From the Editor's Notebook: Journeying Through Jude

W. Ross Rainey

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Part 1

From the Editor's Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Journeying Through Jude (Part 1)

The Writer

There are seven Judes or Judases mentioned in the New Testament:

1. Judas, the ancestor of Jesus (Luke 3:30)

2. Judas, the Galilean (Acts 5:37).

3. Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve and the betrayer of Christ (Mark 3:19).

4. Judas, with whom the Apostle Paul lodged (Acts 9:11).

5. Judas Barsabbas, one of the chief men among the brethren at Jerusalem (Acts 15:22).

6. Judas, the apostle (Acts 1:13)

7. Judas, the half brother of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3).

The writer of this brief letter is the last in the list, Jude, the half brother of our Lord (Jude had a human father, whereas our Lord did not). The Scriptures certify that he became a believer shortly after the resurrection of Christ (cf. John 7:5; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:7). Though Tertullian identifies the author of this letter as the Apostle Jude, it should be noted that the writer made no claim to be an apostle and actually distinguished himself from the apostles (v. 17). He appealed to his relationship as the "brother of James" (v. 1), which James was

prominent among his readers. By omission of the apostolic title both James and Jude indicate that they were not apostles. That Jude made no claim in his letter to be the brother of the Lord Jesus is easily understood in the light of Christ's altered human relationships following His ascension to the right hand of God the Father. Rather, he simply referred to himself as "the servant of Jesus Christ."

That Jude was an evangelist and married may be inferred from 1 Corinthians 9:5. Nothing further is known about him.

His style of writing is much like that of his brother James, poetic and vivid. It may be further described as bold, rugged, picturesque, prophetic, energetic and even vehement.

The Readers

Though the address is general, it is evident that Jewish believers are in view. Apart from 2 Peter and possibly Hebrews, this letter contains more allusions to Jewish history than any other New Testament letter. Verses 4 and 16 localize the occasion of the letter, and in all probability it was addressed to some particular church, probably in Palestine.

The Date

Since there is no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.), which surely would have been cited in verses 5-7, it is assumed that Jude wrote his letter around 67 or 68 A.D.

The Object

1. Jude is especially fond of triplets, of which there are twelve groups (see v. 1, having two sets, vv. 2, 8, 11; double triplets are found in “kept,” three times in reference to the godly, vv. 1, 21, 24, and three times in reference to the ungodly, vv. 6, 13; and in “ungodly,” vv. 4, 15, 18).

2. A portrait of false teachers is given in the three historical examples of Cain, Salaam and Korah.

3. Jude is the only book in the Bible which records the strife over Moses’ body (v. 9), and the prophecy of Enoch (vv. 14-15).

4. Jude refers to three groups of writings: (1) the Old Testament; (2) the New Testament; and (3) the Apocryphal Writings.

5. Jude is very similar to 2 Peter, and since it is widely believed that the latter is the earlier of the two letters, it is apparent that Jude quotes from it (cf. Jude 4-16 with 2 Pet. 2:1-18; and Jude 17 & 18 with 2 Pet. 3:2 & 3).

6. Jude mentions three eternal things: (1) chains; (2) fire; and (3) life (see vv. 6, 7, 21).

7. Jude presents the pathway of security for the Christian, and several prominent themes are found in his letter: a. The Trinity (vv. 4, 20).

b. The deity of Christ (V. 21).

c. The historicity of the Old Testament (vv. 5-11).

d. The personality and power of Satan (v. 9).

e. The angels (vv. 6-7).

f. The certainty of judgment (vv. 6, 7, 13).

g. The second coming of Christ (vv. 14-15).

8. Peter speaks of the apostasy as undeveloped; whereas Jude speaks of it as having already come.

9. Jude is a profound and highly applicable letter in view of present-day conditions of widespread apostacy.

10. That Jude should refer to the Apocryphal books of The Assumption or Ascension of Moses (written about 50 A.D.), and the Book of Enoch (written in the 1st or 2nd century B.C.) need not cause surprise. James makes use of the Wisdom of Solomon, and Paul quotes from Epimenides, Aratus, and Menander (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Tim. 3:8; Tit. 1:12). Jude uses these references as passing illustrations. There is no need to suppose that these excerpts from extant and current sources were given by special revelation. “Honour is not done to God by our creating a miracle where there is no need for one.”1

11. “Kept” is the keynote of the letter. It is found in verses 1, 6 and 21, and in another form in verse 24.

12. Jude “is the Holy Spirit’s warning to the church against apostasy.”2

13. In Jude, Christians are PRESERVED “in Christ.”

Quotable Quotes

Origin, one of the early church fathers, refers to Jude’s letter as “an Epistle of few lines, but one filled full of the strong words of heavenly grace.”3 Robert Lee has stated: “Jude’s epistle is one of the most solemn in the Bible. It gives a history of apostasy from before time to the end of time, dealing with the ambitious angels, self-righteous Cain, depraved Sodomites, rebellious Israel,

greedy Balaam, presumptuous Korah, and the apostasy of his day and ours; in all, three judgments on corporate wickedness, and three on individual."4 S. Maxwell Coder wrote: "Jude is the only book in all God's Word entirely devoted to the great apostasy which is to come upon Christendom before the Lord Jesus Christ returns. This brief message of twenty-five verses is the vestibule to the Revelation, introducing the Bible student to the apocalyptic judgments unfolded therein.

"Without Jude, the prophetic picture which begins with the teachings of Christ in the Gospels and develops throughout the epistles would be incomplete."5 (Editor's Note: This introductory study of Jude's letter is the first of several studies on this important epistle which will appear in future issues of the magazine, in our Lord's will.)

1 Ibid., p. 305.

2 Robert L. Evans, The Epistle of Jude, p.5.

3 Ibid., p. 5.

4 Robert Lee, The Outlined Bible, Analysis No. 65.

5 S. Maxwell Coder, Jude: The Acts of the Apostates, p. 3.

Part 2

From the Editor's Notebook

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Journeying Through Jude (Part. 2)

Although Jude is one of the shortest books in the Bible, comprising only twenty-five verses, it has a very important place in the canon of Scripture. Being largely a book of judgment, the place given to this letter is the right one, for it serves as a fitting preface to The Revelation. As A. C. Gaebelein has said of Jude's letter, "…it reveals the conditions, religiously and morally, which prevail on earth before the great coming event takes place, of which Revelation has so much to say."1 Like James, it is unfortunate that Jude's letter has been greatly neglected, for it is especially applicable in these "last days" of this age of grace.

The Declaration Of The Apostasy (Vv. 1-4)

The Introduction (vv. 1-2). Jude calls himself "the servant (bondslave) of Jesus Christ." The fact that he did not refer to himself as the brother of our Lord was not in any sense to depreciate his own person. Rather, to have appealed to this relationship would have been altogether inconsistent with the true spirit of Christ (see Luke 22:27-28), and it would have formed a strong a priori argument against the letter's authenticity. The fact that Jude refers to himself as the "brother of James" may be to identify himself, or else he used his brother's name—and his relationship to him—to lend authority to his letter.

Throughout his brief treatise Jude readily shows his fondness for triads, there being two sets in verse 1. The first set is represented by “Jude” (actually a form of the Jewish name Judah), “servant” and “brother.”

The second set depends on what translation of verse 1 is preferred, the better rendering being, “to the called ones, beloved in God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ,” or as the New American Standard Version has it, “to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ.” Thus the recipients of the letter—and all true believers—are “called,” “beloved” and “kept.”

The word for “called” (in reference to all Christians) pertains to an effectual call, such having been invited and having responded (see Rom. 1:6; 1 Cor. 1:24). The word for “beloved” intensifies the believer’s standing in love, while the word for “kept” strongly proclaims the believer’s eternal security. Also, as related to the letter itself, the believer is kept from apostasy. These three words, “called,” “beloved” and “kept,” describe the true Christian life, the same being in marked contrast to the kind of life lived by the false teachers about which Jude is led to write so much in his letter.

The celebrated Greek scholar, A. T. Robertson, has stated in connection with verse 1 that “kept by Jesus Christ” is “a quite possible interpretation”2 (see John 17:6, 11).

The salutation of verse 2 is unusual. Grace is omitted and a study of other New Testament salutations will reveal that “love” is not often included. “Mercy” denotes the undeserved pity of God, and it corresponds to Paul’s “grace” in his salutations. Both words express the

unmerited goodness or favor of God which is at the root of His fellowship with redeemed sinners. In essence, God's mercy withholds what we deserve, while His grace bestows what we do not deserve. "Peace" is the Hebrew word of salutation which, with an added fulness of Christian meaning, is generally found in the letters of the New Testament. "Love" is, of course, a reference to God's love, the outflow of the new life in Christ. Believers are already living in the enjoyment of these precious blessings, but Jude desired that they might be "multiplied" or increased in our experience and example (see 1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:2). Apart from God's mercy, His peace could never have been known, the latter issuing out of the former (see John 14:27 with Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7). Because the divine nature is in the believer, the love of God is produced and flows out to Him and to others.

If mercy, peace and love are ever lacking in the life of the believer, it is because of his failure to enter into the Lord's abundant supply (Phil.4:19; Heb. 4:16).

The Intention (vv. 3-4). These verses tell us why Jude wrote his letter. He had been giving diligent thought to writing a treatise about "the common salvation," literally "our common salvation (i.e., the full and free salvation extended to Jew and Gentile alike). However, the appearance of the apostate teachers in the church constrained him to write about the urgency of contending earnestly for the faith. This sudden change was, of course, directed by the Holy Spirit. As a little side note, it's important to observe that if it was not for the subject of apostasy a sizable portion of the New Testament would be missing.

The verb for “earnestly contend” (v. 3) is found only here in the New Testament, although the same idea is expressed in Philippians 1:27 in the words “striving together.” This exhortation gives us the positive and practical challenge of the letter—namely, that the truth must be held fast and advanced (this is readily illustrated in the Old Testament by Nehemiah and his workmen). “The faith” is not the faith by which a sinner lays hold of salvation, but rather a reference to the written body of truth—the Word of God—regarding our Lord’s “so great salvation.” Furthermore, this body of truth has been “once for all delivered unto the saints” (v. 3).

Two great truths are in view: (1) The one body of truth is complete. No supplement is possible. However, while our Lord’s written revelation is complete, illumination continues, this being one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit in the believer which our Saviour Himself promised and described in John 16:13-16. And in 1 Corinthians 2:10, the Apostle Paul stressed that the believer can experience the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit even to the extent of understanding the deep things of God. While it is quite proper and thoroughly Biblical to advance in spiritual knowledge and understanding, believers must nevertheless faithfully abide in the teaching of Christ. Pope, purgatory, indulgences, the immaculate conception, etc., all come under the category of advances but not such as abide in the teaching of the Lord, Jesus Christ. (2) The one body of truth is final. No successor can be admitted. Classic examples of those who have violated this truth and principle are the Mormons who place The Book of Mormon on a par with the Bible, and the adherents of

Christian Science, its founder—Mary Baker Eddy—having affirmed a greater authority than the. Bible's for her book, Science and Health, with a Key to the Scriptures.

The body of truth regarding God's salvation has been delivered from the apostles to the Church, and it is important to note that Jude follows Paul in esteeming the gospel as that which, in its unchangeable entirety, has been delivered by God to men for them to hand on to others (see Gal. 1:8, 9, 11, 12; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2).

Believers should seek to "earnestly contend for the faith" by example, as well as by exhortation. The word "saints" expresses the key idea, suggesting the thought of separation or holiness in both conduct and conversation. As someone has discerningly pointed out regarding the designation of believers as "saints," the name is an honor, an exhortation to be what we are; it is a reproach because we are not what we are.

Lest we become contentious when contending for the faith, the Apostle Paul has given us a high and holy standard by which to abide: "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at His will" (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

In the light of Paul's words, Harry A. Ironside commented as follows on the spirit that is to characterize the servant of Christ who would contend for the truth:

“Firmly, yet with tender compassion for those being led astray, he is to stand for all that God has revealed. When a bad, carnal spirit takes possession of one, he is powerless to help or bless others. And it should ever be remembered that in contending for the faith, the soul of the sinner has to be thought of likewise. It is not enough to uphold the doctrines of Christ, the behavior must commend the truth which the lips proclaim. The phrase in Eph. 4:15, translated ‘speaking the truth in love,’ has been literally rendered, ‘truthing in love.’ We do not have the participle form of the word in English, as in Greek; consequently it is awkward to so express it; but it gives the exact meaning. It is far more than speaking the truth that is in question. It is the truth lived out in all our ways. Unless this be characteristic of the one who contends for the faith of God’s elect, the utterances of his lips will be but in vain.”3 (to be continued, D.V.)

1 A. C. Gaebelein, The Annotated Bible, The New Testament, IV, p. 173.

2 A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, VI, p. 186.

3 Harry A. Ironside, Exposition of the Epistle of Jude, p. 15.

Part 3

From The Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Journeying Through Jude (Part 3)

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(v.4).

“From the days of Simon Magus to the present, “ wrote Harry A. Ironside, “it has ever been the object of Satan to secretly introduce evil workers into the assemblies of the saints of God, that thus the simple and the unwary may be deceived and led astray. Nor have men been wanting in all ages who would stoop to do so nefarious a business.”1 Thus the words of verse 4 describe the apostate teachers whose presence and influence in the visible church stirred Jude to write as he did. The opening “for” introduces the occasion of the letter. In Galatians 2:4 the error of those who stole in was legality; here it is licentiousness. Jude brings three charges against these false brethren, charges which are repeated numerous times in the letter. First of all, we see their character. They were “ungodly men” (vv. 15 & 18). At this point it’s important to understand that the descriptive term ungodly does not necessarily refer to open immorality or other forms of wickedness. Actually, the Greek word asebes means “impious” or “destitute of reverential awe toward God.” An apostate may be held in high esteem by other men as a moral, upright,

exemplary citizen. Yet, the Bible describes him as ungodly because in his heart he has no real fear or reverential awe of God which would lead him to believe and obey God's revealed will.

Second, we note the conduct of the apostates depicted by Jude; they were immoral men, "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." And third, we observe their creed; they were rebellious men, "Denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Actually, as in the old Revised Version, the closing words of verse 4 should read, "denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." In the oldest Greek manuscripts are two different words behind the twice used "Lord" of the King James Version. The first word, despotes, occurs only ten times in the New Testament and means "a sovereign master, a master of slaves." From it we derive our English word despot. The second word, kurios, is quite common in the New Testament and is the usual designation given to Jesus Christ as "Lord." The new International Version translates it: "Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord." This clarification, then, reveals that the whole clause refers to Christ.

"Crept in unawares" includes the thought that these apostates were already in the visible church, having secretly or stealthily gained entrance as though by a side or back door. This reminds us of our Lord's words in His parable of the tares among the wheat: "But, while men slept, his (i.e., the man who sowed good seed), enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way" (Matt. 13:25).

Peter wrote of the apostates as being future (2 Pet. 2:1; 3:3), while Jude writes of their actual presence. This

provides some evidence that 2 Peter is the older letter and that if any copying was done, Jude used Peter's letter, not vice-versa.

"Before … ordained" does not mean "foreordained" or "elected" to condemnation. Rather, it simply means "Marked out beforehand." The Apostle Paul used the same word in Romans 15:4 with reference to things written in the Old Testament, and the word must be understood as having a similar reference here. The thought is that the condemnation or judgment of apostates has been declared and illustrated in the Old Testament. The adjective "old" may refer to one of four things: (1) Jude's prophecy of verses 14 and 15; (2) Old Testament prophecies in general; (3) New Testament writings such as 1 & 2 Timothy and 2 Peter; or (4) possibly to verses 5-7. The first view has the support of the context, while the third has the support of the background. The Greek word for "old" is never used to refer to eternity past, but to time only.

Apostasy is a result of the denial of right doctrine, and as S. Maxwell Coder has carefully pointed out: "Apostasy is not to be confused with mere indifference to the Word, nor error or heresy. A born-again person may fall into error, or embrace some heresy; but there seems to be no scriptural warrant for thinking that he may become apostate. An apostate has received light, but not life. He may have received, in some degree, the written Word; but he has not received the living Word, the Son of God."2 In one of his sermons John F. MacArthur, Jr., has commented as follows on the denial of the Lord Jesus Christ by apostates: "They always want to make Him into a man. They always want to take away from Jesus the right to be God. This is the most despicable doctrine

there is. It's the thing I hate worse than any false doctrine that Jesus is not God in human flesh. The cults that pervert that doctrine, and the liberals and modernists that pervert that doctrine are striking right at the core of Christianity and right at the core of the character of God. They will not let Him be distinct. They will not honor Him as the Lord. They want to bring Him down to a human level. They dishonor Him in that way. The apostates deny everything. They deny His sovereign rule as God. They deny His Lordship over the believers as the one to be exalted and honored. They deny His Saviorhood, and they deny His Messiahship. They deny it all. That's apostasy."

As for Jude's threefold portrayal of apostates in verse 4, these same characteristics are reiterated in verse 11. Cain is an illustration of the ungodliness of apostasy, Salaam is an illustration of the perversion of divine grace into evil, and Korah is an illustration of the denial of God's appointed leader — namely, Moses, who is a picture of Christ.

The Destruction of the Apostates (vv. 5-16)

I will, therefore, put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels who 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 Gomorrah, 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 (vv. 5-7).

In these three verses Jude sets forth God's attitude toward apostates, singling out three groups which illustrate God's judgment of past apostasy: the Jews, the angels, and the Gentiles. Verse 5 tells us of how God dealt with the children of Israel in the desert, verse 6 of how He judged the angels that sinned, and verse 7 of God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Actually, the main body of Jude's letter begins with verse 5, and to both appreciate and rightly interpret Jude's message we must have a working knowledge of 2 Peter. Both follow the same pattern, although Peter's second letter is chronological, while Jude's epistle is not. The examples recorded by Jude in verses 5-7 were selected because of some particular correspondence between the conduct of those involved and the behaviour of the apostates who had stealthily gained entrance into the assembly.

In verse 5, Jude's "I will" does not refer to the future but to his set purpose to remind his readers of Israel's past judgment, as well as the two other examples of judgment. The clause, "though ye once knew this," seems to be a parallel to the words in verse 3, "the faith which was once delivered," the occurrence of "once" in both verses meaning once for all. The first example the Holy Spirit led Jude to select refers to the unbelief of Israel in the wilderness (see Num. 14:27-37). The parallel between the faithless Israelites and the false brethren lies in the fact that both had identified themselves with God's people and then apostatized. This illustration, then, demonstrates that it is possible for a true believer to apostatize from the truth.

While it's true that the mixed multitude which came out of Egypt with the children of Israel included many unbelievers, no thoughtful, discerning student of the Bible would say that all who perished in the wilderness perished eternally. If this were the case, then of the entire number that had crossed the Red Sea only Joshua and Caleb were true believers, since they were the only ones of that generation over twenty years of age to ultimately enter Canaan. Of further significance are the words of Hebrews 3:12, where the brethren are exhorted to beware of "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Through unbelief Israel fell away from the living God. And the same thing can and does happen to believers today, Jude's warning being treated at length in other New Testament passages (see 1 Cor. 10:1-12; Heb. 3:16-4:5).

The Greek word for "destroyed" in Jude 5 is appolumi. It is used elsewhere in the New Testament of both physical death, as in Luke 8:24, and of the "second death" or eternal separation from God, as in John 3:16. The context determines the precise meaning of the word.

That believers today, who are guilty of certain sins, can "perish" in the same way in which unbelieving Israelites did in their day is clear from such passages as 1 John 5:16 and 1 Corinthians 11:29 and 30. In the former reference, John speaks of "a sin unto death" or, as it may also be rendered, "sin unto death," which sin undoubtedly takes many forms. The latter passage is a classic illustration of John's words, in that, some of the Corinthian saints had, through divine judgment, been taken home to heaven because they ate and drank at the Lord's Supper in a sinful manner, having failed to discern the Lord's body.

As for the possibility of being guilty of sinning unto death, Coder has helpfully commented, “This is not a major doctrine of Scripture, but it is part of God’s revelation for us. Many faithful servants of Christ are called to glory at an early age; we dare not say of any man that he sinned unto death. We must rather see that we ourselves profit by what is written. Jude 5 is given to warn us, not to enable us to judge others.”3 (To be continued, D.V.)

1 Harry A. Ironside, Expostion of the Epistle of Jude, p. 16.

2 S. Maxwell Coder, Jude: the Acts of the Apostates, p. 21 3 Ibid., p. 32.

Part 6

From the Editor's Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Journeying Through Jude (Part 6)

Having illustrated the destruction of the apostates in verses 5-7, Jude returns now in verses 8-13, with verse 16, to the subject of the false brethren who had stealthily made their way into the assembly of God's people. It is in these verses that he delineates in considerable detail the portrait of these heretics, verse 8 disclosing the opening details.

In like manner also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

In spite of the previous warnings of verses 5-7, these apostate teachers sin after the same pattern, as indicated by the opening words, "In like manner also" or "Likewise also," the literal translation being, "Likewise nevertheless also." On the basis of his three analogies in verses 5-7, Jude begins to paint his vivid, warty-word portrait of these false brethren. He arraigns them on three counts: for defiling their own bodies, for rebelling against authority, and for speaking evil of celestial dignities.

There is no word in the Greek text for "filthy," this being an addition by the translators. The word for "dreamers" may point to the impure and evil thoughts or imaginations of the false teachers, which in turn are put into action. Some, feel, however, that by calling them "dreamers," Jude is indicating that they supported their

evil conduct by claiming divine revelations in their dreams.1 At any rate, the graphic description of the unbridled activities' of these apostates represents another of Jude's many triads. First, these ungodly men "defile the flesh" through misuse of it, the flesh itself not being impure. Second, they "despise dominion," the word for "dominion" being found only three other times in the New Testament (Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16; 2 Pet. 2:10) and meaning lordship. In Jude's use of the word, it has reference primarily to either the Lordship of Christ or angels, the former probably being the case. Why? because the doctrine of the Lordship of Christ is despised by apostates, and because of the words at the close of verse 4, "and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (NASV). Their despising of authority may, of course, be properly applied to human authority, whether in the realm of civil power, church leaders and discipline, or to authority in general. Nevertheless, in view of what Jude has already stated in verse 4, it seems best to refer these descriptive words to the false teachers' denial of all ultimate authority and judgment as personified in the Lord Jesus Christ. One thing, these apostates were against God's law and thus lawless in their behaviour. Like those in the illustrations of verses 5-7, they were filled with pride and arrogance, as well as jubilant in their professed superior knowledge. Third, they "speak evil of dignities," these words being a clear reference to angelic beings, the allusion of verse 9 definitely confirming this, coupled with the fact that the same Greek word used in verse 8 appears in both verses 9 and 10 (see 2 Pet. 2:10). The phrase is rendered elsewhere as follows: "and revile angelic majesties" (NASV), and in the New Testament Version to "slander celestial beings."

Whether good or bad angels are meant is not clear. The natural thing is to assume that Jude is referring to good angels, yet the illustration of verse 9 refers to none other than Satan himself. It seems best, therefore, to interpret these words to refer to angelic beings in general, both good and bad, and including the devil.

Summing up, then, this verse reveals the vile and corrupt character of these false brethren, expressing itself in violent words and deeds.

Although he wrote his brief exposition on Jude's letter more than fifty years ago, the following comments by Harry A. Ironside on verse 8 are still pertinently fresh:

"Unholy ways always accompany, and indeed spring from, unholy teachings. Hence we can easily understand the readiness with which apostates from the truth give themselves up to what is defiling and abominable. It is noticeable that present-day advocates of that insult to decency denominated 'free love,' are in large measure persons who have apostatized from a nominal Christianity, and now can tolerate, and even stand for, what they once would have abhorred. The loosening of the marriage tie, the prevalent evil of unscriptural divorce and all its train of iniquitous practices, find in modern latitudinarian thought and liberal theology earnest defenders. What would once have been rebuked, even by the world, is now pandered to by a Christless pulpit, and so men and women sustaining unholy relations are rocked to sleep in their sins and made comfortable with the vaporings of 'filthy dreamers,' while death, judgment and eternal punishment are fast hastening on! The rejection of the inspiration of the Bible places the law of God, as expressed in the ten

words from Sinai, among the productions of the human mind, and therefore its code of morals may be spurned and a lower ethical system, more in keeping with present day conditions, substituted. Hence loose standards prevail where Scripture no longer speaks with authority: ‘They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?

“Coupled with this new standard of morals, so opposed to the purity of Scripture, will be found a pride that brooks no bounds, and vaunts itself against every unseen power. Satan is no longer feared, but his very existence denied on the one hand, or his super-human ability ridiculed on the other.”2 (To be continued, D.V.)

1 Michael Green, The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude, p. 168.

2 Harry A. lronside, Exposition of the Epistle of Jude, pp. 27-28.

Part 7

From The Editor's Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Journeying Through Jude (Part 7)

Continuing his written portrait of apostate teachers, Jude states in verse 9:

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

Here, the conduct of apostates is seen in sharp contrast to that of Michael, the archangel guardian of Israel, who did not use violent speech even to the devil. The argument is that if Michael respected some measure of dignity in Satan, how much more should men. Michael, whose name means "Who is as God" or "Who is like unto God?", is mentioned in the Old Testament by Daniel (Dan. 10:13; 12:1) and again in the New Testament in Revelation 12:7. In the Bible he appears as the archangel, there being no reference in the Scriptures to a plurality of archangels. Along this line Harry A. Ironside has stated, "It is important to observe that we never read of archangels in Scripture. Men may so talk, but God's word never. The word occurs only in the singular. Michael … is the archangel. Gabriel, for instance, is never so called. Some have sought to identify Michael with the Son of God Himself. But as there is no word from the Holy Spirit that declares such

an identity it is unwise to theorize. In the writer's judgment the evidence is all the other way.

"Michael appears in the book of Daniel as 'the great prince that standeth for the children of thy (the prophet's) people'; that is, of Israel. In Revelation he appears as the leader of the angelic hosts driving Satan from the heavens when his days of accusing the brethren are ended. Here he is seen contending for the lawgiver's body; and in 1 Thess. 4 he seems to be a distinct being, whose voice (as Israel's prince) will be heard in connection with the shout of the Lord and the trump of God at our Saviour's coming to gather His redeemed to Himself in the air. It is noticeable that in Dan. 10:13 he is called, by another angel, 'Michael, one of the chief princes'; a title, it would seem, utterly inconsistent with Him who was known of old as 'The Angel of the Covenant' —now as our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God."1 There is no record anywhere in the Scriptures of the event to which Jude refers in verse 9. However, relying on a note in the church fathers, some Bible scholars assume a connection between this passage and an alleged appendix to the apocryphal book, The Assumption of Moses (the situation is similar to 2 Tim. 3:8 in reference to Jannes and Jambres), which gives the story of the dispute over the body of Moses after his death, resulting in his triumphal "assumption" to heaven. The devil claimed the body on the ground that Moses was a murderer (Ex. 2:11).Why, then, did Michael contend for Moses' body? Some say it was because of the prophet who would arise like Moses, and Satan wanted to use Moses' body, but this interpretation is farfetched. Furthermore, it would be pointless to relate these

details to the Mount of Transfiguration, where Moses appeared with Elijah, since Moses' natural body would not be at stake there. At any rate, whatever significance there may be, it seems best to relate the reason for such a dispute to Revelation 11:1-13, where the two prophets — Moses and Elijah — are spoken of (see Deut. 34:6). If indeed Moses is to be one of the two witnesses who will be slain and raised again in what appears to be the first half of the tribulation period, then his natural body would be at stake and on this basis Satan might have had good reason to contend for it. It has also been suggested that the devil may have wanted to stumble Israel by setting up Moses' body as an object of veneration, much as Israel was led astray in worshipping the golden calf set up by Aaron (see Ex. 32) and later venerated the brazen serpent which Moses had made (see 2 Kings 18:4).

In verse 10 Jude repeats, in similar fashion, what he mentioned in verse 8:

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.

While professing to have superior knowledge, these false teachers were in reality devoid of the Holy Spirit and in their natural state they neither knew nor understood the truth and wisdom of God (see 1 Cor. 2:7-16). They have no understanding of spiritual realities and, in their ignorance, they "speak evil" of those things about which they are blind. While, like the "brute beasts," they possess instinctive knowledge about physical life, this they pervert. The Apostle Peter does not limit his comparison to the sort of knowledge they

possess, but likens both their persons and conduct to that of “brute beasts” (2 Pet. 2:12). The condemnation of their moral perversion in particular runs throughout Jude’s letter.

“How ironical,” comments Michael Green, “That when men should claim to be knowledgeable, they should actually be ignorant; when they think themselves superior to the common man they should actually be on the same level as animals, and be corrupted by the very practices in which they seek liberty and self-expression. Jude is stating profound truth in linking these two characteristics together. If a man is persistently blind to spiritual values, deaf to the call of God, and rates self-determination as the highest good, then a time will come when he cannot hear the call he has spurned, but is left to the mercy of the turbulent instincts to which he once turned in search of freedom.

And those instincts, given free reign, are merciless. Lust, when indulged, becomes a killer. For a modern commentary on this theme, see Albert Camus’s play, Caligula.”2 (To be continued, D.V.)

Comments on the Creeds

Let us never speak disparagingly of creeds. Preachers who in sweeping statements condemn “man-made creeds” are not thereby manifesting as much spirituality and intelligence as some might suppose. While it is true that we go to the inexhaustible fountain of the infallible Word of God for doctrine, nevertheless we may well thank God that in early centuries when the cardinal truth of the Deity of Christ was viciously attacked, strong men like Athanasius investigated the doctrine in the. Word, and stood in the breach. The results of these

painstaking investigations were beautifully expressed in three important creeds, The Nicene Creed of 325, The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381, and Symbolum of Athanasianum. There were few Bibles in those days so long before the invention of printing. Arians and Semi-Arians were many and powerful, and even the emperors of Rome supported them. We can come to no other conclusion than that these creeds were ordered by the providence of God to the eternal glory of His Son, and for the reaffirmation of the doctrine of the Deity of Christ.

—Donald. M. Hunter in

Our Hope, February 1948

What They Don't Tell You About Darwin!

Neither the biographers of Charles Darwin, nor writers on Evolution, relate the following story of the last days of Charles Darwin, as told by Lady Hope, at meetings in Northfield, Mass.: "It was on a glorious autumn afternoon, when I was asked to go and sit with Charles Darwin. He was almost bedridden for months before he died. Propped up with pillows, his features seemed to be lit up with pleasure as I entered the room. He waved his hand towards the window, as he pointed out the beautiful sunset scene beyond, while in the other hand he held an open Bible, which he was always studying. 'What are you reading now?' I asked. 'Hebrews' he answered. 'Still Hebrews. The Royal Book, I call it.' Then, placing his finger on certain passages, he commented on them. 'I made, some allusion to the strong opinions expressed by many on the history of creation, and then their treatment of the earlier chapters of the Book of Genesis. He seemed distressed,

his fingers twitched nervously, and a look of agony came over his face as he said: ‘I was a young man with unformed ideas. I threw out queries, suggestions, wondering all the time over everything; and to my astonishment the ideas took like wildfire. People made a religion of them.’ Then he paused, and after a few more sentences on the holiness of God, and ‘the grandeur of this Book,’ looking at the Bible which he was holding tenderly all the time, he said: ‘I have a summer house in the garden which holds about thirty people; it is over there (pointing through the open window). I want you very much to speak here. I know you read the Bible in the villages. Tomorrow afternoon I should like the servants on the place, some tenants, and a few neighbours, to gather there. Will you speak to them?’ ‘What shall I speak about?’ I asked. ‘Christ Jesus,’ he replied in a clear, emphatic voice, adding in a lower tone, ‘and His salvation. Is not that the best theme? And then I want you to sing some hymns with them. You lead on your small instrument, do you not?’ The look of brightness on his face as he said this I shall never forget; for he added: ‘If you take the meeting at three o’clock, this window will be open, and you will know that I am joining with the singing’.”

—From the Christian Witness

1 Harry A. Ironside, Exposition of the Epistle of Jude, p. 29.

2 Michael Green, The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude, p 171.

Part 8

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Journeying Through Jude (Part 8)

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 Korah (v. 11).

At this point Jude was led by the Holy Spirit to single out three well-known representatives of evil in the Old Testament: Cain (Gen. 4), Balaam (Num. 22-24), and Korah (Num. 16). The evil acts of these men afford infamous illustrations of the evil acts of apostate teachers in Jude’s day and on to the present time. Thus, if you want to know the kind of company present-day apostates keep, here are three notorious Old Testament examples. The first was a farmer, the second a prophet, and the third a servant and royal guard of the tabernacle, reminding us that apostasy is not confined to a particular class of persons.

Cain illustrates the error of false religion, Salaam the error of false service, and Korah the error of false worship. Observe that in their actions apostates go in the way of Cain, they run after the error of Balaam, and they perish in the rebellion of Korah. To go in Cain’s way is to reject the right way, to run after the error of Balaam is to reject the truth, and to perish in the rebellion of Korah is to reject life. The words of Jude 11 are in direct contrast to those of John 14:6, for there the Lord Jesus Christ said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

With these few introductory facts in mind, let's look briefly at

The Way of Cain

Both Cain and Abel had the same parents and upbringing, and both brought offerings to the Lord (Gen. 4). Both knew that God required an animal blood sacrifice, yet Cain deliberately chose to present to Him a bloodless offering — the fruit of the ground. In unbelief having rejected God's way, Cain sought to interpose some other way. Immediately we are reminded of Solomon's words in Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Cain's action is typical of false teachers throughout the church's history. Today liberal preachers and theologians reject Christ's atoning blood for the cleansing of sin, teaching simply that He died a martyr's death on the cross. Thus modern-day apostates reject God's way and,seek to substitute the works of their Own hands as an offering for sin, if indeed they recognize at all the reality of sin.

It's a stark fact but an important one to grasp in the light of Scripture — namely, that evil doctrine leads to evil deeds. It should not surprise us, therefore, to learn from Genesis 4 that Cain, angry because God accepted his brother Abel's offering and rejected his, rose up and murdered his brother (vv. 3-8; see 1 John 3:12).

Commenting on the way of Cain, Ironside has said, "His sacrifice seemed fair and lovely: the fruits of the ground, wrung there from by toil and travail. But there was no recognition of the true character of sin and its desert.

God’s sentence of death on account of sin is refused, therefore no life is given, no blood is brought. This is natural religion as opposed to what has been revealed. The fruits presented picture well man’s effort in all that is fairest in character-building, all that is loveliest in human attainment — beautiful indeed if the fruit of divine grace already known in the soul — but of no avail whatever to meet the claims of divine justice, to purge the conscience and cleanse the soul from the stain of sin. It is purely plain, then, that ‘the way of Cain’ is a most comprehensive title, embracing every form of religious teaching, ceremony, or cult that ignores the need of the vicarious atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ.”1 Having gone in the way of Cain, apostates readily give themselves over to

The Error of Balaam

The story of Balaam is found in Numbers 22-25. He is a mystical, enigmatic character who was essentially an Old Testament hireling prophet. The Israelites were about to enter Canaan, a move that threatened Balak, king of Moab. As a result, he offered Balaam a large sum of money to curse Israel and this put the mercenary prophet in a real bind. On the one hand, he dearly wanted the money but, on the other hand, God had clearly instructed him not to curse Israel. Although he tried three times to pronounce a curse on God’s people, each time he ended up blessing Israel instead, so at least to that extent he was obedient to the divine injunction. Naturally, this was most upsetting to Balak (Num. 24:10).

Had Balaam been a true prophet his Bible biography might well have ended at Numbers 22:14, but not so.

Realizing he could not curse the people of God, he devised a plan to get God to curse Israel (see Num. 31:16; Rev. 2:14). He evidently convinced the Israelites to believe that so secure were they in God's favor that they could sin against Him with impunity. In addition to this he instructed the women of Moab and Midian to seduce the Israelite men to commit fornication and then lead them into idolatry. Sadly enough, Balaam's clever scheme worked (Num. 25:1-9), but in the process of attaining his sordid goal he was slain by the avenging Israelite army which God had raised up through Moses and sent in judgment against the Midianites (Num. 31:1-8).

Balaam stands out as an unusual illustration of those who sacrifice eternal riches for earthly gain, and who think more of gold than of God. Like so many others of his ilk, Balaam professed to serve God and attempted to court His favor, while in reality he greedily served men and trafficked in unfelt truth.

Generally speaking, false teachers love money and are motivated by it, as well as by popularity, applause and fame. Such are legion today and come in all sorts of varieties, shapes and forms, being found in churches, on radio and television, and in colleges and seminaries. Their chief motivation is money, yet did not our Lord Himself teach that "Ye cannot serve God and money" (Matt. 6:24)?

Just recently I read about a professed pastor who oversees property valued at $14 million. He receives a salary and fringe benefits totalling $110,000 a year. Furthermore, he lives in an ocean-view house, filled with valuable antiques and estimated to be worth $900,000.

He also owns four cars, one of them being a 1981 Lincoln Continental. Perhaps the saddest part of all is that his 79-year-old widowed mother lives in a low-rent section of the same city in which her son resides and relies on Social Security welfare payments for her support. While I would not be judgmental as to this pastor's salvation and motives, it seems to me that somewhere along the line he has altogether missed or ignored the teaching of the New Testament as to the characteristics and qualifications of true under-shepherds.

Balaam is mentioned three times in the New Testament. First, Peter speaks of "the way of Balaam" (2 Pet. 2:5), a reference to the prophet's covetous character. Second, Jude cites "the error of Balaam" (v. 11), a reference to his sacrificing of eternal riches for temporal wealth (Mark 8:36). And third, the Lord Jesus Christ, addressing the church at Pergamum, spoke about "the doctrine of Balaam" (Rev. 2:14), a reference to the hireling prophet's inducing of Israel to sin and thereby forfeit their separated, pilgrim character.

As Ironside has stated, "That the three are most intimately related is self-evident. Out of his errors sprang both his way and his doctrine. He was a striking example of those who suppose that the object of godliness is to make gain, and who consider it a right and proper thing that religion should be used to minister to one's personal advantage."2 Finally, we come to Jude's third illustration of apostates — namely,

The Rebellion of Korah

Korah, with three other men — Dathan, Abiram and On — led 250 princes of Israel in rebellion against Moses

and Aaron, who at that time were God's appointed leaders over Israel. They claimed and demanded equality with Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation is holy, everyone of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore, then, lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" (Num. 16:3).

Subsequently, God unleashed a dramatic and awesome judgment against Korah and his rebel companions, resulting in the earth opening up and swallowing both them and their houses. The one note of grace in this otherwise fearful scene is recorded later in Numbers 26:11, where we read: "Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not."

Korah is a representative of false worship. He arrogantly brushed aside the need of divinely appointed service and like a swashbuckling pirate intruded into the priest's office. He is a classic example of modern day apostates and others who assert that they do not need a Mediator between God and themselves. The world today is filled with this kind of person who not only claims that he is as good as anyone else but that we are all God's children. He somehow thinks he can step out of time into eternity and be accepted by God on his own merits. His is a do-it-yourself salvation. Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus Christ made it plain that He alone is the Way into the presence of God (John 14:6), and through the Apostle Paul it is recorded that Christ is the only Mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5).

Korah rebelled blasphemously against God's holy character and authority, the result being that he and his cohorts suffer eternally for their disobedience and

unbelief. Their counterparts today deny Christ's deity and authority, saying, "We are as good as He was; after all, He was only a man. We don't need Him." Such is the character of those who deny that Christ is God and brazenly assert that they do not need a Saviour.

Here, then, in these three pen-portraits from the Old Testament we see three leading characteristics of apostates right to the present time. Like Cain, they are devoid of love. Like Balaam, they love money and for the sake of material gain are prepared to teach others that sin doesn't really matter. Like Korah, they are careless of God's holiness and insubordinate to His appointed leaders.3 Little wonder, then, that Jude says of all who follow in the train of this ignoble trio, "Woe unto them!"

To the indifferent and unbelieving citizens of Chorazin and Bethsaida our Lord said, "Woe unto thee!" (Luke 10:13).

And to all who scorn their need of the Lord Jesus — apostate or not —we say to you with loving concern for your soul, WOE UNTO YOU IF YOU DIE IN YOUR SINS WITHOUT CHRIST!

(To be continued, D.V.)

1 Harry A. Ironside, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

2 Ibid., pp. 34-35.

3 Michael Green, op. cit., p. 173.

Part 9

From the Editor's Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Grace And Peace

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you" (2 Peter 1:2)

God loved the world — and long ago

He sent His Son to Bethlehem

That living, all the world might know

The wonders of His love for them.

Those who have tried and found Him true

Know this: "My peace I leave with you."

God loved the world - He loved it so

He sent His Son to Calvary

That dying, all by faith might know

Salvation for eternity.

Those who have trusted, find this true:

"Sufficient is My grace for you."

—C.A. Lufburrow

Journeying Through Jude (Part 9)

In this present study we want to consider two of the three remaining verses which round out Jude's basic pen-portrait of the false teachers who had already wormed their way into the local churches of his day.

With sure, succinct, Spirit-inspired strokes of his scalpel-like pen, he states:

These are spots in your love feasts, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; clouds they are without water, carried about by 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 forever (vv. 12-13).

Much in the style of James, in verses 12 and 13 Jude draws several analogies from nature to communicate to his readers the truth he wants them to grasp. In continuing his vivid delineation of the apostates, he virtually ransacks nature itself, referring to them as hidden rocks, waterless clouds, trees without fruit, restless waves of the sea, and wandering stars.

1. Hidden Rocks (v. 12). “These are spots in your love feasts,” says Jude, and by this he means that these false teachers are like submerged rocks just beneath the surface of the water. The word for “spots” (spilades) is found only here in the New Testament and means hidden rocks or sunken reefs, conjuring up in our mind’s eye those extremely dangerous places barely covered with water and found along many sea coasts and other types of waterways.

Like the devil, whose children they are and whom they serve, these apostates are like angels of light (see 2 Cor. 11:14-15); they are deceivers and pretenders. Jude is anxious that his readers be fully informed of their disguises and characteristics, and that they recognize these subtle emissaries of Satan for what they really are.

The expression “love feasts” is a reference to the evening meal partaken of by Christians, either accompanied or followed by the Lord’s Supper. Abuses relative to the meal increased to such an extent that this practice was later abandoned altogether.

Jude makes it clear that these false teachers represent enemies from within the sphere of Christian profession, and not from the outside. This is what makes them so dangerous and sometimes difficult to detect. “They feast with you,” he says, “feeding themselves without fear” (v. 12). “Feeding themselves” literally means shepherding or pasturing themselves (see 2 Pet. 2:13). In other words, instead of nurturing, guiding, guarding and enfolding God’s people, they were selfishly looking after their own interests at the expense of the flock, and this, without any fear of the divine judgments that will ultimately overtake them and their ilk (we have an echo here of Ezekiel 34:8).

Some Bible teachers, like Harry A. Ironside, see in the opening words of verse 12 a graphic expression of “the conception of the clerical position in the minds of many who trade upon its privileges. They who should feed the sheep and lambs of Christ’s flock, fleece them instead, and look upon them as those whose place it is to contribute to their honor, wealth, and dignity. Scripture knows of no distinction between clergy and laity. All believers are God’s kleros - His allotted portion. If of their own number there are those raised up to act as pastors, by guiding and caring for those weaker or less instructed, it is as doing a service to the Lord, the Chief Shepherd - ‘not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over possessions (kleros, Gr.), but being ensamples to the flock’ (1 Pet. 5:1-4).”1

2. Clouds without water (v. 12). Jude further describes these apostates as clouds that bring promise of refreshing rain but in reality are devoid of any moisture at all. Who of us in a period of summer drought has not looked longingly at clouds on the horizon which gave promise of rain, only to discover when they arrived overhead that there was plenty of show and blow but no go as far as any rain for mother earth was concerned? Thus this vivid metaphor would suggest the emptiness of their high-sounding pronouncements, promises and pretensions. The words “carried about by winds” remind us of the unstable character of these false teachers and of the Apostle Paul’s warning in Ephesians 4:14, “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, by which they lie in wait to deceive” (see 2 Tim. 3:7). We are also reminded of Solomon’s words that “whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain” (Prov. 25:14).

As suggested by John F. MacArthur, Jr., there may be a connection here between these apostate teachers and unseen evil spirits who control them.2 Michael Green has searchingly commented as follows: “Here is a graphic example of the uselessness of teaching which is supposedly ‘advanced’ and ‘enlightened’ but has nothing to offer the ordinary Christian for the nourishment of his spiritual life. I find this a solemn warning to those who, like myself, are professional theologians. We must constantly ask ourselves if our studies and knowledge are benefiting anybody at all.”3

3. Barren fruit trees (v. 12). Next these false teachers are likened to “autumnal trees without fruit, twice dead,

rooted up" (J. N. Darby's New Translation). They are like the fig tree cursed by the Lord Jesus Christ and reminding us also of His parable in Luke 13:6-9. It was He Himself who taught - "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). Outwardly they appear to be like any other fruit-bearing tree, but in the fruit season they bear only leaves. They are "twice dead," suggesting not only their spiritually dead condition (Eph. 2:1) but also the deadness of their false profession. They are like the majority of professing believers at Sardis who had a name that they lived but in reality were dead (Rev. 3:1).

4. Wild waves of the sea (v. 13). These apostates are also described as "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their shame." In the Bible the sea is sometimes used as a picture of those who do not know God (Isa. 57:20). Just as the waves of the stormy sea cast up foam, seaweed, debris and refuse on its surface, so these restless, evil men continually produce and glory in their filthy, smelly scum, saying and doing things which should shame them before God and man.

Today, as never before, there is wave upon wave of false teachers who shamelessly propagate their evil doctrines and engage in perverse conduct. However, just as God has imposed a limit beyond which the sea cannot go (Psa. 104:9), so these apostates will be permitted to go only so far and no further, even as the Apostle Paul has said of such men: "But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men" (2 Tim. 3:9).

Having been born and raised near the ocean, I have often watched raging waves sweep ominously toward some rocky barrier along the shore, only to harmlessly spend their fury on the immovable rocks. Such is always

a reminder of the eternal stability afforded to all who have been by God's marvelous and matchless grace planted on the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Wandering stars (v. 13). As a climax to his description of these false teachers and in contrast to the stability of the North Star, Jude likens them to wandering stars "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." To the confusion of all who would look upon and follow them, it is readily observed that these apostates do not belong to an orderly picture. They have violated their being and have departed from the true way (see v. 6; 2 Pet. 2:17).

S. Maxwell Coder has aptly contrasted Jude's swift, bold word pictures of these false teachers with a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. He states:

"In reading this list one is reminded by way of contrast with the Lord whom these men deny. He is the Rock of our salvation; they are hidden rocks threatening shipwreck to the faith. He comes with clouds to refresh His people forever; these are clouds which do not even bring temporary blessing. He is a tree of life; these are trees of death. He leads beside still waters; these are like the restless troubled sea. He is the bright and morning Star, heralding the coming day; these are wandering stars presaging a night of eternal darkness."4 (To be continued, D.V.)

1 Harry A. Ironside, Exposition of the Epistle of Jude, p. 41.

2 John F. MacArthur, Jr., Beware the Pretenders, p. 70.

3 Michael Green, The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude, p. 175.

4 S. Maxwell Coder, Jude: The Acts of the Apostates, p. 76.

Part 12

From the Editor’s Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Journeying Through Jude (Part 12)

The Duty of the Saints (vv. 17-25)

In the light of growing apostasy, what are true believers to do and how are they to conduct themselves as conditions throughout Christendom become worse and worse prior to Christ’s return for His Church? It is in this third and last main section of Jude’s brief letter, which begins at verse 17, that he tells us what our responsibilities are, these nine verses having three major thrusts of subject matter. His first emphasis centres on:

The reminder of the prophecies (vv. 17-19). The passage reads as follows:

But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

From describing the apostates, Jude now turns to give instruction to God’s people, providing them with clear guidelines as to how they should behave in view of the presence of apostate teachers, as well as how to avoid falling into their errors.

To help us understand the connection of these verses with the preceding context, Michael Green has helpfully pointed out that “There is, in fact, a close parallel between verses 17-19 and verses 5-16 which preceded them. In each case there is an exhortation to remember; in each case Jude begins by addressing the heretics in condemnation. But the tenor of the passages is different. Verses 5-16 expose and condemn the sin of the heretics, and the Enoch citation is adduced to seal their doom; whereas verses 17-19, while laying bare once again the character of the opposition, have a different purpose, to encourage and reassure the faithful.”1 The presence of ungodly teachers should neither surprise nor confuse the saints, for the apostles had previously declared that this situation would develop. For instance, at Miletus, Paul had warned the Ephesian elders “that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after themselves” (Acts 20:29-30, NKJV). Later, similar warnings about apostates and apostasy were written to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 4:3-4). Peter wrote about the same matter (2 Pet. 2:1-3; 3:3-4), the quotation in Jude 18 being a loose rendering of Peter’s words in 2 Peter 3:3, as well as representing a concise statement of Paul’s warnings.

Thus Jude calls upon his readers, and upon all true believers, to “remember” the words of the apostles regarding apostate libertines, “remember” being the first imperative employed by Jude and “ye” being in the emphatic position. Jude himself made no claim to be an apostle.

While in verse 17 God's people are exhorted to remember the faith, in verses 18 and 19 they are called upon to recognize the foes. In verse 18 the verb for "they told" is in the imperfect tense, thereby stressing the fact that the apostles repeatedly told the faithful "that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts" (NKJV).

"The most remarkable passage in the New Testament dealing with the specific subject of mockers in the end of the age," wrote S. Maxwell Coder, "is II Peter 3:1-3, which may be regarded as a divine commentary on Jude's statement. 'Beloved … 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.'

"The word translated 'scoffers' in Peter and 'mockers' in Jude is found nowhere else in the Bible. A mocker holds up to scorn the teaching of the Word of God. One such teaching particularly disliked is the promise that Christ will one day return to earth. They will say: '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.' Peter reveals that this attitude is the result of willing ignorance. The Word is heard and understood, and then by a deliberate act of the human will it is rejected and held in derision."2 The expression "in the last time" (v. 18) is equivalent to Paul's similar phrase — "in the last days" — in 2 Timothy 3:1. Actually, "the last days" began with the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-2) and will continue until His return. They are referred to as the "last days" because in them God is continuing to complete His purposes for His people.

Peter and the writer to the Hebrews properly speak of "the last time" as already present, whereas Paul states that "in the last days perilous times shall come." By "times" the apostle means seasons of various kinds, and as the "times" in which we are living draw to a close they are indeed becoming hard, difficult, painful, grievous, fierce (Matt. 8:28) or savage, as the word for "perilous" may be variously translated.

These same apostate teachers who are likened to brute beasts in verse 10 are now said in verse 18 to "follow their own ungodly desires" (NIV). Again, Jude's stress on their ungodly character harks back to Enoch's prophecy (vv. 14-15) and even to verse 4. As to the closing words of verse 18, Coder maintains that there is a striking word-picture here pertaining to these false teachers who are led about by their lusts. He states that they are like an animal "led about with a ring in its nose. The animal walks obediently after its master; these walk after their ungodly lusts. Neither the captive bull nor the apostate enslaved by sin has any choice. He must go wherever he is led. He is in bondage. He may talk of liberty from traditional moral restraints, and despise the believer who lives a life of true holiness in the fear of God, but the apostate is himself a bondslave to corruption (2 Peter 2:19)."3 In verse 19 the word for "separate" is found only here in the New Testament and means to mark off or to make separations. Martin Luther translated it, "those who make factions." Resident in the word is the idea of setting up boundary lines, thereby making false distinctions among Christians. Not only did this sort of thing give rise to factions, but these false teachers looked upon themselves as superior to others in the church.

Having commented on this subject, Harry A. Ironside wrote: “There is a spiritual and carnal separation. The former is separation from evil at the call of the word of God, when to longer continue in some particular association would be unfaithfulness to Christ. The latter is walking apart in fancied superiority, led on by pride and vainglory. This is what marks out the class Jude is portraying, in the day of their power.”4 While these apostate teachers prided themselves as being spiritually superior, claiming not to be bound by mere Biblical standards and despising true Christians, Jude calls them “sensual.” This word does not refer to their lasciviousness and lusts already pointed out in verses 4 and 16, but to the fact that they were natural men, that is, devoid of any spiritual understanding whatsoever (see 1 Cor. 2:14, where the same root word is used and there translated “natural”). Thus Jude takes quite a jab at those who considered themselves among the spiritually elite. Not only were they not the spiritual intelligentsia they thought they were, Jude goes on to state that they did not have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. In other words, they were not saved (Rom. 8:8-9); they were counterfeit Christians.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Heart Longings

Oh, that today my clothes may be vestments, my meal a sacrament, my house a temple, my table an altar, my speech incense, and myself a priest unto the Most High God.

Come in, O strong and deep love of Jesus, like the sea at flood tide, cover all my powers, drown all my sins, sweep away all my cares, lift up my earth-bound soul, and float

it right up to my Lord's feet, and there let me lie — a poor broken shell, washed up by His love, having no virtue or value, and only venturing to whisper to Him that, if He will put His ear to me, He will hear within faint echoes of the vast waves of His own love, which have brought me where it is my delight to lie, even at His feet for ever.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

1 Michael Green, The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude, p. 180.

2 S. Maxwell Coder, Jude: The Acts of the Apostates, p. 103-04.

3 Ibid., p. 104.

4 Harry A. lronside, Exposition of the Epistle of Jude, p. 51.

Part 13

From the Editor's Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Journeying Through Jude (Part 13)

Not only were Jude's readers to remember what the apostles had said about the apostates, they were to give attention to themselves. Thus we come to Jude's second major thrust relative to the responsibility of true believers midst the world's increasing and intensifying apostasy, and this, in contrast to the scoffers cited in verses 18 and 19. His second emphasis focuses on:

The responsibilities of the present (vv. 20-23). The verses are as follows:

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Having thoroughly addressed the subject of the apostates, Jude now turns to more positive teaching. For the third time he addresses his readers as "beloved" (cf. vv. 3, 17), and on this third and final occasion he proceeds directly into some highly concentrated Christian instruction which, if obeyed, would preserve them (and us) from defilement by the false teachers.

1. Building (v. 20a). The call to "building up yourselves" indicates the strong and stable character that should mark the life of every Christian (contr. vv. 12-13). There have been, and are today, many wreckers among God's people. And granted, at times a certain amount of

wrecking may be necessary, such as the cleansing of and removal from a local assembly of believers anything that is contrary to our Lord and His Word. Nevertheless, what is most needed today are true builders, those who evidence personal spiritual growth and who in turn contribute to the spiritual growth of the local assembly.

“Your most holy faith” is not a reference to the believer’s personal faith in Christ for salvation but to the foundation on which Christians are to continually build themselves up —namely, to what Jude has already referred to in verse 3 as “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (NASV). While it is appropriate to apply these words to the entire written Word of God, Jude specifically has in mind the teaching of the apostles now recorded in the Scriptures.

Having warned the Ephesian elders of the danger of apostasy, the Apostle Paul prayerfully bade them farewell on the beach at Miletus and, among other things, said: “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). Later, from a prison in Rome, he wrote to the Ephesian assembly reminding them (and all true believers) that “Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone” (Eph. 2:19-20; see 1 Pet. 2:4-6).

Since the verb for “building up” is in the present tense, Jude is underscoring the absolute necessity of feeding on God’s Word that the soul may be nourished and

edified (see 1 Pet. 2:2). It is through the reading and study of the Scriptures that the believer personally progresses in the knowledge of God's revealed will (see 2 Tim. 2:15).

"Your faith" expresses possession of God's Word, not only in the head and hand but, above all, in the heart. The Greek word translated "most holy" is a superlative, stressing the character of the Scriptures.

Among the readers and students of the Holy Scriptures in all ages have been some of the ablest leaders and most brilliant minds. Consider the following:

· George Washington: "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible. He is worse than an infidel who does not read his Bible and acknowledge his obligation to God."

· John Quincy Adams: "My custom is to read four or five chapters of the Bible every morning immediately after rising. It seems to me the most suitable manner of beginning the day. It is an invaluable and inexhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue."

· John Wesley: "O give me that Book! At any price, give me that Book of God. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one Book."

· William Wilberforce: "Let no religious book take its place. People do not read the Bible enough."

· Daniel Webster: "From the time that, at my mother's feet or on my father's knee, I first learned to lisp the verses from the sacred writings, they have been my daily study and vigilant contemplation."

· George Mueller: “The vigour of our spiritual life will be in proportion to the place held by the Word in our life and thoughts.”

· David Livingstone: “All that I am I owe to Jesus Christ, revealed to me in His divine book.”

· Robert E. Lee: “The Bible is a book in comparison with which all others in my eyes are of minor importance; and which in all my perplexities and distresses has never failed to give me light and strength.”

· Charles H. Spurgeon: “Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the Book widens and deepens with our years.”

· F. B. Meyer: “Read the Bible, not as a newspaper, but as a home letter. If a cluster of heavenly fruit hangs within reach, gather it. If a promise lies upon a page as a blank check, cash it. If a prayer is recorded, appropriate it, and launch it as a feathered arrow from the bow of your desire. If an example of holiness gleams before you, ask God to do as much for you. If the truth is revealed in all its intrinsic splendor, entreat that its brilliance may ever irradiate the hemisphere of your life.”

(To be continued, D.V.)

Editor’s Note

Two respected brethren have questioned the editor face to face regarding some comments in Dr. S. Lewis Johnson’s expository study on “The healing of the Helpless Man”(John 5:1-18, Jan.-Feb. 1984 issue, pp. 9-14). I might add that there have been no written inquiries and/or criticisms from any of our readers.

The two brethren cited called attention to Dr. Johnson's comments on page 10, the second column, and the first paragraph. The words in question are as follows:

"How our Lord knew of the condition of the impotent man is not stated in the text. It is possible that He knew of his condition supernaturally through the revelation of it by the Father. And it is possible that he acquired the knowledge by heresay. At any rate He knew of his condition."

First of all, I would assure our readers that Dr. Johnson both upholds and is totally committed in his faith to the essential, foundational doctrine of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. This should be obvious to every reader of his article, for in his opening paragraph (p. 9) he states:

"In the healing of the impotent man the Apostle John gives his readers a miracle, or sign, that is a kind of parable of impotence and omnipotence. It is a story of the impotence of a man, and it is also a story of the omnipotence of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Second, when I thoroughly read and prepared the article for publication, I understood Dr. Johnson's words on page 10 to have been penned with a view to emphasizing our Lord's perfect humanity, as well as from the standpoint of the normal flow of the details in John's account of the miracle.

As a further case in point, I am reminded of John 9:35. In the account of the man born blind, whom Christ had healed, we read concerning our Lord, "Jesus heard (emphasis mine) that they (i.e. the Jews) had cast him out …" From the standpoint of His deity, did Christ know all along that this dear man had been cast out of the synagogue? Of course He did! Nevertheless, from the

details of John's narrative, it is recorded that the Lord Jesus "heard" that the man had been cast out. Again, here is a detail which emphasizes the fact that our Lord was Very Man, and this, in the particular Gospel account that reveals Him as Very God.

Finally, it seems to me that some brethren who zealously and rightly uphold the deity of Christ — as I at all times most certainly seek to do —have a tendency to virtually efface or at least mask the real humanity of our Lord.

Who can fathom the mystery of the divine and human natures in Christ's blessed Person? As by faith through the Scriptures I see my Saviour's scars which tell me of His wounds, shed blood, sufferings and death at Calvary, I can only bow and worship, declaring with believing Thomas of old, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

As for Dr. Johnson's decision not to treat the details of John 5:3b-4 (a matter brought up by one of the two brethren previously mentioned), he is perfectly within his rights to state —and correctly so — that "The textual evidence for the genuineness of the words is not strong, and we, therefore, will not consider them in the exposition."

Even a cursory amount of research in available, conservative sources will indicate to the reader that the words of John 5:3b-4 appear to be a late insertion. Nowhere does the Bible teach this kind of superstition, which in itself would be a cruel contest for many ill people. Furthermore, no available Greek manuscript before 400 A.D. contains these words (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 289).

I would assure both my inquiring brethren, as well as all others of our readers, that there is absolutely no intent

whatsoever on the part of Dr. Johnson to in any way detract from either the Son of God or the Holy Scriptures. On the contrary, having known him for thirty-four years, I esteem him as strong a defender of the deity of Christ and the inerrancy of Scripture as anyone I know, including the brethren who raised the questions to begin with.

Part 14

From the Editor's Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Journeying Through Jude (Part 14)

2. Praying (v. 20b). A key means to building yourselves up on your most holy faith is by "praying in the Holy Spirit." This is an essential daily exercise if spiritual growth is to be a reality. Martin Luther once said, "I have so much business to do today that I shall not be able to get through it with less than three hours' prayer." And well do I recall Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer saying to us in a classroom at Dallas Theological Seminary, "Men, prayer is hard work and we are inherently lazy."

Jude is not speaking about a perfunctory saying of our prayers. Rather, he is underscoring the need for true spiritual communion with the Lord and the necessity of our praying being guided by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2, 12). This is possible only as we "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16), and please note, there is no exhortation here — or anywhere else in the New Testament — to pray to the Holy Spirit. Thus the question naturally arises, "Is it ever proper to pray directly to the Holy Spirit?" In answering this question it should be stressed that the normal way of approach is, according to Ephesians 2:18, to the Father, through the Lord Jesus, and by the Holy Spirit. This, however, is not the only way of approach, even though it is true that most prayers in the Bible are addressed to God the Father (Matt. 6:9; John 16:23; Eph. 3:14). There are

several examples in the New Testament when the Lord Jesus is addressed directly in prayer (Luke 24:51-52; Acts 1:24; 7:59; 9:5-6; 10:14; Rev. 22:20). While having already indicated that there is no Biblical precedent for directly addressing the Holy Spirit in prayer, Lehman Strauss has helpfully commented on this matter as follows:

Each member of the Trinity performs a unique ministry. Stephen prayed to the Lord Jesus (Acts 7:59). It is a perfectly natural and normal thing for any Christian to thank Jesus for dying for his sins. I have done this frequently in my own prayers. And why not? It was not the first nor the third Person in the Trinity who died on the cross. When I thank Jesus for shedding His blood for me, I address Him personally and directly.

It is the function of the Holy Spirit to teach the Christian (John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Col. 2:9-11). When I come to study the Bible, I ask the Holy Spirit to guide and teach me. I do not ask the Father or Jesus to do that for me which is the prescribed ministry of the Holy Spirit. For many years I have prayed in this way to the Holy Spirit, and the requests have been granted. I cannot conceive of God refusing to answer such a prayer. The members of the Godhead are co-equal; each can be addressed in prayer.1 What does it mean to pray in the Holy Spirit? Coder has explained it this way: “Prayer in the Spirit is prayer which issues from a heart indwelt, illuminated, and controlled by the Holy Spirit of God. It is petition, praise, and thanksgiving which are indited by the Spirit. The outstanding inspired commentary upon it is found in Romans 8:26, 27. By ourselves, we know not how to pray as we ought, but there dwells within us One who makes intercession for us with unutterable groanings,

intercession which is in accordance with the will of God."2

3. Keeping (v. 21a). Jude's third practical exhortation in this section is: "Keep yourselves in the love of God." MacArthur considers "keep" (tereo) the key verb in verses 20-21, pointing out that the other three verbs — "building," "praying," and "looking" — are participles which describe or clarify the "keeping." In the Greek grammatical construction, this "keeping" relates to sphere, place or location "in the love of God," where we can be the recipients of His blessings. MacArthur cites our Lord's "Parable of the Prodigal Son," wherein the father never changed in his attitude toward the son, but the son for a season removed himself from the place in which the father could bless him.3 A further point of Greek grammar, and one often overlooked by preachers, Bible teachers and commentators, is that the verb for "keep" is aorist active imperative. This means that Jude's words are not only a command but also represent a decisive, once for all action on the part of the believer to keep himself in the love of God.

To keep yourself in the love of God does not mean that we are somehow to contribute to our own individual salvation in Christ, for this would be contrary to the teaching of many Scriptures (e.g., Eph. 2:8-9; Jude 24). Nor are we to understand this exhortation to mean that we are to "Keep on loving God." Most assuredly we are to continue loving Him, but the emphasis here is on His love to us, not on ours to Him (see John 15:9).

What, then, does this command mean?

Ironside helpfully defined it by saying, "It is as though I say to my child, 'Keep in the sunshine.' The sun shines

whether we enjoy it or not. And so God's love abides unchanging. But we need to keep in the conscious enjoyment of it. Let nothing make the tried soul doubt that love. Circumstances cannot alter it. Difficulties cannot strain it, nor can our own failures. The soul needs to rely upon it, and thus be borne in triumph above the conflict and the discouraging episodes incident to the life of faith."4 The secret of keeping oneself in the love of God is obeying the two preceding exhortations. If we are habitually feeding on the Scriptures and praying in the Holy Spirit, then we shall indeed remain in the sphere of God's wonderful love and thus be in the place of divine blessing.

Demas is a sobering, real life example of a believer who failed to keep himself in the love of God. The Apostle Paul described his former fellow worker as one who "hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10). What was it that led to Demas' spiritual demise? Well, there may have been numerous contributing factors of which we are not aware. Nevertheless, we can be sure he failed to daily build himself up by means of the Word of God and to pray in the Holy Spirit.

4. Looking (v. 21b). Jude's fourth exhortation directs the believer to be "looking expectantly" (prosdechomenoi) for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is precisely what he means by his words: "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," or as the New American Standard Version translates it: "waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life." The verb variously translated "looking," "looking expectantly" or "waiting anxiously" is the same one used in Titus 2:13, where we read: "Looking for that

blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

While it is true that the believer has eternal life from the moment of his salvation (John 3:15, 16, 36; 5:24), Jude is reminding all true Christians that some day, when Christ returns, we are going to enter fully into the reality, realm and reign of the eternal life which we possess in Christ, which life is presently communicated by the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 1:5, 9, 13). It is in that day and moment when our physical bodies shall be redeemed and our salvation in Christ shall be completed. Thus the coming of the Lord to the air for His saints represents one of the greatest consummating acts of divine mercy in the history of God's universe.

From this statement of verse 21b and its context, it is important to learn that Christ is the source of mercy, the setting of the exercise of His mercy is in the midst of judgment, and the significance of it is unto eternal life, that is, an experiential entering into the full possession and enjoyment of that never-ending life in His blessed presence (John 14:1-3).

Observe that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are prominent in this section (vv. 20-21), even as Jude also strikes the practical notes of personal edification, supplication, sanctification and expectation.

Building and praying may be said to speak of the believer's Work of Faith; keeping suggests his Labor of Love; and looking speaks of his Patience of Hope (see 1 Thess. 1:3).

"These wonderful verses," says Coder, "begin with an inward look at the developing of Christian character; we are to be building. They continue with an outward look

at everything and everyone for whom we should intercede; we are to be praying. Then they look upward at the One who loves us and who has made us His children; we are to keep ourselves in the love of God. They conclude with a forward look at the return of our Saviour and the dawn of eternal life in His presence; we are to be looking and awaiting for the final great manifestation of His mercy."5 (To be continued, D.V.)

1 Lehman Strauss, Sense and Nonsense about Prayer, p. 121.

2 S. Maxwell Coder, Jude: The Acts of the Apostates, p. 110.

3 John F. MacArthur, Jr., Beware the Pretenders, pp. 89-90.

4 Harry A. Ironside, Exposition of the Epistle of Jude, p. 54.

5 Coder, op. cit., p. 112.

Part 15

From the Editor's Notebook

W. Ross Rainey

Journeying Through Jude (Part 15)

Continuing his overall theme of the Christian's present responsibilities (vv. 20-23), Jude turns from the believer's personal responsibilities in verses 20 and 21 to his relative responsibilities in verses 22 and 23. Thus these latter two verses have to do with personal evangelism and the compassionate, understanding, energetic, cautious attitude we should manifest toward the dupes of apostates—people bewildered, led astray and mesmerized by the apostates about whom Jude has so effectively warned.

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 (vv. 22-23).

Every effort should be made to rescue deluded souls, even apostates themselves, for the Christian is a debtor to all. Nevertheless, it seems that the dupes of apostates, not apostates themselves, are those primarily in view.

Regarding verses 22 and 23 there is considerable manuscript variation. One possible rendering is, "And some convict, when contending; but others save with fear, snatching them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." The New International Version translates this brief passage as follows: "Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire

and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear, hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh."

Personally, I like the helpful paraphrase of The Living Bible which reads: "Try to help those who argue against you. Be merciful to those who doubt. Save some by snatching them as from the very flames of hell itself. And as for others, help them to find the Lord by being kind to them, but be careful that you yourselves aren't pulled along into their sins. Hate every trace of their sin while being merciful to them as sinners."

Actually, there is not a great deal of difference in the possible variations of the Greek text. Nevertheless, one thing is certain, a godly discrimination is called for in dealing with individuals deceived by error. Every beguiled man or woman represents an individual case that must be handled with "wisdom that is from above" and not according to some hard and fast rule of thumb approach.

At this point someone might bring up the words of 2 John 10: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed." This passage applies only to those who wilfully oppose the doctrine of Christ. Such are to be shunned and refused fellowship.

Whether or not the first clause of verse 22, as translated in the King James Version, is accepted, one thing is certain, genuine Christian love is essential in dealing with lost or wayward souls. An attitude of compassion and pity is in keeping with the perfect example of the greatest soul-winner of all, the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking upon the multitudes, we read that "He was moved with compassion on them, because they were

faint, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matt. 9:36; see 14:14; 15:32; 18:27 with James 5:19-20; 1 Thess. 3:12-13).

An interesting and possible point of interpretation is suggested by Edward C. Pentecost, who takes the opening words of verse 22 to refer to "Christians who are doubting," having stated that "Because the words of the apostates were confusing, probably many believers were in doubt as to whether to follow them. Such persons, Jude wrote, should not be slandered or criticized. They should be dealt with in love and mercy — the same way in which the Lord dealt with them (cf. v. 21).

They needed encouragement, not criticism. They needed to be built up, not torn down."1 Whether or not we accept the standard translations of this brief section, or Pentecost's interpretation of verse 22, there nonetheless emerge three classes of persons which must be dealt with in three different ways.

First of all, those given to doubt (or arguing) are to be brought to conviction and understanding through the Word of God, whether we take them to be believers or unbelievers. Such need to have the Scriptures brought to bear upon their conscience (see vv. 9, 15; 1 Tim. 5:20; Tit. 1:9, 13).

Second, some need to be snatched from the fire, that is, from the state of condemnation that leads to the fire of hell, and ultimately to the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15). Energetic effort should be made to warn and deliver such, lest the evil one gets such a hold on them that it will be too late to seek their blessing.

Finally, in dealing with still others, extreme caution is required. When seeking to help a confused, deceived individual, the one helping must be careful not to become contaminated by the sin of the one whom he is trying to assist. “With fear” is literally “in fear,” and a possible translation is, “And on some have mercy in fear…” Sin is contagious and at all times and in every circumstance the Christian must be on his guard (see 2 Cor. 7:1; James 1:27; 1 Pet. 1:17; 3:15; Rev. 3:4).

Many Bible students see a parallel between Jude 22 and 23 and Zechariah 3:1-5. S. Maxwell Coder cites three things in the Zechariah passage which are found here. He notes that “Satan is rebuked for disputing or resisting the salvation of Joshua; Joshua is called ‘a brand plucked out of the fire’; Joshua is seen clothed in filthy garments which are taken from him.”2 For over thirty years the Salvation Army and William Booth in particular were subject to some of the most vile persecution Christians suffered in modern times. But the general lived to see the day when his army would be honored around the world. His own King Edward VII invited him to Buckingham Palace in 1904. All the persecution and trials of the previous decades must have seemed insignificant to Booth as he heard King Edward say, “You are doing a good work — a great work, General Booth.”

When the king asked Booth to write in his autograph album, the old man — now seventy-five — bent forward, took the pen, and summed up his life’s work:

Your Majesty,

Some men’s ambition is art,

Some men’s ambition is fame,

Some men's ambition is gold,

My ambition is the souls of men.

There's no doubt about it, this should be one of the chief ambitions of every true child of God. There is an eternal reward for the believer who wins souls to Christ. The Apostle Paul refers to it as the "crown of rejoicing" (1 Thess. 2:19; see also Phil. 4:1), and both preachers and Bible commentators frequently call it "The Soul-winner's Crown." As King Solomon of old said, "He that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30).

A cheery chorus to sing each day of our lives is Will H. Houghton's, "Lead Me to Some Soul Today." The music was written by Wendell P. Loveless, the chorus itself having been dedicated in memory of D. L. Moody, who said, "I must speak to one soul each day about Christ."

Lead me to some soul today.

O teach me, Lord, just what to say;

Friends of mine are lost in sin,

And cannot find their way.

Few there are who seem to care,

And few there are who pray;

Melt my heart and fill my life.

Give me some soul today.

(To be continued, D.V.)

1 Edward C. Pentecost, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 923.

2 S. Maxwell Coder, Jude: The Acts of the Apostates, p. 119.