



12 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; 13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. (Jude 1:11-13)

In the foregoing devotions in Jude, we have read of the denunciation of false teachers. If the church is sterile and puny of spirit, it is owing to false teachers who have not led the sheep over whom they have been appointed shepherds. There is no dishonor in a church being small in numbers as long as it is large in biblical truth and doctrine. But the churches that are the largest today seem to be the very ones that are weakest on biblical doctrine and practice. Though they grow to cover the earth, the poison drippings from the birds (demons) that have come to live in her branches (Matthew 13:32) have poisoned her fruits and ruined her foundation. Those demons of the branches that inhabit the life of the modern church are the same as those **“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). Shall we remain forever oblivious to these wicked compromisers among us?

The testimony of the Church is not only weakened by false preachers, but by the lack of conviction and courage of her lay people who know better than to trade truth for error, but do so for political considerations. “Just because my pastor said so” is not an excuse; rather, it should be “Just because my Lord has said so!” The Moral Law of God is not all that complicated to understand. Why will we be deceived to believe that the very things that the Lord has called an abomination are suddenly acceptable to the Church? Have we lost our backbones as Christian men and women? We are deceived for only one reason: we have CHOSEN to be deceived rather than to take up arms against the enemy of God. We would prefer to cringe in our spiritual hovels and be fed the devil’s cake.

The world is the eternal sea. It is fraught with hidden reefs and rocks that may not be visible from the surface. The pilot of the ship needs a dependable chart and compass to navigate free of these dangers. Voila! He has such a Chart and Compass in

God's Holy Word. And not only does the pilot have the Chart and Compass of God's Word to guide him, but he also has the starry host of heaven to reckon his course and position just as surely as the Christian, equipped with God's Word, has the Light of the Holy spirit to illumine that Word of God in his heart.

12 "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;" The false prophets are much like the stones and reefs of the outer shelf at sea to wreck the ship of Church and cause her to founder and sink. Our undertakings of love and charity are spoiled by these blemishes of false prophets who gobbled up our love offerings with impunity.

While living in the high desert of central Iran, I used to see very promising clouds arise over the dry and parched desert at the afternoon hour. Surely, life-giving rain was in the offing! But these clouds offered no relief at all. They teased the desperate farmers and herdsman below with an appearance of rain, but they had no water. They dissipated as gradually as they had built up. The blistering winds of the high desert carried the clouds away and evaporated their vapors. So does false doctrine offer promises of abundance, healing, and satisfaction, but those who are tossed about with every wind of doctrine will end their days with not a drop of the Water of Life. How then must the children of God weather the storms of the Sea and the Winds of Doubt of the High Desert? **"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ ."** (Eph 4:14-15) See? These are the Bright Stars of Holy Scripture that will Guide our souls into safe harbors and havens of peace and joy!

The false prophets are not unlike the Scribes and Pharisees of the time of Christ of whom He spake: **"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."** (Matt 23:14) If your Bible does not contain this verse, throw away your worthless NIV or ESV and buy yourself a REAL Bible! Why would modern prophets desire to exclude references to long and public prayers, or the devouring of widow's houses? No imagination required for the answer to that question – look around and see them soliciting money at every opportunity with false promises of wealth, success, and special blessings. Indulgences did not end with the courageous stand of Martin Luther in old Germany!

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." How often do we see false professors, as well as false prophets, divide the church over the selection of carpets, drapes, or cut-glass windows? They insist on the non-essentials and neglect the very rock-bed of the essentials laid out by God in His Holy Word. They will accept the murder of innocents in their mother's womb as long as it goes by a name other than murder. They will abide the desecration of God's first institution of marriage in the Garden as long as it is called something other than the abomination which God's Word labels it (homosexual unions).

If the Church will serve her purpose as a Holy Vessel on the Seas of Life, she must navigate not only the smooth waters, but the raging billows of the Sea. The false prophets will create raging waves of doubt and foaming brine of fear. In such storms of

doubt, what will the pilot do? The ship of the Church will best weather the storm by casting forth anchor into that Solid Rock of her foundation that is Christ; turn the bow into the storm and face the oncoming wind with courage and steadfast resolve. The Anchor will hold our position and prevent drift. Facing into the storm head-on will reduce the effect of false winds of doctrine. If our Captain is the Lord, He will remain at the helm and keep us stayed upon the hope we enjoy in Him. And now, the storm having passed, we must weigh anchor and get underway once more on the Sea of Life. How shall we navigate now that the winds have abated and the raging waves have subsided?

Our most ancient means of navigating the ocean seas has been by way of celestial navigation. The sextant focuses on the known position of the stars and we fix our positions thereby. We navigate by those lights provided from above just as we navigate God's Word in view of that Sun of Righteousness that has forever lighted our heavenly canvas. The Lord Jesus Christ is, at the same time, our Bright and Morning Star, our Star of brilliance of the Evening, and our North Star of constancy. If we fix our positions on Him, we shall not be moved from the River of Life, and our steps shall always lead to the coming Day Star: **We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**" (2 Peter 1:19-21)

What of those wandering stars "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."? Who are they? These are those who cannot maintain a sure focus on God. A wandering star is like unto a meteor. It has not fixed position. It wanders from one end of the Universe to the other. It has no light as does the other stars of God. It is only a stone, or a conglomeration of vaporous gases, aimlessly wandering across the heavens whose ultimate end will result in total darkness. At some point, it will enter the atmosphere of another star or planet and will burn itself out in its rapid descent into total darkness. It is thereby destroyed in darkness. These are those false prophets, and their followers, who wander about with no light of their own and who have no fixed position in God. They will one day confront the Sun of Righteousness and be burned up as they come face to face with Him. This fate is one which God has reserved for all who allow themselves to be continually deceived by false lights and false prophets. They are destined to share the fate of the false star they have followed.

I hope that none will be shaken with the rising perils of our day in which faith is famishing in the souls of men. There is always truth and hope in Christ. He knows His people, and His people will forever know Him. Please hear the words of that great Christian attorney, William Jennings Bryan:

"If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn and make it burst forth from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, made in the image of his Creator? If He stoops to give to the rose bush, whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will He refuse the Words of Hope to the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the imperial spirit of man suffer annihilation when it has paid a brief visit like a royal guest to this tenement of clay? No, I am sure that He who, notwithstanding man's apparent prodigality, created

nothing without a purpose, and wasted not a single atom in all His Creation, has made provision for a future life in which man's universal longing for immortality will find its realization."

The only thing that shall suffer destruction will be evil and wickedness and the hearts that harbor those.