

SEPARATION

SPIRITUAL

Versus

SENSUAL

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Over station KMTR in Los Angeles by Maurice M. Johnson

A Holy Kiss

I greet you this afternoon with a “holy kiss”—a holy greeting or salutation. As I understand the word translated “kiss” in our English, it merely means a friendly or loving greeting. In Romans, I & II Corinthians, and I Thessalonians Paul commands us to greet one another with a “holy kiss.” Let us note well that it is to be a *HOLY* kiss, a *holy* greeting. Judas kissed the Lord Jesus that night in the Garden of Gethsemane, but his was an *unholy* kiss, the greeting of feigned, of pretended love and devotion. Just think of that stupid hireling rushing up to Christ with that shallow “Hail, Master!” The poor fool had evidently forgotten all about the fact that his sham, and indeed, his very soul, was all naked and bare before the piercing eyes of this apparently helpless Man of Sorrows. He and his gang of fellows actually thought they were putting over a clever deal on this Jesus of Nazareth, the Alpha and Omega Who knew the end from the beginning. And what silly ostriches we are today to stick our heads into the blinding sands of pride and self-will with the smug satisfaction that God doesn’t really see willfulness and unbelief!

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” “Not all that saith...Lord, Lord,...but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven,” they, and they alone, are the ones who can greet the Lord and one another with an *HOLY* kiss.

Is A Baby Sect A Sect?

Eleven years ago, I came out of the Methodist denomination with about a hundred others out in Glendale, California. Hastily following the example set by other older fundamentalists, we got busy to discover a name by which we could greet one another and in which we could salute others. The late J.J. Sims, an elder “Plymouth” brother from England, met with us a few times, and he suggested the name, “Maranath Tabernacle.” He reminded us that the word, Maranatha, which occurs in I Corinthians 16:22, meant “Our Lord Cometh.” We thought the suggestion of this white-haired Bible teacher from across the waters was a happy and, indeed, a holy suggestion. Thus, we assumed the name, “Maranatha Tabernacle.” “Ah, that was different from any other group of Christians in Southern California! That really stood for something,” we reasoned.

And we did quite a bit more reasoning, too, before we allowed our forgotten Head to tell us what His wishes and commands were for all who have named His holy name in sincerity. Yes, we had a greeting that was different, was separate from other members of the body of Christ. But, while our new denominational greeting was a separate greeting, it was not a spiritual one. That arresting statement in Jude 19 along with I Cor. 1:9-12; 3:1-4 and Col. 3:17 (see below) was brought to our attention only a little more than a year after we had started this new fundamentalist sect and, by the energizing grace of God, we repudiated the whole thing, got rid of our big Tabernacle as soon as we could, and have been honestly, though very imperfectly, endeavoring to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith our blessed Lord has called all of His children. In Col.3:15-17, we found a name and a constitution that were infinitely superior to our man-made Maranatha Tabernacle and its constitution and by-laws. Let us read these passages—

“These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”

“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?...And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ...For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?”

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful...And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.”

Jesus Must Be Lord!

So I repeat my opening salutation. I greet you with a holy kiss. And I shall never again be guilty of imitating those ungodly men of Jude 19, men who “separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.” Though all of us who were Christians still had the Holy Spirit indwelling us while we were walking as men, we very surely had grieved and quenched this Holy Teacher as we chose to be known by, and do our Christian work under a name that separated us from other members of Christ’s body. And no Christian need be in the dark on this point, for the Word of God clearly tells us that when the Holy Spirit came into the world to take up His abode in blood-washed believers, He was going to glorify Jesus as Christ and Lord. Not only in salvation do we have to believe and confess Jesus as Lord, but also in our daily lives. In our Christian walk, we will always give Him “the glory due unto His name,” if we are Spirit-led.

I have every reason to believe that the surest proof that a person is spiritual is that he consistently acknowledges, not merely the Saviorhood, but also the Lordship and Headship of Christ. To humble students of the Bible, it is very sobering to note that the first sermon ever preached after our Lord left the scene of His humiliation, where He was known only as “Jesus,” is a message proclaiming “Let all the house of Israel know

assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). In each of his Spirit-indicted epistles to the church, the Apostle Paul greets the Christians with that holy kiss, that thrice holy salutation, “Our Lord Jesus Christ,” or “Jesus Christ our Lord.” Nor was Paul’s a mere lip service, either, for Paul’s life was as surely a presentation of the indwelling Christ as his words suggested. His walk was the same as his talk. Oh what splendid contempt Paul had for the opinions of men, and what a holy hush came over him when his Lord spoke! Sometime ago while thinking along this line, I wrote these words to be sung to the tune of “Are you washed in the blood?”

Are You Hushed By The Word?

God has spoken plainly. Yea, the Bible is His Word.

Are you hushed when He utters His commands?

Do you tremble, tremble when His glorious voice is heard?

Are you hushed by the Word of the Lord?

Chorus: Are you hushed by the Word?

By the life-giving Word of the Lord?

Are your footsteps ordered by the Head Divine?

Are you hushed by the Word of the Lord?

Do you know that Satan is this lost world’s god?

Are you hushed by the Word of the Lord?

Do you set your affection on this blood-stained sod?

Are you hushed by the Word of the Lord?

Are you walking worthy of the Lord’s high call?

Are you hushed by the Word of the Lord?

Owning Christ as savior, Head, and All in All,

Are you hushed by the Word of the Lord?

Paul’s Declaration of Independence

I think it must have been about twenty years ago that I had my own private declaration of independence from “those who seemed to be somewhat” in religious conferences. I didn’t publicly declare that independence for several years, I’m sorry to say. I was reading Galatians and came across Paul’s declaration in the second chapter where he referred to “Those who seemed to be somewhat,” and he quickly added “whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person.” I guess the “second blessingists” would say that the thrill I received in reading that was my “second blessing” and the “Pentecostalists” might say I got “it.” Be that as it may, I know that I have never forgotten that introduction to the peerless preacher of Christ, the ruggedly honest and transparently sincere soldier of Christ who fought a good fight, kept the faith, finished his course, and is forever with his Lord for Whom Paul joyously counted all things but loss. He gathered up all his religion, his high pharisaical position, and all that is highly esteemed among men, and deliberately threw it away, counting it but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of his Lord Christ. He scornfully repudiated his pharisaic education, scathingly denounced all of the wisdom of men as being foolishness with God, and cried out with soul throbbing and unspeakable joy: “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are

His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor?...For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom. 11:33-36).

Fundamentalists’ Infidelity

You know, strange as it may seem to some of you, I became in some real degree an unbeliever after I had my rather notorious fight with the Methodist Conference over Modernism. That was in 1925 when the issue of Modernism was a real issue, and it looked like there might be many thousands of denominational church members who actually loved the Lord Jesus more than their sectarian institutions and who would, therefore, leave the said institutions rather than be unequally yoked together with these modern wolves in sheep’s clothing (sheep-skins received for learning to parrot the theories of evolution and religious progress). Yes, for a few brief years, the fight between fundamentalists and modernists was quite sharp and was therefore good copy for the newspapers. When I took my stand against the infidel, evolutionary, Sunday School literature and put it out of my Methodist Sunday School and wrote a tract exposing it to thousands of unsuspecting parents, I was called upon the ecclesiastical carpet, accused of being generally unacceptable as a Methodist pastor and was expelled. The newspapers grabbed the story of the conference battle and gave it front-page publicity. Headlines in the Berkley, Oakland, and San Francisco papers stated “Methodist Oust Fundamentalist Pastor,” et cetera. When I returned from Berkeley, the scene of the battle, two Los Angeles Times reporters were awaiting me at my home in Glendale. One had a camera, and the other sought a statement from me. I refused both, telling them that I knew very well I would be accused of seeking notoriety and publicity but that was a million miles from the truth. I was merely “earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

Even before I returned from the North, I was elected vice-president of the Southern California Premillennium and Prophetic Association, and my name was placed on the letterhead of the Christian Fundamentalist Association as one of the Association’s evangelists. Upon my return a call was awaiting me from Dr. W. E. Edmonds of the Glendale Presbyterian “Church,” urging me to take the entire Sunday evening hour in that beautiful new religious corporation building to tell of my Berkeley fight for the fundamentals of the faith. I spoke to an overflow crowd of nearly two thousand. I was asked to deliver two addresses at the Annual Bible Conference of the so-called “Church of the Brethren,” and I did so. Within the same two or three weeks after my free publicity, I was given a unanimous invitation to become assistant pastor of what is called “The Church Of The Open Door” (downtown Los Angeles). Besides these flattering recognitions from the fundamentalist camp, I received scores of letters, resolutions from men’s Bible classes, and personal commendations. I must have received some of these honors from men, for I proved very soon to be an unbeliever. Do you remember what the Lord Jesus said about receiving honor from men? Listen carefully to it: “How can ye believe which receive honor one of another and seek not that honor that cometh from God only?” (John 5:44).

Fundamentalists’ Christ Must Take orders

I didn't see then that probably all of those different sectarian fundamentalist groups were seeking my presence and assistance simply because I was catapulted before the public eye by the tense modernist-fundamentalist situation, and I was therefore more or less of an attraction to the sensation-loving public. I didn't see then that all of those fundamentalist organizations demanded that Christ take orders from them if he sat on their platform, because in not one of the statements of their creed is Christ recognized as the only Head of the ONE and ONLY church that has heaven's sanction. I failed to see that Christ was really admitted into those man-made organizations if he would keep His place as the Bruised and Bleeding Lamb to take away those fundamentalists' sins, if He would be content to be their scapegoat, their fire escape by which they could escape the wrath to come, the lake of fire, but that he must not Lord it over them to seek to show them how sinful their various splits and fundamentalist sects were. His Headship, you see, is not one of the "fundamentals" of these fundamentalists. God have mercy on such impudence, such unbelief! And, thank God, He did have mercy on me and showed me that I could not be a true believer if I received honor from men (John 5:44).

Repudiating Fundamentalists' Religious Organizations

With my heart humbled and grateful toward my Glorified Lord, the sufficient Head of the church which is His body, I repudiated all my fundamentalist connections, my salary as a fundamentalist pastor, and determined that I would never again be a sweet mixer in a place where Christ is welcomed only as the Scapegoat. That is why I am never seen at any of these charming conferences where scholarly tramp Bible teachers piously say: "Lord, Lord" right while they are receiving the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity or are being complimented and introduced as "Reverend" this and "Reverend" that. My refusal to go to these fundamentalist Bible conferences does not mean at all that I consider myself anything other than a saved sinner who is learning the indescribable secret of serving only the Lord Christ. My heart toward Him is warmer and warmer as the days go by, while with increasing intensity, "I hate every evil way." I have seen so much of the inside workings of the newest and most fundamental of man's religious organizations that I cannot say that their leaders are honest, broken hearted, God-fearing men. They are almost to a man, leaders who wink at the errors and weaknesses of their own fundamentalist fraternity, while they unmercifully attack those who sincerely seek to bring all of God's people together on God's terms. Since God's terms are His own, that leaves no room for these "Reverend Doctors" to display their doctoring ability. When some of us consistently show from the Bible that every Christian has all of God's mutton, so to speak, we are thereby robbing these denominationally trained men of the fun of showing off their sheepskins. When Paul showed that it was not the possessing of scholastic sheepskins, but by the possessing of the sheep nature that the deep things of God were apprehended and understood, he was called "a pestilent fellow."

Mixed Messages Make "Big" Preachers

If you think it will get you high ecclesiastical standing to preach the unforced and unadulterated Word of God today, you are deceived of Satan. You can win a place on a national radio hook-up by preaching Christ as the Bread from heaven if you will cleverly mix some fleshly "relish" with the Heavenly manna, such as the religious "horse-radish" of the late "Josiah Hopkins" and his "Country Church of Hollywood." Or you can live in a palatial home and have a D.D. degree conferred upon you if you will eloquently

describe the deceits and horrors of the next age while lovingly telling of the “sweets” for this present evil age—if you will show from prophecy, history, and geography just how the ten toes of Daniel’s image are going to lead the world’s governments to shameful defeat while you show “tolerance” and sectarian indifference as to how the ten toes of Christians are shamefully walking “as men” and denying the Headship and Lordship of the Son of God. It is since he denied his separated walk of years, during which the Lord was so surely teaching him, that H.A. Ironside has accepted the title, Litt.D. and is “the pastor of Moody Memorial Church,” Chicago. Go to his palatial Hollywood home and ask the renowned Fundamentalist Presbyterian, Stewart MacLennan, how it happens that he became so popular while proclaiming that the only hope of this sin-cursed world is the personal return of Christ. He will probably attribute his religious and material wealth to the grace of God but a fair investigation of the facts will reveal a most ungodly mixture of Fundamentalism, Buchmannism, Universalism, and Hollywood-ism. Is this Scotch-Presbyterian “Fundamentalist” a true believer in the LORD, Jesus Christ? Allow John 5:44; Philip. 3:17-19 and Mark 12:38-40 to answer the question.

Since God hates all such mixtures, I hate them, too. The “yoke” of Christ is not an unequal yoke for He allows none to be yoked up with Him until He has been allowed to exercise His jealous Lordship. “Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:11-14). And what are good works in God’s sight? They are those works, and only those, that THE Head of the church has called for in His Word! For “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tim. 3:16-17). Thus it is that “good works” are “the work of faith,” for “faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God” and “whatsoever is not of faith is sin,” “and without faith it is impossible to please God” (Rom. 10:17; 14:23; & Heb. 11:6). In other words, “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it” (Ps. 127:1).

“The Mystery of Godliness”

What blind pride and impudence for any of us to think that the Infinitely Wise Creator will adopt our bungling plans for doing His work. He Who planned each minute detail of the millions of planets gave exact and sufficient plans for the erecting of a Tabernacle in which He condescended to meet with guilty sinners. When His every plan was humbly recognized and followed, He met with man. When man sought to mix a little of his own dreams and schemes with the Divine plans, the WRATH of the jealous God was poured out. This same procedure also characterized the Temple which was erected after the Tabernacle days. And just so it is in this day of grace when “God dwelleth not in temples made with hands” but in the “spiritual temple” composed of all the saved people of this, the church dispensation. Those who suppose “that gain is godliness” will be very sure to “have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof,” because to all such it is still a fact that “great is the mystery of godliness” (I Tim. 3:15-16).

And just what is “the mystery of godliness”? During the days of Christ’s earthly pilgrimage, the mystery of godliness was the mystery of the incarnation and heaven-directed life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Since His ascension, however, he sent the Holy

Spirit back to earth to “re-incarnate Himself” in the fleshly body of each Christian. Long ago Paul wrote that “God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ IN YOU, the hope of glory: Whom we preach (show forth)” (Col. 1:26-28). Thus it is that, for this dispensation, “the mystery of godliness” is the presence and behavior on earth of the “members of Christ.” Desiring that young Timothy should come into the glorious light of this new truth, the mystery concerning the “church which is Christ’s body,” Paul wrote to him saying: “These things write I unto thee...that thou mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Tim. 3:15-16).

“False Accusers”

As a direct result of seeing some of these liberating truths, I began to count my former “fundamentalist” standing and the corporately owned “fundamentalist” tabernacle as “but dung.” The large tabernacle was sold. About a year after our little group left the building, a woman preacher secured it. This change of real-estate provided the president of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles with the best weapon he could find to answer my embarrassing radio ministry of the pure Word of God, the Word that builds no compromising “Interdenominational Bible Institutes” or other sectarian institutions, however sound they may appear to be. Therefore he, Louis T. Talbot, wrote a former admirer of his, a man who had begun to ask the Doctor very embarrassing questions which deserved honestly selected Scriptures instead of the following:

“I am not in sympathy with the belligerent, unkind, unchristian, critical attitude of some ultra-fundamentalists who impugn wrong motives to their brethren in the service, misrepresenting God’s people and exalting themselves as the only real Bible teachers in this wide world. I have known the man you mention (Maurice Johnson) for ten years and he has left a trail of wreckage from East to West and North to South. His former church in Glendale is now in the hands of an extreme branch of the Foursquare Gospel people... surely this in itself should humiliate him to the dust and raise a question in his own mind about himself as a competent leader. Personally if any of my former churches were now in the hands of Pentecostals I would bow my head in shame and certainly would not dare criticize others in view of such failure.”

(Signed) Louis T. Talbot, (8/28/35, written to Arthur M. Southall.)

Freed To Become A Bond-Slave!

The deliberate selling of our “religious dirt-dobber’s nest” (the physical building) because we became convinced that the corporate ownership of religious property was not only unbiblical but was the cause of more pride and fleshly fights and compromises than, perhaps, any other single thing among Christians, did not in any sense “humiliate him to the dust and raise a question...” To the contrary, our questionable practices were humbled to the dust, and we were raised out from among the dead to begin the joyous and un-earthly walk of faith, “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-6).

As to Brother Talbot's charges about my national wreckage, I may truthfully say that I have not yet qualified as a "follower of Paul" who, with his faithful companions, was accused of turning "the world upside down" (Acts 16:4-6). Talbot's sputterings belong with the "dung," while Paul's sobering statements claim my awed attention: "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake; having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear to be in me" (Philip. 1:29-30). "If we suffer with Christ we shall also reign with Him" (II Tim. 2:12). I have made my decision as to the world in which I would rather have a good reputation. God tells me I can't in both. Choose ye.

Utterly abandoned to the will of God;
Seeking for no other path than my Master trod;
Leaving ease and pleasure, making Him my choice.
Waiting for His guidance, listening for His voice.

Utterly abandoned! No will of my own;
For time for eternity, His, and His alone;
All my plans and purposes lost in His sweet will,
Having nothing, yet in Him all things possessing still.

Utterly abandoned! 'tis so sweet to be
Captive in His bonds of love, yet so wondrous free;
Free from sin's entanglements, free from doubt and fear,
Free from every worry, burden, grief or care.

Utterly abandoned! Oh, the rest is sweet,
As I tarry, waiting, at His blessed feet;
Waiting for the coming of the Guest Divine,
Who my inmost being shall perfectly refine.
—Author unknown

Maurice M. Johnson