

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

he is, by his own admission he is not in the fellowship. Like Haman, he is hanged on the fatal gallows which he constructed to destroy others. I consider the traditional orthodox interpretation placed upon I John 1:7 as one of the most dangerous ever palmed off on unsuspecting men and women. It is subversive of the Spirit and a scandal to the church of God. It dooms the body to disintegration and can only damn us all to destruction.

Let us recapture the valid meaning of this warped and wrested passage and use it to promote fellowship, not pervert it. God is light. God is love. If we walk in the light we walk in God. If we walk in love we abide in God. If we love our brothers we abide in the light. You cannot separate light and love. Neither can you separate those who love one another. We quit living together when we quit loving each other. The road to togetherness is the path of love. "And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (I John 4:21). When we heed this command, and only then, can it be said, "As he is, so are we," and it can be added—"in this world."

RECEIVE HIM NOT

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 10, 11).

This is one of the "twisted scriptures." It has become the handle for every factional tool used to pry apart the living stones in the temple of God. It is the murderous knife employed to dismember the body of the Lord. It was written by the apostle of love to protect the flock of God from prowling wolves who sought to seduce them through denial of the foundational fact that Jesus has come in the flesh. It is now used to convert the sheep into snarling dogs, snapping at each other over every stray scrap of doctrine. It has substituted the law of the pack for the love of the flock.

No other passage so well illustrates the danger inherent in ignoring the context. That the leaders of thought in the "Church of Christ" should have been betrayed into adopting an interpretation which makes unity impossible and renders ridiculous their vaunted claim to respect for the authority of the word of God, is one of the amazing developments in the restoration movement of which we are heirs. Any use of the written word

SPECIAL STUDIES

which make impossible the fulfillment of the prayer and purpose of the Living Word is abuse and misuse. We can never regain our integrity as scholars until we repudiate the current partisan explanation which makes every vagary of thought and dissent an occasion to destroy fraternal relationship and stab love dead at our feet.

What is "the doctrine" which is so transcendent that one who does not attest to it, must not be allowed to enter the house, nor be given a greeting on the street or in the marketplace? Or, looking at it from the opposite position, what is it that, when advocated is so heinous and so poison to the fellowship, that to merely salute its proponent is to make one a participant in his vicious works? The use of individual cups in the Lord's Supper, says one. Bible classes on the Lord's Day, says another. Chartered homes to care for orphans, says still another. Advocacy of the pre-millennial coming of the Lord, or of instrumental music, or of missionary societies—all of these are added to the motley list by partisan voices raised to high pitch in the clamor for debate.

The depth of one's love for the family of God can be determined by the relative value of those things for which he is willing to sacrifice or break it up. The triviality of those views elevated to a higher station than the family ties created by the blood of the cross is indicative of the shallowness and superficiality of thought eating like a pernicious cancer at the heart of a great restoration movement in our day. Who can really believe that the apostle who wrote more about brotherly love than any other man, would recommend that we refuse entrance to our homes to those saints who disagree with us about cups, classes, colleges, or collectives for the care of orphans? What sane reasoner can actually conclude that to greet a brother who differs with us about the millenium or instrumental music is to become a participant in some "evil deed"? The very absurdity of such a conclusion renders obnoxious the common usage of the passage by "Church of Christ" expositors.

I do not hesitate to say that so long as these men maintain such an unrealistic attitude toward the sacred scriptures they can never make any impact upon the thinking world. They will only be purveyors of prejudice, agents of animosity, and disseminators of distrust. Such explanations are exercises in eisegetics, not exegetics. They inject a meaning into the holy oracles rather than extracting one from them. And while there was a time when dogmatism held men and women in line because the masses could neither read nor write, that day is over. We face another "Great Awakening" in the religious realm. Enlightened people are

RECEIVE HIM NOT

growing less satisfied with the dry husks thrown out to them by factional debaters.

To what did John refer by "this doctrine"? Who were the wandering teachers who were to be refused entrance when they applied for hospitality? What condition existed at the time which made it imperative that the "elect lady and her children" refrain from giving a greeting to certain teachers? Who were those who "went beyond" and did not remain in the doctrine of Christ? Surely what they denied must be related to the very fundamental and essential facts upon which Christianity was predicated to require such drastic measures to preserve it inviolate.

General Observations

Every reputable scholar known to us believes that John was writing to counteract the pernicious effects of Gnosticism. Upon no other ground can we account for the approach of his gospel record and first two epistles. Who were the Gnostics? What did they teach? Why were they so dangerous to the Christian concept? How did John become involved in the controversy? It is not our purpose here to analyze this synthetic philosophy, interesting though it might be. We shall be content with supplying our readers with sufficient background material to enable them to see the purpose and intent of John and to recognize how modern "interpreters" among us have warped and wrested what the apostle wrote. For your own convenience and to aid the reviewers of what we write, we will number the various observations.

1. The word "gnostic" is from *gnosis*, knowledge. The Gnostics were "the knowing ones". It was believed by the Gnostics that all matter is inherently evil and only spirit is good. Since the spirit was imprisoned in the body, and the body is composed of matter, the chief aim was to free or liberate the spirit. Taking their cue from the Greek mystery religions they taught that only by probing the depths and ascending the heights of knowledge, could that which was real be delivered from the material. This required an elaborate secret ritual coupled with painful, arduous and disciplined investigation and research into the mystical infinite wisdom of God. All men were not equipped to do this, either from lack of time, inclination or ability, and the majority of these would continue on a mere animal plane. The Gnostics were in a class by themselves in that they could "go beyond."

SPECIAL STUDIES

2. This idea of a spiritual aristocracy made up of specially endowed thinkers who were on "the inside" would wreak havoc upon the idea of fellowship. For this reason John emphasizes over and over that all of the saints have access to, and possess, knowledge. The word "know" appears in its various forms eleven times in chapter two. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and *ye know* all things" (2:20). "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth but because *ye know it*" (2:21). The one who doesn't know where he is going is the one who hates his brother (2:11). In chapter three "know" is found 8 times, in chapter four 7 times, and in chapter five 7 times. In every instance the disciples are comforted with the thought that knowledge is not the special privilege of the few. Note the recurrence of "we know" and "ye know."

3. The Gnostics held that matter was evil. On this basis they speculated that God could not have created the earth because it is material. By the same token the idea of the incarnation was unthinkable. One group held that Jesus was simply an ethereal person, a mere phantom. They insisted that he never had a real flesh and blood body, that he was pure spirit. These were called Docetics, from *dokeo*, to appear. John attacked this speculation by affirming that the apostles had heard, seen, scrutinized and handled Jesus with their hands.

4. Cerinthus was the first Gnostic leader whose name has come down to us. He lived in Ephesus where John apparently wrote his epistles. According to Eusebius, the father of church historians, John knew Cerinthus for what he really was. Cerinthus made a distinction between Jesus and the Christ, or Logos. He taught that Jesus was human, the son of Joseph and Mary. But Jesus increased in wisdom and in favor with God, which he could not have done if he had been God, according to Cerinthus. (See Luke 2:52). When Jesus was thirty years of age, he had lived in such a state of purity that God adopted him, publicly announcing that Jesus was his Son in whom he was well pleased. Upon this occasion the Christ (anointing) descended upon him in the shape of a dove. Cerinthus reasoned that Jesus could not have been God prior to this as he did not have the Spirit of God until it descended upon him. The Christ came upon him at John's baptism.

He further contended that the Christ (Spirit) could not be killed or made to suffer pain. The human Jesus was nailed to the cross and en-

RECEIVE HIM NOT

dured agony but the Christ had withdrawn as he came, and was beyond the reach of men. It is for this reason John insists that, "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood" (I John 5:6). It was not just Jesus who came to be baptized but Jesus Christ; it was not just Jesus who was crucified but Jesus Christ. He did not come by water (baptism) only, but by water and blood (crucifixion).

5. The crux of the whole matter as it affected Christian faith lay simply in the fact that a Gnostic could not believe in the incarnation. It was impossible for such a person to admit that the pre-existent Logos was made flesh. This provided a real test. If one, upon being asked, "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh?" answered in the affirmative, you could be sure he was motivated by the Spirit of God. If he denied or hedged, as the record says, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist" (I John 4:1-3).

Specific Observations

Having given this meager outline of Gnostic philosophy we turn to consideration of the group of Gnostics against whom John sought to protect the saints. Let us list some of the things about them which we can learn from his writings.

1. We know that these men pretended to have access to a source of knowledge which made them superior in wisdom to the average member of the body. It was their aim to make the Way intellectually acceptable to the philosophic schools by expressing their concepts of Christ in the language of Oriental mysticism. They belonged to an arrogant cult of philosophic aristocrats who claimed to have the ability to *go beyond* and penetrate the veil of true learning. The idea that Jesus had come in the flesh was spiritual pap for infantile mentalities but could not be countenanced by the advanced reasoner. John declared that the true *gnosis* was the apostolic testimony and the test of *knowledge* of God was willingness to receive that testimony. "We are of God; he that *knoweth* God heareth us: he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby *know* we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (I John 4:6).

2. We know the Gnostics were respected and received by many and that they were numerous. They were regarded as possessing visionary

SPECIAL STUDIES

insight and revelatory power because they were accepted as prophets. For this reason the apostle cautioned the saints to test the spirits "because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). John labels them antichrists and says, "Even now there are many antichrists."

3. We know these men were traveling from place to place as did many of the philosophers and teachers in the Greek world and they no doubt depended upon the homes they contacted in each community to extend them hospitality. Any such home would then be used as a base for their efforts. It is significant that John says, "Many false prophets are *gone out into the world.*" The false prophets were doing what Jesus commissioned the apostles to do.

4. We know that the Gnostics were separatists and schismatics and that they abandoned the body of saints to create a sect of their own. The unity of the body is based upon acknowledgment of the great fact that Jesus is the Christ. When men no longer are willing to accept this foundation upon which the community of heaven was planted they become antichrists. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us" (I John 2:19). It is interesting that, in this context, John shows the one creed which can bind us together, repudiation of which will fragment us. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son" (2:22). So long as one accepts fully the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, he remains upon the foundation upon which Jesus said he would construct his community. When he forsakes that foundation he forsakes all that is Christian.

5. We know that even though the Gnostics withdrew they still sought to influence those who allowed that which they had heard from the beginning to remain in them, and who continued in the Son and in the Father (2:24). These false apostles were proselytizers. Under the guise of teaching advanced truth they wormed themselves into any home which would receive them, and led those who dwelt there to deny that Jesus was the Christ. It was to warn against such teachers that John wrote, "These things have I written you concerning them that seduce you" (2:26).

The reply of those who were solicited by these "advanced thinkers" was to be simply that they did not need any man to teach them, but hav-

RECEIVE HIM NOT

ing been anointed by the Holy Spirit they had access to all truth, and that truth was always consistent. The additional truth must be measured by what they had formerly been taught by the apostles. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (3:27). Those who were taught by the Spirit would abide in Christ, that is, in what they had been taught by the anointing. The Gnostics "went beyond and abode not in the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9).

All history bears out the truth that during the lifetime of John, and in the very area where he resided and wrote, this synthetic philosophy was presented with ruthless disregard for the unity of the congregations. False prophets insinuated themselves into every company of the saints and promulgated their unhallowed speculations. It became necessary to issue blunt warnings to the saints against extending a welcome to such teachers, or allowing their homes to be used as bases from which to launch war on truth. This brings us to an analysis of the short epistle known as Second John. It contains the passage with which we are concerned in this article.

The Second Epistle

We shall not enter into the controversy as to identity of the addressee of this letter. It is my personal opinion that it was written to a Christian sister and her family. It is altogether possible that the congregation of saints met in her home. It will be observed how John speaks of truth and love in the same connection. He does not regard truth as being composed merely of facts which have been verified. Truth is a relationship which transcends human relationships. John loves the elect lady and her children in the truth (verse 1). All others who have known the truth exhibit the same love (1). The truth dwells in God's children and is age-lasting (2). The trinity of divine blessings—grace, mercy and peace—these are shared in truth and love (3). We walk in truth as required by God (4).

John approaches the primary purpose of his letter of admonition and warning with familiar language. Certain phrases are at once associated with certain writers. One of these phrases used by John is "a new commandment." Every such phrase should be considered in the light of its other appearances. That which John wrote to the elect lady will be

SPECIAL STUDIES

correctly understood only in conjunction with what he wrote elsewhere upon the same topic. We must never forget that the gospel record and first epistle of John are *general*. They were written to meet a condition faced by the community of saints at large. The second epistle is *specific*. It deals with the same condition on a local basis and provides a specific approach to it. But the specific must be understood in the light of the general. One is not qualified to diagnose and treat a specific cancer until he knows the nature of cancer in general.

1. John filled his gospel record and first two epistles with a dissertation on love (*agape*) but these were not written primarily to be treatises on love at all. They were produced to offset a dangerous philosophy which threatened dissolution of the community by destroying the foundation upon which it was built. Love is the antidote to such a condition because it cements and holds the hearts of the saints together in times of greatest stress. One who reads the writings of John about love will derive much pleasure from the observations of the apostle but he will never understand why John injected the teaching as he did until he remembers that love was a prescription for the body at a time when certain errors were becoming epidemic.

2. John besought the elect lady to remember that he wrote no new commandment. He simply reminded her of the commandment heard from the beginning. He identifies that commandment—*that we love one another* (5). Only if we recall constantly the nature of this commandment which was had from the beginning can we ever understand John properly. In I John 2:7, the brethren are told that John will write no new commandment unto them, but an old commandment which they had from the beginning. They are told that the old commandment is *the word* which they heard from the beginning.

The word is not the new covenant scriptures. They did not have this from the beginning. The new covenant scriptures grew out of needs created by later circumstances. Philemon was a letter of commendation for a runaway slave, Onesimus, who was returning to his master. Philipians was a letter of thanks for assistance to Paul when he was in prison. First Corinthians was written to deal with a demoralizing state of affairs disclosed by the visiting family of Chloe, and to answer queries in a letter brought by Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus. All of this came later.

RECEIVE HIM NOT

The word which was heard from the beginning was "Love one another."

From the beginning Jesus said, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Again, "These things I command you, that ye love one another" (15:17). John wrote to the elect lady, "This is love, that we walk after his commandments" (2 John 6). Those who regard the Way as being a legalistic system lay great stress upon this, but they fail to grasp the significance of the following sentence, "This is his commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning ye should walk in it." The previous verse tells us that we heard from the beginning was to love one another. This is the commandment of Christ. What John is here saying is, "This is love, that we walk after his commandments, and his commandment is that we love one another and walk in that love." But why does John use "commandments" (plural) and "commandment" (singular) in the same sense? The answer is found in Romans 13:9, where we are told that all the commandments are summed up in one word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This lifts the commandments of Christ above the level of law to the plane of love. This is the word we had from the beginning.

3. The reason for the admonition to the lady and her children to continue to walk in love is that, "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (7). Here John pointedly identifies the kind of traveling false teachers against whom he warns the recipients of this epistle. This letter was written to counter the efforts of the Gnostics. "The many deceivers who have entered into the world" are "the many false prophets who are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). The deceivers of whom he now writes are the seducers of whom he has written. "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you" (I John 2:26). The things written identify the personages as antichrists (I John 2:18).

The Fundamental Doctrine

4. The elect lady and her children are cautioned, "Look to yourselves, that you may not lose what you (or we) have worked for, but may win a full reward" (8). The purpose of the apostolic message was to build men in love on the Christhood of Jesus, so that the eternal life they possessed by having the Son might eventually terminate in fulness of joy in his presence. Those who face up to the fact of his divine Sonship in the flesh will be rewarded with fellowship face to face in the future.

If we abide in him here we may abide in his presence over there. But if antichrists seduce us to forfeit our faith in the greatest fact in the universe we will lose all. So fundamental is this fact of faith that rejection of it is the fundamental falsehood of this age. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" (I John 2:22). There is one foundation of salvation and one foundation of damnation. Both are directly concerned with the same fact. "He that believeth . . . shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." (I trust that no carping critic will conclude that I have intentionally devaluated baptism in making this point).

5. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

To whom does the apostle relate the expression, "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ?" What is "the doctrine of Christ"? Let us notice some of the other translations.

"Anyone who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God" (Revised Standard Version).

"No one has God who goes too far and fails to stay by the teaching of Christ" (Charles B. Williams).

"Whoever goes beyond, and does not remain within Christ's teaching, will not possess God" (Authentic Version).

"Anyone who runs ahead too far, and does not stand by the doctrine of the Christ, is without God" (New English Version).

"Anyone who is 'advanced' and will not remain by the doctrine of Christ, does not possess God" (James Moffatt).

"The man who is so 'advanced' that he is not content with what Christ taught, has in fact no God" (J. B. Phillips).

It will be noted that these substitute for "transgresseth" (King James Version) such expressions as: goes ahead, goes too far, goes beyond, runs ahead too far, and advanced. Both Moffat and Phillips indicate by usage of quotation marks that the term "advanced" is used in a special sense. Those who are under consideration are not really advanced thinkers; they just flatter themselves that they are. These later versions are more nearly correct than the King James Version. The word "transgress" is a translation of *parabaino*, and it is true this is found in a few manuscripts. But all of the best copies have *proagon*, to go ahead, to advance beyond.

This was the very claim of the Gnostics. They looked with disdain and contempt upon "the common herd" who thought of Jesus as being the Word (Logos) made flesh. In their intellectual arrogance they had

RECEIVE HIM NOT

advanced to the place where they could see that Jesus was not the Christ. Jesus was human. The Christ was spirit. These two were not the same. They did not deny that Jesus existed nor did they deny that the Christ existed. They did not even deny that for a period the two had been invested in the same person. But they did deny that Jesus was the Christ or that the Christ was Jesus. Jesus was not the word (Logos) and had no existence prior to the incarnation, as they viewed it. Therefore there was no incarnation. Jesus did not *come in* the flesh.

The apostolic declaration was that Jesus had come in the flesh. This was basic, elemental and fundamental. The spirit which confessed this was of God; the spirit that did not confess it was not of God, but was antichrist. This was the test proposed by which to "try the spirits whether they are of God" (I John 4:1-3). This was the foundation. One who was on that foundation might be mistaken about many things and all of them were, but they dare not be mistaken about the foundation. It is noteworthy that one was built upon this foundation by a positive action—confession that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (I John 4:2). The opposite is not denial, which is also a positive action, but simply "not confessing." "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus is come in the flesh is not of God." This eliminates not only positive denial, but also neutrality. One cannot occupy a neutral position as to the identity of Christ and be built upon the foundation. The foundational fact must be confessed—*as a fact!* One cannot be either a gnostic or an agnostic.

6. We can determine what "the doctrine of Christ" is in this sense by the effect of "going beyond" or "abiding in it." One who *advances* has not God; one who "abides in it" has both the Father and Son. The doctrine of Christ, in this case, does not consist of *the things* Jesus taught, but of *the thing* taught about Jesus. The ethical and moral values of Jesus are very important. Nothing we say here must be understood as minimizing their value. One must "keep the commandments of Jesus" (John 15:10), and if he loves Jesus, he will keep them, naturally, automatically and spontaneously, for this is the only possible reaction of love. Only one who does not love Jesus will not keep his sayings (John 14:24). Yet we must all, without exception, place some qualification upon living up to the requirements of Jesus. "As far as we are able," "to the extent we understand them," "as we learn what he wishes,"—these are all our own qualifications to explain how we can have God, and how He can have us, while we fail to live up to His perfect example. We often transgress, and often disobey. If we did not the Father would not

SPECIAL STUDIES

need to administer chastisement. Yet we are told that all of us are partakers of such chastisement, and without this we would but demonstrate that we are bastards, and not sons.

But "the doctrine of Christ" about which John wrote cannot be qualified. It cannot be governed by mitigating circumstances. One who does not abide in it has not God. It is just that plain. It is just that positive. What is "the doctrine" one must have in order to have God? Whatever it is, it was possessed by all who have God while the apostles were still alive. It was possessed by "the lady and her children" and by "all others who are in the truth." It could not have been a copy of the new covenant scriptures, for no person on earth possessed that, not even the apostle John. It could not have included the Second Epistle of John for those to whom it was written were already "walking in truth" before John wrote it. This epistle could not have been part of "the doctrine of Christ" for there were those who had already gone beyond that doctrine when this epistle was written.

Fortunately John identifies the doctrine essential to having the Father and the Son. "Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ. . . . No one who denies the Son has the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also" (1 John 2:23). *Jesus is the Christ!* This is the foundation of the community of saints, the colony of heaven on earth. *Jesus is the Christ!* This is the only confession we may scripturally require of any penitent seeking admission to the fellowship of the redeemed. *Jesus is the Christ!* Every spirit which confesses this is of God. *Jesus is the Christ!* This is the only creed essential to overcoming the world. *Jesus is the Christ!* The one who believes this has the witness in himself.

But what of the "advanced thinker" who denies this great fact? How was the Gnostic teacher to be treated? How was one who did not abide in this doctrine to be regarded by those who did abide in it?

"Receive Him Not"

7. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (10, 11).

"Do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting, for he who greets him shares his wicked work" (Revised Standard Version).

RECEIVE HIM NOT

"If any one who comes to you does not bring this teaching, do not receive him under your roof nor greet him; for he who greets him is a sharer of his evil deeds" (Weymouth).

"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not admit him to the house—do not even greet him, for he who greets him shares in his wicked work" (Moffatt).

"If anyone comes to you who does not bring this doctrine, do not welcome him into your house or give him a greeting; for anyone who gives him a greeting is an accomplice in his wicked deeds" (New English Version).

"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your homes, do not even bid him welcome; for he who bids him welcome shares in his evil deeds" (Authentic Version).

In the face of what has gone before, I would not presume upon the intelligence of my readers to further identify "the doctrine." Only those who ignore background, setting, contemporary issues and context, could ever mistake it. The application to other matters could only be made by those with a party axe to grind—those who would fasten upon the phrase "receive him not," to deny their relationship with the very brethren whom Jesus taught us to love. The warping and wrestling of this scripture by factional defenders should serve as a warning to us of what happens to those whose hearts are filled with the party spirit and who search the scriptures for a means to separate and segregate themselves from other brethren in the Lord.

Inconsistency of Orthodoxy

I have heard the expression "this doctrine" applied to every item of controversy among the various factions calling themselves "The Church of Christ." Depending upon the particular party whose champion quoted it, the expression has been related to individual cups, Bible classes, colleges, orphan homes, the pastor system, fermented wine in the Lord's Supper, a method of breaking the bread, the pre-millennial viewpoint, instrumental music, missionary societies, and a diversified host of motley issues which have made "the restoration robe of righteousness" a Joseph's coat that puts the rainbow spectrum to shame.

In every instance these partisan exponents have shown themselves to be utterly inconsistent. They have slashed themselves with one side of the knife which they have sharpened in eager anticipation of stabbing others. But their very inconsistency proves that each is better than his

unwritten creed. These brethren dare not apply practically what they claim to believe. Take for example the preacher who quotes 2 John 10, 11 in condemnation of one who cannot see that instrumental music as an aid in corporate worship is a sin. Does not the one who deplors the use of the instrument receive the other into his house—either the public meetinghouse or his private dwelling?

The fact is that all of the non-instrumental groups I know, not only receive into their houses those who disagree with them, but go to great lengths to try to get them into their houses. When they hold a meeting they spend money on radio and television programs, as well as newspaper advertising, all beamed at the very ones whom they condemn as "bringing not this doctrine." They go from door to door, greeting and saluting all and sundry, and when they find someone who does not agree with their position they *urge* him to come. They meet him at the door, welcome him warmly, and give him a "chief seat in the synagogue." Of course, after the meeting is over at night and the "faithful ones" remain behind to congratulate themselves upon the success of the personal work and the fact that "the Christian Church preacher attended," if one asks if it would have been a sin to call upon the visitor to lead prayer, the evangelist will quote, "If any man come and bring not this doctrine receive him not into your house nor give him any greeting."

If 2 John 10, 11, applies to "a Christian Church preacher" as my factional brethren so childishly designate those who use instrumental music, I charge that to even allow him to enter the house (much less invite him to come), makes them "accomplices in his evil deeds." It is such absurd, ridiculous and puerile reasoning which will keep thinking people from seeing the real force and beauty of a plea which began as "a project to unite the Christians in all of the sects." The very essence of sectarianism is exclusiveness, and if anyone is more exclusive than those who twist this scripture to justify their sectarian prejudices I have yet to meet him. Our brethren should be ashamed to live and afraid to die!

Every party among us, even the most reactionary, will greet any person who attends their meetings—after they get over their surprise. Of course they would not call upon him to pray to the Father but they will run halfway across the house to provide him with a songbook already turned to the right page, so he can praise the Father. He cannot pray out loud by himself, but he can pray as loud as he wants with others, if the prayer is set to a tune. I am thankful that literally hundreds of our

RECEIVE HIM NOT

brethren are becoming embarrassed by the imbecility and senselessness of the preposterous position in which they find themselves. The party spirit has driven them so far down a blind alley that at last some are trying to scale the fence at the other end and get back on Main Street again. This is good and I intend to give them a hand when I can.

My Position

I propose to regard all of God's children as my brothers. I intend to treat them as brothers. I have resolved to make nothing a test of fellowship which God has not made a condition of salvation. I shall accuse no one of being an antichrist who is built upon the one foundation simply because he differs with me in understanding of such things as cups, classes, colleges, the millennium, or instrumental music. I shall not allow our divergent views upon these things to keep me from associating with any of my brothers, or helping all of them.

I shall go visit any group to share what I have learned, and to share in what they have learned. I shall go with none of them in partisan alliance, for my allegiance is to Jesus Christ. I am joined to Him and through Him to all others who are joined unto Him. Never again will I be a champion of any party, faction or clique. I refuse to be affiliated with any clan in which my love for *these* precludes my love for *those*. I belong to nobody and no body but the body of Christ!

Under no circumstances will I apply to those who believe that Jesus is the Christ, those passages written to condemn those who do not confess this fact. My brethren are not Gnostics. They have not gone out from us even though we differ about many issues which have disturbed our tranquillity. When brethren come where I am speaking, I shall not seek to determine how they stand on instrumental music, the millennium, or Herald of Truth, before I call upon them to pray. These are matters between them and our Lord. If they can explain their position to his satisfaction, they need not try to satisfy me with their explanation. I am not so much interested in where they stand as I am in the direction they are facing. I shall recognize their right to pray because they are in Him and not because they are in some party. I have no party and no party has me! This last is even more important than the other. I know a lot of brethren who claim to have no faction, but a faction has a claim upon them. They stand in jeopardy every hour!

Upon the one foundation living stones are builded together. These stones are not all the same size, shape, texture or variety. A stone house

SPECIAL STUDIES

must be built with the stones available in the area. Since stones vary from one area to another, a house in one location may not look like that in another. The house of God is not made of stones that are uniform in knowledge, perception, ability or aptitude. It is composed of those who are joined together by mutual faith in Jesus and cemented by love. The foundation for all is the eternal abiding principle in confessional form, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." "If any man come and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting."

RELIGIOUS HATRED

BY FREDERIC W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.

(Editor's Note: After preparing the foregoing article I decided that our readers should hear from one capable of a more scholarly approach. I append this chapter from "The Early Days of Christianity" by Dr. Farrar, who was at the time Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; Archdeacon and Canon of Westminster; and Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen. He deals with 2 John 10, 11. We ask that you read it carefully.)

It will be seen, then, at a glance, that Truth and Love are keynotes of the Epistle, and that the conceptions which prevail throughout it are those with which we have been made familiar by the previous Epistle. And yet one passage of the Epistle has again and again been belauded, and is again and again adduced as a stronghold of intolerance, an excuse

for pitiless hostility against all who differ from ourselves. There is something distressing in the swift instinct with which an unchristian egotism has first assumed its own infallibility on subjects which are often no part of Christian faith, and then has spread as on vulture's wings to this passage as a consecration of the feelings with which the *odium theologicum* disgraces and ruins the Divinest interests of the cause of Christ. It must be said—though I say it with deepest sorrow—that the cold exclusiveness of the Pharisee, the bitter ignorance of the self-styled theologian, the usurped infallibility of the half-educated religionist, have ever been the curse of Christianity.

They have imposed "the senses of men upon the words of God, the special senses of men on the general words of God," and have tried to