

FALSE FAITH

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(From the Law of Faith)

Chapter Twenty

LIKE anything else, such truths concerning finding God's will can be abused. But so could Paul's emphasis on justification by faith. He did not, however, for that reason refrain from stating the truth. He knew that if there were a few who would turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, misinterpreting liberty as license, there were multitudes of others who would revel in and rightly use the glorious liberty of the children of God.

So it is in the truth of the endless resources of God at the disposal of faith, and the fact that faith can be exercised to supply the every-day desires of every-day life. Some few will seek the quails and get them with leanness to their souls, for there is a Satanic as well as a God-centred, Spirit-guided faith, a faith that can remove mountains but which is not motivated by divine love. There is a sense in which faith is a law of nature, which can be operated on another level under the control of another spirit, motivated by self-will and self-love with purely selfish ends. There is a god of this world as well as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is an evil spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience, as well as the Holy Spirit. There is a prince of this world who has resources at his disposal, the kingdom, power and glory which he offered Jesus, and which he said that he would give to whom he would.

All forms of human achievement are by faith, as has already been pointed out. All draw on the resources of the universe, material, mental, spiritual. The building of a business, the carrying through to success of an enterprise, great or small, the acquirement of knowledge, all require faith in varying degrees and on differing levels. There are regular "spiritual" sciences¹ which are built on this truth. They have their followers and their

¹ Christian Science, New Thought, Unity, and others.

large measure of success; indeed, they have lessons that they could teach us in the practice of faith. But their foundations are devilish, not divine, for few of them will confess that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" and that "Jesus is the Son of God", the tests given by John by which we are to "try the spirits whether they are of God".

Sorcery, witchcraft, black magic, and such-like practices work on the same principle, only that they acknowledge the direct intercourse of faith with "wicked spirits in heavenly places", and openly draw their power from them; whereas the teachers of "spiritual science" are much more subtle, in that they centre their doctrine on one aspect of God which they take to the utmost extreme, to the exclusion of the counter-balancing aspect which is equally stressed in the Scriptures.

They are an example of the pitfalls which yawn before those who do not open their minds to every aspect of the truth revealed in God's Word. They select with delight that phase of truth which specially appeals to them, and run upon it as hidden treasure. They explore and develop it until they seem to see it alone on every page of Scripture, to the exclusion of anything which seems to give an opposite point of view; and what could have been a healthy re-emphasis to the Church of Christ of some truth which has been neglected is transmuted instead into deadly error.

Thus these teachers, who have something real to say to us on the immanence of God, could be a healthy counterbalance to an overemphasis on His transcendence (which leaves so many Christians with a sense of distance from I-Am, and consequent weakness, diffidence, joylessness) They rightly see God as the One Mind behind all creation, the I AM who is in and through everything, the Life of all lives; but, in thus concentrating upon His immanence, they neglect the equally necessary truth of His transcendence, His separate being, His dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto. They carry to the furthest extreme the teachings of the mystics in >the unity of the soul with God: to a point beyond that which in .most cases the mystics themselves

would have intended it to be taken; for it must be remembered that those giant spirits, to whom we give the name of mystics,² are men and women through the centuries who have left us at the foothills, while they have climbed the spiritual uplands and stood in the presence of God. They have been caught up with Paul into the third heaven and heard things hardly lawful to be uttered, and struggled to put into words what language can hardly contain. Their written testimonies, glowing with heavenly fervor, are one of the richest legacies of the Church of God on earth; but in the rapture of their experience, almost blinded by the light of their heavenly visions, it may well be that their hearts have sometimes gone further than their heads, and their theology needs counterbalancing by the more objective sides of truth.

Teachings such as these, twisted often out of their full context, and such as would be themselves repudiated by these humble but great souls, coupled with forms of philosophy such as Hegel's .idealistic monism, and even with concepts that are really derived from Buddhism and Hinduism, form the basis of a theology, at bottom anthropocentric .rather than Theo centric, which gives no place to the plain dualism of the Bible, and as a consequence approaches to the edge of pantheism.. God practically loses His separate entity as a Person. He is One with the universe which is His "body". Man is the self-realization of God. Man in essence is God incarnate. Man at the centre of his being is eternally one with God, is God.

Then, to bolster up this extreme position, and to account for the plain and horrible contradictions to such statements .in man as we see him through history, the explanation is given that man is in ignorance of his true self. Foolishly regarding himself as a separate being who must fight his own lone battle in an

² For example: John of the Cross, John of Ruysbroeck, St. Teresa, Francis of Assisi, ,Jacob Boehme, William Law, Pascal, Mme. Guyon, Meister Eckhart, John Tauler, Henry Suso, Catherine of Siena, Angela de Foligno, Richard Rolle, Lady Julian of Norwich and, the unknown authors of *Theologica Germanica* and *The Cloud of Unknowing*.

unfriendly world, and surrounded by other people as separate anal alone as himself, and each out to get the best for himself, he uses all his resources to main his own ends. Here, they say, is the origin of evil. It is ignorance, not wickedness. It is just a misuse of good, not an enmity against a personal God. It is merely negation, nothing; not the power of darkness derived from a kingdom and king of darkness; and in saying this they join hands with the rationalists and humanists and modernists of all the centuries.³

³ *This fundamentally erroneous view of man, which maintains his essential goodness, and attributes his "failures" either to ignorance, or to his body warring against his mind, or to environment, has been Satan's most devastating and far-reaching method of pouring; scorn on mans need of a Saviour. It has been the point of view that "the world" has always held, axed still does, and always will. It can be traced in varying forms from Greek thought as represented by Plato and Aristotle, through the Roman era as represented by the Stoics, on to the Renaissance and Enlightenment where, through Rousseau and such writers, it became the foundation stone of modern humanism. Only the Bible has withstood it and pointed, not to man's ignorance, but to his deliberate rebellion against God as the source of his troubles. The Reformation, as opposed to the Renaissance, re-emphasized this fundamental Bible truth. Modernism and Liberalism has this same worm at its roots. It has attempted to synthesize this rationalistic lie of man's basic goodness with certain aspects of New Testament truth, and as a consequence produced its sinless, bloodless, Savorless "Gospel" of Jesus as man's example, and of a world which would gradually be leavened by Christianity until the Millennial Age is finally reached. The convulsions and horrors of the past thirty years have done much to shake and shatter these erroneous concepts, combined with the theological teachings and writings of such men as Kierkegaard, Karl Barth, and Emil Brunner. Perhaps the best modern writer on the whole subject is Reinhold Niebuhr. See his *Nature and Destiny of Man*.*

There is value, they say, in Jesus as the one perfect "Initiate". He alone walked this earth spotlessly, in fullness of light as to His (and man's) essential oneness with the Father. He, they say, rightly called Himself the Son of God, to reveal to us that we are all sons. He knew the secret of the divine resources available to all the sons of God by virtue of their Christhood. He exercised and applied this secret of faith, and spoke out into manifestation those hidden powers of healing and supply. Some would even go so far as to teach that His Cross is the most vital "lesson" ever taught to mankind, for by it He revealed that by death and resurrection is the way to realized Son-ship. Each man who in ignorance lives as a lone self and acts on the principle of self-seeking as the correct way of life, must "die" to himself and "rise" to the spirit of love and life within him; recognize his unity with the Spirit of all life, use his prerogative of creative faith to draw to himself his visible needs from invisible resources, to dissolve hatred and evil around him by his own output of positive love and good. No greater word, they say, has been spoken than that word of Jesus: "Whosoever shall save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall find it."

But all this, although it has some very helpful lessons to teach us of the reality of our oneness with God (only through Christ) and the privilege and powers of this relationship, has so completely ignored the other side of truth that the whole teaching has become a seductive error; its source, as a consequence, is found to be in the subtlety and wisdom of the serpent instead of in the grace and power of God. For the existence of God as a separate living Person, "The high and holy One who inhabiteth eternity", practically disappears. The disobedience of man, the existence of the devil, sin as a reality, man's responsibility before God, God's wrath and judgment, the reality of hell as well as heaven; God's love revealed in sending His only begotten Son into the world, Christ's essential son-ship and deity, His blood atonement and physical resurrection, His all-sufficient Savior hood; man's repentance, justification, son-ship, and sanctification in Christ; and, finally, Christ's second coming; all these cease to be truths through the neglect and denial of the one great basic truth of the

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these cease to be truths through the neglect and denial of the one great basic truth of the transcendence of God as well as His immanence, of a dualism as well as a monism; for the final truth to finite man is paradox, it is un-reconciled contraries existing side by side, and each essential to a faith which would keep to the high road of truth; illogicalities to the mind, which the Spirit transcends, the dialectic of infinity which he that is spiritual can discern though he cannot explain. In such ways as these can guidance and faith and like precious truths be misused, and can become the metaphysical armory of religious systems whose author is "Satan himself transformed into an angel of light".