



# The Burning Bush - Online article archive

## "CHRISTIANS TO ACTION STATIONS!!"

An outline study of Jude - an important little book for today.

By Rev Ivan Foster

### **Introduction.**

When this book was written is not readily ascertained. However, it is widely believed to have been written at least 30 years into the apostolic age - somewhere around 65 AD. It was likely written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

The reason why it was written is easily seen from the verses 3-4. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

The epistle greatly resembles the 2nd chapter of 2 Peter. This in itself indicates the concern there was amongst the first generation of apostolic preachers and pastors regarding the inroads of false teachers and false teaching. Paul's warnings in Acts 20:28-30; 1 Timothy 4; 2 Timothy 3 as well as numerous other warnings scattered throughout the New Testament epistles serve to highlight this threat facing the early church.

We are inclined to think of those days of Holy Ghost power as somewhat idyllic days. They were in truth no such thing. Persecution and satanic attacks through false teachers were the norm. In a similar fashion, we tend to think that revival would bring tranquillity and unity and peace and joy to God's people. It would on an individual level but for the people of God collectively there would be the same storm of hatred and opposition as faced the early church. I always think of what we read in 1 Samuel 7:8-10. "And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel." Please note those words in verse 10: "And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel."

It has ever been so and will ever be so. When God's people begin once again to plead the blood of Christ and cry unto the Lord God against their enemies then those enemies react with fury.

That explains the terrible onslaught of falsehood and error that threatened the church in Jude's day.

This is most certainly a book for today.

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### **1. THE FAITH IS UNDER ATTACK, VERSES 1-4.**

#### **The author identified.**

We really know very little about the author of this brief but important epistle. He calls himself "the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James," verse 1. There have been quite some differences of opinion as to which James is meant though I believe the matter is clear.

There were two men called James among the apostles. "James and John . . . James the son of Alphaeus," Luke 6:14-15. There were also two of the name of Judas, or Jude; but there is no difficulty in determining which of them was the author of this epistle, for the other had the surname of Iscariot, and he was the trai-



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Luke's catalogue also lists "Judas the brother of James." So, Jude was the son of Alphaeus and brother of James.

It is further to be noted that Jude was placed amongst the apostles in Acts 1:13. "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James."

The James who was slain by Herod, Acts 12:2, can hardly be referred to here, as he had been dead some time when Jude's epistle was written. Furthermore, as that James was the brother of John, who was then living, it would have been much more natural for him to have mentioned that he was the brother of John, that beloved disciple.

The other James, "James the Less," was still living and was a prominent man in Jerusalem; and besides, was known as the brother of the Lord Jesus. That would make Jude also a brother of the Lord Jesus. This was stated for us by Paul in Galatians 1:19. "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."

This was clearly stated for us by Matthew in Matthew 13:55. "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?"

It must be noted that Jude does not claim that wonderful and unique earthly relationship with the Lord when seeking to identify himself. Why not? It would appear that he preferred to be known as "the servant of Jesus Christ" rather than lay claim to having an earthly, human, physical link to Christ. To be the half-brother of the Saviour was a most wonderful thing and yet he elevates his spiritual link to Christ above that.

### Lesson

There is a deep lesson there.

Earthly, physical relationships count for nothing regarding our eternal and spiritual wellbeing. That needs to be noted by those who have godly, Christ-fearing parents. Being the offspring of such true Christians does not, cannot, obtain for you a place in heaven.

That is what the absence of any reference to Jude's human relationship with Christ teaches us. Let us make sure that we are born again, having received the Lord Jesus by faith into our heart and life and are thereby members of God's family and servants of Jesus Christ.

### 2. THE ADDRESSEES LISTED.

The titles given to believers in Holy Scripture are of great importance and should be studied carefully.

Here is how Jude addresses them. "To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called."

The work of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead in the redemption of the believer is mentioned here. How great must be that salvation which is the result of the labours of the Triune God!

First of all there is a reference to the work of God the Father. A Christian is someone "sanctified by God the Father."

This is a reference to that act of eternally electing a soul unto salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus it was said to Jeremiah: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations," Jeremiah 1:5. Jeremiah had been set aside by God, before his birth, both to be saved and also to be a servant of His. The elect of God



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are, by God the Father sanctified and set apart in this wonderful act of love. How exquisitely this truth is stated for us in Ephesians 1:3-6. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

There is a reference to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Godhead. The elect of God are in Christ, "preserved in Jesus Christ."

1. They are in his heart. He loves them from all eternity. "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee," Jeremiah 31:3. "We love him, because he first loved us," 1 John 4:19.
2. They are in his arms. He carries them in His arms. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," Isaiah 40:11.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand," John 10:27-28.

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost," Luke 15:4-6.

3. They are in his prayers. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine," John 17:9.

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil," John 17:15.

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one," John 17:20-22.

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," Romans 8:34.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Hebrews 7:25.

It is with them as John Gill states it: "They are preserved not from indwelling sin, nor from the temptations of Satan, nor from doubts and fears and unbelief, nor from slips and falls into sin; but from the tyranny and dominion of sin, from being devoured by Satan, and from a total and final falling away; they are preserved in the love of God, and of Christ; in the covenant of grace; in a state of justification and adoption; and in the paths of truth, faith, and holiness; and are preserved safe to the heavenly kingdom and glory: their other character follows."

4. They will be with him in glory. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also," John 14:2-3.

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world," John 17:24.



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"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together;" Romans 8:17.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord," 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

How secure are those redeemed by the precious blood of Christ!

Note the work of the blessed Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead: ". . . and called." The Holy Spirit is not mentioned by name but His vital, essential work is. The absence of the Spirit's name is in keeping with the demeanour He manifests as He executes his work. Listen to the words of the Saviour as He explains the work of the Holy Spirit: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come," John 16:13. Thus, this little book which is the product of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, makes no mention here of His name, just His work. The Holy Spirit calls the elect, for whom Christ died as an atonement for their sins on the cross, by the word of the gospel, applying that word to their hearts and working faith in Christ and repentance toward God.

"And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years," Genesis 6:3.

"Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," Acts 20:21.

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers," Acts 2:37-42.

The above-mentioned verses all highlight the glorious work of the Holy Ghost in the work of regeneration and conversion of the sinner.

He it is Who strives with them when they are in their natural state of rebellion (Genesis 6:3).

He it is Who works faith within the heart of the elect in the promises of God set forth in the gospel and repentance toward God for their rebellious defiance of Him (Acts 2:37-42, 20:21).

These then are the people to whom Jude is writing. It is to all the true saints of God, everywhere and in every age.

I repeat, this epistle is for us, Christian, today.

### 3. THE GREETING EXPRESSED.

Here is how Jude greets his readers: "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied."

Jude desires the choicest blessings upon those to whom he writes.

- a. Mercy - the pardon of all their sins and acceptance with God;
- b. Peace - with God, with their fellow-men, in their own consciences, and in the prospect of death;



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c. Love - to God, to the brethren, to all the world. What blessings are there which these do not include?

### Treasure

Few words can often contain the greatest of treasures. John 3:16 is evidence of this. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16. Twenty-five words that embrace all the glories of the gospel treasure of heaven!

In this epistle, Jude intends to press upon his readers all that these three blessed words, "mercy, peace, love" intimate.

However, it is an epistle that is very much 'warlike' in its terms and tone and yet "mercy, peace, love" are promoted by its teaching and exhortations.

What insipid, bland notions many have of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ! Listen to the spoutings of the ecumenists and liberals and note the featureless and characterless notions they have of the Saviour and His Word. There is no place in their perceptions of the Saviour for the robust terminology of Jude or indeed of the Saviour Himself. They rail against the 'fundamentalist' for his 'unloving' condemnations of those who would pervert the Word of God and divert God's people from the paths of righteousness. They fail to note (or more likely deliberately close their eyes to) the vigorous language of the Saviour in passages such as Matthew 23:1-36. Here are found memorable terms for those who are the enemies of Christ.

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" "Woe unto you, ye blind guides." "Ye fools and blind." "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

These are the words of One determined to get across the solemn dreadfulness of disobeying God and His Word and defying His warnings. It was the attitude and language the apostles had also imbibed. Paul said: "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech," 2 Corinthians 3:12. John Gill comments thus upon these words of Paul. "Plain and intelligible words, not ambiguous ones: or 'boldness'; we are not afraid of men nor devils; we are not terrified by menaces, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself: or 'freedom of speech'; we speak out all our mind, which is the mind of Christ; we declare the whole counsel of God, hide and conceal nothing that may be profitable to the churches; we are not to be awed by the terror, or drawn by the flatteries of men to cover the truth; we speak it out plainly, clearly, with all evidence and perspicuity."

This is what marks the epistle of Jude and it is with such plainness he would impart those blessings suggested in the words of his greeting: "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied."

### Straightforward

There can be an enjoyment of "mercy, peace, and love" only under the ministry of straightforward preaching of the whole counsel of God and not the 'sanitised' gospel that foolish, wicked men would proffer to their flock.

I have often steeled myself to read the 'joint Christmas message' of the local Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland (Anglican) bishops in our area. What 'mush' it always is! Meaningless drivel which will always gain a headline in the local press but which will provide no help whatsoever to a poor seeking soul. Rather, it will drive men and women on down the road of self-righteousness, of so-called good works, of self-reliance and the vain hope that their church-going and perceived good works will gain them entrance to heaven. In truth, these men and their ilk are but assisting men and women down the road to hell. Of them the Saviour said: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves," Matthew 23:15.



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It was under the "blood and thunder" preaching of men such as Martin Luther, John Knox and John Calvin, to name but three of God's mighty reformers, that multitudes of men, women and children entered into the blessings of "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied." Such spiritual deliverances can be wrought today amongst the nations only by preaching of the same content and style that God so gloriously owned in former times.

### 4. THE BURDEN OF JUDE'S EPISTLE.

Here is what Jude was pressed in his soul to warn the people of God about.

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," Jude 1:3-4.

The call to battle that Jude was urging upon the people of God was not born out of a cantankerous, quarrelsome spirit but was born out of a distress and anxiety for the honour of God and a concern for the wellbeing of the saints, in the face of the corruptions that evil men would introduce to the church, under the guise of being the 'grace of God'!

It is clear that it was the original purpose of Jude to write, simply expounding the truths of the 'common salvation', that is, the one, common message of salvation that God has revealed unto all men, Jew and Gentile alike.

That was his original intention and, of course, it is the universal burden upon the hearts of all God's servants throughout the ages. Each Sabbath, and on the many other occasions that congregations are convened together to hear God's Word, it is the desire of the true servant of God to expound the 'common salvation.' However, it is clear from the actions of Jude, that there are occasions when the pastor must leave aside that essential labour and take up the sword and go to war against the 'invader'!

"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood," Jeremiah 48:10.

"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty," Judges 5:23.

"Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal," 1 Samuel 15:32-33.

All of these verses serve to underscore the war that the people of God are engaged in. In these New Testament times, ours may not be the sword of steel but the war we must engage in, wielding the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is every bit as real and invariably uncomfortable as was any Old Testament battle!

That is what this epistle is all about as I hope we will discover as we pursue our study of it.



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## "ALL CHRISTIANS TO ACTION STATIONS!!"

An outline study of Jude - an important little book for today.

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### Part 2: The fight we must engage in

*"Beloved . . . it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ,"* verses 3-4

There never was a time when the 'FAITH', that is the doctrines of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, has not been under attack!

Every generation since Adam has witnessed the devil's assault upon God's truth. The assault has taken many forms and many strategies have been employed by that Master of Wiles, the devil. Paul said that "we are not ignorant of his devices," 2 Corinthians 2:11. Of course this is perfectly true, since the wicked mind of Satan and his unceasing efforts to overthrow God's Kingdom are fully revealed in the Holy Scriptures. We have no excuse for ignorance or unpreparedness but, sadly, such is our carelessness and slackness, our deafness and heedlessness of God's Word that we fail to take due notice of the information given us.

Furthermore, we fall easy victim to Satan's beguiling ways and all too readily set aside the warnings of God. Man is easily persuaded that the Word of God is foolishness, outdated and should be set aside whereas the 'lie' of the devil is to be embraced as trustworthiness itself! There is much of the spirit of the sons-in-law of Lot in us. "And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law," Genesis 19:14.

To the very end of this age, after which "that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan" will be bound for a thousand years and cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up, and a seal set upon him, "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled," (Revelation 20:2-3) will men be subject to his deceptions and trick.

The call to arms Jude issues tells us much about the fight we are required to engage in.

#### 1. THE FAITH IS WORTHY OF OUR CONTENDING FOR IT.

The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is, in truth, the most valuable possession to come into the hands of men!

It is the "pearl of great price" and is worth selling all we have in order to possess it. This was stated by the Saviour in Matthew 13:46. "Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

Did not David employ such terms when speaking of the Word of God?

"The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver," Psalm 119:72.

"The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward," Psalm 19:9-11.



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His son, Solomon, spoke in like fashion of the wisdom of God which springs from His Word.

"For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it," Proverbs 8:11.

Paul called the gospel: ". . . the unsearchable riches of Christ," Ephesians 3:8.

### Martyrs

Throughout the ages, there have been those who valued it above their very lives and died rather than surrender it. Paul's words in Acts 20:23-24 encompass the thinking of those who value the gospel above all things. "Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

So it was with Stephen and so many of the early believers and countless millions of God's true people up to this present time. And there will be more still in the those future days that lie between now and the return of our Saviour. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years," Revelation 20:4.

All too many believers today put their honour, their reputation, their business, their family before the honour and glory of Christ. They compromise with the world and remain silent and inactive in the face of insidious inroads by the devil into the camp of Bible Christianity. To object to such things as "New Calvinism", "Hip-Hop gospel rap" (whatever such silly terms mean!!!) and the glorification of "Academic Accreditation", so important to some who value this world's admiration and approbation, will bring much ridicule upon your head and accusations of failing to move with the times.

Rather than suffer such opprobrium, many will, like some of the Jewish rulers of old, remain silent. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue," John 12:42.

How such cowardice must offend the Lord! He has said: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels," Luke 9:26.

Let the dreadfulness of these words loose the tongue and strengthen the arm of every Christian in defence of Christ and His cause.

### 2. THE FAITH IS WORTHY OF OUR 'EARNEST' CONTENDING FOR IT.

The 'thavelessness', to use a good old Ulster word, of modern 'Evangelicalism', is sickening to behold. May I resort to 'Ulsterspeak' once again. Many who call themselves evangelicals, are about as useful as an 'ash-tray on a motorbike or a parachute in a submarine'! They are worthless and useless and utterly ineffective in their witness in this age.

I always think of what the Saviour's reaction was to the lukewarm Laodicean believers. "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth," Revelation 3:16. The Saviour, quite literally, found the attitude of the Laodiceans 'stomach-turning'!

I for one have found a queasiness creeping over me whenever I consider the disposition and words of many in the evangelical camp today. They pussyfoot around issues rather than coming out and denouncing the wickedness that abounds. They employ 'generalisations' when plain speaking, calling a spade a spade, is required. All this is done in order to avoid offence and to protect their standing with men.



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Just the other day, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland chose its new Moderator. He claims to be an evangelical. One of the other ministers standing for the post was a woman, 'Rev' Liz Hughes, who was outvoted for a second year.

Here is "The Belfast Newsletter" report of the election results. It has the moderator elect, Rev. Ian McNie's comments regarding a female moderator. It is a prime example of 'waffle', 'prevarication' and avoidance of stating plainly what the Word of God says about female ministers. He reminds me of the character, 'Mr Facing-Both-Ways,' in 'Pilgrim's Progress'!

The Bible is unequivocal. "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach," 1 Timothy 3:2. That rules out women ministers or elders.

Sadly, Mr McNie lacks the candour of the Word of God when dealing with what men consider controversial but like so many takes refuge in 'prattle' and 'flannel'.

Under the headline - "**Mr McNie said he shared the view of many people and that was based on their interpretation of the Bible**", the report said:

*"Those who are not all that in favour, if you want to put it like that, of women's ordination don't hold that point of view from the position of personal preference," he told the BBC's Good Morning Ulster.*

*"They hold that position from the point of view that as they interpret the scriptures, the leadership role within the church is not necessarily the leadership role within society - that men and women complement each other, and consequently, possibly that's why many people have taken the view that they take and that's why the church has not embraced the election of a woman moderator.*

*"I would have a conviction that, like many other people within all major denominations, that there are some concerns about that issue, and yes, I would share that conviction as well."*

*Mr McNie said the Presbyterian Church had led the way in ordaining women, and paid tribute to its first woman minister Ruth Patterson as "a great ambassador for women within the church".*

*"The Presbyterian Church chose to go down the route of ordaining female ministers in 1974, and when that decision was taken, corresponding to that the church was saying at that point we're prepared to have a woman moderator if she's elected," he said."*

He then is reported in the Belfast Telegraph as follows:

*The Rev McNie told the BBC he shared concerns about a woman taking on leadership of the church but later distanced himself from the remark. He said: "I believe the time will come when that will happen and I will be part of the church that is involved in that and be willing to be involved in their higher role. "I would submit very readily to that; if the Presbyterian Church elects a woman moderator within the next number of years they will have my full and complete and utter support."*

No wonder the ecumenical Presbyterians elected this "evangelical prevaricator"!

### "The Revivalist."

There was a time when such statements by an Irish Presbyterian minister would have brought a scathing response and a setting forth of God's truth on the issue in the Free Presbyterian Church magazine, "The Revivalist." We will have to wait and see if its successor will carry a like response!

The futility of evangelicalism is very evidently seen in the failure to stop the advance of the enemy. But then how could that be achieved when one courts the enemy and does all that one can to avoid confronting or offending the enemy?



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Those who do seek to engage the enemy in battle find themselves facing a coalition of foes and so-called friends. Many who have sought to 'Stand up, Stand up, for Jesus' in a day of apostasy have found themselves exclaiming with Job: "All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me," Job 19:19. The believer should never expect to fare better than our Saviour amongst our enemies in this world. He said: "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" Matthew 10:25.

The experience of the Saviour has indeed ever been the experience of God's people. "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company," Psalm 55:12-14.

### More Common

Such incidents will become more common as the end of this age approaches and "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold," Matthew 24:12. "And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved," Matthew 10:21, 22. "All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another," Matthew 24:8-10.

Do we not see something of that spirit arising amongst us today? How many faithful men are derided and scorned and spoken of contemptuously by those who are their brethren and fellow ministers? And why? All because they raise their voices in protest against the corruptions and errors of the age to the embarrassment of those believers who foolishly involve themselves in such wrongdoing!

As one who had the privilege of witnessing the days of blessing in the 1960s and 1970s and the mighty preaching of Dr Ian Paisley in those days, I can say without fear of contradiction that were the preaching of those days to be heard today, many Free Presbyterians would rise up in opposition. Such fervency, such earnestness are not welcome in a day when the insipid and the innocuous are the order of the day.

Earnest contending, placard waving and confronting the enemy are for most things of the past and must never be allowed to return!

How sad!

### 3. THE FACT THAT THIS FAITH WAS 'ONCE DELIVERED' ENHANCES ITS VALUE.

The gospel is a God-given revelation placed in the hands of the saints of God to be cared for, obeyed and proclaimed.

There is not its like anywhere else in this world. Of it may be said what David said of Goliath's sword. "There is none like that; give it me," 1 Samuel 21:9. It is indeed unique. If it is cast aside and neglected, it will result in the loss of the soul and all the blessings that accompany the possession of this "FAITH." There is no escape for those who neglect or reject that escape route purchased by the blood of Christ and set forth only in the Word of God. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him," Hebrews 2:3.

How dare we be careless about this blessed message! Ought we not to guard it with our very lives and resist all attempts to alter or diminish it?

We read of Solomon's bed in Song of Solomon 3:7. "Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant



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men are about it, of the valiant of Israel." How much more ought we to surround and protect the gospel couch, upon which our Saviour reclines and from which He dispenses His eternal blessings - even the precious gospel Scriptures.

### 4. WHAT A SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY RESTS UPON GOD'S PEOPLE TODAY!

The faith has been 'delivered unto the saints.' It is our responsibility. We will be asked for an account one day.

This should add fervency to our witness and stand for Christ. Too many adopt the stance of the ostrich and bury their heads in the sand whenever a controversy arises. They simply do not want to get involved because of the threat to their standing among men. The Lord will not hold guiltless those who act in this fashion. We would do well to remember the aftermath of Deborah and Barak's victory over Jabin, king of the Canaanites. God always holds an inquest into affairs in His Kingdom. In this instance, questions were asked of those who failed to rally to the aid of Barak against the Canaanites. That was clearly seen in the song of victory sung by Deborah and Barak. "Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches. Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeopardized their lives unto the death in the high places of the field. . . . Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty," Judges 5:16-18, 23.

That inquiry was but a foreshadowing of a much greater one which will follow the Saviour's return. We ought to heed Paul's exhortation to Timothy and live in the light of that great day. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. . . I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," 2 Timothy 4:1, 7-8.

God help us to live and speak and act ALWAYS in the light of that event.

### 5. THE ASSAULT UPON GOD'S WORD IN THE DAY OF JUDE IS VERY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE TACTICS THE DEVIL EMPLOYS STILL.

1. **He uses agents.** ". . . there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men." As God uses men, so too does the devil. It seems that he has a ready supply of willing servants. But then that is not very surprising when we remember that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," 1 John 5:19, or quite literally "lieth in the lap of the evil one."

That is where the heart, the will and being of man is to be found. Paul said: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others," Ephesians 2:1-3.

It is little wonder then that the devil seems ever to have a reserve from which he may recruit agents to serve his cause.

2. **The tactics his agents employ.** ". . . crept in unawares." This tactic they learned from their father. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it," John 8:44. The hypocrisy and deceit of those who abound today within the ranks of Christendom have been spawned by the devil!



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The deviousness and the deceitfulness of the devil's emissaries are manifested in the recorded words of the Jewish leaders who conspired constantly against Christ. "And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things," Matthew 21:24-27.

As the duplicity of Judas Iscariot enabled him to pass himself off amongst the disciples without the least suspicion being aroused amongst them, even so it is today.

3. **Their wicked objective.** "... turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Does not our heart tremble even to read of the dreadful objective of these foul creatures? Of course, we would readily concede that few of them are in the least aware of the evil they are engaged in or acquainted with the final objective of their master the devil. It is as Paul states it in 2 Corinthians 4:4. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

It is clear that this objective entails the utter repudiation of the message of salvation in Christ. Does this not give us added incentive to avoid, reject and resist apostasy or the least beginnings of it.

Brethren and sisters, we cannot be complacent about the inroads of error, no matter how insignificant it may appear to be. I have seen its beginnings excused because of the person involved. A family member, a person well thought of or in a position of influence. Instead of these facts being a reason for ignoring sin, they are in truth, all the more reason to address the sin and deal with it as soon as possible.

### Ebola

The ongoing Ebola crisis gives us an example of how we should respond to sin. What efforts are made to contain the disease! What measures are undertaken in order to avoid the spread of the virus to those uninfected! Special protection suits, isolation of those infected, the administration of the very latest medical aid. Governments have invested £millions in order to combat this disease because it has already cost the lives of thousands and will cause the death of countless thousands more if it is not combatted and contained.

The attack upon the purity of God's Word makes the Ebola crisis pale into insignificance. It is the eternal death of souls in everlasting perdition that will result from this attack of which Jude is giving us warning.

Ought not believers to at least match the urgency with which medical authorities have reacted to Ebola?

Instead, those who cry out against departure from the 'old paths' are despised and denigrated and their warnings ignored.

Such folly will bring a terrible harvest!

4. **Engagement in such wickedness brings with it eternal damnation.** "... who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men. . ." The Lord does not fear to employ plain language when dealing with the wickedness of these men.

Those who promote departure from God's Word under whatever pretext will bring upon themselves God's eternal condemnation. He calls them "ungodly men." The meaning of this term is seen in various Scriptures, for example "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly," 2 Peter 2:5 and "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," 2 Peter 3:7.



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Judgment is hard on the heels of these apostates. The day when God flooded the world in the time of Noah is termed a visitation of God's judgment on the "ungodly." Again, the day of God's Great White Throne is likewise called the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Does this not tell us how terrible is that work in which the corrupter of the gospel is engaged?

Does it not add to the reasons why we must seek to stop all inroads of this dreadful invasion in order to protect our friends and loved ones and neighbours and, above all, uphold the honour of the Lord Jesus?



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## "ALL CHRISTIANS TO ACTION STATIONS!!"

An outline study of Jude - an important little book for today.

By Rev Ivan Foster.

### **Part 3: Remembering the lessons of former manifestations of apostasy.**

"I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," Jude 1:5-7.

It cannot be emphasised enough that "the thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun," Ecclesiastes 1:9.

The instigator of rebellion and apostasy, the devil, cannot change. He cannot change his tactics, his objectives or his methods.

Therefore, it is very easy to discover both his activities of former times repeated and, to a very large degree, anticipate the form and fashion of his next attack.

It is for this reason that the Saviour tells us, "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed," Luke 17:26-30. The ways of the heart and mind under the control of sin will not alter.

Thus, when the devil is released from the pit after a thousand years what does he do? "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea," Revelation 20:7-8. He has learned nothing for he cannot learn anything other than respond to the depravity of his nature and rebel against God!

#### **1. LESSONS FROM HISTORY OF THE ATTEMPTS TO CORRUPT THE TRUTH**

Jude brings forth from history events which illustrate the character and the objectives of the "creepers" about whom he warns (verse 4). It adds weight to his warning if he can show that such deviants arose to harass the people of God in former times.

It should be noted that ministers ought to be acquainted with the history of God's people and the deliverances they have enjoyed at the hand of God.

Furthermore, the minister should ever keep this history before his people, even when there is a demand that we 'forget the past,' which is a common cry heard in many places today. It is a cry encouraged by every agency of the devil here in Ulster and that serves to indicate how wrong it is!

#### **Repeated Lessons**

It is to be further noted that Jude says, "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew



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this." The most familiar lessons need to be repeated amongst us, so prone are we to forget and being so constantly harassed by the enemy to forget.

Paul tells us what a good minister is. "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained," 1 Timothy 4:6. The "things" that a minister must put the brethren in remembrance of are, of course, the manifestations of apostasy that he refers to in the opening verses of 1 Timothy 4. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer," 1 Timothy 4:1-5.

Warnings of this nature must ever be on the preacher's agenda!

### Departure

Please note that the departure from God's truth that Jude refers to is not at all unusual even amongst those who have been privileged to witness much of God's power at work amongst them.

Jude starts with the departure in the days subsequent to the Exodus. "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not," Jude 1:5.

Doubtless, he started with this incident because it would have been very familiar to the Jews among the Christians to whom he was writing. It would also have been one of the first historical lessons a Gentile convert to the gospel would have learned when studying the Scriptures.

Following the Exodus there was a rebellion amongst a most privileged people indeed. Who can recite the miracles and wonders that were seen by those referred to here? The plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red sea, the repeated provision of water and manna, the scenes around Sinai at the giving of the law, the wonderful manifestations of God's Shechinah glory in full view of Israel, the defeating of Amalek and many other instances of the power of God amongst them. And yet, they "believed not."

Again and again they murmured against God because of unbelief. It seems that hardly had the sun set upon a wonderful miracle of God's mercy and kindness than they arose to complain and accuse God of evil.

### From singing to murmuring

In Exodus 15, we have Israel singing of the goodness and glory of God. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea," Exodus 15:1. However, within days we are told: "So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" Exodus 15:22-24.

That murmuring continued unabated throughout their journey to the border of Canaan and culminated in their rebellion against God's command to enter the promised land, which in turn, brought down His wrath upon them, resulting in the doom of their perishing in the wilderness.

### Relevance

The relevance of that incident will be seen when it is remembered that Jude was writing just some 35 years after the ascension of Christ to glory. He was writing to the first generation of the apostolic church, the witnesses of miracles and the most marvellous demonstrations of God's saving grace and power amongst



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heathen nations, and already the departure from God was underway!

How the lessons of the Bible ought to make us anticipate our own tendencies to wander and rebel and warn us of the consequences we can expect to follow! Do we really think we are better than those who have gone before? Do we really think that we cannot sin as did they?

Look around today and the evidence of the unthankful and wicked defiance of God, seen in the wilderness, is everywhere abounding amongst the ranks of professing Christendom!

### 2. THE LESSONS FROM HISTORY ARE UNIVERSALLY KNOWN

The events from which Jude illustrates the truth he wishes to press upon believers are of such a kind that the whole world knows of them. The Exodus, the Fall of the Angels, Sodom and Gomorrha - these are events of such a nature that the sacred record of them has reached to the ends of the earth!

I recall that while on my only visit to the Grand Canyon I saw, in a little Information Centre, a record of the native Indian's account of how the Canyon was formed. It was a highly embellished account of that given in the Bible and recorded by Moses under divine inspiration. The parallels were very obvious - a universal flood, deliverance of a few in a boat and the drying of the floodwaters leaving the great canyon.

I remember thinking how that the aural accounts of the early events of history, though naturally distorted by the centuries of time, nevertheless bear witness of the truth recorded in the Bible and of the apostasy of mankind and the judgment of God that follows.

#### Judgment follows

The three historic examples of rebellion that Jude mentions here were all followed by severe judgment.

- "The Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not."
- "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."
- "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (verses 5-7).

It is the dreadful consequences of following rebellion that Jude would press upon his fellow believers, who are in danger of being seduced from the truth of God by these "certain men crept in unawares."

It should be noticed that the rebellion of the creature always follows what they believe is an "upward" path! It is commonly believed that a forsaking of God's way leads to a much better way!

#### The devil

The angels sought to rise above their allotted station. How defiant were the actions of those who thus sought to rise above the rank bestowed on them by the Creator? How contrary to their hoped ends were the terrible consequences of their rebellion! "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," Jude 6.

May not these words in Isaiah be applied to the devil? "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High," Isaiah 14:12-14.



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The words of the Saviour in Matthew 25:41 can most certainly be applied to the devil. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Here is the end of evil ambition! So end all such rebellions by devils and men.

### **Unbelieving Israel**

The unbelieving Israelites thought that defying God and seeking to return to Egypt would be an improvement on life under God's rule. "But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt," Numbers 13:31-14:4.

God is here declared to be a deceiver and liar and anything, even Egypt's bondage, was better than life under His rulership!

### **Sodom and Gomorrha**

See what the Holy Ghost says of the rebellion of those evil cities. "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh." "In like manner" - there was a likeness, a resemblance in the actions of the 'creepers' of Jude verse 4, the Israelites, verse 5, the angels, verse 6 and now the sodomites of verse 7. These activities, though separated in time by many centuries, were all of the same ilk, born of the same wickedness.

There was a "giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh." There is no mention here of being "born" a deviant. Rather, there was a "giving over" and a "going after" the perversion which has since borne the name of this infamous city.

Paul likewise indicates that the wickedness has its origins in the rebelliousness of wicked man. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient," Romans 1:22-28.

It was a case of "vile affections" departing from that which was "natural" to that which was "against nature" and "unseemly" or shameful. The "natural" was abandoned for the "unnatural" and "natural" left for the "unseemly"!

### **Misery**

God's laws are always considered restraints and hindrances to "pleasure" by those who yield themselves



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up to such "unseemliness"! Breaking free of the holy commandments of God will, they believe, liberate and bring them into a realm of great freedom and enjoyment.

As one media report indicated, "**Suicide rates among gay men eight times higher**". The higher rate of suicide attempts amongst sodomites cannot be explained by the opposition they encounter from society generally but must also be seen as a result of misery brought upon themselves by their unnatural lifestyle. That is what Paul refers to in Romans 1:27. ". . . and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet." One commentator says of these words: "The meaning of this doubtless is, that the effect of such base and unnatural passions was to enfeeble the body, to produce premature old age, disease, decay, and an early death. That this is the effect of the indulgence of licentious passions, is amply proved by the history of man."

The sodomite claims today that Bible morality is constrictive. The cry of the moral and theological deviants of today is "liberty, freedom!"

### Court case

There is a court case running currently in Belfast in which the defendants, who refused to bake a cake with a pro-sodomite wedding slogan, are accused of discriminating against the complainant, a sodomite agitator. The adherence of the bakers, who are Christians, to the teaching of the Word of God, is deemed detrimental to the rights and liberties of the plaintiff.

Such is the perverted logic of corrupt mankind!

### Psalm 2

This is all summed up for us in that well-known passage in Psalm 2. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," verses 1-3.

This spirit of rebellion against the Lord and His Anointed, Jesus Christ, has often shown itself and will lie at the heart of the end-time apostasy of the Antichrist and the ten nations that will submit to him.

That was what was at work in the Jude's day and it was of this he sought to warn the church. The same spirit is at work today amongst us and we must be on our guard against every attempt to turn us from our first allegiances and loyalties.

Let us beware of those who complain of the "old paths" and claim that the newfangled methodology, the new approach must supersede the stand, the attitudes of the last generation because we live in a new day!

This is no "new day" rather, such agitation is but the words of latter-day "creepers" who would turn us from the truth of God, the time-honoured testimony of Heaven, seeking to turn "the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," Jude 4.

O Christian Beware!!



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## "ALL CHRISTIANS TO ACTION STATIONS!!"

An outline study of Jude - an important little book for today.

By Rev Ivan Foster.

### **Part 4 : Further illustrations of former manifestations of apostasy.**

"Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core," Jude 8-11.

Examples of the spirit of apostasy at work throughout the ages, recorded within Holy Scripture, are myriad. We may conclude from that fact that the Lord is most desirous of us learning of the dangers of apostasy, the waywardness into which the 'creepers' which Jude warns of would have us go. The danger is thus highlighted for us to heed.

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God," Hebrews 3:12.

The Bible's records indicate that apostasy may spring up most unexpectedly and that amongst those in whom there is not the least indication of rebellion and discontentment.

Was not the Garden of Eden the most unlikely place for rebellion to spring up and flourish?

Were not Adam and Eve, our sinless first parents, unlikely and indeed the most implausible candidates for insurrection?

Going back before those infamous incidents, what of the rebellion in heaven amongst the angels. How incongruous was that affair!

And yet it was so.

#### **I. JUDE GIVES US SOME MORE EXAMPLES AS A MEANS OF INFORMING US OF THE WICKED NATURE OF THE "CREEPERS" WHO SEEK TO INFILTRATE THE VISIBLE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN EVERY AGE.**

##### **1. It is to be noted that dreams are the source of their 'filth'.**

Jude calls them: "filthy dreamers."

Jeremiah had encountered such in his day for he records the words of the Lord regarding them. "I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed," Jeremiah 23:25.

"Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD," Jeremiah 23:32.

The source of their doctrine is their own dark minds and imaginations and the character of that which they proclaim is "filthy"!

Dreams born of the Holy Spirit are very different indeed. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith



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God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams," Acts 2:17. This refers to a conveying to the mind of the godly that which is endorsed by and corresponds to the Spirit-inspired Word of God. The night-time vision granted to Paul at Troas was of this character. "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us," Acts 16:9.

There is a further example of such night-time holy communication in Acts 27:23-24. "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

The night-time 'dreams' of the 'creepers' are of an entirely different nature. They are 'filthy' in source, character and influence! They 'defile', verse 8. That word literally means 'to dye with another colour.' Earlier Jude had said of these men that they were guilty of "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," verse 4. They would dye the bright doctrines of the gospel with the blackness of hell!

### **2. This filthy dreaming accompanies a despising of the authority of God.**

Here, of course, is the purpose of the dreamers. They would overthrow God's rule! This they seek to do by speaking disparagingly of God's providential governing of His creatures.

So spoke the devil in Eden's garden. "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," Genesis 3:1-5.

This same despising may be noted in that forerunner of the Antichrist, Absalom. He promoted his rebellion by despising the dominion of his father, David. "And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel," 2 Samuel 15:2-6.

Stealing away the hearts of men from their rightful allegiance to Christ their King was the evil purpose of the 'creepers' at work in Jude's day and at work still in our day!

There is a spirit at work today, and it is plainly seen within the ranks of professing Christians, whereby the dominion or 'Lordship' of Christ is despised or 'set aside and disregarded' as the word means. There is a declining regard and respect given, even by professing Christians, to the commandments of God. It is a time in which man's own opinion takes precedence over what God says. It is as it was in the days of the Judges. "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes," Judges 17:6.

The present system of government in Northern Ireland - a power-sharing coalition involving those guilty of engaging in and supporting murder - was embraced upon the basis that it was deemed the right thing today, irrespective of what the Bible has to say.

Likewise, the cause of sodomite 'marriage' is promoted in defiance of God's Word, simply because benighted



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sinners think it the 'right' thing to do.

The abandoning of the marriage union between a man and a woman, fornication, Sabbath-breaking, the tolerance of idolatry and other heathen practices are all born of this despising of God's dominion by men.

The mark of the work of the 'creepers' is everywhere to be seen today.

### **3. Their 'despising of dominion' is a further manifestation of this spirit.**

Peter also speaks of this matter. "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities," 2 Peter 2:10. The words of Peter regarding these 'creepers' parallel those of Jude. Jude says that they 'speak evil of dignities' while Peter claims 'they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.' They are not at all reticent about blaspheming God and reproaching His throne or of deriding and abusing those appointed by Him to administer and rule His Kingdom.

Is it not true that today there is little or no regard for doing things 'decently and in order' within God's house and the family unit? Submission to elders and deacons, to parents and those in authority within society is considered anachronistic, out of date and no longer relevant!!

This is the spirit of the 'creeper'!

## **II. THE ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS OF THESE 'CREEPERS' STANDS IN CONTRAST TO THOSE OF THE HIGHEST ANGELIC BEINGS.**

"Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee," Jude 1:9.

### **1. Here is a statement given us by the Holy Ghost.**

The source of this account of the dispute between Michael the archangel, or chief angel, is not known. Some believe it was one of the Jewish traditions. If it was, then we have here an endorsement of the accuracy of the record, given it by the Holy Ghost.

The lesson taught is that the attitude of the 'creepers' toward the Lord, His Law and His servants and ministers differs very greatly with that shown by Michael toward the devil. The devil, in truth, is due no respect given his wickedness but nevertheless, doubtless because of his standing within the created order of God, he is spoken to without malice or insolence.

Is not the archangel's attitude a reflection of that shown by Christ when confronted by the devil in the wilderness and again in the garden of Gethsemane by the devil's agent, Judas? There is much wisdom in what John Gill says about this verse. "If Christ, the Prince of angels, did not choose to give a railing word to the devil, who is so much inferior to him, and when there was so much reason and occasion for it; then how great is the insolence of these men, that speak evil of civil and ecclesiastical rulers, without any just cause at all?"

### **2. Dark ignorance and brutishness lies behind this attitude of the 'creepers'.**

"But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves," Jude 1:10. Peter states this truth so: "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption," 2 Peter 2:12.

What wickedness ignorance can breed! "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," Romans 1:21-22.



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This is the dark path down which ignorance will lead men.

Isaiah bears testimony to the foolishness of ignorant men. "He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand," Isaiah 44:14-18.

The exact same folly may be heard in the words of the Evolutionist as he sets forth his ludicrous speculations and theories as to the origins of that which in truth came forth from the hand of God.

Ignorance is a cruel, blinding, mocking master!

### 3. The outcome is corruption.

" . . . in those things they corrupt themselves." They live only for sensual indulgence, and sink deeper and deeper in sensual gratifications.

John Calvin comments on this passage. "He means that they had no taste for anything but what was gross, and as it were beastly, and therefore did not perceive what was worthy of honour; and that yet they added audacity to madness, so that they feared not to condemn things above their comprehension; and that they also laboured under another evil – for when like beasts they were carried away to those things which gratified the senses of the body, they observed no moderation, but gorged themselves excessively like the swine which roll themselves in stinking mud. The adverb 'naturally' is set in opposition to reason and judgment for the instinct of nature alone rules in brute animals; but reason ought to govern men and to bridle their appetites."

This is where sin and rejection of God's Word takes men and it is into such degradation the devil would plunge the people of God by the deceptions of the 'creepers' he sends amongst us.

Heed the words of Peter as he endorses the warnings of Jude.

"But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time," 2 Peter 2:12-13.

### III. THE WOE OF GOD IS PRONOUNCED AGAINST THESE EVIL MEN.

"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core," verse 11.

Here is a record of the path they tread and the destination to which they are headed.

#### 1. They have Cain as their patron.

" . . . they have gone in the way of Cain." Cain's way was one of rejecting the way of God, envying and hating the brother who walked with God and resorting to murder and then denial of his crime.

ALL men, who reject the Saviour, bear a likeness, to some degree at least, to Cain their elder brother and spiritual progenitor. His vices manifest themselves, to differing degrees, in all men.

Men reject the gospel message and insist on pressing on their own path to heaven which, in truth, will lead



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to hell. They are angry with and hate those who have found 'peace in believing' through Christ. They will readily do believers ill and have, as history records, all too often slain the righteous. All this, of course, they will deny even to God's face.

### **2. Greed moves and motivates them on the path they have chosen.**

They "ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." Peter puts it thus: "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness," 2 Peter 2:15.

Balaam's greed rejected time and again the warnings and plain directions of God. Truly, "the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows," 1 Timothy 6:10. It very evidently played a part in the downfall of Judas Iscariot. "This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein," John 12:6. Hence, thirty pieces of silver meant more to him than the 'pearl of great price,' Matthew 13:46.

The word 'reward' means 'the wages of an hireling'. If only men realised the 'wages of unrighteousness' which they will receive one day. The 'creepers' are but 'gang masters' recruiting poor sinners into slavery which will end one day with the dreadful wage of eternal damnation being doled out.

Greed for this world's 'treasures' blinds men to the true and eternal riches of Christ. Many today in Ulster, and indeed I fear, Ulster itself, are casting aside the Lord Jesus for 'a mess of pottage' and all at the behest of the 'creepers' who are at work under the guise of being servants of God.

### **3. A terrible destruction awaits such.**

" . . . . and perished in the gainsaying of Core." This is a reference to Korah, the cousin of Aaron and his rebellion against Moses, God's appointed ruler of Israel. Heed the record of God's Word on this man and his rebellion. "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men . . . . and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?" Numbers 16:1, 3.

What a dreadful end they met because of their sin!

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD," Numbers 16:23-30.

So will perish all who imitate Cain, Balaam and Korah. Indeed, we pray that it will be so!

"So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might," Judges 5:31.

"For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scat-



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tered," Psalm 92:9.

Amen and amen!



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## "ALL CHRISTIANS TO ACTION STATIONS!!"

**An outline study of Jude - an important little book for today.**

By Rev Ivan Foster.

### **Part 5 : Five telling metaphors of the apostate**

*"These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever," Jude 1:12-13.*

With what bold clarity and explicitness, Jude paints the picture of the apostates and their activities amongst the early church! These warnings are relevant still for these same creatures are at work today!

Of course, let it be noted, a warning is of little use when it is clouded by ambiguity and lacking in transparency. This is especially so when the matter about which the warning is made is of such a serious and solemn nature as the infiltration of the church by deceivers and agents of the devil.

Let preachers take note: Don't be as "dumb dogs", which "cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber," Isaiah 56:10. Be as Paul's trumpeter in 1 Corinthians 14:8, giving forth a clear, shrill sound that all will instantly recognise as an alarm "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

Oh how clear was the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church in former times under the energetic and Holy Ghost enabled early ministry of Ian Paisley and fellow ministers!

May it be generally so again.

The language Jude employs is, as ever, easy to understand. He employs five very graphic and telling illustrations of the evil character of the individuals he referred to at the first as "certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," verse 4.

Please consider well these pictures painted of the apostate by the Holy Ghost.

#### **I. SPOTS IN YOUR FEAST OF LOVE**

"These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear," verse 12.

Let me point out something important about this word "spots".

Peter, whose writings are wonderfully paralleled by Jude in many ways, uses a similar phrase. "And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you," 2 Peter 2:13.

Interestingly, though Jude uses a Greek word very similar to that used by Peter, it has a very significantly different meaning. Jude uses the word "spilas" whereas Peter uses the word "spilos". The word employed by Peter means "a fault, moral blemish", whereas the word chosen by Jude carries the meaning "a rock in the



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sea, ledge, reef.”

### Noteworthy

To me this is very noteworthy. It highlights the terrible danger that evil deceivers pose for the people of God. They are not just as a stain on a garment but they are as a hidden rock which lies, as it were, waiting to wreck any ship that passes over it!

The impact of the influence of these “creepers” is the making shipwreck of the faith of those over whom they exercise an influence.

What a danger they are to the church of Christ! What a heavy responsibility lies upon ministers to watch for them, detect them and uncover them to the people of God!

### Early love feasts

A word about these early church feasts of love or charity as it is translated in the Authorised Version. John Gill says of these events:

“These here seem to be the Agapae, or love feasts, of the primitive Christians; the design of which was to maintain and promote brotherly love, from whence they took their name; and to refresh the poor saints, that they might have a full and comfortable meal now and then: their manner of keeping them was this; they began and ended them with prayer and singing; and they observed them with great temperance and frugality; and they were attended with much joy and gladness, and simplicity of heart: but were quickly abused, by judaizing Christians, as observing them in imitation of the passover; and by intemperance in eating and drinking; and by excluding the poor, for whose benefit they were chiefly designed; and by setting up separate meetings for them, and by admitting unfit persons unto them; such as here are said to be spots in them, blemishes, which brought great reproach and scandal upon them, being persons of infamous characters and conversations.”

Matthew Poole has this brief comment which echoes John Gill’s view on these feasts.

“In your feasts of charity; feasts used among the primitive Christians, to show their unity among themselves, and promote and maintain mutual charity, and for relief of the poor among them.”

### Over indulgence

Good indeed were it that we were in a spiritual frame to reinstitute such gatherings but sadly, today we are much more given to over indulgence and fleshly gatherings similar to that which John Gill says emerged from the early abuse of these sweet times of fellowship in those far off days of trouble and persecution.

It is hardly surprising that the early love feasts became corrupted by carnal appetites when it is remembered that these ‘corrupting creepers’ joined themselves to such happy and holy gatherings. “These are spots in your feasts of charity.”

The word ‘spots’, as already noted, refers to a hidden reef which endangers ships that strike it. Where better for the devil to hide that which will sink Christians than in a love feast!

## II. CLOUDS WITHOUT WATER

“ . . . clouds they are without water, carried about of winds,” Jude 1:12.

Again, we have a vivid and impressive analogy used to inform us of the character of the apostate infiltrator that every generation of the Church of Christ faces.

**How numerous are the clouds!** It is extremely rare for our skies to be void of clouds. Likewise, these evil men who threaten the well-being of the people of God are numerous indeed. There are always some in the



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In Revelation 9:1-11, we read of a Satanic attack permitted of God at the end of this age. The agents of Satan are likened unto a swarm of locusts. "And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power," Revelation 9:2-3.

Some swarms of locusts have as many as two hundred million per square mile! For the Lord to use such an analogy of the agents of the devil that threaten the Church is a sure indication of the abundance of the attackers Christians face.

**The form these apostates take.** We have little concept of how welcome the appearance of a cloud is for the people of middle east. In a land prone to drought and the resultant famine that would follow, clouds ensure food and comfort and are most welcome, heralding plenty.

The agents of the devil thus present themselves as emissaries of good. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works," 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. They promise that which a cloud would promise to the eastern dweller.

But it is an empty promise for they are "clouds . . . without water."

What a disappointment! What a raising and dashing of hopes, what misery and despondency are brought by such "clouds"!

What shadows they can cast. We here in Ulster know how clouds can cut out the sunshine and turn a bright day into a very dull day indeed. Apostasy casts a shadow over all who come under its influence. It cuts off God's truth from a people, a nation. The darkness which is so evident in the United Kingdom and in many other lands, where once the light of God's Truth shone brightly, is the direct result of the emergence of apostasy within the ranks of churches, the pulpits of which once sounded out God's message of saving mercy.

**They are carried about of winds.** Often, but not always, in the Bible, the 'wind' is used by the Lord to symbolise the work of the devil.

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock," Matthew 7:25. Here the 'winds' are part of the amalgam of enemies that buffet the Christian and test his standing in Christ.

"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree," Revelation 7:1.

Here are two instances in which 'winds' have an evil connotation.

These apostate intruders are 'carried about of winds' or moved and directed by wicked impulses and energy and thus cast abroad the dark shadows of the lies and deceit of "seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy," 1 Timothy 4:1-2.

### III. TREES WITHOUT FRUIT

". . . trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots."

The phrase "trees whose fruit withereth" literally means "trees in autumn" or trees at a time when they are stripped of foliage and fruit. The season of fruitfulness and fulness of foliage is short for fruit trees. Very soon they are shorn of their covering and appear with nothing to garnish and beautify their bare branches.



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So it is with apostasy. Its appearance of beauty and beneficence is short-lived!

The beauty of Absalom was but skin-deep and, like snow off a ditch, soon melted!

"But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him, 2 Samuel 14:25. "And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel," 2 Samuel 15:6. The evil, licentious heart of Absalom was soon discovered. He has long been considered one of the most striking foreshadowings of the Antichrist of the end-times.

So it is with all who masquerade as messengers of God when they are, in truth, agents of the devil. They soon reveal themselves in their true colours just as did Judas Iscariot. They have no fruit with which to refresh and edify. They are "twice dead, plucked up by the roots." John Gill comments: they are "entirely, thoroughly, and really dead in trespasses and sins, notwithstanding their pretensions to religion and godliness; or the sense may be, that they were not only liable to a corporeal death, common to them with all mankind, but also to an eternal one, or to the death both of soul and body in hell."

It is against such that Jude warns the people of God in every age.

#### IV. RAGING WAVES OF THE SEA

"Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame," Jude 1:13.

**What frenzied activity one can see on most days at the shore.** The frenzy increases dramatically when the winds are blowing.

Here is a lesson for us all to learn.

The word 'raging' is linked to the 'wildness of savage animals.' It is reminiscent of the depiction of the latter-day apostasy given us by David in Psalm 2. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," verses 1-3. This tumult is so like the raging of the waves on the shore.

This storm of rebellion is alluded to in many places in Scripture. Here is one.

"Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea. Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever," Psalm 93:2-5.

It should be remembered that it was from the sea that the 'Beast' will arise. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy," Revelation 13:1. This is of course the Mediterranean Sea that is depicted, but may we not also rightly conclude that out of the restless sea of man's wickedness shall arise the one who will prove to be wickedness incarnate.

**It is in this rage that they 'cast up the foam of their own shame and dishonour.'** For all their appearance of strength and might, the raging of the waves, even on the stormiest of days, peters out in a mere ripple of foam!

So it will be with the endeavours of the devil and his envoys. Christ and His Truth and His People will triumph in the end.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matthew 25:34.



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"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," Revelation 20:10.

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," Revelation 20:15.

So will end the devil and man's rebellion against God

### V. WANDERING STARS

" . . . wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever," Jude 1:13.

Here again is a telling illustration of the character and the wickedness of the apostate creepers whose activities threaten the Church.

**How beneficial stars have proved to be to mankind!** It was by them that travellers of old were guided. The sailor often still uses them to plot his course on the open seas where he is without a landmark to point the way. It was by a star that the wise men were led to Bethlehem where Christ was born.

Thus the stars picture for us the glorious revelation of God's truth set forth in the Holy Scriptures wherein is detailed for us the 'way of life', the 'way, the truth, and the life' that lead to heaven.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world," Psalm 19:1-4.

The stars bear universal and timeless witness to the existence of God.

**Wandering stars are no safe guide.** No sailor will find the harbour he seeks by following a 'wandering star'!

How like the apostate this is. The apostasy has been marked by the shifting, altering, unstable pronouncements of men who reject the Word of God. No safe eternal haven will ever be found following the guidance of the "certain men (who have) crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," Jude 1:4. Instead, when "the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," Matthew 15:14.

Jude states clearly the destination of these 'wandering stars'. "To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever," Jude 1:13.

**Their damnation is 'reserved'.** It is therefore most certain indeed. There can be no escape for those who openly reject the truth of God and follow their own perverted notions. The word reserved is used in reference to Peter's imprisonment in Acts 12:5. "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." The word is translated here as 'kept'.

The end reserved for these apostates is most fearful. It is 'the blackness of darkness for ever.'

They will share the fate of the fallen angels in whose path of defiance and rebellion against God they have chosen to follow. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," Jude 1:6. This is the 'blackness of darkness for ever' which is reserved for the apostate 'wandering star.'

It has to be said that this too is the place reserved for all who follow them. Of this dreadful fate Peter warned. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of



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truth shall be evil spoken of," 2 Peter 2:1, 2.

Many indeed have stepped on this path to perdition and multitudes today are being recruited on to this path to 'swift destruction'! It behoves God's servant to warn boldly of the creepers of whom Jude cried out some 2000 years ago.

I can still hear Dr Paisley preaching on 1 Timothy 4:6 just a month or so after I was converted and showing just what a 'good minister' was like. He was defending himself from one of the many attacks he came under for preaching out against the apostasy.

I have never forgotten that lesson.

"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things (see verses 1-3), thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained," 1 Timothy 4:6.

I feel it is a lesson young ministers need to learn today!



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## "ALL CHRISTIANS TO ACTION STATIONS!!"

An outline study of Jude – an important little book for today.

By Rev Ivan Foster.

### Part 6: Believers warned of the apostasy from the beginning

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 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," Jude 1:14-15.

Enoch would have preached while Adam was still alive. Therefore he was a man who preached to the earliest generations of men. It is clear that the end-time apostasy occupied the thoughts of the earliest believers. That in itself should cause Christians today to place a higher emphasis upon the study of what the Bible has to say about the end-times and the development of the lawlessness which the Bible consistently testifies will manifest itself just before the Saviour's return.

Perhaps a little word about Jude's source for this quotation from Enoch. It is likely, I believe, that Jude took this quotation not from a book called the "Apocalypse of Enoch", which is spurious, but from Jewish tradition; this prophecy being handed down from age to age; and was in full credit with the Jews, and therefore the apostle very appropriately produces it; or rather he had it by divine inspiration.

Believing as we do in the inspiration of Holy Scripture, we see that Jude, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, in quoting these words of Enoch, clearly indicates to us that these words had the endorsement of God upon them. By no means was all that was contained in Jewish aural tradition accurate or true, but we do have a divine confirmation of the accuracy of this quotation of the preaching of Enoch, some 3000 plus years earlier.

Coming to these words of antiquity:

### **IF WE WOULD FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PATRIARCHS HERE IS A TOPIC WITH WHICH WE SHOULD FAMILIARISE OURSELVES.**

**1. Surely there must have been something very important, very significant about the apostasy of the last days, if God's people back in the dawn of time were being instructed about it?** Is that not an elementary observation? The one quotation of the ministry of Enoch, a man who is extolled as a truly great and holy man (Hebrews 11:5), which has been preserved for our instruction centres upon the apostasy and the return of the Saviour.

Should not this cause us to stop and consider the clear implications of this fact?

The subject of the return of Christ and the apostasy which would immediately precede it has been the topic of all of the prophets of God. I cannot over-emphasize this truth! It ought to make every preacher seriously consider just how closely his ministry, in the preaching of the truths of prophecy, matches that of the prophets and apostles.

"But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God



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hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," Acts 3:18-21.

In these words of Peter we are told that two subjects occupied ALL the prophets.

### a. "That Christ should suffer."

### b. "Jesus Christ . . . whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things."

Two matters were dealt with by all the prophets - Christ's first coming in humiliation and then Christ's second coming at the 'times of the restitution of all things.'

That being on the agenda of all the prophets, preachers must take note of this fact and "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," Hebrews 2:1.

### 2. Apostasy is always a time of danger for believers, but none more so than the final apostasy.

That is why a constant warning of it has been sounded throughout the ages. It will be the time when the world will witness the power and wickedness of the devil as never before. His craft, his cunning, experienced before by men but always under the constraint of God, will be unleashed without Heaven's restraint in the last days. "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time," Revelation 12:12. This is an event that takes place just prior to the end of the devil's regime, just before the return of Christ in power and glory.

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season," Revelation 19:19-20:3.

These events all take place subsequent to Christ's return in glory. It is because the devil "knoweth that he hath but a short time" he will be spurred on to furious energy against all that is holy, just prior to Christ's return.

God's people need to know this. That is why God started sounding the warnings nearly 6000 years ago.

### 3. The recording of these warnings may be found in many places.

"And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days," Genesis 49:1.

"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end," Daniel 12:8-9.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils," 1 Timothy 4:1.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come," 2 Timothy 3:1.

These are but a few examples of God's ongoing instruction of His people regarding matters in the time of the end. Men such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Matthew and Paul all supply great details of the subject in their writings.



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This quotation from Enoch surely indicates that such a subject deserves our deepest and most solemn attention.

But would it not be correct to say that such a topic is greatly neglected today? How contrary to the spirit of Enoch's ministry such negligence must be!

### **II. WHEN HE COMES IN GLORY, THE LORD JESUS IS GOING TO CHALLENGE THOSE THAT HAVE OPPOSED HIM THROUGH THE AGES.**

"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.

#### **1. It is to confront His gainsayers that He comes!**

This does not refer to 'ALL' the wicked in the world when the Saviour returns. We must understand the meaning of the word 'all' in the light of other Scriptures. The parameters of the word are defined by other references to Christ's coming. Consider what Revelation 20:4-5 has to say on this matter. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

There is not a universal judging of the wicked when Christ returns. That must await the judgment of the Great White Throne at the end of the 1000-year reign of Christ, Revelation 20:7-15.

### **Conversions**

Furthermore, we are told that during the 1000-year reign of Christ, there will take place the conversion of myriads of people of the earth, even from the nations whose kings are joined in Antichrist's rebellion! "And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles," Zechariah 14:12-16.

### **Israel**

It has to be borne in mind that when the Saviour returns the nation of Israel will still be in darkness. So again we see the limit that surrounds the word "all". Israel, being yet in her sin, will not be destroyed by the judgment of the Lord when He returns but rather, in His great mercy, He will turn them from their sin and rebellion and wonderfully save them. This is one of the first events following the return of Christ.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their



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wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land," Zechariah 12:9-13:2.

Here is the judgment of the forces of Antichrist as they seek to destroy Jerusalem and wipe out the Jewish population there and that judgment is coupled with God's revealing Himself in mercy to His ancient people.

Paul wrote of this glorious day.

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin . . . . For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins," Romans 11:1, 25-27.

Here then is further evidence that "all" the unconverted will not be judged when Christ returns, but the "all" refers to the supporters and worshippers of Antichrist.

In the run-up to the return of Christ, the territory of Antichrist will be subjected to horrific judgments which will specifically fall on his followers and thus we see that, at His return, the Saviour will finalise that which He had begun just prior to His coming again. "And the first (angel) went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image," Revelation 16:2.

We have identified for us the targets for the judgments of God which will be culminated at the appearing of Christ.

So then, at His coming again, the Lord Jesus will confront those who have been engaged in a campaign of vilification, defiance and outright rejection of His person, position and power. The Antichrist and his supporters will mount a campaign of resistance and hostility in the forty-two months of the final manifestation of lawlessness just before the return of Christ.

This is the period also referred to as 'The Great Tribulation', Matthew 24:21.

This latter-day defiance, though in keeping with the spirit of opposition to God that all men have engaged in since the fall of Adam, will reach a peak just prior to the Saviour's return and indeed, it is this fulness of rebellion and lawlessness which will initiate His coming again.

### **Another worldwide flood**

At the end of this age, there is to be a flood of wickedness as man, spurred by the devil from whom God has lifted restraints, as was the case in the day of Job (Job 1:12, 2:6). That upsurge of sin and insurrection will trigger the return of Christ to judge those engaged in it, just as it was in the days prior to the flood of Noah's day. "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them," Genesis 6:5-7. The intensifying of wickedness upon the earth back then precipitated the world-wide judgment of the flood. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted



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his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth," Genesis 6:11-13.

It is not difficult to see the growing parallel with today's society, not just in our nation but worldwide.

That which is referred to in Psalm 2 is developing all around us. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," verses 1-3.

Worldwide, men are casting away the morality of God's law and seeking to establish their own wicked ways, legalising their own dreadful lusts. From the devilish cruelty of the Islamic terrorists to the overthrowing of God's institution of marriage in the Republic of Ireland and the USA and the universal agitation in favour of sodomy, we see this tide of lawlessness mounting and the ground being prepared for the rising of the Antichrist to lead this final assault upon God's throne, as defined by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-5. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"

It is that campaign of wicked slander and defiance of Himself that Christ will "execute judgment" against at His return.

### III. CHRIST IS GOING TO CHALLENGE EVERY WORD SPOKEN AGAINST HIM.

**1. God keeps a record of men's evil utterances.** Men should know that "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," Matthew 12:36. The foul-mouthed supporters of Antichrist will be cast down to hell at Christ's return, but from hell they shall be taken, along with all whose mouths engaged in rebellion against the Lord throughout the ages, to give a full account of their wickedness at the Great White Throne of Judgment. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," Revelation 20:12-15.

Words long forgotten by those who spoke them, but noted by the Lord Who heard them, will be accounted for.

Not just the words of men, but their most secret thoughts shall thus be brought forth to the light. "In the day when God shall judge the secrets (hidden inward things) of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel," Romans 2:16.

The self-important and conceited Stephen Hawking and Richard Dawkins of this world will one day give an account of their blind and foolish rejection of that which was written large in the creation around them as well as fully declared in the word of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard," Psalms 19:1-3.

**2. Men will be 'convinced' by the Lord of their sin.** What debates and wrangles over the gospel have taken place since the beginning of time. The Word of God, despite its authenticity having been repeatedly proven, is rejected by men as the basis of faith. That will change when He Who is the 'Living Word' will call men before Him and 'convince' them of their error and sin. They will be forced then to acknowledge that they were in the wrong!



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**3. Those deemed foolish by the Christ-deniers will on that day be gloriously vindicated.** "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." Who is there then who will dare deny that the 'poor foolish' believer of God's Word was right all along?

Dear Christian, mediate upon these sweet words:

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," Ephesians 5:27.

There is an old hymn which states the matter well.

1. Ofttimes the day seems long, our trials hard to bear,  
We're tempted to complain, to murmur and despair;  
But Christ will soon appear to take His Bride away,  
All tears forever over in God's eternal day.

*It will be worth it all when we see Jesus,  
Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ;  
One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase,  
So bravely run the race till we see Christ.*

2. Sometimes the sky looks dark with not a ray of light,  
We're tossed and driven on, no human help in sight;  
But there is one in heav'n who knows our deepest care,  
Let Jesus solve your problem, just go to Him in pray'r.

3. Life's day will soon be o'er, all storms forever past,  
We'll cross the great divide to glory, safe at last;  
We'll share the joys of heav'n - a harp, a home, a crown,  
The tempter will be banished, we'll lay our burden down.

The Lord bless you.

Ivan Foster.

July 4th 2015.



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### "ALL CHRISTIANS TO ACTION STATIONS!! "

An outline study of Jude – an important little book for today.

By Rev Ivan Foster.

### Part 7: Remembering the words of the apostles about the latter-day apostasy

*"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, 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 1:16-19.*

Verses 16-17 of the epistle of Jude underscore for us yet again how events in the last days feature large in the Word of God.

In our last study, we considered the words of a man, the prophet Enoch, and what he had to say about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Enoch's ministry would have had the earliest generations of mankind sit under it, and that most likely included Adam!

Here, in this penultimate book of the Bible, we are told of the warnings issued by the apostles regarding the character of those who would arise in the close of this age.

Events at the close of this age are very much to the fore in God's Word!

#### I. HERE IS AN EXHORTATION TO STUDY THE PROPHETIC WORDS OF THE APOSTLES

"But, beloved, 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."

I think that it is a reasonable thing to say that you cannot 'remember' that which you have not considered closely and studied in depth.

The word 'remember' literally means to 'fill your mind' or be 'mindful.' Here are some references where this same word is translated by the English word 'mindful.'

"Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy," 2 Timothy 1:4.

"That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour," 2 Peter 3:2.

Significantly, this second use of the word 'mindful' appears in a parallel exhortation by Peter to that written here by Jude.

It is appropriate that we consider what Peter says.

"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the



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water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen," 2 Peter 3:1-18.

Peter tells us here that:

**1. The mocking of the latter day scoffers stems from their willing ignorance of the Holy Scriptures.** If you are ignorant of God's Word then you invariably mock the statements of believers regarding the coming again of Christ. "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:4), says the mocker. This scepticism stems from ignorance says Peter. "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:5-7).

The abundant evidence of the world-wide flood of Noah's day is totally discounted by ungodly men, and this we say, irrespective of their vaunted knowledge, ludicrous theories and preposterous speculations about the origins of life on this earth and their attempts to explain away the fossil records which cry aloud of a catastrophic flood which wiped out creatures of every kind, including men, in a bygone era.

Blinding themselves to this great act of judgment in the past by the Lord, they easily dismiss the Bible's warnings of a yet greater judgment which will overtake mankind.

Peter says that the earth is "kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" by God. This statement on its own will demolish men's dire predictions about global warming and rising sea levels wiping out life on the planet. It is rather strange that those who dismiss the clear evidence of just such a flood in the past are prepared to cobble together "evidence" that a great flood will destroy the earth in the future!

The devil thus deceives men as to what is really coming by creating a diversion about a flood with the same impact as that Biblical flood which, ironically, he has already deceived men into rejecting!

How blind and foolish is mankind!

**2. Irrespective of ungodly men's ignorance, the Christian is to be aware of the Bible's teaching on this issue.** So says Peter. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing," 2 Peter 3:8.

The delay of which men complain (verse 4) is explained by the fact that a thousand years does not carry the same significance to God as it does to men. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day



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is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," 2 Peter 3:8. Two thousand years have passed since Christ bade farewell to His disciples and promised to return. However, long as that might appear to men, it is not long to God!

What appears as a very long time for man is, for God, "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isaiah 57:15) as nothing! The Lord Jesus Christ, Whose return in power and great glory will mark the beginning of the "Day of the Lord", is the One described by Micah as He, "that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," Micah 5:2.

As I have said, "the Day of the Lord" commences with the return of Christ in glory. But it is a day, that is a length or period of time. It is not a 24-hour day any more than was the hour spoken of by Christ in Luke 22:53 a 60-minute period. The Saviour said of the time when He was given into the hands of men and arrested and crucified, "but this is your hour, and the power of darkness". It is the context in which the word is used that decides for us the length of time indicated. We know that the days spoken of in Genesis 1 are periods of 24 hours for we are told that the period was bounded by the "evening and the morning."

We frequently use the word 'day' to indicate a period of time in history, an era, as it is used in the phrase 'in Shakespeare's day.'

This era in which we live has been called the 'times of the Gentiles' - "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24) when the Gentiles dominate the world, Israel being under their power and dominion. But "the Day of the Lord" is that time when "the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one" (Zechariah 14:9)!

The "Day" begins with His coming "in the clouds with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26) and will end with the final judgment, described by Peter in 2 Peter 3:10. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

### Amillennialism

This verse, it has to be said, is set forth by Amillennialists (those who reject the Bible's teaching on the millennial reign of Christ) as proof positive that there is no millennial reign. They claim that when Jesus Christ comes again, "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." That is the end of creation as we know it now, and, they claim, there is no mention, no place for a millennial reign after Christ's return according to Peter.

### Every word of God

The difference between Amillennialists and those who belong, as I do, to that school of prophetic teaching called Pre-millennialists or Futurists, is that we pay reverent attention to EVERY word of God for we believe that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," 2 Timothy 3:16.

That being so, there are three words in 2 Peter 3:10 of which we should take particular notice. Peter says that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise . . ." The three words to be carefully noted are "in the which."

The "which" referred to by Peter is the "Day of the Lord". It is "in" or "during" or "within" that Day that "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise." In other words, this is one of the events, the final event as it turns out, that will mark that wonderful period which begins with the return of Christ in glory. The Bible makes it clear that the Day that will begin with Christ's Second Advent and will end with the heavens passing away will contain many wonderful events which must of necessity occupy lengthy periods of time.



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For instance, Isaiah 2:12 reads "For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low." The description of the events of that wonderful day begins in verse 1. Here we read of the exalting of the mountain of the Lord's House in Jerusalem and the flowing of the nations to it. "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD," Isaiah 2:3-5.

Such activities will take place at the beginning of the Millennial Reign of Christ and continue until its end. If there is no Millennial Reign then when do these events take place? Please note that it is a time of great peace. "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Has that taken place yet? I am very sure that no one will be so foolish as to claim that it has!

But it will take place in the Millennial Reign of Christ.

If the reader cares to read on from Isaiah 2:12 (and one should) and its opening phrase, "For the day of the LORD of hosts . . ." they will encounter another little phrase: "in that day." I would contend that it is a reference to the same "day" mentioned in 2:12 and it enlarges upon that which will happen in that day. Please consider the phrase, "in that day" in the following verses: 2:11, 17, 20, 3:7, 18, 4:1, 2. Are these not activities which are said to take place during the "Day of the Lord" and thereby is implied that the "Day" is of considerable length? Its exact length is given precisely six times in Revelation 20:1-6. It is a millennium or one thousand years.

That is one day that is a thousand years!

Another example of what I am saying is found in Zechariah 14:1 where we again have the phrase 'the day of the Lord' and it is then followed by many verses which contain the phrase 'in that day' all of which illustrate the same fact of much activity over a lengthy period taking place subsequent to the beginning of the 'Day of the Lord.'

We could add many more references but I think that these illustrate that is clear that in the "Day of the Lord" there is going to be a multiplicity of events and happenings that must clearly show that the dawning of that "Day" does not end time as the Amillennialist would have us believe.

But to return to the words of Jude.

### II WE HAVE A VERY DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE 'MOCKERS' OF THE LAST DAYS

"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. . . . who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit," verses 18 and 19.

Here are seven descriptive phrases employed to detail the character of these latter-day mocking blasphemers.

Seven is considered as the number associated with 'fullness or completeness.' We certainly have a complete description here of the apostate of the last days.

These are derogatory terms! Jude was not afraid to be colourful in his language. Of course, we must bear in mind that the words written by Jude were given him by the Holy Ghost so we are looking in actual fact at the terminology of the Holy Ghost!



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## Free Presbyterianism in the past

Free Presbyterianism in the past was often censured by ecumenists and modernists for resorting to expressions such as these here employed by Jude. How right we were back then in our denunciations of the apostasy! May God fill our tongues again with such terms when we speak of God's enemies.

Please quickly note the seven titles given to these mockers.

**1. They were 'murmurers'.** This is a unique word, appearing only here in the New Testament though a closely related word is used elsewhere. The word refers to those who 'discontentedly complain against God.' It suggests a secretive muttering against the Lord, against His Person, His Word, His Laws and Commandments - just about everything that is of the Lord. Nothing about Him pleases them. They would change Him wherever they can. Thus they promulgate and proclaim new views on His deity, His sinlessness, His knowledge, His miracles and His teachings. They cast off His laws on morality, marriage, the Sabbath, abortion, modesty and just about everything He has instituted.

There is nothing about God that pleases them so they 'murmur'! It was to such that the Psalmist referred. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," Psalm 2:1-3. Murmuring leads to defiance and rebellion. That is where the great apostasy of today is going.

**2. They are 'complainers'.** This is a word close in meaning to 'murmurers'. This divine emphasis must be noted for when the Lord repeats Himself He wants us to take note. The word refers to 'complaining of one's lot, querulous, discontented.' They chafe under the yoke of God and would be rid of it. They lead the chorus of protests and grumbling against God.

Please note that the secret murmurings have broken out into public complaining. Here is a bold advancing in their rebellion. It is the spirit of those depicted in the parable of the 'certain nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return', that we read about in Luke 19:11-28. The parable contains the line: "his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us."

The rebellion against God's law, exemplified in the legalising of abortion, sodomy and same-sex marriages, is that spirit embodied in this word 'complainers' and the parable of Luke 19 and is rising all around us, growing louder every day.

**3. They are those 'walking after their own lusts'.** Having rejected God's rule and God's commandments, they follow the dictates of their own filthy lusts. Their compass and map are their own depraved appetites. We see this before our very eyes here in Ulster as well as across the world. The Irish Republic recently voted overwhelmingly to cast off God's Law on same-sex marriage and many here in Ulster, who are in sympathy with such a decision, are now clamouring for such a change in the law to take place here also. It is to be noted that in polls conducted amongst the public, the majority in favour of such a change is to be found amongst the younger generation, those who are the product of the teaching of ecumenism in the last forty years.

**4. They are those whose 'mouth speaketh great swelling words'.** The abuse of God pouring forth from their mouths has become as a river which has burst its banks. It is in full flood. It is said of the Beast, the Antichrist, that "he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven," Revelation 13:6. We are hearing the beginnings of that tirade today!

**5. They are those who have 'men's persons in admiration because of advantage'.** They live and rule with their eyes upon men in order to obtain man's favour. In this they are not as God. "For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward," Deuteronomy 10:17. Thus a system of government, based upon greed and self-



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advancement, will become more and more evident in complete contrast to that desired of by God. "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous," Deuteronomy 16:19.

Do we not daily see and hear of evidence of this spirit at work in the Houses of Parliament at Westminster? Is it not the very foundation of the present Stormont regime?

**6. These are 'they who separate themselves'.** They separate themselves, not from sin and immorality, which would be a commendable thing, but from the people of God and godliness. They are separated unto wickedness!

How often we have seen those in public life separate themselves from aspects of Bible teaching because it was deemed detrimental to their career. We had a clear example of this some time ago. Here is the headline of an article in the 'Belfast Telegraph' of July 13th, 2015. "Adrian Cochrane-Watson: 'I respect the gay community... they have stayed at my B&B'" This man is a member of the Ulster Unionist Party who was recently co-opted as a member of the Stormont Assembly. But he sang a different tune in former days. In the article in the 'Belfast Telegraph' he is clearly seen to back-pedal because it is not good for one's political career within Ulster Unionism today to be an anti-sodomite!!!

**7. They are 'sensual, having not the Spirit.'** They are moved and motivated, not by the Holy Spirit toward purity and holiness but by the base spirit of man toward earthliness and corruption. 'Sensual' literally means 'such as gave themselves up to sensual lusts and pleasures.' The headlines in today's press, as I write this article, illustrates this word very succinctly. "Police have launched a criminal investigation after former Deputy Lords Speaker Lord Sewel was filmed allegedly taking drugs with prostitutes." **BBC news site**, 28th July, 2015.

We are further down the road to the looming conflict between this world and the God of Heaven, which will culminate in the return of Christ, than, sadly, most Christians are aware.

The Lord bless you.

Ivan Foster.

August 1st 2015.



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## "ALL CHRISTIANS TO ACTION STATIONS!! "

An outline study of Jude – an important little book for today, by Rev Ivan Foster.

### Part 8: The believer, a vivid contrast in a day of apostasy

"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," Jude 1:20-23.

The believer is ever to be a contrast to the worldling, but that contrast is never more obvious than in a day of darkness and apostasy. The stars are always shining in the heavens, but it is only when the sun sets that their presence becomes obvious!

So far in this epistle, Jude has stressed the character and nature of the enemy about whom he would warn us, the "certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," verse 4. In the four verses we wish to consider in this study, verses 20-23, the emphasis is upon the response of the believer to this wicked invasion.

It is the ongoing duty of the believer to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Peter 3:18. Never is there a greater need for such spiritual increase than in a day of apostasy.

In nature, the creatures living in cold climates prepare for winter by eating as much as they can before the onset of the bitter cold, in order to store within their bodies the resources they need to face the dark and frigid days approaching.

We may learn from this. The verse we have quoted above from Peter's second epistle is set in the context of his warning of days of scoffing which will come upon the church. "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts," 2 Peter 3:1-3. It is in the light of their approach that Peter urges believers to prepare for that onslaught. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Peter 3:17-18. Increase in holiness ought to be our response to apostasy. That which would separate us from the Lord ought to prompt a more resolute clinging to Him.

In these verses we ought to note that :

#### I. ADVANCING IN HOLINESS IS A PROGRESSIVE WORK

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith," verse 20.

**1. 'Building up' is a gradual, progressive activity.** "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon," Psalm 92:12. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby," 1 Peter 2:2.

Full growth in nature or in grace is not achieved overnight. It is a gradual work.

**2. Growth in grace is detectable.** We can measure growth. Advancement in grace will likewise be measurable. "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of



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God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord," Acts 11:22-23. The grace of these believers in Antioch was discernible to the eye! Likewise, it was the case with the apostles Peter and John when they were examined by the Jewish leaders. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus," Acts 4:13. The grace of the Lord Jesus was evident in their lives!

**3. It is the only antidote to worldliness and sin.** A weak and sickly church will fall easy victim to sin and the attack of the devil's agents. The saint must be weakened before he can be attacked. By weakened I mean the saint must separated from the One Who is his strength. "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower," Psalm 18:2. While believers abide close to Christ and daily partake of His grace, they are impervious to Satan's attacks. Like Job, they will have a hedge about them which will frustrate the devil's attempts to destroy. "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land," Job 1:10.

It is imperative that the people of God TODAY turn from their backsliding and carelessness and seek the Lord for His blessing and grace whereby they will be fortified against the onslaught of apostasy and wickedness that is increasingly assailing the church.

It is everywhere acknowledged that there is a slipping backwards and a decline in standards amongst God's people. I can never understand why this truth is so readily acknowledged in conversations amongst Christians but is greeted with anger and indignation when preached! I think that the godly and earnest believer is very concerned about this matter and converses with those of like mind, seeking God's answer to this decay but the carnal in the pew object strongly when it is proclaimed.

Earnest souls must ignore the carnal protests and bear whatever reproach is directed at them and press on in their search for God's blessing and seek to encourage others to join them in their endeavours.

### II. NOTE THE PLACE THAT PRAYER HAS IN 'GROWING IN GRACE'

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost."

**1. There can be no spiritual growth without prayer.** Sadly, I have heard it reported from every quarter that there is a great decline in the prayer meeting. The numbers attending are smaller. The fervency and zeal displayed in prayer are much weakened. The importance of it in the plan of God is much undervalued and misunderstood.

This must change if we are to see the correct response to the attack by the 'creepers' and the work of God revived.

**2. There can be no prayer without the Holy Ghost.** "Praying in the Holy Ghost."

Acceptable intercession can come only from the motions of the Holy Ghost within our hearts. How we need to ask for His help as we approach God's holy throne.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints," Ephesians 6:18. That is our duty, our obligation.

There is a wonderful promise given by the Lord regarding the turning again of Israel from her darkness and rebellion unto God and crying unto Him in prayer. It is found in Zechariah 12:10. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

Here we are told from whence comes this cry of repentance. This cry of Israel has its origins in the fountain



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of all true prayer - the moving and unction of the Holy Ghost.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 21, paragraph 3, states: "Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all men: and that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of His Spirit, according to His will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue." Note the little phrase: "by the help of His Spirit."

There can be no prayer without the help, the assistance of the 'Blessed Paraclete' Who has been sent by our Saviour to stand alongside us and aid us in all our spiritual endeavours. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter (parakletos - one who pleads another's cause before a judge), that he may abide with you for ever," John 14:16.

He has been sent to aid us, but how many believers would vainly seek to live without His aid and comfort? He, in His fulness, is absent from our prayer meetings. How I look back with joy upon prayer meetings which took place long ago when the believers were 'liberated' to pray with unction and power, aye, to touch the very throne of God and see mighty answers to our cries.

We must seek to see such again! We need to seek God for the pouring out again of His Spirit. The days of the apostles were days of numerous and repeated outpourings of the Holy Ghost. We should desire after that again.

### III. WE ARE TO KEEP OURSELVES IN THE 'LOVE OF GOD'

"Keep yourselves in the love of God," verse 21.

**We are to 'keep' (watch and observe that we maintain) ourselves in the love of God.** We have an obligation to love God and to maintain our love toward Him.

It is the first of all commandments. "And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment," Mark 12:28-30.

Our chief duty is to love God above all things. The individual or the church is not right or walking with God if not constant in their love and affection for Him. We must see that we are very prone to fail in this duty.

*O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it from Thy courts above.*

( 'Our Own Hymnbook', number 195.)

These words of Mr Robert Robinson (1735-90), are so very true and have been quoted by the aching heart of the earnest believer. Very early in the Apostolic age, we find the Saviour addressing these words to a church which had been in the front rank of spirituality and holiness. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love," Revelation 2:4. That church was Ephesus. Within thirty-odd years of its beginnings in Holy Ghost power (Acts 19:1-12), we find that they have 'left' (forsaken) their first love.



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If we are to maintain spiritual health and fitness we must maintain a close heart attachment to the Saviour.

The victorious church is that body of saints which follows hard after the Lord. They walk in the light of His smile, His countenance looking down upon them approvingly.

The psalmist seeks a restoration of just such a walk with God in Psalm 80:3. "Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved." The shining of God's face down upon His people will assure them of victory. "We shall be saved" says the psalmist. The word "saved" means "made safe, delivered, made victorious." We shall be under the umbrella of God's protection and favour.

It means just what the Church of Christ needs to experience today. It is the medicine our souls, our denomination so urgently need.

#### IV. CONSIDER THE DISPOSITION THAT EACH BELIEVER SHOULD MAINTAIN

"Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," verse 21.

There is to be a 'looking' an 'inclining of the eyes toward' that day when the mercy of Christ will be revealed and His people will enter into eternal life. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," Titus 2:11-13. In the midst of our efforts at "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." We should also ever be "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Where there is an absence of a true desire after holiness there will be a carelessness regarding prophetic matters. The two go together!

**1. Surely it is true that today ever so many of the people and the pulpits have lost that vision!** I sat and listened recently as a man of God who is busily engaged in the Lord's vineyard, lament that hearing a sermon on the return of Christ is a rare thing indeed. This is sad and it tells us much about the state of the church.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept," Matthew 25:1-5. This is the state of the church, as described by Christ, in the days that will develop at the end of the age. The last but one verse in the previous chapter says: "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of," Matthew 24:50. Chapter 25 opens with "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." So, it is in the days just before the return of Christ that the kingdom of God will be like the actions of these 10 sleeping virgins.

The professing church is asleep today, especially regarding the return of the Lord and the development of the great apostasy.

**2. Few see in the most wicked developments around us the descent into the final apostasy.** All too many ministers are happy to ignore the warnings of Christ regarding the last apostasy and to acquaint themselves with the "signs of the times"! The commencement of the Second World War found the United Kingdom in a state of unreadiness, as a result of the criminal neglect by the political leadership of the country to pay any heed to the clear evidences of what it was Hitler was planning and the direction in which he was moving affairs in his country. Indeed, the one political figure who sounded a warning about what it was Hitler was planning and the resultant need for the United Kingdom to ready itself, was Winston Churchill. In the criticism, the lampooning he faced from the political leadership, I find a very definite likeness to the foolish comments of those who ignore the prophecies of Scriptures and mock those who seek to study them



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**3. Such critics are to be pitied but more to be pitied are the poor flock under their negligent ministry!** The failure to act as watchmen and keep the people of God informed of the fulfilment of God's Word can produce only the situation depicted amongst the flock in Matthew 25:5, - "they all slumbered and slept!"

Nothing will sustain the faithfulness and the loyalty of Christians to Christ and His Word like a constant presenting to them of the revelation given us of God regarding the last days. Some 2000 years ago, Paul the apostle wrote: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come," 2 Timothy 3:1. If such preaching was relevant 2000 years ago, how much more relevant it is today! Yet, how little of it we hear. This absence cannot be of God!

Dear Christian, study to inform yourself of what God's Word tells us will unfold at the close of this age and so be informed of the truth that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Do this in your own study times should ministers fail to fulfil their obligations to teach you.

One final thing:

### V. GOING ON WITH GOD, WATCHING FOR CHRIST'S RETURN ARE EVER LINKED TO SOUL-WINNING

"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," verse 22.

**1. A slumbering church is not a soul-winning church.** The awareness of the approach of God's judgment awakened, belatedly, Lot to the danger his children were in. Had he known the mind of God, he would not have been so careless, so content in the environs of Sodom.

The evidence of worldliness, the sense of carelessness abounding today amongst Christians and the decline in soul-winning can be traced directly to a blindness amongst believers to the near approach of Christ's return.

Jude says that in the face of the onslaught of the creepers and their depraved teachings we ought to be engaged diligently in building ourselves up in our holy faith, in prayer, keeping ourselves in sweet harmony with God, watching for Christ's return AND engaging in the task of rescuing the perishing souls around us caught up in this end-time wickedness.

Where you find an absence of any one of these elements of true religion you will find an absence of all.

There is little soul-winning taking place because the other elements of Jude's exhortation in verses 20 and 21 are missing and neglected.

**2. We must never let our detestation of the sins of this age deter us from seeking to rescue sinners from their grip.** We are to have compassion or mercy. I am sure that this refers to backsliders primarily but it also refers to sinners. Our stomachs turn at the wickedness of many today. But remember just how offensive must have been the actions of the thief on the cross or Saul of Tarsus (later to be Paul the apostle) to the One Who is of "purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity," Habakkuk 1:13. What we see of men's sin today is dim indeed in comparison to what the Lord could see of the men we have referred to and yet He had compassion on them and millions more.

Likewise, we must try and show compassion.

I think that the words: "making a difference" would indicate the need for discernment and discrimination. There are some whose sin is so vile and their defiance of God so great that we must imitate the Saviour and remain silent to them, Matthew 27:12.

**3. The business of rescuing souls is set before us.** "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the



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fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." A wholesome fear of the contamination that attaches itself to sinners is to be observed. We are to engage in their rescue with an awareness of the corruption that fills their lives. We are to loathe their sinfulness while engaging in this act of compassion toward them. We are to 'hate' or 'detest' the defilement of their lives and seek to avoid at all cost being contaminated by it. As the filthy rags of a rescued vagrant, a down-and-out, are to be removed and burned, even so should our attitude be to the former ways of the rescued sinner.

None loathes sin more than those who would rescue others from it!

Here then in these four verses we have the cure, the remedy for today's malady within professing Christendom.

God help us to take heed to what is here written by Jude by divine inspiration and apply the ointment liberally to our ailments.

The Lord bless you.

Ivan Foster.

September 1st 2015.



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**"ALL CHRISTIANS TO ACTION STATIONS!! "**

## **Part 9: A glorious doxology**

An outline study of Jude – an important little book for today, by Rev Ivan Foster.

"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, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen," Jude 24-25.

As this call to arms comes to an end, it is most significant that it concludes with one of the most noble, most glorious most relevant doxologies in the Bible. Here is a profoundly wonderful elevating of God and that in terms so marvellously relevant to the subject matter the apostle has been dealing with.

Here is a glorious note to conclude an urgent appeal to beware of the creeping destructiveness of apostasy: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling." While Jude sought to arouse believers to the danger of those who would sow the seeds of detestable error which would lead to a turning from God and a falling away, his final words extol the power of our God to keep His flock.

It is interesting to note that while this epistle sets forth the exceeding wickedness and craft of agents of the devil, who were engaged in seeking entrance amongst the people of God in order to work their corruption, "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," verse 4, the next book of the Bible, the Book of the Revelation, with its detailed description of the future manifestation of the Antichrist and his lawlessness, begins with a wonderful description of the Lord Jesus. "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter," Revelation 1:12-19.

In Jude, we have at the close of the book a manifesting of the power of the One Who is able to sustain believers, in the face of the devil's ongoing and increasing attack, while in the Book of the Revelation there is given at the beginning of the book, a wonderful description of the Glorious One Who will defend His people in the face of the final dreadful assault by Antichristianity upon His kingdom by His personal and victorious intervention at His second advent.

### **1. GOD HAS POWER TO KEEP HIS PEOPLE FROM FALLING**

**1. It must be noted that we are ever in danger of falling.** We fall into temptation and thereby fall into sin and error and were it not for the power of God we would fall away altogether!

We live in a world filled with the snares of the devil, set to trip us up, to catch us and bring us down. "Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity," Psalm 141:9. We may be sure of this fact in our Christian walk - there are many devices laid for our entrapment.

What a huntsman the devil is and his agents are well taught by him. "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and



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Calneh, in the land of Shinar," Genesis 10:8-10.

Nimrod is one of the earliest foreshadowings of the Antichrist and he is described as "a mighty hunter before the LORD." The word "before" means "in the face of." I think that we can understand Nimrod to be thus declared to be one who hunted "against" the Lord. He was a rebel, a defier of God and an opponent of His people.

Throughout the generations, God's people have been faced with such enemies and have often been defeated by them. The record of Israel's defeats at the hands of the Philistines and the many other enemies that faced her, is evidence of this. The best of God's saints have fallen before the enemy's attacks: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David - the list is long indeed!

**2. Whatever enemies we may have surrounding us there is a terrible one within us!** "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9.

Let us never forget our proneness to wander from the Lord and fall before the enemy's attacks.

O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let that grace now like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above.

What an enemy our old nature is! I do believe that none can match its craft and cunning. It is "above all things" wicked!

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," Galatians 5:17. I am sure that Paul means that these two contrary natures hinder and oppose each other. Thus, while we are hindered from doing the wicked things that our old nature would desire to the full extent, we are also hindered and hampered in doing the holy things that our new nature would long after. Paul states this spiritual conundrum which has tried and perplexed the children of God since the fall in this fashion. "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin," Romans 7:15-25.

The freedom to live as we desire can come only from the slaying of the flesh! "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," Romans 6:6. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," Romans 8:13. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," Romans 13:14. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Galatians 2:20. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our



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Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world," Galatians 6:14.

May the Lord enable us to grasp and understand these great truths for they hold the secret of the victorious, triumphant overcomer's life!

**3. Christ's high priestly ministry is dedicated to keep us from falling away totally and finally.** In John 17:9-12 and 15, we read these words directed by the Saviour to His Father, which are indicative of what He is praying for His people even now. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

The word "keep" occurs and reoccurs in this prayer. It means "attend to carefully, guard".

Such is the divine care that is afforded to God's people. Such care reminds us of the danger we are in and the threats we face from the enemy's craft and our carelessness and foolishness.

It also indicates to us that being under the caring eye of our heavenly Father and of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus, we will be kept from falling away and will be brought to Heaven's glory in God's time.

Whatever stumblings and fallings we may experience are permitted for our edification and benefit. "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word," Psalm 119:67. The Lord causes even the evil schemes of men and our sinful hearts ultimately to work holiness in us.

### II. FURTHERMORE, GOD HAS POWER TO PRESENT US FAULTLESS BEFORE HIS PRESENCE

Bless God the outcome of our earthly pilgrimage is assured, hallelujah!

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Romans 8:28-39.

Our God is ABLE to save. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Hebrews 7:25

Our God is ABLE to keep us. "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," 2 Timothy 1:12.

And now, says Jude, He is ABLE bring us home. "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," verse 24.



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**1. The Christian's final condition, faultless.** The word means "without blemish or spot or blame." How gloriously powerful is the cleansing blood of Christ that it leaves us without one stain! "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," Ephesians 5:27. It is something every true believer longs after. 'Oh to be rid of my sin' has often been the sigh from the Christian's heart. Sadly, we must ever acknowledge that our state is that which is set forth by John. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," 1 John 1:8.

But a glorious day is coming for when "He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is," 1 John 3:2. Oh happy day indeed!

**2. In that day we shall be 'presented'.** "Presented . . . before the presence of his glory . ." What an immeasurable honour! We who are in truth fitted only for hell and damnation are to be presented before God. The word "presented" carries the meaning of "established." Those thus presented before God are there to stay. What an honour this is! The words of that godly woman, Hannah, Samuel's mother will see a glorious fulfilment one day. "The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed," 1 Samuel 2:7-10. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." That, dear child of God, is your destiny!

**3. This presentation will take place in an atmosphere of 'exceeding joy'.** "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."

It is that joy of which the gospel is the fountain. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," Luke 2:10.

It is that joy of which we get a taste when first we hear believingly the gospel and are saved. "For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy," Luke 1:44. The unborn John the Baptist manifested something of this joy in his mother's womb upon hearing the voice of Mary, the one who carried in her womb the Saviour of the world.

It is that joy of which the Holy Ghost enables us to partake. "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart," Acts 2:46. Happy indeed is the people who know the joy of the Holy Ghost.

But this refers also to the joy of Christ as His redeemed stand thus perfect in His presence. The "man of sorrows" will enter then into the full pleasure of that which it was His pleasure to pursue, even to the sufferings of the cross - the redemption of His people.

### III. TO THIS ONLY WISE GOD OUR SAVIOUR BELONGS ALL HONOUR

"To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Do we not long for the day when foolish, arrogant stupid man is made to acknowledge the wisdom of God! His wisdom in Creation, in Providence, in Redemption, in Judgment - in ALL THINGS!

Do we not weary of the vain and boastful utterances of mere creatures of the dust who pronounce God and His ways folly, while their notions and empty speculations, void of all wisdom as they are, are poured forth as



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the pinnacle of revelation and knowledge. May the day of Attenborough, Dawkins and Hawking, with its arrogant defiance of God, soon end and the day of the manifested and acknowledged wisdom of God soon dawn.

To God alone belongs GLORY, MAJESTY, DOMINION and POWER.

Praise God there are those who at this time ascribe such honour to the Lord, but a day is coming when ALL creation will render such honour.

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God," Romans 14:11-12.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father;" Philipians 2:5-11.

Dear Christian, rejoice that by the mercy of God YOU will be one of that illustrious eternal chorus!

The Lord bless you.

Ivan Foster.

October 1st 2015.