to be burdened for the indifferent and the backslidden numbered among his appointed flock (Hebrews 13:17). *Keeping a soul in communion with God is soul winning too.* Yet, it seems after such a pastor has talked and prayed with such individuals, leading them back to the fold, there is yet another who has gone astray. No church seems to be an exception to this fact.

The backslider gives a variety of excuses for his backslidden condition: a desire for more money; positions in a job that would take him away from God's will; certain friendships; the cares of this world; family; overloaded responsibilities; physical maladies; the pull of the world and the gnawing powers of pleasures in sin; tiredness of the fight; increase pressures and demands; etc. But the singular reason

behind all backslidings is the lack of one's keeping of his heart, and keeping himself in the love of God. If our lives are in a present tense abiding in the truth of Romans 8, nothing will separate us from the love of God, yea, even from our loving Him.

The Warnings of the Scriptures

Although the Bible is a book of promises, consolation, and hope, it is also a book heavily freighted with warning. No Christian ever leaves the fold without being warned by God concerning his falling away. God warned Adam about partaking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and its consequences. Noah's generation was warned that God would grant it 120 years to get right with Him (Genesis 6:3), and He also warned through the preaching of Noah (Hebrews 11:7; II Peter 2:5). Moses spent the entire book of Deuteronomy warning the second generation. Deuteronomy 27 and Joshua 8 present two mountains that would warn of curses coming upon Israel if they left their obedience before God. Saul was warned on three different occasions before his final end came. David was warned; Solomon was warned; every king was warned; Judah was warned about the captivity to come. Eleven times Jeremiah told of God "rising up early" in warning His people. Jonah warned Nineveh; Daniel warned Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. Each of the New Testament epistles gives warnings; the

book of Hebrews gives seven classic warnings to the Christian. Yes, the Bible is replete with warnings both to the righteous and the unrighteous.

Signs of Spiritual Decline

Declension of heart always has certain signs that indicate a brother is secretly backsliding. Perhaps all the signs can be found in the words *absence*, *indifference*, and *bitterness*. There is an absence of communion with Christ; there is an absence or a neglect in his Bible reading and prayer; there is an absence of joy within the soul; there is an absence of praise in his heart to God; there is an absence of fervent living for God; there is an absence of spiritual response to the Word of God.

There are also the signs of indifference to personal sin, indifference to the worship services, indifference to spiritual growth in God. Eventually, absence and indifference breed bitterness toward true Bible preaching that boldly deals with one's failures. There is bitterness towards others who are going on with God; there is bitterness towards the true brethren. John Flavel, one of the great Puritans of the past declared, "The greatest difficulty in conversion, is to win the heart to God; and the greatest difficulty after conversion, is to keep the heart with God." The only real difference between a backslider and a communing saint or between an apostate and a true child of God is the true posture of the heart.

The Brother with the Brother

There is a unique quality about the term *brother* in regard to the spiritual. More emphasis is placed on a brother in the Bible for closeness of love than any other term. There is a great love in regard to a man and his wife, but Jonathan and David's love, we are told, surpassed that of a woman. Marriage is for the sojourn on earth; however, being one on earth in marriage does not mean that both will be saved in eternity. For there will be no marriage or giving in marriage in heaven. Therefore, a *sister* concept in Christ is closer than a wife when it comes to relationships of eternity. Paul declared this relationship in his words of I Corinthians 9:5, "Have we not power [or right] to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles?" We also read of this in Song of Solomon 4:9, "Thou has ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse." The salvation of both the husband and wife brings their relationship to a higher and deeper meaning than that of marriage—it is tied into the family of God.

The Brother Against the Brother

There is a consistent principle that when truth or right is despised or rejected within a heart, a false brother will begin to hate a true brother. After Cain willfully presented the sacrifice contrary to God's command, he hated Abel. After Esau despised his birthright and what it represented, he hated Jacob. After

Joseph's brethren rejected the truth he told, they hated him. After David told the truth to his brothers about Goliath, they despised him.

In Genesis 4, seven times Abel is designated as Cain's brother. In Genesis 4:5, we are told that Cain, after giving the wrong sacrifice and giving it without faith, was "very wroth, and his countenance fell." Although several reasons account for this, the key reason is *pride*. No doubt since he was the first of the sons, he thought he should have first place with God, just as he had with his parents. But state of birth has no bearing with God. God's verdict was different; Abel was accepted, and Cain was rejected. Cain was the first-born and this rejection by God was a humiliating thing. He was not accepted. How often when a heart is not going on with God secret bitter thought arises against a true brother. Or when a brother is caught in a sin and dealt with, he later surmises a sin in a true brother, becoming obsessed with dark thoughts against that brother. Only heaven knows how deep the evil, dark, and bitter thoughts were that went through Cain's mind after God's rejection of him. Nevertheless, there was the outward evidence of his thoughts: "And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."

"His countenance fell" in the Hebrew expresses that "his face fell." His countenance portrayed his thoughts. His mind was so aroused that it could not rest. When an

individual for the moment cannot inflict harm, his anger will be displayed in the countenance. Oh God! what were the thoughts of Cain's heart every time he saw his *brother*? What powers had now grown within his bosom and fomented every time he conversed, ate, and drank with his *brother*? In I Corinthians 13:5 we are told that love does not behave itself unseemly. The Lord rebuked and warned Cain. How many times has the Lord endeavored to speak to a secretly backsliding individual through messages, conversations from others, warnings from pastors, or teachers, or parents, and through circumstances! Yet, all of these things are despised and progressively hated. Although God endeavors to influence and guide, He will not coerce. There is a season when the conscience and the Holy Spirit are screaming at the Christian beginning his journey away from God; eventually this brother becomes distant and silent in his manner to the true brother. Yes, God warned Cain:

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him (Genesis 4:7).

Sin like a wild animal is always just outside the door waiting for the individual to come out, for the spiritually waning Christian to become sin's possession.

Only stubborn silence precipitated from Cain's heart. He gave way to

his wrath after his contempt for God and His Word. “And Cain spoke to his brother Abel.” Did Cain disguise his wrath and anger before the rest of the family and before Abel until an opportunity of vengeance arose? When Cain took Abel out into the field, what did he speak about? In I Samuel 24:20 Saul spoke these subtle words to hide his hatred against David, who had spared his life again:

And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father’s house.

Did Cain change his outward attitude as part of the ploy? Did his subtle actions give false evidence to his parents and Abel that there was no danger from him? Did he now change his behavior and converse affectionately to the point that even Abel trusted to be alone with him? He speaks as a beloved brother placing Abel off guard. This truly is an insight to the spiritual murderers: every Cain speaks in a brotherly fashion to an Abel. Yet, on the other hand, every Abel trusts Cain like a brother, and so is killed:

For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Be-

cause his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous (I John 3:11,12).

Conclusion

We are going to be witnessing an increase of such powers manifested from backslidden brethren and false brethren within the churches and church leadership. The guise of peace, the flow of honey from their talk, the flatteries of an Absalom, and the “appearance” of harmony will all be used to kill the Abels. David declared in Psalm 28:3,

Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.

It is the nature of a true brother to trust a brother; false brethren, like Cain will take advantage of that trust. “And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him.” Did Abel try to stop him, plead with him, and entreat him? If so, it is evident that Cain did not hearken to his brother Abel. The murder became history. But just as God gave Adam and Eve time to run, sew fig leaves, cover themselves from one another, and hide among the trees before He came to them, God allowed Cain to perform the dark deed of killing Abel and to hide the evidence of the killing. Cain went to the field with his brother, but he came back from the field alone that day. When the Lord did confront him, his angry

response was “Am I my brother’s keeper?” or “Am I suppose to watch my brother all the while?”

Rather than restraining these perpetrations against the true brethren, God is now allowing such dealings and confrontations to take place. Instead of opening the earth and swallowing Korah who attacked the authority of Moses, or instead of Miriam contracting leprosy, God may allow such false individuals to prosper. Rather than sending judgment, God may bring to them a strong delusion as they encamp themselves around God’s saints.

Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit, Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother’s son. These things hast thou done, and *I kept silence*: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes (Psalm 50:19-21). (Emphasis added)

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him (Ecclesiastes 8:11,12).

Such false brethren after slandering a true brother, later attempt to ingratiate themselves expecting the true brother to act as if nothing happened between them. However,

the true brother will keep it clear refusing to cover the sin with “false” family love. God abhors hypocrisy and feigned love among the brethren. Any hope of restoration necessitates true repentance first.

According to I John 3:11-17, abiding in Christ is what prevents hatred against the true brethren. Biblical love is only wrought by the Spirit of God. When He is not present, the nature of the flesh will take its course; part of that course will be hatred against the brethren. This is one of many reasons why backsliding is an enemy to the Body of Christ. When a Christian’s heart begins to leave the Lord, he will automatically become a hypocrite in his ways, especially with the brethren.

I must discern who is a *true* brother, and then understand the heart and life with a brother:

He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even unto now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes (I John 2:9-11).

The false brother will be given to changes in his life that will become more evident when he leaves the true brother, just like the life Lot was given to when he left Abraham. The true brother will remain consistent in his life.

Divisions and separations are coming within churches, dear reader, and they will be of God. He is now bringing His powerful siftings and shakings to even the best of churches, Christian schools, and the Fundamentalist movement. Such workings of God will seal a people in their growing desire for compromise and the contemporary, while the remnant will have to separate and begin the quest to find a church where the Word of God and godly music are still upheld. There will be churches, when God's shaking comes, that will be strong enough to stem the tide of a minority who are trying to change the church to a compromising position; God supernaturally will sift out this ungodly minority.

We will even hear of such brethren influencing older children to rise up against their parents' authority, to separate from godly parents, and to attack such parents in words and actions. They will instigate risings against godly pastors and those who are desiring to stand for the Truth in right living.

Sometimes it is the brother who has been secretly compromising and falling away in backslidings who initiates the separation from a true brother (I John 2:18,19); sometimes it is the true brother who initiates the separation from a backslidden or false brother (II Thessalonians 3:14). It is not the same case in every separation. The Lord uses circumstances, crises, and even at

times misunderstandings to bring out of us all our hearts. Will we be part of the falsity and hypocrisy that so permeate contemporary Christianity, or will we be part of the Elect?

Thank God for the promise that when these siftings and shakings come, not the least of the grain will fall through the sieve (Amos 9:9). God is not only able to "keep us from falling" into hell, but He is also able to keep us from falling into backsliding and into the powers of the apostasy!

Communion

Christ, the Lord, did die for men.
His own death; the pow'r o'er sin.
Glorious death! He died for me;
There upon Mount Calvary.

Union strong, with God is mine!
"One with Him," oh, grace divine.
But my heart must also know
His "communion" here below.

True communion bought for me
By my Saviour on the Tree.
Yes, communion with my Lord
And His saints; oh, blest reward.

Harlot Church: false unity
In days of apostasy.
But true unity must be
With God's saints in purity!

Refrain
Blest communion with the Lord,
Based upon His Holy Word.
And communion is to be
With His saints eternally!

—H. T. Spence

Eighth Congress of Fundamentalists

September 29 - October 1

Theme:

**"For God Hath Not Called Us Unto Uncleaness,
But Unto Holiness"**

Wednesday, September 29th

A Call to the Laodicean Church Age

Dr. H. T. Spence, 7 PM

For God Hath Not Called Us Unto Uncleaness

Dr. W. L. Wade, 8:15 PM

Thursday, September 30th

The Holy Throne of God (Call to Prayer)

Dr. Dennis Lowry, 9 AM

The Call to Holy Living

Dr. Othello Caturan, 10:00 AM

Holiness: The Standard of Acceptable Service

Pastor James Harms, 7:00 PM

Men Who Longed for Holiness

Dr. W. L. Wade, 8:15 PM

Friday, October 1st

The Holy Intercessor (Call to Prayer)

Dr. Dennis Lowry, 9:00 AM

Partakers of Holiness Through Suffering

Pastor James Harms, 10:00 AM

Fundamentalism and Its Need of Revival in Holiness

Dr. Othello Caturan, 7:00 PM

Holiness in Eternity

Dr. H. T. Spence, 8:15 PM

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