

STRAIGHTWAY

“And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.” (Mark 1:18)

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Ask for the Old Paths

Dr. H. T. Spence

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A most appropriate and imperative command for our times is found in Jeremiah 6:16, 17:

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hear-ken.

These words are found as part of the second message Jeremiah gave to what he called “backslidden” Israel and “treacherous” Judah. He cried to his audience the words of Jehovah, “Stand ye in the ways!” It was the Lord’s plea for them to station themselves on or by the roads, or at the meeting point of different roads in order to make inquiry as to the “old paths.”

Antiquity carries with it a presump-

tion of rightness; the ancients were nearer to the days when God spoke with man, often through mighty shepherds appointed by God. Such ancient leaders are viewed in Job 8:8, 9:

For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:).

Although there are many pretended “ways,” there is but one way which has the Lord’s blessing:

And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them (Jeremiah 32:39).

The Lord called through His prophet, yea, His watchman Jeremiah, to stand by the roads and “ask for the old paths.” The strong Hebrew word *ask* means “to demand, to require, to



interrogate." Jeremiah calls for them to ask in order to find the old paths and walk in them. Regretfully, the people's emphatic response was "we will not walk therein." To compound the sad reality of stubbornness and rebellion, they no longer desired a watchman to sound the trumpet from his tower on the wall. Although the prophet warned them, they would not hearken to him.

The Church Is Found Within the World

The growth of movement, church, or Christian institution in its history is accompanied by various dangers. Because Christianity is found in the world (although it is not to be of the world), there is the constant potential of the world system, its philosophy and influence, creeping into the sanctity of Christianity's fortress. Alongside this danger are the ever-in-

creasing powers emerging from the false church.

A previous *Straightway* article[†] presented the distinction between the Wheat and Tares throughout history. The tares were sown almost immediately after the wheat was sown in the book of Acts. It is evident by the language of Matthew 13:25 that the tares were sown among, or around, or on top of the wheat. The epistles of the New Testament prove the tares were within the very churches to which the apostles were writing. Throughout history each has grown alongside the other creating two distinct churches on earth: the remnant true church and the apostate institutional church. The generation in which we live gives clear evidence that the latter church is in control of the public display of Christianity, an apostate Christianity. The remnant true church is getting smaller as we near the coming of Christ.

Christ is the Head of the true church, the remnant, but who is the head of the public church today? The Bible declares several sobering observations concerning the powers that be. First John 5:19 acknowledges that the whole world lieth in the Wicked One. Second Corinthians 4:4 declares that Satan is the god of this world, and three times John will acknowledge that Satan is the prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Satan is also the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), which means that he is the ruler of the demons, who are the powers of darkness that are in this

STRAIGHTWAY

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lower region called “the air.” He can marshal these demons anytime; they are ready to tempt men and do mischief in the earth at his bidding.

Another truth about the Devil is found in Luke 4:5–7. In this passage the Devil takes Christ to a high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. “The world” in verse five is *oikoumene*, or the “inhabited earth.”

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

Though Christ denied the offer, there is coming a man who will accept it, the Antichrist. It is evident from this passage that the Devil controls the inhabited world. Matthew 13:38 clearly relates the fact that the tares are the children of the wicked one, thus declaring the institutional church on earth. As Christ is the Head of the remnant true church on earth, Satan is the Head of the apostate, public Neo-Christian church that is the visible church of Christianity today. The tares and wheat are now so close in the earth, only the Rapture can finally reveal who is who and what is what. Deception is so fine-tuned that “if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24).

This is the greatest hour in the history of the church for deception within the institutional church. Within the institutional church (for we all at-

tend and are affiliated with some church body) both wheat and tares are found. Who is in control of the pulpit, the choir, the church board, the teachers, etc? Is it possible that in one generation wheat Christianity could be in leadership and then in the very next generation a subtle, deceptive tare religion could take over, bringing the people into the influence of Neo-Christianity?

The Proclivity of History

Every generation of leadership must heed the warning of history, including the leadership of Christian churches, denominations, and educational institutions. Although apostasy can take over any Christian entity at any stage of its existence, history reveals a typical pattern of four generations needed to bring about a spiritual demise. Amidst the humanities and frailties of the founding of a godly work, the heart's desire of a genuine founder is for the ministry to be exclusively based upon the Scriptures. He will give his life fighting for the clarity of such a hope. While observing this first-generation leadership, the second-generation leadership will tend to secretly look with disdain on some stands that were taken and the contentions that came from such stands. They will look on the weaknesses of the leadership of the previous generation with hidden mockery. Therefore, they will surmise that neutrality is the better road to take in the battle, although a few stands will be taken to ease the con-

science. Nevertheless, such neutral heart and actions will produce confusion in the thinking of the third generation. The third generation, observing the neutrality in certain areas of the second-generation leadership, will take advantage of the non-committal attitude and bring forth compromising decisions in regard to biblical standards and principles. In turn, this will lead the fourth generation to become bold in its changes, believing such changes are for the benefit and progress of the work of God. This final state of heart is what brings forth apostasy in that ministry. And, sad to admit, the people following these changing leaderships will desire these changes. This is why it is very important for every Christian leader to know where he is in history and thus fight against the natural tendencies that vie for his heart and thoughts in leadership. Can the proclivity of such a history be broken? We dare not believe that such a fourfold decline is a sovereign decree of God, but history has proved it to be the proclivity in the history of denominations, churches, and academic institutions.

A Coming New Breed of Fundamentalists

Fundamentalism is now facing the transition of leadership between the third and fourth generations of its history. What do our youth see as they rise to take over the helm of the ship? What will they ask for when the opportune time comes for their voice to

be heard? The reading of our history reveals that the public Fundamentalism of today is not historic Fundamentalism. The subtle, gradual changes that have been made along the way have now brought to this generation's leadership a new mindset, a new way of viewing the age in which we live, and a new concept of approaching our contemporary.

Though Fundamentalism has endeavored to be strong historically in *ecclesiastical* separation, one of its great weaknesses from its beginning has been its lack in *personal* separation. Because of this deficiency in personal separation throughout its history, we are now witnessing in the third and fourth generations a greater toleration for the absence of dress standards, the inroads of contemporary Christian music, the acceptance of various ungodly TV programs, mixed-bathing in youth camps and church gatherings, and an overall worldly mindset within the church. This is greatly contributing to the sand of a different foundation, which will inevitably yield to the powers of erosion before the world. When this new generation steps forward and gives voice to what it has been thinking for some time now, we will hear a new perspective given; this perspective will not include the old paths of antiquity.

The ancient men were men who walked with God in intimate fellowship; they knew the anointing of the Spirit of God; they preached and prayed with power and conviction;

they were bold in their stand without apology; and they were strong in the trumpet warning. In contrast, our generation believes they have arrived with better methods, better ways of handling the world, better approaches to dealing with the separated brethren, and better ways of facing the MTV generation. Such reasoning will transform the spiritual concepts of Scripture into a different view altogether. Prayer will become more of the protocol for appointed times rather than the constant breathing of the soul in deep seasons of searching; the Scriptures will be viewed more from the scholastic point of view rather than the thirstings and cryings of the heart; preaching will become more professional and scholastic with the absence of heart passion as a result of waiting before God. The prophet's voice will be suppressed, and the watchman on the wall will be told to leave his post of duty.

The Line of Demarcation Is Being Erased

The line of demarcation that existed between the Separatist Fundamentalists and the Neo-Evangelicals is now being intentionally erased through a slow blending of these two identities by the leadership of the next generation. The erasure of the demarcation between the separated beliefs in Evangelicalism and the ecumenical spirit of Neo-Evangelicalism has been prompted by the secret desires of a new generation during their years of

preparation.

The up-and-coming music composers and arrangers have been fascinated by the variations of sound and modern harmony of the Neo crowd. These musicians have been secretly listening to Neo-Evangelical music composers, whom they have now made to be their "models and masters." The musical diet a composer listens to will automatically come out in his writing. If the musical diet is Neo-Christianity, then the music writing will unconsciously be Neo-Christianity.

Then there is the new generation of

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preachers and teachers who have been secretly reading and hearing with admiration the Neo-Evangelical preachers, commentators, and teachers. They have admired their scholastic, tangible growth in the world, their polished presentation of "the gospel," and their greater acceptance by the conservative world.

There once existed a "gray area" between the Separatist way and the Neo-Christian way. God's people were warned for years of that existing gray area: it was that compromising area

through which one would travel to finally arrive at the Neo way and life. But the new leadership coming on the scene is becoming content to live in that gray area, with a greater sympathy for Neo-Evangelicalism than their forefathers had. Accompanying this greater sympathy is an increased accommodation marked with a gentler consideration of the other side of "the camp." Because of this growing sympathy, their thoughts about God, standards, evangelism, education, etc. will change, and the day will arrive when God will allow the "fruit of their thoughts" (Jeremiah 6:19) to become a reality. What was one time only in thought will be emboldened with words and writings. The older men will either step back and say nothing when such thoughts are expressed, or they will rise up for God and demand the old paths, the old separations, the old warnings, and the old message of Truth.

As our Supreme Court is now interpreting the Constitution of the United States according to "public policy" rather than according to what the founding fathers meant, we are witnessing new interpretations to accommodate a new generation rising to take over fundamental churches. They have bided their time while the "ancients" have been slipping away; a new breed is rising to reinterpret and redefine Fundamentalism. Whether acknowledged or not, the key difference between Separatist Fundamentalism and Neo-Evangelicalism is the ab-

sence of biblical separation doctrinally, ecclesiastically, and practically. The "crossover" is coming! It is not Neo-Evangelicals becoming Separatists, but rather Fundamentalists (who have for the most part dropped the term "separatists") are becoming Neo-Evangelicals. There must come a day when someone will rise up and declare the truth of the matter. The music of modern day Fundamentalism has become Neo-Evangelicalism; it has taken on the sound of the contemporary. Many of the churches have already become sympathetic to the Neo crowd. Even the "old" is now being redefined to accommodate the more "up-to-date" views of contemporary Fundamentalism. What will we witness to take place in the name of "progress" and "growth" in the next five years under the discolored banner of Fundamentalism?

Proverbial phrases are now being offered for the whitewashing of the changes taking place. "It is a matter of culture" becomes the reasoning for the diminishing of dress standards that are the product of the world's philosophy; "it is a matter of taste" becomes the logistical reasoning for condoning "worldly" styles of music; "it is a matter of methodology" becomes the reasoning for changes against the Word of God.

We are called upon to *preserve* God's words and works without *change*. It comes down to this question: "Will we preserve or change?" My dear earthly father, Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, often

stated the following as a warning to his students:

If a person changes in human things without those changes being of the Lord and led by the Holy Spirit, he will sooner or later change in the larger truths. A successor of any kind in any ministry carries with his office responsibility of being loyal to three generations: first, the generation which he succeeded; second, his own generation; and third, the generation coming after him. No founder had that responsibility: he only sought root in the earth in his generation in order that there would come fruit in the next generation for his successor.

One may keep the “orthodox” doctrine all the days of his life, but it will be his changes in the policy, standards of holiness, and daily living that will give insight to the change of his heart from the past.

Conclusion

One of the sad contributions for the rise of new thinking in the emerging new Fundamentalism in our present day is the “silence” of the ancients who are still living or who have recently died. As a preacher enters his final years, there can be a subtle intimidation thrown upon him by the leadership of the next generation, implying that he has been too hard, too severe, and too demanding upon the movement, congregation, or student body in calling them to conform to the Word of God. Therefore, the elder preacher is

forced to think that he is archaic, puritanical, and in need of stepping aside for the younger to rise in the ranks of authority and leadership. Because of this subtle intimidation, the ancient tends to back off in demanding principle and in declaring the biblical voice for God. Another reason for his silence is that the up-and-coming youths are his own sons, grandsons, or sons-in-law; there is a natural softness of heart about saying anything to them. Perhaps there is a third reason for silence: the reality of his own failures and sins in certain areas that he personally refused to get right, or certain compromises that became obvious to others. Whatever the reason, God will not forget these dangerous silences. There will come a day when the changes will finally catch up; then, hope of recovery will be too late. It is not so much our present generation that we need to be in touch with; it is the God of our forefathers that we must be in touch with for our generation.

We must pray that we (and I plead for myself) as leaders will not fall prey to the modern mood of new “wrappings” believing these will fortify and strengthen the message of the Gospel and its acceptance for this unique generation. Often such new wrappings are what entice changes, believing they will be good for growth. May God raise up a remnant of preachers, musicians, teachers, and church leaders to stand in their churches, their choirs, their schools, and their homes and ask—yea, plead—for “the old paths, where is

the good way, and walk therein." This article is such a plea. May we not say under our breath, "We will *not* walk therein." May we not cry against the watchman with the trumpet, "We will *not* hearken."

†H. T. Spence, "The End-time Church World of Wheat and Tare Religion" *Straightway*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (May 2005).

"Preacher, Ring the Bell!"

Dr. H. T. Spence

Straightway, August/September 2005

Over the years of my earthly father's ministry, a variety of observations have been made about his preaching. About thirty years ago, while preaching in a Bible Conference, he poured out his heart as he always did in preaching. After a particular service a young boy came up to him and asked, "Why do you preach so loud?" My father knelt down by him and in a gentle voice stated, "Well, young man, I am a bell, and in my preaching I am ringing out warnings to the people about this world, and sin, and the need of living for God. I preach loud and strong, for this is the purpose of a bell. Do you understand?" The young boy responded that he did. About that time his mother came up, and the boy immediately introduced my father to her by stating, "Mom, this preacher is a bell." Of course, my father had to explain the situation to the mother. The young boy throughout the rest of the Bible Conference continued to address my father by saying, "Hello, Preacher Bell."

My father passed away in July of 2000; his bout with Lou Gehrig's disease reduced him from 195 pounds to around 90 pounds at his death. He lost his ability to speak in the last year of

his life, silencing the voice of a prophet. Nonetheless, I will always remember him as one who rang forth the truth of God amidst the neutrality and compromise increasingly evident among so many of his contemporaries. His voice was strong, his words were clear; he was a bell ringing loud and strong amidst the encroaching darkness and fog of the End-time apostasy. Like others who were strong in their preaching, condemning the subtle changes of their times, he has entered into eternity to be with his Savior. The warning bells are becoming fewer and fewer as the rocky shoals of apostate modern Christianity are claiming church after church and ministry after ministry.

The Bell Silenced

There is a story that dates back to the turn of the twentieth century concerning a ship that was anchored for several days off a terribly rocky sea-coast. A buoy was nearby with a bell attached to the top. It had been placed there to warn ships of the imminent dangers of the area. All day and night as the buoy was bobbing up and down in the waves, the bell clanged and clanged. Finally the ship's captain got

so tired of hearing the clanging of the bell that he rode a dinghy over from his ship to the buoy and cut the line that held the bell in place. Down it went, never to ring again.

The captain and the ship left the next day for an appointed destination and some weeks later came back to the same rocky seacoast. This time it was night, and a terrible storm had formed. The mad waves tossed the ship like a little toy. The captain knew he was near the rocks but was unable to see his surroundings. Only now was he regretfully aware he had silenced the bell, the clanging sentinel that had warned of the rocks. Suddenly a rending crash was heard; striking a large rock in the water, the ship was rent in two and all were lost. Having earlier severed the bell, the captain had foolishly destined his ship to destruction.

The last fifty years or more have been marked by a growing apathy and disrespect for the appointed bells of God. Where the once indited "amen" of the congregation accompanied their preaching, the love for such preaching has grown dim. The ever-increasing cares of life and the subtle proclivity toward lukewarmness in our Laodicean age have all contributed to the growing weariness of the people for the bell warnings and the prophet's cries against the destructive rocks and sandbars of the apostasy. God has always had a remnant of men in each generation

who have sounded forth the clarity of the Scriptures with each movement of the waves of the sea of humanity.

More and more today people want the ropes tying the bell to the Scriptures to be severed in order to silence the bell once and for all. This new church age wants to be refreshed with messages of self-esteem, positivism, and that which builds up the human potential. The church has now found its power in the flesh, and there is no longer the need of the Spirit of Truth. Ministers are feeling the pressures to accommodate the complaints of the people who are fed up with the "old path" preaching. The change is for more "upbeat" services, more programs to meet the demands of the social needs of its parishioners, and plans to expand the boundaries of acceptable music and places of entertainment. There is a subtle movement growing in Fundamentalism to become "like other churches" and have what they have and enjoy what they enjoy. The bells that have rung for

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years the clear Word of God with insight to the age are now being cut off. Their silence is now being replaced by the clamor and noise of a contemporary Jesus and a contemporary gospel.

Who are the popular ministers of to-

day? They are those with the smile, with a modified psychology message, and a human-interest story that makes the stressed-out churchgoers feel better in their weak, cold, lifeless Christianity. They are those who make the worldly feel at ease and comfortable while attending church services. They proclaim with open arms the “come-as-you-are” philosophy, and labor at presenting a non-offensive message from God.

The theme of Oral Roberts for many years has been “Something good is going to happen to you.” Now this theme has been interwoven within the popular ministries of our contemporary, although each gives a little different twist to its delivery. While the Spirit of Truth has been intentionally alienated from such churches, the people have been convinced that CCM is the manipulative sound that can actually bring God’s presence into the service like some incantation. The Charismatics for years have claimed the moving power of rock music to be the music of the Holy Ghost.

With such bold teachings by the modern mega church, the bells of biblical preaching have been severed and silenced. According to the Scriptures, the next two God-appointed international preachers will be hated rather than accepted. The two prophets of Revelation 11 (Elijah and Enoch or Moses) will come with judgmental preaching, fire proceeding out of their mouths and devouring their enemies (11:5). The powers of nature will be

under their authority to bring judgment upon the people of the earth. They will be so hated that they will be killed and their bodies left in the streets of Jerusalem:

And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth (11:10).

Perhaps this is the way Christmas will end: the rejoicing over the death of the prophets, the silencing of the bells.

We are now witnessing the silencing of godly bells that have been warning us of the falling away within God’s camp. “Silence the bell! We are tired of hearing his clanging noise about the dangers of our time, the falling away of the churches, the dress standards, and the living standards, and the Neo movements. Let us silence the bell!”

The Hearing of the Word

Amos 8 warns, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.” What is this famine of hearing? Is it a famine of people not wanting to hear the Word of God? Although this certainly is true in our times, this verse is from another perspective.

The absence of the true Word of God being preached is the burden of Amos. A time will come when one will not be able to hear the plain Word of

God. For the prophet Amos goes on to state, "And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and *shall not* find it." It is becoming more difficult to find a pulpit now that is preaching the Word with insight of the times. The remnant that is longing for the pure Word of God is going from church to church, town to town, seeking such a pulpit. A city could have two hundred churches, but are any of them sounding the bell? Yes, "they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and *shall not* find it" (emphasis added). Even in Fundamentalism, churches that give a clear sound of the Word to the times in which we live have become scarce.

A Recent Storm

Our beloved nation was hit in recent days with Hurricane Katrina, which devastated an area almost as large as Great Britain. Levees broke; waters rose to overwhelming flood proportions and inundated miles of land, homes, businesses, and properties. Oil rigs and seaports were destroyed. Our heart truly goes out to the victims of such a tragedy and the bereaved families of some estimated ten thousand who may have died. It will take years to recover, and perhaps we will never recover from the financial cost to our country.

We must remember that God is in control of the powers of nature. Will this latest disaster be viewed by any-

one in the light of God? Hurricanes Fran and Floyd hit our own state of North Carolina several years ago; we must understand it the same way. Anytime such a tragedy hits a city or nation it is a judgment from God. God does not send nations to hell; He judges them in their lifetime either by using other nations to conquer them or by tragedies such as storms, earthquakes, and tsunamis. Our nation is now witnessing almost constant attacks by the providences of God; what is yet ahead of us? God-fearing men have been warning us for years of the judgment of God being "overdue" because of our ever-growing national sins. We are now witnessing increasing natural catastrophes throughout the world; they may be preludes of more to come.

One only needs to read the historical account of the deep sins of Pompey to get the greater meaning to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Many of Pompey's citizens were solidified by molten lava in the very acts of sin, testifying for posterity to their deep wickedness.

Christ prophesied of the destruction of Jerusalem accomplished in A.D. 70 by the army of Titus. Christ declared the following:

For these be the days of vengeance that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in

the land, and wrath upon this people (Luke 21:22, 23).

This principle is given time and time again in the Scriptures beginning with the universal Flood in the days of Noah and the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sometimes God's remnant is spared or kept (as was Noah and later Lot). But there are times God's people, though innocent of the wrong, suffer in the judgment of a nation or city (such as Jeremiah and Daniel, and no doubt millions of babies that died in the Flood and were the innocent victims in the burning of Sodom).

Certain cities hit in this recent storm were given over to festivities of open sin, such as Mardi Gras, and to the powers of witchcraft, voodoo, all forms of occult, gambling, drugs, alcohol, and the dark life accompanying the Jazz world of music. The city of New Orleans was to once again witness the gathering of well over 100,000 sodomites over the Labor Day weekend. In spite of the flooding, there still were a few sodomites that met for their annual "Decadence Parade" Labor Day weekend.

Many buses were sent to evacuate the people before the hurricane, but residents refused to leave. How like the people in the days of Noah and the building of the ark—no one wanted to enter that ark of salvation before the Flood came.

As to when the cup of iniquity of a city or nation is full, God is the only One who knows. However, there is another principle that must be viewed:

God never sends a judgment without warning. What remnant of voices, of bells, has rung over the years warning these communities of God's concern? The question may be asked why God chooses one city in judgment and not another which seems to be worse. But we must believe "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25). We are in the prelude of such disasters hitting this planet; more are yet to come. Yea, the whole earth in the Tribulation Period will groan against man and nations because of their sins against the Almighty and Eternal God.

The Bell of Preaching

One of the final spiritual commands of the apostle Paul to Timothy was to "Preach the Word!" (2 Timothy 4:2). In Isaiah 58:1 God commanded Isaiah, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." These are the words of a true preacher for his times! He was a bell ringing clear the warnings; as the sea waves roar even louder, God's bells will get louder.

But where are such men today? Most ministers have become sedatives crying, "peace, peace," even when there is no peace. It is evident they lack the anointing of the Holy Spirit; they are given to lightness, levity, and frivolity. When they gather for fellowship, it is not for prayer and serious conversations around the Word, but for golf or to talk of cars, sports, and

the World Series. Biblical words are rare. The bell heart and life are not evident.

God's man must be consumed with his calling. The preacher *must* preach the Word of God. It is the greater, God-appointed method. It is higher than theatrical drama, dialogue, puppets, concerts, so-called "Christian psychology," and other forms of human methodology that the modern church now believes is needed to "reach this generation for Christ." It is still true, in this day when the church is given to carnality and endeavoring to live the Christian life through the power of the flesh, that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). Christian schools and Bible colleges are leaving off the spiritual training of their students preparing for the ministry. They substitute for Bible preaching the art of a non-offensive message and manner.

The bell heard in the crying and weeping of the prophets of old ... heard in the clear, loud voice dealing with sin,

as John the Baptist and Jesus Christ Himself ... heard in the unapologetic proclamation of "Thus saith the Lord"... and heard in the Pentecost preaching that heralds with power, "Save yourselves from this untoward

generation" ... all these bells have been cut off, severed from the present concept of preaching. John Knox, the great preacher of Scotland declared, "When I preach I am not master of myself, but I must obey Him who has commanded me to speak plain, and to flatter no flesh on the face of the earth."

Conclusion

One of the great reasons we are losing our way as a professing people of God is that we have allowed certain men to tamper with the chart and compass that God has appointed to get us through this sin-laden, end-time, falling-away time in history. It is important that *every* preacher keep ringing the bell! We must not allow the shifting tides of personal opinion to dominate or the howling winds of false doctrine to manipulate our thinking. We must remain true to the Word of God for our moral standards and not allow the subtle belief, "if it feels good, do it," or "nobody is going

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to tell me what to do," to cause the voice of Scripture to be silenced.

Though the world is against the Word of God and the men who represent that Word, the sad reality of our times is that the professing people of

God, the congregations themselves, are cutting the bells from the buoys that God has established for His people. *It is a gift from God when a congregation is given a bell in the pulpit; it is a judgment from God when He takes such a bell away.* If providence gives you such a man, respect him, encourage him to preach the unadulterated Word, praying that God will keep him from the powers that are out to sever his appointed burden of warning and guidance.

Preacher, Preacher! Ring the bell!
You must be God's sentinel!
Lift your voice: a bell to toll!
Warn the apathetic soul!

Churches sleep with lifeless creed!
They believe they have no need!
You must sound the truth of God,
Seeking not the world's applaud!

Preacher, Preacher! Ring the bell!
Enemies now rise from hell!
Churches love carnality!
End Time brings apostasy!

The Cutting of the Bell

—H. T. Spence—

On rocky shore, near Fundy Bay
A bell did toll on buoy grey.
The buoy tossed with ringing bell
To warn the ships of rock and swell.
The buoy rocked from side to side;
As bell did toll from tide to tide.
It rang and clanged its warning sound
For ships to keep from rocks renown.
One evening found a ship near coast;
Its anchor fast, asleep its host.
Yet one, its captain, was in plight,
For sound of bell caused sleepless night.
He soon arose, and dinghy found,
And rowed to tossing buoy's sound.
Disgusted with the clang it wailed,
He cut the rope that held its bell.
Returning to his ship to sleep,
And next day sailed to waters deep.
When voyage took him weeks away,
He then returned to Fundy Bay.
He entered bay in thunderstorm
With winds and waves in divers form.
He could not see the rocks and reef;
Relentless squall gave no relief.

He strained his ear to hear the bell
That sounded forth where rocks do dwell.
But there was no bell to be found
To give him needed warning sound.
The captain knew he cut the rope!
The bell was gone; there was no hope!
His ship then struck the rocks with force,
He lost the ship with deep remorse.
The bell that rang, and rang, and rang,
He hated once in sleepless pang.
Yet now the silent, warning hope
Was down in sea—he cut the rope!
Oh, how the world and church despise
When preacher's voice and words arise
To warn of compromise and sin!
He rings the bell of truth for men!
The cry is heard, "O Bell, give way!
Your peal for truth, we'll not obey!
We'll cut the rope; we'll let it fall:
We want no Word that's biblical!
At end of life when God will say,
"I judge you now a castaway,"
You'll long to hear the preacher's bell;
But it's too late! Your verdict: hell!

The Beloved Versus the Behated

Part One

Dr. H. T. Spence

Straightway, October/November 2005

Among the twenty-seven precious books that comprise the eternal canon of the New Testament, there stands the epistle Jude next to the end. Although brief, its approximately six hundred words are of profound importance for the days in which we live. Of the New Testament's four short epistles (Philemon, 2 and 3 John, Jude), Jude is the fullest in burden. Its providential placement in the biblical canon honorably makes it a *preface to the book of Revelation*. Appropriately, the message of this little book concerns the falling away of the institutional church on earth before the Second Coming of the Lord. It is the epistle that contrasts the Beloved of God and the Behated of God in history.

To appreciate this spiritual concept in history, the reader must consider a startling truth at the outset of this article: *the New Testament writings were not penned until the institutional church began to fall away*. This is most important to observe when studying the first and second generations of the first-century church.

The Falling-Away Visible Church

On the Day of Pentecost there were already at least some five hundred believers having seen Christ after His resurrection. Then on that day another three thousand souls were saved.

Christianity was a new experience, never known before in history; it was the new wine that Christ spoke of in Luke 5:37–39. What does one do with this new wine? The great temptation would be to place it in the old wine bottles of Judaism, for this was all that they knew. That is what happened through the Judaizers; they endeavored to pour Christianity into old Judaism. When this new faith commenced, there were dangers that it would soon face. In passages such as Matthew 13, 24, and 25, Christ had warned of this danger.

By A.D. 45, fifteen years after the ascension of Christ, James gave us an insight into the Jewish church. In these short years the new church became noticeably filled with much carnality and weakness. In chapter one James speaks of their frailty in times of testing and in the temptations to evil. Chapters three and four address the fleshly power of the tongue and worldliness that were bringing grief to the testimony of Christ. The burden of James is contemporary to the events of Acts 13 where the Lord begins to move the burden of the Gospel from the Jews to the Gentiles. As the rest of the New Testament epistles begin to unfold, there is the clear evidence of the birth and emergence of a neo-Christianity troubling the true church. Paul speaks of “another Gospel” com-

ing to the Galatians (chapter 1); he writes and warns the Corinthians of another spirit and another Jesus (2 Corinthians 11) coming in among them. John writes of antichrists that had infiltrated the church congregations (1 John 2) and of those who professed to be born again but were not. Peter in his second epistle warns of false prophets and teachers privately coming in among the saints, and Paul warns of wolves from without and from within (Acts 20) coming to spoil the flock. A falling away was already deeply entrenched by the end of the first century within the church on earth.

After the death of Peter and Paul, but before the writings of John, the powerful epistle of Jude was written. Of the six men called Jude or Judas in the New Testament, Jude or Judas the son of Mary and Joseph was the author of this epistle. He is mentioned in Mark 6:3; 1 Corinthians 9:5 seems to suggest that as a brother of the Lord he may have had a wife to accompany him on his missionary journeys. Tradition, quoted by Eusebius, tells of the grandchildren of Jude who were brought before the Emperor Domitian (A.D. 81–96). According to John 7 none of the siblings of Joseph's home had believed on Jesus as the Christ during

His ministry; however, it is evident by Acts 1:14, in the upper room, that they came to believe on Him after the Resurrection. This half-brother of the Lord is the one to write, with great warning to the church, about the in-

creasing falling away. His writing is closely related to Peter's second epistle.

Clearly, a departure from the Faith began early in the first-century church and continued to

gather momentum in the later part of the century. The book of Jude seems to be a prophetic history of the growing apostasy that will finally take over the public view of the Christian Faith before the coming of the Lord.

It is clearly stated in his introduction that Jude is writing to believers! He calls them the "sanctified," the "preserved," the "called," and in verse 3 the "beloved." Each generation has had those sealed with this understanding. There have been the sanctified, those who have an intense desire for the holiness of God and holiness of life. There have been the "called." These have responded to the powerful call of the Gospel; an effectual call has laid hold of their lives. And there have been the "preserved," those kept by or for Jesus Christ. No matter how dark and evil the days become, no matter how strong the current of the apostasy

**No matter how dark and evil
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how strong the current of the
apostasy swells, there
continues to be the sanctified,
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swells, there continues to be the sanctified, the preserved in Jesus Christ, and the called ones who continue to hear that calling.

Who are these sanctified, these preserved, these called ones, and these beloved? Often we have seen men who started out for God, led ministries according to the Word of God, and then capitulated to the gradual falling away of their contemporaries. Only the end of our life will truly determine whether we are a part of that quartet of character sealed by heaven. So many clamor for “eternal security,” but such a security is only for those who will know this quartet of character to the end of life; they are the true Elect. The test of this security is found in John 10:27: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” All of these verbs are in the present tense. “And I give unto *them* eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (v. 28, emphasis added). Eternal Security outside of its biblical context is never promised.

The Purpose of Jude’s Epistle

According to verses 3 and 4, it was upon Jude’s heart to write an epistle to the Christians concerning the common salvation. What Christian heart would be against a Gospel of evangelism? The common salvation is the matchless story of God’s love revealed in the Son of God Who died for our sins, was buried, and rose on the third day. The heights and depths of this

salvation have never been fully fathomed!

Yes, this common salvation was to be the theme to the Beloved of the Lord. *But something happened!* The power that guided his pen constrained Jude to write about something else. What could be greater and more necessary than the common salvation, yea, than evangelism? Well, from God’s standpoint there is something greater than evangelism and that is earnestly contending for the Faith that was once and for all delivered unto the saints! Jude’s writing here truly demonstrates that the men who wrote the Scriptures did not write what they wanted but what God wanted them to write!

What Is “the Faith”?

“The Faith” is not a creed or a confession of faith, as formulated by a denomination or segment of Christians. The Faith is that which was *once* (in the aorist, “once for all”) delivered unto the saints. We read of this Faith in Luke 18:8, “when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” These words were spoken prior to Origen, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Arminius, and all of the church Fathers and Reformers. We are not speaking of a theological system but of “the Faith.” This is the embodiment of revealed truth, the Word of God! This Faith was once for all delivered unto the saints. It was not delivered to the world, to Mel Gibson and Hollywood, or to any one saint to write and

claim the whole embodiment of Truth. It was written to the saints! It is permanent, irrevocable, and unchanging!

Jude exhorted his audience to “earnestly contend” for this faith. How do we earnestly contend for this faith? We do so by living it: by constancy, zeal for the truth, holiness of life, mutual exhortation, prayer, suffering for the Gospel’s sake. But we do it also by defending it against all those who would pervert the Gospel. We must contend by struggling, fighting, combating, and battling against the opposition of this Faith. It truly is a twofold contending: militant against the apostasy, yet magnificent (in the way we live) for the Lord.

Certain Men Crept in Unawares

There have been, are, and will be those who corrupt this Faith! They come in the name of Christianity—certain men, who have crept in! They have secretly slipped into the fold! In John 10:1 Christ stated that if someone comes in any other way than through the door, that one is a thief and a robber. He has come in to destroy either secretly (thief) or openly (a robber). God has foretold of such men. They pretend to be Christian but live as ungodly men; they have no true regard for God in their thinking and actions of life. The evil they try to introduce is twofold: (1) They deny holy living endeavoring to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness and abusing the grace of God; they belittle biblical separation in the life and ministry. (2)

They deny the Lordship of God and Jesus Christ by denying Christ the right to be the Lord and Master and denying the Father His rights as Lord of the life.

The Behated of God

The child of God must understand in reading the epistle of Jude that God hates some people; He hates apostates. Jude warns the Beloved of the Behated! Such a concept of a Behated must not surprise us. Romans 9:13 states, “as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” (see also Deuteronomy 1:27; 9:28; Hosea 9:15; Malachi 1:3; Revelation 2:6,15). There are the Beloved of God, and there are the Behated of God. The Behated are the “Christian” apostates. The next few verses of Jude deal with such individuals. In verses 5–10, Jude speaks of apostates of past history and how God judged each of them. *The only antidote to apostasy is judgment.* There is no recovery; there is no remedy for apostasy.

In verse 5 Jude deals with the Israelites who came out of Egypt and were destroyed in the wilderness because they believed not. He then deals with the angels who kept not their first estate. Thirdly, he warns of Sodom and Gomorrah and the judgment on those cities. And fourthly, in verse 9 he speaks of Michael contending with the Devil about the body of Moses. These are not given in historical, chronological order but are in a spiritual order. The starting point of apostasy is *unbe-*

lief (Israel); unbelief leads to *rebellion* against God (the angels); rebellion leads to *going after strange flesh* (Sodom and Gomorrah), which could be natural or spiritual strange flesh; and strange flesh leads to *anarchy* and *lawlessness*, apostasy's final frontier.

In verse 11 Jude gives a further description of the apostates. The Spirit of God pronounces a woe upon them. We are reminded of Cain, a religious man but not a man of faith and of the blood; he hated the godly Abel. Apostates are known for their *works* but not for their *faith*. We then are reminded of Balaam, who taught error for reward. We see this today in those who are teaching error for money, for praise, or to make their churches and ministries larger. They will twist and pervert the truth, whatever it takes, in order to gain what they want for their ministries. A third personality is presented in the apostate Korah who gave open rebellion and opposition to the authority of God and God's appointed leadership. From here Jude lists the characteristics that mark such men (verses 12, 13).

Enoch, the Seventh From Adam

Jude, in the unfolding of his powerful epistle brings us to Enoch. This beloved, godly man lived near the end of an age, an age that closed with the Flood. He walked with God; he pleased God. Enoch represents the true saint, the remnant, the Beloved at the end of the church age, the Laodicean age. He is the one waiting

for the translation, the Rapture; he is the one walking in communion with God, whose life and preaching are pleasing God. He is the one who rose up in his preaching, declaring that the Lord would come to "execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (verse 15). Oh, where are the Enoch preachers of our time? Such preachers are those who deal with and call the names of those rising up as apostates of their times.

We are looking for that translation of God's saints! But while we are waiting for such a departure from this earth, it is imperative for us to be walking with God, pleasing God, and preaching against the apostasy of our times. Such is the true remnant preacher of this Laodicean age. If these characteristics do not mark a man's preaching, he is part of the contemporary "tare" Christianity of our times.

The Closing Words to the Beloved

In verse 17 Jude gives needed exhortation to the Beloved on how to live amidst apostates. He urges, "Remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is our only hope in these days when the Word of God is being changed, diluted, mongrelized, adulterated, and manipulated to be a supporter of the contemporary and the

compromises that are taking place within the institutional church. Yes, we must hold the Word of God fast! Keep reminding ourselves of these words. The scoffers are coming; they are and will continue to scoff the godly life and the biblical standards by which the Beloved live. The tares are in their greatest hour; they dominate the field over the wheat. They do not have the Spirit of God in their services, in their preaching, and in their music (verse 19c). They know how to speak with swelling words to move the crowd (verse 16), to work them into a frenzy; but they have not the Spirit of God! They have learned the professional way and are well-endowed with the showmanship, using high-tech equipment and building mega-church facilities. But they have not the Spirit of God!

How is the Elect, the remnant, to live in such days as described in this epistle? Jude gives us these words:

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, do-

minion and power, both now and ever. Amen (Jude 20–25).

May God empower His remnant to be resolute, tenacious, and empowered by His Spirit to live through this most deceptive time in church history. May we rise to fight the good fight of Faith, having on the armor of God, watching unto prayer, and longing for the hour when the wheat and tares will be permanently separated, each to his appointed, eternal place. We may be living in the generation when such a separation and respective harvest will occur. There are those, perhaps even of our own family, who are in the apostate system through ignorance of heart; there is hope for them. These we must deal with in compassion or sometimes by pulling them out of the fire. We must do this with fear, lest any *fleshly* spotting of our own garments affects us. Nevertheless, we cannot afford to help certain ones if our own life or family is placed in jeopardy. We cannot abide in a church that is capitulating to the contemporary, giving itself over to the changes of the times. While believing we will be of a restraint to unbiblical changes, we may be losing our children to the powers of a failing system. From such situations we must separate as soon as possible, turning that church over to God to deal with. Although He is not affected by the apostasy in His workings, we definitely are!

Let us rise above these subtle powers of apostasy that are now swarming like virus-carrying mosquitoes in the

churches today. A fresh, daily faith in Christ and His Word is the only way to overcome such powers. We pray for the

Beloved of God, but we pray not for the apostasy.

The Beloved Versus the Behated

Part Two

Dr. H. T. Spence

Straightway, October/November 2005

The previous article noted the Holy Spirit's providential appointment of the epistle of Jude as a preface to the book of Revelation. Jude is the crucial book prophetically dealing with the falling away of the institutional church on earth throughout its history. By A.D. 45 this falling away had already commenced in the church. Another Gospel, another Spirit, and another Jesus were being proclaimed by false Christs and false teachers already coming like wolves into the fold to spoil the flock.

The church in its earliest and purest form only knew true Christianity. Did the Apostles know what was beginning to come among their own? Within fifteen years, at the writing of James' epistle, the problems were beginning to become evident. Thirty years later, Jude's epistle reveals a deepening of the apostasy to epidemic proportions.

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares

We have referred to the parable of the wheat and tares in a previous article in *Straightway* (May 2005); a review here would be most appropriate. From this second parable given by the Lord in Matthew 13, it is evident that

Christ, the Son of man, is He Who sowed the wheat seed (the true Christians). But while men slept His enemy came and sowed tares. The Greek here is literally "sown upon" or "sown again"—over the top and around the wheat seed. At first, the men did not seem to be concerned about this sowing, as if the tares could not affect or injure the wheat. They were together, almost on top of one another. There were two sowings in one field, and they initially looked alike.

This parable reveals there would be two churches in that first century, two Christianities that would be very close to one another: one church with Christ as the Head, and another church with the Devil as the head; one seed being the children of the Kingdom, and one seed being the children of the Wicked One. Truly the Devil wasted no time in entering into the fold of the flock. Eventually there comes a time when the tares are requested to be pulled out. This request is only to be fulfilled at the end of the harvest, or the end of the world (Gr., "the age"), or the church age.

From this parable it becomes strikingly clear that the End Time will be

the most crucial hour, the end of the harvest age. Although the tares are destined for hell and the wheat for heaven, their separation comes at the end of the age. Thus, the End Time is the critical point in history when this separation will finally take place. The End will be the harvesting, when both tares and wheat will be at their most mature moment.

This is the greatest hour of the apostasy. We are witnessing "men of renown" as in the time of the days of Noah. In Numbers 16:2, Korah and the two hundred fifty princes who sided with him against the appointed authority of Moses were called "men of renown." While these tares are reaching their fullest maturity, so are the wheat.

The Enigmas of the End Time

The End Time will be the most complex time in history when the ends of all generations will come to maturity (1 Corinthians 10:11b). All of the off-spring philosophies of the mother philosophy Humanism are coming back home. Amalgamations are taking place in every sphere of society.

When the Scriptures deal with the last days, a number of puzzling truths step forward. According to Acts 2:16, 17, the "last days" began with the first coming of Christ to earth. First Timothy 4 seems to be a prophetic description of the first part of these "last days"

with the rise of the Roman Catholic church. In contrast, 2 Timothy 3 appears to be the description of the last part of the "last days" with the falling away of Protestantism. John's Gospel speaks of the "last day" (11:24; 12:48), and 1 John 2:18 speaks of the "last time" or the "last hour."

What are some of the enigmas of the

This is the greatest hour of the apostasy. We are witnessing "men of renown" as in the time of the days of Noah.

"last day" or the End Time? One enigma is found in the parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25. It must be noted with candor that

all ten were *virgins*. All had lamps, wicks, oil, and light; all slumbered and slept; all awoke; and all knew what they needed. However, we are told that five were foolish regarding their lack of additional oil. They all heard the voice announcing the coming of the Bridegroom. The five foolish went to gain more oil. While they went, the Bridegroom came, and the foolish virgins quickly returned to the door crying, "Lord, Lord, open to us." But He answered and said, "I know you not." This event will happen at the coming of Christ. How one will interpret this passage depends upon what his theological system will allow him to see. How will an individual interpret the five foolish virgins?

A second enigma concerns the wheat and tares of Matthew 13. Matthew 13:41 records that the reapers are "angels." This word in the

Greek is *angelos* meaning “messenger.” Understandably, most of the time the word *angelos* refers to the heavenly creatures. However, Revelation 2 and 3 clearly use the word *angel* referring to a human being, the pastors of the churches. It is to the pastor or the messenger of that church that the letter is written. Are the angels in Matthew 13 the heavenly creatures who will divide the true church from the false church, or are they the remnant messengers through whose preaching this division will take place? In Matthew 13:41 these reapers (whoever they are) will “gather out of his [God’s] kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.” We must remember that the tares are people, the children of the wicked one who are sown among the children of the kingdom. Those “that offend” are those who become a stumbling block to the sons of the kingdom. They are active workers of lawlessness. Matthew 24:24 gives the following warning:

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; inso-much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

These prophets will try to deceive and destroy the Elect. This is a very important principle to note: *the tares are out to destroy and deceive the wheat.* They are an offense; they are workers of iniquity. Matthew 7:22 also warns us:

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

They were definitely identified with Christ and Christianity, but they were part of the tares of the Wicked One.

The Beloved Versus the Behated Through History

In his epistle Jude addresses the Beloved amidst the Behated. Although the apostasy, or the falling away, has been suppressed and restrained at times in church history, God has always had His sanctified, preserved, called, and beloved ones. In the first century John the beloved, the last of the Apostles to contribute to the canon of Scripture, represented “the Beloved” saints amidst the Behated apostates. His great warnings throughout his five books give evidence that the apostasy and false Christianity were increasing. He especially endeavored to suppress false teaching in his three epistles.

In the fourth century when Constantine legalized Christianity, the tares began to flourish within the visible church. There was some suppression and recovery through the powerful, anointed preaching and writing of Alexander of Alexandria, Athanasius, and the Cappadocian boys. However, under Theodosius I the church fell back even deeper allowing the barbar-

ian fowls to come and lodge within the branches of the tree of the church. Following the Dark Ages, God raised up men such as John Wycliffe and the great Reformation leaders to once again suppress the mighty powers of the tares in the church. As a result, a great exodus from Roman Catholicism took place.

By 1600 Rationalism took over the Protestant church and a falling away increased; often as God brings deeper light to His people, any defection from that light is deeper than previous defections. In the 1700s the Holy Spirit inspired a hunger and thirst for God that was unprecedented in history. No matter what theological system one held then, there was a fervent hunger for heart purity and holiness of life manifested within the messages and hymns. This was the time of awakenings and revivals on both sides of the Atlantic. It truly was the greatest spiritual move of God since the first-generation church.

The mid-1800s and early 1900s witnessed an inroad of apostasy that was again unprecedented. The tares deepened their powers of persuasion and infiltration. For the first time, the belief of biblical inspiration was being denounced. The birth of both higher and lower Biblical Criticism along with Liberalism, Modernism, Neo-Orthodoxy, and the strong influence of Existentialism in hermeneutics brought the powers of neo-Christianity to mega proportions.

To this plethora of tare theology a

final element called Neo-Pentecostalism has been introduced to bind together a global neo-emphasis of the End-time church. Neo-Pentecostalism brought an emphasis upon a new Holy Ghost, a new Pentecost. This glue to unite all church tares and to attempt to deceive the Elect evolved into the Charismatic movement. With Charismatism the ecumenical world was brought into full solidarity producing sympathy towards a one-world, global religion. All of this has profoundly affected the liturgy of the church, including its music and the multitude of Bible versions flooding the commercial market. America has become the leading force of this global apostasy.

Although Fundamentalism was born in reaction to this powerful, final surge of the maturation of the tares, many Fundamentalists today are steadily feeding upon both Neo-Orthodox and Neo-Evangelical writers. Their personal libraries are filled with such authors. More and more Fundamentalists are becoming convinced that the "neo" way is the right way if we are going to survive as a plausible Christian identity in the new generation. Our composers and arrangers have been secretly listening with rapt attention to the neo-composers, and such a musical diet is beginning to permeate their own compositions.

The sad reality of this final end-time surge of the tares is that there will be no recovery this time: the principles and lines of demarcation have been permanently erased. Evangelism has

been redefined; the Bible text has been redefined. The New Birth has been redefined by the Billy Graham viewpoint as a “decision” or simply the power of the human will. The Holy Spirit, Holiness, and now even the church have all been redefined; we will never get back to the original biblical definitions within the institutional church. Even Fundamentalism is being redefined by professing Fundamentalists.

We will never be able to publicly return to biblical principles in America. For the first time in Western Civilization, since the days of Constantine, there has been a redefining of God and the Revelation of His Word. This is why God Himself has permitted prayer, the Bible, the Ten Commandments, and Christianity itself to be taken out of our schools and places of government. The Reconstructionists, and those who hope to turn the government around, do not see the biblical principles concerning the End Time. The Christianity they desire to implement in the government is a Neo-Christianity, not a biblical one. When running for President, Pat Robertson in his book *The Secret Kingdom* believed all of the promises of the Millennium would be enacted if Christians could take over the government. This Neo-Christianity, the church of the Tares, will eventually merge with all other religions to become the Woman riding the back of the Beast (the Antichrist) of Revelation 17.

The End of the Church Age

The Laodicean Church Age is the last and yet the worst of all the church periods of history. It is the result of a falling away from one of the greatest spiritual moves of God on earth since the first generation church. Laodicea as a church age has fallen from the highest spiritual pinnacle, the Philadelphia Church Age. “These things saith the Amen” (Revelation 3:14). This is the benediction of the church age. The characteristics described in Revelation 3:15–17 have only deepened in the past one hundred fifty years. We are at the end. Even Rome fears the next pope will be the antichrist pope, according to the Malachy (Malachi) writings. Charismatic leaders are declaring their greatest visions and dreams now to imply we are on the verge of the greatest hour in history. Protestant believers are convinced that God is moving to bring all of the religions together to help build for man the great utopia. There truly is expectancy in the atmosphere of religion and global government—for either global destruction or global unification.

Conclusion

Amidst all that has been said, this is the greatest hour to be a Christian. If this is the end time of the coming to maturity of the tares, then this is also the end time of the coming to maturity of the wheat. The wheat expectantly await the harvest!

Jude tells us there are the sanctified,

the preserved, the called, and the beloved. These are here on the planet today. But what does Jude exhort them? How are they to wait for this harvest, this coming of the Husbandman (James 5:7)? He gives the following exhortation:

Remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit (Jude 17-19).

The mockers are coming! They will mock the wheat's worship, music, standards, Bible, message, their separation, their stand, etc. They know how to intimidate and belittle the true child of God, as they grow greater in the eyes of the world. They will even try to isolate the godly from their meetings, their preaching, and their fellowship. Nevertheless, they will not have the Spirit!

"But ye beloved . . ." What is the contrast of the Beloved with the Behated? The Beloved have a life for God! They are "building" up their life on their most holy faith; they are "praying in the Holy Ghost"; they are "keeping" themselves in the love of God; and, they are "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." All of these verbs are in the present tense; there is the day-by-day living of the Beloved.

However, we must discern and look

for those whose roots are entangled with the tares under the soil, for those who are growing up alongside of the tares in churches or families. Of them we must "have compassion, making a difference." There are some who may see what is happening and will "come out from among them." There will be others whom we will have to strongly warn, calling names to make clear these tares. At the same time, we will have to save them with fear, with self-trembling as to how far to go with them, because we do not want to be burnt by the apostasy, by the power of the tares.

We may wonder how we are going to make it through this apostate age, when it seems that most churches have gone the way of all flesh and have joined the contemporary religious scene to visibly survive. But there is this promise: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling." The Greek even deepens the promise in that Christ is able to keep us from *stumbling*.

One day we are going to stand before God, having come out of this wilderness of earth, the worst days of the church, leaning hard upon our Beloved (Song of Solomon 8:5). He is going to present us faultless "before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." We who came from the dunghill of sin, we who were born in sin and plucked from the burning of sin, will stand one day before God faultless. We will stand in a glorified body, with a glorified will and mind,

and love Him with an unsinning heart. When we are made higher than the angels, the only thing we will be able to declare before them is GRACE!

May God keep us, preserve us, and protect us from the End-time powers of the tares' deception and the calcu-

lating powers of apathy, indifference, coldness of heart, lukewarmness, neutrality, and compromise. May He also raise up men anointed by the Holy Spirit to defend the Faith and to declare the Word of God with boldness and without apology.

Featured Sermon Set

11th Congress for the Christian Remnant

October 2023

"The Burden of Jeremiah for Our Times"

"The Burden of End-Time Powers Rising Within Global Governments"

"The Burden of the Battle Against the Bible"

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