

The Antidote to Existing Evils

Jude 24.

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PART THIRD. EARLIER MINISTRY, CONTINUED.

You will find that this epistle shows out the true character of everything that is of man. There is not one portion of God's word more calculated to make us sing than this epistle, and high notes too.

The joy of a Christian at the beginning was, that he found something of God in Christ that met all the ruin in himself; and the way that God communicates blessing to the Christian proves that He will ever be with him. The more trial, the more God says, "I am with you."

"Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ." No title; he does not take the place of an apostle. He is a *servant*, a title in one aspect common to the whole family. It was brotherhood. Then he shows to whom the epistle was addressed — "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." In Jude 3 and Jude 4, he shows what the circumstances were under which he wrote.

When the Lord Jesus Christ went up into heaven, God sent down the Holy Ghost from heaven, and formed in the world *the Church*. He goes on to say, "there is failure from first to last." He begins with "the common salvation," and a wonderful salvation too! "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." He turns back to the whole history that had gone before, and says, "These are specimens of those who will corrupt themselves;" then, closing it up, he brings in the testimony of Enoch, as one who bore witness of what the evil would be in the end. Observe how this servant of Jesus Christ calls up the testimony of all these, as telling what the declension would be, the forsaking and betrayal of the common salvation. And the effect should be on our hearts, Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

The higher the privilege the worse the corruption. If I look from the beginning of God's dealings down to the last, I do not find one period in which the deposit was so large as that given, to us, or the corruption so thorough. Here it is a cold-blooded, deliberate thing; but, then, if I see there what apostacy is, what declension is, do I stop there? No. Jude passes through that; and he gets a second note of mercy struck in connection with the common salvation — God coming in, and the security of the people who had faith.

How strikingly he winds up in Jude 24. Observe, he does not merely in the last verse take the place of one who sees nothing in those around to sing about, and therefore turns to God. But more than that, he says all this ruin is not without God's permission, or the token of His being in the midst of it. Those circumstances are the circumstances in which God's wisdom will flow out. God is not going to lose His Church. The same waters which destroyed the world flowed in to float the ark. The same wisdom of God will be displayed to you individually, He is able to keep you from falling," etc. Do not, therefore, be discouraged or cast down; do not think God will forget you in those circumstances. "He is able to keep you," for He is "the only wise God our Saviour." How the apostle gleans up his experience

of God. Look up and see what sort of a character God will exercise towards you in those circumstances. Notice this blessed thought! Come what may, there will be a people "sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called;" and they have a certain course traced out for them. You, dear friends, do you find that God has preserved you in Christ Jesus? Well may "mercy, peace, and love be multiplied unto you."

Jude 20. Observe, in this day of darkness there is to be no groping, though all is confusion outside; but hold fast what you have got; you know you are called, "sanctified by God the Father," hold that fast. Hold fast the things you know God has done for you. Give me the place and time of trouble, and I know God will be with me. In times of trouble He is always close at hand. The Spirit of God dwelling in your heart, let Him lead you forth in "praying in the Holy Ghost." We know, as the children of God, that we can tell Him everything; but when we come to pray, as in times of trouble, and there comes in the thought, "Which way is the Lord going?" that is not praying in the Holy Ghost; or when desires are expressed, as with Paul, "Take away the thorn." Afterwards he prays in the Holy Ghost. God has His own pathway. God may see something in my heart to humble me. While the ear of God is perfectly open, you will have to learn that you are not to dictate to Him. The simplest way is to "cast all upon God, and pray in the Holy Ghost."

Jude 21. "Keep yourselves in the love of God." Do not forget the love of God. The whole heart of God is beaming upon you; His love is always upon you. "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Either the word here "looking for" means having the expectation of the appearing of the Lord Jesus — everything here is going into confusion; but in the midst of all, the cloud of glory is coming down, and up the Church goes — or the word "looking for," etc., might also mean it is mercy unto eternal life, and therefore you may calculate on everything till you get there. God calls whom He likes to His house. He called me on the ground of mercy, and that secures me. He that calls is responsible for every difficulty. I cannot tell how I am to get through; but He that calls me will provide.

Jude 22, 23. A description of what the conduct of the saints should be in these times. It is no question of tolerating what is about; you must hate it. There is to be a positive repugnance to it; not merely the principle you are to hate, but even the spot of the flesh, the least connection with it. If the heart of a saint who is called, chosen, preserved, is where it ought to be, it is assured of God's presence, and will try to bring others out, whether by strong or by gentle means. You cannot go into the place where the evil is and tolerate it. Why are you left in the wilderness? Do you know what God's thoughts about Christianity are? that the best thing He ever gave is corrupted? And are you spending, all your energy to lead the people of God out of the evil? And why? Because we should be the expression of what God is, "God our Saviour," the God who has said, "This one is for myself, and I am able to keep him in all difficulties." It is God really showing out His wisdom in the present time. God is at work, bringing those whom He separated, bringing them on as the One who is able to keep them from stumbling. This brings God very close.

Jude 24. How exquisitely beautifully He takes in the different parts of what would be the anxiety of the heart. We look around, and say, "How is it possible? How can we get through?" But if I look as the man whose eyes were anointed (the prophet's servant), it is no wonder. Let the only wise God show His competency to keep me from stumbling. There will always be something for you to strike your foot on in the wilderness. "And present you faultless before the presence of His glory *with exceeding joy*."

Oh, dear friends, if our eyes were but more conversant with the presence of His glory! He does not forget the glory. The Spirit of God does not forget the glory to which we are predestinated. You and I forget it, and therefore get discouraged, and say, "I never shall get there." Yes you will, poor feeble

thing. He will present you as a spotless one, thoroughly cleansed. There is many a thing we might not count a spot; but in God's sight it would be very spotted.

Well, He will present you faultless, trophies of the cleansing power of the blood of His Son. He will bring us there, having to tell, "I am a *poor sinner* called by grace. I was always afraid of facing difficulties; my heart was always afraid. But I came here, and simply His wisdom brought me here; and now all the sorrows are past, and all 'exceeding joy.'" We shall not be merely there for His praise, tokens of His wisdom, but there with hearts able to enter into it all.

Jude looked at all that, and said, "That is where I see the wisdom of God displayed." Persons ask sometimes whereabouts I find myself. I say, "In the last four or five years I have had a deeper sense of the apostle Paul's experience of the churches. I am not discouraged as to all the sorrows; I can only say God wants to multiply proofs of His wisdom. I expect to find greater trials; but in them all God will make us know more of what He Himself is."