



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

### FIVE QUESTIONS WHICH SETTLE THE 'SEPARATION' DEBATE!

#### 2 Corinthians 6:11-18.

The Christian who believes in and practises 'Biblical separation' from those who reject the teaching of the Bible and those Christians who maintain fellowship with such rejectors, are labelled unloving, lacking in 'Christian charity' by their opponents!

But, as it was with Paul who likewise suffered such abuse from those whose wrongs and sins he rebuked, it is not the 'separatist' who lacks love but those who refuse to separate from evil.

Paul says to those who opposed him in Corinth, "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels," 2 Corinthians 6:11-12.

There was no 'narrowness' in Paul's love for them but there was a definite 'straightening' of their hearts toward him.

Paul's record of sufferings and privations in the gospel (verses 4-10) for the Corinthians prove his love for them. His call for their separation does not stem from any lack of love but from the abundance of his heart and hearty affection for them, that his mouth was open so freely to communicate to them the truth of God. He speaks as a father should toward the children he loves (verse 13).

Paul, as a father, in love warns against those alliances and unions that have arisen within the church at Corinth and which are contrary to God's Word and will. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," verse 14. This is, I am sure, a reference to the teaching of Deuteronomy 22:10. "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together." These two creatures are not to be yoked together to pull a plough. They had very different gaits and statures and would only be chafed as a result of being harnessed together and thus trouble each other, being so tied together.

Likewise the believer and the unbeliever cannot unite in any spiritual labour as their objectives, outlook and manner of obtaining their ends are very different indeed. As far as the unbeliever is concerned, 'all is fair in love and war'! They feel free to employ any means to further their religious ambitions. They feel free to enlist any means to promote their cause. Hence we see the worldly and ungodly 'personalities' engaged to raise support for a church. We see affiliations with all and sundry on the flimsiest of 'religious basis' in order to seek to achieve success for their cause through 'big numbers'! Such thinking is what lies behind regional, national and international religious organisations such as 'Churches together in Britain and Ireland' and 'The World Council of Churches'. The basis upon which they come together is not the Word of God, for many of the 'churches' and religious groupings within these organisations are blatant rejectors of God's Word. Within their lists of members you will find those who promote the acceptance of sodomite members, of sodomite ministers and same-sex marriage!

Such abominations trumpet loudly that such organisations are not of the God of Heaven!

Now Paul was not forbidding civil society and converse with unbelievers. This, some claim, is the call of the 'separatist' today. It is not so, but we stand with Paul on this issue. This is impracticable for then must believers needs go out of the world. Paul clarifies the Christian position on this matter in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

Paul is not urging a civil separation from wicked persons but rather a spiritual and religious separation. We must not company with a professing Christian seen to be 'a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner.' We are to separate from his company to the degree of not eating with him!



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As proof of the wisdom of his exhortation Paul asks five questions.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:

- for **what** fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?
- and **what** communion hath light with darkness?
- And **what** concord hath Christ with Belial?
- or **what** part hath he that believeth with an infidel?
- And **what** agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” 2 Corinthians 6:14-16.

Who can defiantly open their mouth to reply to these question? Surely there is none!

### THE LOGIC OF PAUL'S CONTENTION IS SELF EVIDENT AND INDISPUTABLE.

This is so much so the case we have no need to enlarge upon the matter. However, even as evidently indisputable the matter is, many in 'Christendom' choose to ignore God's truth. The churches belonging to such ungodly organisations as the WCC have within them many who undoubtedly are true believers, oftentimes in prominent positions of influence, who defend their associations with these organisations, despite the 'indisputable' truth of God. They are willing to defy logic and what is even more deplorable, defy God's truth in order to justify their refusal to obey God.

What keeps them in such unscriptural alliances is a mixture of worldliness, cowardice, greed, fear of man and dread of the reproach that separation would bring.

I have seen it displayed throughout my 50+ years of preaching the Word of God on this issue.

Such a blend of carnal emotions and feelings governing men's thoughts and actions is not new! "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: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God," John 12:42-43. What a dreadfully wretched reasoning! They preferred the polluted fellowship of the synagogue to the blessed presence of the Son of God. Separation from today's apostasy entails something immeasurably precious. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come," Hebrews 13:12-14. Separation entails going forth "unto him without the camp"! Who can balk or show any reluctance hastening toward such a privilege for any reason whatever?

Yet it is refused most commonly by those who prefer the company they find within the liberal, modernist, apostate churches in the world.

What shame awaits them on 'that day' of reckoning and reward when Christ "will render to every man according to his deeds," Romans 2:6!

### PAUL TENDERLY SETS FORTH THE BLESSEDNESS OF THAT WHICH AWAITS THE SEPARATIST

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," verses 17-18.

**1. What a reception!** "I will receive you." The word 'receive' means 'to treat with kindness'! Why would anyone forfeit the infinite kindness of God for that 'kindness' of which the worldly are capable and which at very best is paltry and mean! Here is the measure of God's kindness. "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus," Ephesians 2:7. It is



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a 'kindness' that eternity is too brief to 'shew' or display its fulness to those who are the subjects of it! The kindness of God the Father is enjoyed by the faithful separatist.

**2. What a kinship.** "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you." The Lord Jesus said, "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand," John 10:29. He is speaking here of His sheep, Christians. These words of Paul are not to be understood as indicating that this relationship with the Father would begin when they separated. No, God was indeed already their Father as Paul's opening words in this epistle indicate. "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Corinthians 1:2.

The Father already pitied them as his children, sympathising with them, and supporting them under all their trials and afflictions. Taking care of them, so that they have food and raiment convenient for them, He corrected them for their good, and would at last give them their heavenly inheritance.

Yes, all believers are in the Father's hand but the full enjoyment of that position is only for those who maintain a separation from ungodly associations. Surely it is seen that the clear implication of these words of Paul is that the result of separation is the wonderful enjoyment of a Father's care and love. Failure to separate must rob us of the full benefits of such care even as the folly of the Prodigal left him poor, hungry and friendless when he forsook his father's company.

There is a price to pay for disobedience. We deny ourselves the comforts of the Father's love.

**3. What a pledge.** "Saith the Lord Almighty." The title that the Holy Ghost inspired Paul to use of God is a most powerful one. It underscores His ability to fulfil the promise given. This title appears here and in no other place in the Bible. The Christian has a unique signature on this pledge given to us if we separate and live in separation from all that is false and fake and anti-God!

The Title "Almighty" refers to One who "holds sway and rule over all things"! All that is promised God is able to deliver. He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," Ephesians 3:20.

There is no room here for doubts or fears!

### OUR RESPONSE TO THESE GLORIOUS TRUTHS IS SET DOWN FOR US

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Corinthians 7:1.

**Purification.** That is what these promises demand of us. Turning our back on every wicked associate, let us forsake and escape the contamination and "filthiness of the flesh and spirit." The word "filthiness" means "defilement". That is what evil associations result in: defilement. How many believers there are who feel themselves 'made up', as we say, by their associations with bishops and moderators etc., when if they only could see themselves as God sees them, they are adorned as was the Prodigal, wearing that stained by the swine of this world!

**Holiness.** "Perfecting holiness." We cannot "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," (2 Peter 3:18) unless we are 'outside the camp'! There is no advancing while under the bonds and chains of disobedience to God. Obedience is the first element of holiness.

**Fear.** Here is what moves the believer to obedience and delivers him from the fear of this world's reproach: "the fear of God." What a crowning grace this is!

Nehemiah explained his conduct with these words: "But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God," Nehemiah 5:15. Such fear will distinguish us from all around. Joseph responded to the evil suggestions of Potiphar's wife with



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these words: “. . . . how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” Genesis 39:9. Were there more of this grace amongst God’s people there would be less succumbing to the dark temptations of this age!

How young Christians need to learn the fear of the Lord! It is the chief requirement of God.

“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?” Deuteronomy 10:12-13.

To separate from the main denominations will undoubtedly place us amongst the minority, but, dear Christian, that is where the Lord is and it is to such He says “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom,” Luke 12:32.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost,” Romans 15:13.

Rev Ivan Foster (Rtd).

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