

say I am exclusive, I say not of my friend but of the bad company he keeps. If he tells you I won't have *him*, it is not true, for my heart and hand are ready to welcome him if he gives up his bad company. We look at the Christians first instead of the claims of the Lord. We look at the consequences and most appalling they are, but are they yours and mine, or the Lord's. It is with a tender heart for every Christian, but as true to Christ and owning His claims over everyone.

There is one question I would ask: Do you believe the Lord could put the Church right tomorrow if He wished it? We know He is not going to; but it is not because there is not power to do it. In faithfulness to the Lord who *could* do this. I, as his servant, could not compromise one single point of truth to bring 500 Christians together. It would be saying He had been obliged to give up doing it. I must be faithful to the Lord, He who is Holy and True and won't have one point of truth compromised. If it were for myself, I might sink points of truth, and it would be good enough for me, and many better than me; but if it is in the Lord's Name and for Him, it would be unworthy of Him Who is soon coming to take the Church out of this scene and present it to Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

We may fail in a great many points, but this is the instruction for the saints, and it is "Depart from iniquity". An earthly master may come down in his standard but if it is for the *Lord* let us be jealous of any compromise, and is not this true love to our brethren? That is what *true* love is. I distrust above all things the expressed love of any Christian who is untrue to Christ. Is it love to my brethren to encourage them even by a *look* in any bit of their path that is contrary to Christ? It is *treachery*: can you call it love and fellowship if anything due to Christ is sunk? It is the cruellest thing to those to whom it may be meant to be kind. In 1 Tim. 6:11 he is told to follow righteousness, etc., here {2 Tim. 2:22} "with those who {sic} call on the Lord out of a pure heart" is added. What is a pure heart? 1 Pet. 1:22 tells us. Compare also Titus 2:14 and 1 John 3:3 -- "purifieth himself as He is pure" is to judge

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and refuse in thoughts, walk and ways all that is unsuited to Him. He compares the House of God to a great house with many vessels; but it is not a question of *degrees of usefulness* in the vessels: it is a condemnatory word -- dishonor is *disapproval*. The truth disapproves them, therefore you must purge yourself from them. If it is not the truth disapproving them you get a sort of select company. Now you are ready to be taken up and used for the Lord's work -- v. 22 is your own moral condition and your company. It is remarkable it should be "with those" etc., here where the state of the Church is such confusion -- everything is mixed up, and we have to tread our way through it. It is not *isolation*. Separation is one thing -- we may have to sit alone -- but we shall find out there are others who have done the same -- we get our company and their character. We do get the ordering of our path too elsewhere, but here we learn what is to govern it, the principle on which we are together, and then we are not to go on as we like in self-will. There is that which remains, what we get in 1 Cor. 12. Being separated from all that denies that "there is one body" on earth -- we come together on that ground. We have 1 Cor. 10 as well as 11 before us, and we know the Lord's word in Matt. 18{18}, "Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them." The loaf on the table remains the outward expression of the unity of the body today. If there are only two or three of us thus gathered by the Holy Spirit, we think of the whole body in our hearts; and if only three are governed by this, it is not *our* oneness, but "there is one body" {Eph. 4:4} and we come together in acknowledgment of it -- and there is, so to say, a chair at that Table for every member of the Body of Christ not excluded by discipline or by association with what is contrary to Him Who is in our midst. We have learned that a certain thing is true as to our relationship to Christ, and to one another, and we say *amen* to it. What becomes us, our responsibility, is to acknowledge "there is one body". Our eyes of faith have been opened to it, and what we have to do is to acknowledge it practically.

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NEVER Sink the Truth!

NOTES OF A LECTURE
BY CAPTAIN BARTON

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We have seen that in spite of all the failure that has come in, the Holy Ghost still dwells here and the place where He dwells is a place of privilege, with which the Name of Christ is connected; and the path is marked out for us in 2 Timothy in such a day as this. The danger for our hearts in looking at all the corruption the will of man and the flesh have brought in is that we resort to our own ways and means to meet the difficulties. Jer. 7 was a day of awful moral and ecclesiastical evil, and the people said; we are shut up to this. They throw the blame back on God; and now-a-days most Christians will admit they are going on with much that is contrary to God, but they say "What can we do?" "What a mess you have made of it." Well we may find much failure in those who are trying to walk in this path, but the *truth remains*. There is the ruin, and we have all contributed to it, but there is this path today. God's order is to cease to do evil first, before you learn to do well. It is one thing to be an adept at pointing out the evil around, and quite another to lay hold of the Lord's strength to walk in His path. Is there a resource for faith, or would He have me to go on with all this? "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that {thing} which he alloweth" {Rom. 14:22}. Is there a path in which we can look up to God without any compromise and ask Him to be with us? Some people talk of all testimony being gone. It is one thing to be saying "We are Philadelphia" but it is quite another to say "everything is gone" and these people would be more truthful if they said their hearts had let it go. They have got under the state of things around. I would to God saints, especially young saints, would read Romans 14, and not the beginning only, but the end. I know how that word "Whatsoever is not of faith is *sin*" {Rom. 14:23} brought me up short, and it is not speaking of unconverted people, nor is it for people who are

inclined to be loose; but it is written for scrupulous ones, who hadn't got the light and instruction we have today.

Have I the Word of God for my path? Turn to Jer. 18:12. The danger for the heart that is not in communion with God in an evil day is to say "There is no hope" and instead of bringing in God's "Nevertheless" they bring in their own "but we will walk after our own devices." They turn in on their own hearts. You remember at the end of Judges, Micah was a man who had a houseful of gods, and a Levite came that way. (The Levites received their place of nearness to God for their faithfulness at the time of the golden calf.) Micah makes a bargain with this Levite to be his priest to his houseful of idols, in return for certain things; and what is so terrible is he counts on God's favor and smile on the occasion. "Now know I that the Lord will surely {sic} do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest" (Jud. 17:13). And how true it is that there is nothing new under the sun! Do not people now think that an excellent man is a sanction for all sorts of abominations? Where is the worst show of the will of the flesh? Is it not when it intrudes itself into the things of God, where He has expressed His mind and will? Jeremiah did not *do* very much, but he took to heart the state of God's people. He was faithful, and he bore faithful messages to them; and in Jer. 15:16, 17 we find it was the Word of God that put him right, and it filled him with *indignation*. People think now that the study of the Word of God fits them to put up with what is around them; but that is not the result to a true heart. What people call a useful large-hearted man today, is a man with an India rubber conscience; but God's picture of a useful man is not one who goes on with everything; but one who purges himself from the vessels of dishonor that he may be meet for the Master's use {2 Tim. 2:21}. People talk of being liberal: it is very well to be liberal with what is my own; but if it is *God's truth* it is very presumptuous of me to be *liberal* with it. (1 Cor. 4 -- stewards.) I am to be subject to it, to be girt about with it, and by manifestation of it, to commend myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. The man in 2 Timothy is awake, his conscience is exercised, and first he is to "endure hardness" {v. 3} to go on, notwithstanding all the efforts to turn him aside, and then he is told the way to strive "lawfully" {v. 5}. The Word of God teaches us how to strive, *not* to strive in one sense (strife is wrong)

but in the sense of contending earnestly for the faith {Jude 3}. There is no loop-hole here for "agreeing to differ." We are not to be amiable by saying "You may be right and I may be wrong, we are brethren, let us sink everything else and agree to differ." No, this man knows he is right, he is patient and gentle; but he never for a moment gives the sense that he will agree to differ (2 Tim. 2:24, 25). His object is that his brother may "acknowledge the truth" {v. 25}.

Is it not a comfort today the "Word of God is not bound" (v. 9). If any soul turns to Him, there is the Word of the Lord to meet him, and the grace of the Lord too, but we are not to compromise one single point of the truth of God. We may talk of the "good of souls" but "to obey is better than sacrifice" {1 Sam. 15:22}. Saul had been destroying the witches but "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" {1 Sam. 15:23} and he dared cover his disobedience with sacrificing. In Heb. 12 Esau was called a "profane" person. What was his sin? He so lightly valued his birthright that he sold it for present advantage under the pressure of circumstances. Is it not what people are saying today? "What is the *use* of contending for the truth?" and some who do not say it in actual words have drunk into the profane spirit. In Zech. 4:10 we get despising "the day of small things". When God talks of despising it is always in connection with something very precious of His, that is presented to you, and indifference to it constitutes you a despiser. It is in a day of small things that endurance is called for all the more. The path becomes narrower and is more opposed, but is there anything on this earth to come up to what the Lord holds out to us in this day? to be "vessels sanctified and meet for the Master's use". When the church so dear to Christ, and so cared for by Him is in the state we see around? You say is that what the Lord has for me in such a day? I say *yes*, for the youngest and simplest believer, with the love of Christ before him and knowing He marked out this path. It is a wonderful path! What are the distinctions of earth compared to it? What do you suppose does heaven most esteem on earth? Not that which is highly esteemed among men! In the darkest day how precious it is to the Lord to mark

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the path of one who knows Him by witnessing that *He* is sufficient. It is the witness to who He is and to the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, even in the scene where Satan's seat is; but Christ is over it all and He is sufficient to meet and help us in it. "Study to show thyself approved of {sic} God"! How easy it is to get under the eye of man, to study the cravings of souls who have not learned *what* to crave, and to meet them with what will be popular. No, we are to study to be approved of God. . .the men in 2 Tim. 2:18 have erred concerning the *truth*. It is the truth that sanctifies, the Spirit of truth is here (John 17:19). Saying the resurrection was past led to indifference. In Thess. we find Satan trying to terrify the saints by saying the day of the Lord was present {2 Thess. 2:2}; he will try to terrify and he will try to set us at ease -- anything to prevent us pressing on with energy and vigor. Then we come to the blessed resource of 2 Tim. 2:19. People sometimes say "The Lord knows I love Him." Do they remember that was the expression of Peter's shame? He had denied the Lord, men could not see he loved Him, it needed One who saw the heart to know it. Is that all that is to be in our lives? Men should be able to see by our lives that we are His. Every one of us should be His witnesses, but instead of that the House of God has come to this, a company bearing His Name, but we have to fall back on His knowledge "The Lord knoweth". Here is really the point that tests us all. "Let him that nameth the name of the Lord {sic} depart from iniquity." *Individually* that is -- many of us try to go on beyond, and miss over this; but it makes difficulties in our path ever after. If we desire to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" {Eph. 4:3}, as surely we do, and desire to see the saints together, that desire is so apt to lead us to compromise with evil in order to maintain this outward unity. I am to own the claims of the Lord over heart and conscience and life, and depart from all that is unsuited to Him. Do you say, how am I to know what is iniquity? By God's Word! What dishonors Him, it matters not where or with whom I find it, I must depart from it. It may surprise you for me to say I have never separated from any Christians, but if Christians go on with iniquity and cling to it, I must separate; but from *iniquity*, not from *them*. If you

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