

THE INDEPENDENT BAPTIST REVIEW

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Jack Keep, Editor

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Revival and Separation

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

*Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto
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Exodus, Chapter 10:16-29

We have been thinking for a little while in these Thursday evening meditations of Israel's position in the land of Egypt, and I shall pursue that study a little farther this evening. We must ever bear in mind that God does not change with the years. He was the same Holy God in Old Testament times as He was in the full-orbed revelation of Himself through Christ Jesus our Lord. The principles governing the approach of a soul to God have always been the same. God was no more tolerant of evil in Old Testament times than He is now; and those who were saved were saved in precisely the same way as they are saved now. There is no ground of approach to God but through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The promise was given, and on the ground of its certain fulfillment men were accepted before God even in olden times.

The children of Israel present a picture, in their position in Egypt, of God's people in other times. They were His own peculiar people, chosen of Him for His service, that through them He shall be glorified. Yet this book of Exodus shows them as a company of serfs, a nation of slaves, subject to the dominance of some other power than the will of their God. You have there a picture of multitudes of professing Christians today. While the Lord's in their heart, they live in Egypt instead of being free to serve their God. God's call to His people was that they should leave Egypt behind and go out into the wilderness where they would be free from all limitations, and from all encumbrances. His purpose was that they should have full freedom to serve the Lord, and to do the will of God from the heart.

I. GOD'S PEOPLE WERE INTENDED TO BE FREE.

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"; "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." God's people are exhorted to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. And yet how many people there are who, know the truth, see their duty in this Holy Word, and have a clear course marked out for them by the teaching of Scripture. Still, these are subject to so many other considerations that they are not free to do the will of God from the heart! How many people there are who live amid conditions of life which circumscribe their freedom! The condition in which they labor at the

daily task, their social life, their recreational life - in all these conditions they find themselves subject to some other power than the will of God. What a blessed thing it would be for every one of us if we could turn to God's Word and learn our duty day by day and never have to ask what other people think. Never ask what conditions require, but simply and freely to do the will of God!

I say, there are people - and I fear we have all been included in that class at some time or another - whose lives have been lived very largely in Egypt, subject to other wills and other considerations than the simple question of what is right. Wherever that is true, revival is very urgently needed; for every new born soul ought to be freed, untrammelled, unshackled, as free as the air to know the will of God, and then simply to do it.

I wonder if there are any here this evening who in some sense are subject to Pharaoh's influence? Here were a people whose time was given to someone else than to God. They had no time to serve God: they were busy making bricks for Pharaoh. How many people there are who profess to be Christians, who have no time to render Christian service. They have no time to witness to the ungodly, no time to execute the Great Commission and go out to teach all nations. They have no time to do any bit of distinctly Christian service! Why have they not time? There are twenty-four hours in their day as well as in anyone else's. It is because they are otherwise engaged. It is because they are preoccupied with some worldly matter that leaves them no liberty at all to do the work of God.

We have a big Sunday School here, but we are far, far from where we ought to be, and from what we ought to be, even in that matter, yet I have been impressed with this, that when people have come to examine the school, as people do all the time, they go through it all, and they shake their heads and say, "It would be no use trying that in our church." "Why?" we have enquired. "Our people would not have time to do it." Of course, they would not have time! When you get a company of young people who have to go to the movies two or three times a week, and who are engaged in a hundred other worldly practices, they

have no time to give to Christian service. They are so busy serving Pharaoh that they have no time left to serve the Lord. That is the trouble with most of our churches today. Talk about giving the Lord a tenth of our income! There are comparatively few people, I fear who give the Lord even a tenth of their time. They are so busy doing something else.

I read an article last night on the opening of a certain church in town. It read as though it had been written by a blind man--as though the Lord cared whether the aisle is in the middle of the church or not. Or whether the choir sits behind or before the preacher, and whether the preacher wears a gown! I wonder if people consider how God is libelled by such puerilities, by such childishness? as though God cared anything for the style of a building, or where worshipped with men's hands; as though He needed anything! As I read it I said, "If there are many people called Christians who entertain such views of the work of God as that, then we are sorely in need of a great revival." It is like discussing the question as to what uniform the Israelites shall wear while they make Pharaoh's bricks! The point is they are so busy doing something that is not of God that they have not time to serve God.

I wonder are there any here who are thus preoccupied with the work of the world, the flesh, and the devil, that they have no time left to give to the service of God? We might pursue that a little farther, but I leave it with you to show you, if I can, how a real revival came to a whole nation; and how at last they were brought forth into liberty with full freedom to serve the Lord.

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EDITORIAL

Blessings at Kansas City

I was warmed and encouraged by the good spirit and fellowship at the IBF meeting on June 17-19. Men, women and children came from all over the country for a refreshing conference. The messages from 7 pastors, an evangelist and a missionary statesman expounded the theme "Christ Above All!" Excellent music was provided by the former "Faculty Trio" of OBBC/FBBC, Evangelist Ken Lynch and the choir of Stony Point Baptist Church, Kansas City.

An excellent crowd was on hand for all the sessions right to the end of the conference. Business sessions were open and courteous. When a difference of opinion was expressed, it was done with respect for the view of others. There was truly an equality of the brethren free from convention-like control.

Two resolutions were passed, one on expository preaching and another on homosexuality and AIDS.

Elected as officers for the following year were, Pastor Richard Harris, Moderator, Pastor Thomas Nieman, Secretary and Pastor Jack Keep, Treasurer.

One of the significant items of business was a change of name. Since there are a variety of organizations using the description "Independent Baptist Fellowship" it was felt that some modification was needed to avoid confusion. At the same time we did not want too radical a change. The new name of this organization is: THE INDEPENDENT BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF NORTH AMERICA. The intent is that we *meet* in North America, we are not necessarily excluding brethren from other continents.

Next year's fellowship meeting will be held in Providence, R.I., a center of Baptist history in America. Dates and details will be published in the Review.

Woman Trustee at B.B.C.

Baptist Bible College of Pennsylvania has turned out hundreds of faithful Christian workers over the decades. We are grateful for God's blessing on the ministry of that school. However, in recent years this editor has been disappointed in some trends. The most recent has been the appointment of a woman Trustee. A Bible College is a training school for the ministry. The question is: do the Scriptures in 1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:12, etc. apply to such a case?

Several have written to President Milo Thompson to express their objection to this action. Dr. Thompson sent each one a courteous reply stating the reasons the Trustee Board believes these Scriptures do not apply to the College. (The letter is a standard reply and can be acquired by writing to the President)

From the President's letter I have distilled the following four points of support for the action of the Board of Trustees:

Argument #1

Biblical principles that apply to the local church and to the family do not apply to para-church organizations.

Argument #2

The Biblical principle of male leadership and headship applies only to individual function, not group function.

Argument #3

Fifty per cent of the student body is female

Argument #4

Many people support the decision.

My complete response is available for a SASE. Dr. Clay Nuttall has also written an excellent response.

AACS

We have learned that there are state school associations affiliated with the American Association of Christian Schools that have member schools that are not fundamentalist. A review of the schools listed under the Florida Association shows that they embrace charismatic, United Methodist, Southern Baptist and even a Jewish School! One of the churches reportedly has a woman pastor. The KCEA has withdrawn it's affiliation with

AACS. Perhaps AACS should require state associations to clean house or be dropped!

Independent Baptists and the SBC

Jack Warren is the Editor of the Baptist Evangel. Brother Warren helped in the formation of the Independent Baptist Fellowship International when those brethren broke away from the World Baptist Fellowship. He later broke away from IBFI and started his own paper.

In the May 1992 issue of the Evangel he published an editorial in praise of a new book on the life of J. Frank Norris. He wrote to the author: "This book should ... result in greater opportunities for cooperation between independent Baptists and Southern Baptists...." He later exhorts his readers: "Why do ye not rent the vail of *secondary separationism* and change the view of a world which sees you in the same light as radical Islamic fundamentalists?"

Warren published a news report on the formation of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America (us) at Oshkosh, Wisconsin. In reporting our position he stated that he did not agree on our extreme position of "secondary separation."

Officers of I.B.F. of N.A.

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II. HOW DID ENLARGEMENT COME TO THESE PEOPLE WHO WERE REALLY IN BONDAGE?

There are so many church members that have no freedom. There are preachers who have no freedom. I am sorry for the man who cannot take a given course until he has asked his wife about it, and for the woman who is afraid to move until she has had a conference with her husband. I am sorry for the poor preacher who dare not call his soul his own, and must wait until next week when he can call the Deacons together to find out what the dear brethren would like him to do! And then sometimes, when preacher and deacons have come together, they must not do anything until "we find out what the great congregation want to do." They are all busy making bricks, and sometimes without any straw!

How did enlargement come? They mourned and complained because of the bondage, and how they cried to the Lord, and the Lord was entreated of them. Then when Moses went to Pharaoh, their burdens were multiplied. The difficulty of their situation was increased, until they came to Moses and said, "Hold your hand; stop your entreaties. If that is what a revival causes, we do not want it. It is making things worse instead of better." Often things are worse before they are better! How did enlargement come at last? What was the proposal made to them when they sought an open door to serve the Lord?

You remember the way of compromise which Pharaoh suggested. He said to them first, "Now I have no objection to your serving the Lord, providing you serve me too. Stay right here in Egypt, set up your altars in Egypt, serve the Lord where you are; but do not separate yourselves from us. Do not take yourselves out of the land; do not be a separated people. Let us be good mixers. Let us be on good terms with one another, and though I may not agree with your religion, still I have no objection to your serving here."

That is the cry today. One can scarcely pick up a paper without seeing proposals that we set up altars in Egypt, and not be over particular. "Why," said this writer whose article I read last night in one of our papers, "the United Church of Canada was only the first step. It was the first step in the direction of Union. By and by the Anglican communion might be included; and of course there was still the larger union yet to be thought of, union with Roman Catholicism, and union with the Eastern Church." And they call that Christianity! What is it but saying "Serve the Lord if you want to, but stay in Egypt? We are quite willing that you should sing Moody and Sankey hymns if you want to! If you are a little bit orthodox and still talk about the blood, we shall not object so long as you do not make yourselves objectionable. We will find room for you." The article said, "The United Church ought to appeal to people who have the Anglican temperament" - whatever that is - "but they must not forget to find a place for the old Methodist spirit, and to make room for that power which will transform the lives of men. Why should we not have in the United Church a little bit of everything?" Certainly! Stay right where you are, in Egypt.

That is what many of our Baptists are doing today. They say, "I do not agree with Professor Marshall, I do not agree with his Modernistic tendencies; but I am not quite ready to leave Egypt yet, I am going to stay where I am for a while."

My friend, revival does not come that way. Moses was well advised when he said, "We cannot serve God in Egypt. We must get clear out of the land, and be an entirely separated people, so that we shall have the utmost liberty to serve the Lord as we will, and as he directs." Let me suggest to you that when any body of people find themselves in circumstances that they have no compromise, and are not free to follow the dictates of an intelligent conscience, and to obey the precepts of this Word to the uttermost, then they had better get out of the land, out into the wilderness alone with God. When they are ready for that, the revival will come.

Then you will remember the second suggestion of Pharaoh. He said by and by, "Well, if you must go, I will consent thus far: Go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord. Leave your wives and your children here." There is a tendency nowadays to relegate religion to Sunday. You must not carry your religion into everything - and certainly not into the families! Ye that are men! You who are grown up! The tastes and desires of youth are past, so far as you are concerned, but you must not be over-particular about the young people. You must make allowances for that sort of thing, and you had better not be too strait-laced!

That is the attitude of a great many ministers. I have sat on committees with them when they have said: "Of course, so far as we are concerned, we have a very clear view of these things; but you know, brethren, young people are young people, and if you are going to be too strict in these matters you are simply going to drive them all away. If you want to go to prayer-meeting two or three times a week, there is no objection to that, but do not insist that the whole family go! Do not make your religion objectionable by putting it into everything. You will only drive the people away."

In principle, that is just about the same thing. But you cannot have a revival in a divided church; you cannot have a revival in a divided house. Moses said, "No, we are not going to have a revival for half the family, but for our whole family. Our wives and children will go along with us when we go. We shall all go, and we will be entirely separated unto the Lord our God."

Then Pharaoh said, "Well, do not go very far away anyhow. Just move a little bit out, just out on the rim of things, so you can easily get back again. Do not be an extremist. Do not allow yourself to become fanatical. Do not be too rigid in your demands." There are many people who are afraid of being called fanatical, who are afraid of being extreme! They remind me of a remark Sam Jones once made very solemnly, as he was speaking to a large congregation. He told the women present that it was a very dangerous thing to be beautiful. Everyone felt as though there were a funeral on! He solemnly warned them against the dangers of it, and then he said, "But do not be alarmed. You are all safe, you have nothing to fear!"

Most people have a long way to go before they are in danger of being called extremists. But that is the problem with a great many young people. Scores of people ask me, "Is there any harm in this?" Or, "Now, Pastor, just how far do you think we need to

go? Do you not think if we go only a little way, as long as we get a little bit away from the danger line - don't you think that will be all right?" There is a tendency to compromise with evil, instead of being free of it altogether! There is a life against which there is no law, and we are to seek that larger freedom where we shall have full liberty to do the will of God.

Pharaoh had a still further compromise to suggest. He said, "If you must go, and if you must go right out of the land, and if you insist on taking your religion into your business, then leave your flocks and your herds here. Do not take the money away from the country." There are many people who would be quite willing for you to leave the old Convention as long as you leave your flocks and your herds behind! They have no objection whatever to your withdrawal, as long as you do not affect the Treasurer's report! But this idea of being religious seven days a week, of preaching Christ on Monday as well as on Sunday, and of carrying the principles of the Christian religion into our everyday business so that even the flocks and herds have something to do with our sacrificing to the Lord, that is altogether obnoxious to some people. I heard a man say once that the first creature that really knew he was saved was his cat, because when he was accustomed to coming home drunk he was in the habit of kicking that poor creature around; and when he came home sober and kindly disposed toward everyone, he said, "Even my cat knew I had been changed."

The principle upon which Moses insisted all the way through was that laid down in the verses which I read to you tonight. He said, "We will go, and not even a hoof shall be left behind. There shall be complete separation between us and Pharaoh. We will go out into the wilderness where we are answerable to God, and where we can obey the direction of His Spirit. Only as we thus keep ourselves free from all entangling alliances, and shut ourselves up to the will of God, can we really be used in His service."

Our further step is too large a subject for me to embark upon this evening, but you read the book of Exodus and see how a nation is brought into liberty through the liberating power of the blood and the outstretched arm of God. Only thus, by passing under the blood and through the sea, by being born again by the power of God's Spirit into a new life, can we enjoy that liberty which belongs to the children of God. May He set us free every one!

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