

TRUE GOD OR NEW GURU?



Studies on Love and Authority,
Leadership and Community

Geoffrey C. Bingham



New Creation Publications

Preface by Dr. Dean Drayton

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STUDIES IN TRUE LEADERSHIP

By

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Cover design by John Hinds

Published by
NEW CREATION PUBLICATIONS INC.,
PO Box 403, Blackwood
Adelaide, South Australia 1979

First Edition July 1979

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National Library of Australia card number and
ISBN 0 9597018 6 9

FOREWORD

At first glance this appears to be a topical book dealing with the question of leadership raised by the Jim Jones mass suicide in Guyana last year. Yet Geoffrey Bingham wants to raise the deeper fundamental question of authority in a way that will disturb those who live in this century. He is asking, what is 'really real'? And certainly it is about time we asked that question again.

In one sense the Christian Church has been too successful in convincing the modern world that God is a God of love. The usual definitions of God's love end up with us telling God what he should do because he loves us. God's love is re-interpreted in terms of our love. The common argument against the existence of God uses this sort of approach. If God is a God of love how can there be suffering in the world?

It came as a disturbing surprise recently to discover that the message of the writer of 1 John strikes a more primal note by declaring that Jesus' message was 'God is light'.

1 John 1:5 'This is the message we heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.'

God's love is then carefully defined as the coming of Jesus to bear our sin, and bring us into the fellowship of light. I felt distinctly uncomfortable for it means I need to deal with God on God's terms. If God is light, he calls me in question.

A God of light is decidedly awkward for the twentieth century. If God is light, then there is darkness, and light and love are diametrically opposed to darkness and hate. However we interpret what it said, one cannot escape the

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Gillingham Printers Pty Ltd
106 Currie Street Adelaide
South Australia

polarisation of human reality into the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness unless, of course, one explains away the biblical account. Martin Luther too, was clear there were stark alternatives for experience. He put it a different way. Either my righteousness or Jesus' external righteousness. For him my righteousness is darkness, and Jesus' external righteousness is light.

One of the curliest questions one can ask now is this; 'What is Evil?' Our age has convinced itself evil is the absence of good, the result of not doing something. But to ask the question raises the spectre that evil may well have a malevolent life of its own. Both the affirmation that God is light, and Evil is darkness, pull nervously at the comfortable confidence of our own point of view, neatly shorn of these extremes. Our century is a grey era with the common point of view that there are not stark alternatives, only a range of options. In this book Geoff Bingham simply and directly calls this into question on the basis of the Old Testament and the New Testament message.

The Bible affirms that what the eye sees, either brings light, or leaves in darkness. This is not a matter of education but basic belief. To those who see the light, the truth is obvious. To those in darkness, how can there be anything but darkness. There is then no truth but our own point of view. It is a Catch 22 dilemma. If there is no truth, then one is caught in a world in which it is impossible to believe anything is true except one's own point of view. Pilate's answer to Jesus, 'What is truth?' is still used to avoid the truth.

If there is no truth, then there can be no rightful authority. The twentieth century has retreated from truth but finds itself caught with a dilemma when it comes to authority. Authority seems now to be equated with force, the way individual groups and parties maintain their own control. The options seem limited. To disobey leads to anarchy, to obey leads to restrictive conformity. Both options destroy community life. Only if there is a rightful authority can

there be creative life, lived in harmony, with the way things really are.

Here then is a fine exposition of the Biblical message in terms of its most comprehensive concepts, applied to the twentieth century problem of the nature of authority, with clear implications for parents, teachers, leaders and rulers. Whether the reader agrees with this presentation of the Biblical view or not, this book looks squarely at the issues that really matter.

Dr. Dean Drayton

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CHAPTER ONE

THE POWER OF THE CULT

What were the thoughts of each person who agreed to suicide *en masse* in Jonestown, Guyana in November, 1978? Was it group hysteria, or was it a rational understanding of what they were doing? Did they have a philosophy of death, and was this acceptable to them? Who trained them so that death was acceptable? What was the mysterious power which united them to James Warren Jones, their leader and protector? Was he in fact a megalomaniac, pulling down with him to death over 900 persons?

The psychiatrists and the psychologists and the sociologists have worked on these questions, and upon the actual incident which shocked the world. Explanations of the event cannot reverse the situation and bring those people back to life. Homes have been tragically split apart by the event. Suddenly the strange power which operates in a cult has been exposed to the eyes of all. Not all are willing to look, and few are seeking to understand the lessons which the happening could teach.

What we seek to examine and understand in this book is whether there are powers at work, across the spectrum of human society, which if understood would help us to prevent cults, and to heal those caught up in them. In Western countries there are few homes which in some way or another have not been affected by cults. The followers of Sun Myung Moon, the Children of God who follow 'Mo' Berg, and the cult-members who are caught up in

various Eastern gurus are but a few of the folk caught into cults. The seemingly mild yoga and Transcendental Meditation philosophies are having a surprising following and effect. Without doubt the cults exercise great powers.

The Day of the Cult

There have always been cults. It seems that whilst men or women desire leadership and others desire to be led, the danger of the cult will always be with man. *Time* in its issue of 4 December, 1978 looks squarely at the Jonestown event and tries to analyse why people join cults. It quotes Dostoevski in his *Brothers Karamazov*: 'He has no more pressing need than the one to find someone to whom he can surrender, as quickly as possible, that gift of freedom, which he, the unfortunate creature, was born with'.

This is the day of the cult, more perhaps than in any age. It may be said that what people seek religiously in cults is the same as others seek in their social and welfare clubs. Service clubs such as Apex, the Lions, Rotary and others have a pattern which fulfils certain social needs. It also gives its members a sense of well-being in serving others. The same may be said of certain Sports' Clubs. These, too, are bound together by a common cause and interest. Even labour and industrial unions have a common cause, and face the foes who seek to oppress them. It is not too much to say that these all contain elements which are cultic. Probably, however, in all of these there is no outstanding moral danger. At worst they are mutual-security groups. At best they seek to do something worthwhile. Probably none of them rises to any great height, and in many cases what they accomplish is little more than the ordinary. In some cases it is even mediocre and banal. They lack the intensity of the true cults. The forces which move them are far from powerful.

What Moves the Cults?

What moves the cults? No one would deny that the suicide pact of over 900 people is a strange and rare event. The Jews at Masada in AD 73 chose suicide rather than submit to the persecuting Romans. This, however, was inspired by intense nationalism and the knowledge that in any case they might be slaughtered. Other fierce events have happened in history. Few of them have been inspired by this intense passion witnessed at Jonestown.

Bryan Wilson in his book, *Religious Sects* (World University Library, London, 1970) defines a sect as a movement of religious protest. He adds, 'Their members separate themselves from other men in respect of their religious beliefs, practices, and institutions, and often in many other departments of their lives. They reject the authority of orthodox religious leaders, and often, also, of the secular government'. What he points out as to the method of obtaining adherents is seen so clearly in the new cults which have arisen in the past twenty years. These in fact are exclusivist and elitist. Whilst they proselytise, they do not admit those who do not accept the tenets of the group. They join voluntarily but must submit to an intense conditioning. This conditioning has been called by many 'brain-washing', and the power of it is seen when attempts are made to deprogramme the minds of the cultists. In some cases it has proved impossible. It is rare that a cultist will voluntarily submit to deprogramming. Without deprogramming, the cultist who has left his group goes through intense suffering, and may even become psychotic.

How to Understand

In our treatment of the cults we should seek to understand the reasons for their genesis, and the modes of their operations. Warnings followed the Jonestown affair by both sociologists and theologians. Some psychiatrists

averred that merely ignoring what had happened would be futile. The powers working today across the movement of the cults are solidly with us. The search for alternate lifestyles, and the rejection of contemporary culture is not the work of a lunatic fringe. It is gathering momentum and involving a large number of persons. As we have observed, most families can think of one or more members in the cults or the other associated movements.

Merely to pour scorn, or to become aggressive towards these movements is not good enough. Seeming persecution will only foster the separatist spirit and convince the persecuted that they are right, and that others are evil. It ought also to be recognised that vast amounts of money are involved in sects, cults and movements. This matter of money is also highly emotive, and in some cases eventually becomes the driving force of the particular cult which has been gripped by it.

The most simplistic of all explanations is that the cults and groups are all of Satan, and are just his work. Doubtless the prince of evil will be seeking to destroy homes, morals and society, and doubtless he is deeply involved in what is happening. However, to place the whole burden of cause and responsibility on to him is a neat trick of evasion. People in cults, groups and movements are, after all, human beings such as we are. In a general sense they are our brethren. We must not only try to understand them. We must also endeavour to seek them out and help them. Also, to know what they are about may be salutary for us. It may help to prevent our own fall into cultism.

As Dostoevski has pointed out, there are always those who, becoming burdened with life, look for another person to whom they can surrender the gift of freedom, i.e. their own choice of will. Without this gift man must become dehumanised. The one who controls that gift may become dangerous and even demonised.

CHAPTER TWO

JESUS TEACHES CONCERNING THE SECTARIAN

Sects in New Testament Times

The term *sect* is used in the New Testament. The English word 'heresy' is a transliteration of the Greek word *hairesis*. The term is translated as either 'sect' or 'heresy' in English translations. Its use at the time referred to such groups as the Pharisees (Acts 15:5), the Sadducees (Acts 5:17) and even the Christians (Nazarenes—Acts 24:5). It was also used in the first century for such groups as the Essenes and other Dead Sea communities. In I Corinthians 11:18f ('For, in the first place, when you assemble as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognised.') the term heresy is used to cover 'divisions' or 'parties', and Paul says that these must happen in order to define the true church and its members, for division is no true part of an ecclesia, for the very essence of this is unity (cf. Ephesians 4:1-6, John 17:20ff).

Put simply the term 'sect' covered various schools of thought. The Pharisees and Sadducees were contained within the Jewish economy. At the same time they were a problem. The Sadducees were materialists, not believing in the supernatural. The Essenes and other communities had developed life-styles of their own. Peter told the new Christians to separate themselves from this crooked generation, i.e. the Jews (Acts 2:40) because they had rejected the true Messiah and so their own truth. Paul's statement in I Corinthians 11: 18f concerning heresies (parties) means

that these people simply discovered themselves *not* to be part of the true body of Christ, or rather the true members of the body recognised the others were not of the church. II Peter 2:1 says, 'But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction'.

The term, then, whilst reasonably acceptable at first, gradually takes on the significance of a group which does not teach the pure truth and which has its own existence within itself and so is against the basic orthodox truth and authority. Such groups are spoken about in II Timothy 3:6-9. John in his first letter speaks of people going out from the church, and says that if they had been genuine, doubtless they would have remained in the fellowship (I John 2:18-19). Likewise John in his second letter tells his readers not to welcome any person into his house who 'does not bring the doctrine'. Paul, in Titus 3:10, says that a person who is factious after one or two admonitions must be rejected.

All of these elements give us the clear impression that sects, groups, cults and persons who do not accept the basic faith, doctrine and practice of the church are not of the true nature of that body. The same would go for the Jewish economy into which Christ moved, as for the Christian church. Whilst the Christians were called a sect, a theological investigation will show that they had continuity with genuine Judaism. In fact much of the Book of Acts is really an *apologia*—a reasoned defence—that Christ was no sectarian, but the Messiah of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the fulfilment of the prophecies. Hence the body or church that he formed was the true people of God.

The Sect of the Pharisees

This group was a genuine sect. We learn that they were the purists of earlier generations. They sought to maintain

the law in every detail. At one time they exercised a large influence, but then split into a spiritual minority as against the political majority. Their political fortunes had waned by the time of Christ's appearance. They were known as 'the separated ones', and had become legalistic, especially over tithing. They would not eat food at homes where they suspected tithing had not been carried out rigorously. For them the teaching of Jesus was far too lax. This is seen in the conversation at the feast which followed Matthew's conversion to Jesus (Matthew 9:9-13). The Gospels have much to record in regard to the conflict of the Pharisees and Jesus. Even so, there is no point in our pursuing the matter here, except to observe that when Christianity blossomed out in its own right some of the Pharisees who joined it still showed a sectarian spirit, and almost certainly formed the basis of the Judaising Christian group (Acts 15:5, Galatians 2:11ff).

What attracts our attention is the discourse of Jesus in Matthew 23:1-12, and in fact it forms the substance of our enquiry into cultism, and the dangers in it—as also elsewhere—of wrong leadership. The text is as follows:

'Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so practise and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practise. They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honour at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market places, and being called rabbi by men. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ. He who is greatest among you shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." '

As we see, this section concerns the scribes and the Pharisees. Jesus' invective does not cease at verse 12 but continues to the end of the chapter, and is most serious in its statements and most damning in its judgements. We will seek to draw some principles from the passage we have quoted.

Principles of Leadership

It is clear from the passage that the original pietistic Pharisees have degenerated into power-seeking and position-seeking persons. Their many years of study of the law and their meticulous and detailed expositions of it had produced a heavy form of legalism. Jesus said 'They sit in Moses' seat'. He meant they pronounce on the law, and demand obedience to it. So far as the law was concerned, where their pronouncements were correct then people ought to follow the same. However, the Pharisees themselves did not do so. To understand the hypocrisy of the sect verses 13 to 36 need to be studied closely. What we must not miss, however, is the dreadful fascination of legalism, or as it is often called, *nomianism*, that is the way of life which is law for its own sake.

Jesus then paints a vivid picture of the scribes and Pharisees seeking ecclesiastical places and honours. He shows them as men donning their distinguishing robes and taking their places with dignity at the ecclesiastical events of the day. What if it is uncomfortably close to home in our own day? We must face it. Every human being loves honour. The passion for position did not die with the Pharisees, nor the wangling for office, especially high office, perish with that Jewish sect. We recognise the principles, and understand the suavity of place-seeking.

Jesus is talking primarily to his disciples. They will be the first in a long line of leaders and office-bearers. Behind them stretch the centuries of Christian history and the hierarchy of the church. Not all have observed the word which the disciples heard. Jesus pictures the well-robed

leaders sitting at the head of feasts, taking the show-places in the synagogues, and calmly accepting the high honours and salutations which come to them in the streets and market places. They are of course special men!

What they love more than anything is to be called, 'Rabbi!' This, of course, is the term for 'Teacher' but it carries high respect. In fact it does more than that. It carries the reverence that is given to truth, and honour which comes to that one who imparts truth. The term 'Rabbi' could almost equal 'Father' for the teacher was a father to his pupils. The idea of 'teacher' also carried with it obedience to the commands of the one teaching, and so 'Master' was a term often used. Thus these grey-beards, suitably equipped, moving among the people with dignity, had a keen eye for praise, a deep desire for recognition, and a willing ear for any element of appreciation.

What then, could be so wrong, especially for the disciples, to have this kind of acceptance? Would it not mean they had come to the place of being respected, and might not this be a good thing in the new day of faith? Might it not mean that the old harsh economy had given place to a new and fresh way of life? Would not the teacher rightly deserve the honour from his pupils, seeing he brought a newer word than the old, and a better word than that proceeding from the traditionalists and hypocrites?

Whatever answers we endeavour to give to these questions the fact is clear. Jesus wanted no recognition of the elements of Pharisaism. We will now proceed to see what lay behind Jesus' invective of the Pharisees, and his prohibition in regard to being teacher, father, and master.

CHAPTER THREE

GOD IS TEACHER—I

Call no Man ‘Rabbi!’

Jesus said, ‘You are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren’. Some ancient authorities have included, after ‘you have one teacher’ the words ‘even Christ’. The principle in the whole passage surely is, ‘There is one Teacher. There is one Father. There is one Master’. Who these are does not greatly matter at this point. It is just that—apart from Jesus—no man is any of these things, nor should attempt to be so. The question we ask is, ‘Why not?’

The answer is, ‘God is basically the true Teacher. He is basically the true Father. He is basically the true Master. To give any man that position, or for any man to usurp it from God is blasphemous’.

The further question is, ‘Does this in fact happen? Had it happened in Jesus’ day.’? The answer is ‘Yes, it happens down through history’. Satan’s proud claim was, ‘I shall be like the most high God’. Even if we claim that Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 merely portray the kings of Babylon and Tyre, and not Satan himself as a literal person, yet the principle remains the same. As in 1I Thessalonians 2:3-4 the ‘son of perdition’ seeks to be worshipped as God in the temple and gives out that he is the same, so Satan is the great prince of pride who stands behind all ambition. The serpent’s temptation to Eve was, ‘You shall not surely die. God knows that when you eat you shall be as God, knowing good and evil’.

This was the sin of the Pharisees and scribes. They pronounced for men as though *ex cathedra*, as though from God Himself. They drew men’s attention to themselves. They did it via the law, but not for the law. The Rev. Jim Jones is reported as a young preacher to have thrown his Bible to the floor and to have yelled, ‘Too many people are looking at this (book) instead of looking at me!’ The Pharisees had far too much dignity to do this, and far too much intelligence to uncover their own legal pride. In fact they saw themselves as servants of the law although in fact they were manipulators of it.

Yet, There Are Many Teachers

It was at the time of Ezra that the law, so to speak, had come into its own. Doubtless it was the place of the priest to interpret law to those who needed to know it. This is inferred by II Chronicles 15:3, ‘For a long time Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law...’. Ezra brought about a revival in teaching, especially teaching of the law. The prophets also taught, but then their communications were directly from God, and although not in conflict with the law, were not the law itself. The period between Malachi and Matthew has no prophecy, and the law had become highly significant to Judaism. So there were many teachers.

In the Christian church, and no less in the NT period, teachers were prolific. In I Corinthians 4:15 Paul suggests the Corinthians have many pedagogues, i.e. teachers or trainers or guides. The office of teacher has high recognition in I Corinthians 12:28. Paul says, ‘And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers . . .’. In Ephesians 4:11 it is included amongst the main ministry gifts. Teaching is highly commended. The elders have to be ‘apt to teach’. Why then should not a man be called, ‘Teacher’, that is ‘Rabbi’?

The principle is surely clear. Any man may be a teacher, provided he has the ability, and, if necessary, the calling. He may surely be addressed as 'Teacher!' He may rightly be called 'Rabbi! ', but not if he is in any sense taking the place of God. Not if he is speaking as though authority were vested in him, and that above all others. Not if he is imparting teaching on the basis that he alone, of himself, may impart information and wisdom, without referring that to God.

The key in Matthew 23:1-12 lies in the verses 11 and 12. The true teacher is a servant. He serves. He humbles himself, and his teaching is then great, but he must not make himself great by his teaching, or because he is teaching. Otherwise it will not be long before he is not teaching truly, and not teaching truth.

God is the Only True Teacher

If we go by some ancient manuscript authorities then we will say that the true Teacher here (verse 8) is Christ. That, of course, is undeniable. He was Teacher to his disciples, and he gave them command to pass on that teaching (Matthew 28:18o20). Indeed they were to teach the nations. However, he himself was a taught one. He was taught of his Father.

In John's Gospel Jesus constantly states that he does nothing but what his Father shows him. He says nothing but what he is told (John 5:19ff). He has any authority he has because he has been given that by his Father. With his eternal (i.e. pre-creational) background we might think him sufficient, in himself, to teach. Philippians 2:5f shows that he emptied himself. He did not empty himself of his deity, but of that deity's prerogatives. Also he became man, and truly man. Hence as man, he was dependent upon God as Father. This he demonstrates fully and most powerfully. He subjects himself to the human limitations of time, space and knowledge.

In John 5:19-20 Jesus says, 'Truly, truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever He does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show him, that you may marvel'. This is the true type of teaching, and the right way of learning.

The Father is Teacher

The Father not only teaches the Son. He teaches all men, especially those who have a will to hear. Why, then, do men need to be taught? When they are taught, what then are they taught? The answers are:

(i) Men need to be taught because they are ignorant. Being created man-needs to grow and to mature. He needs to be told things. He needs to acquire wisdom so that he can live well in his own world. The fall of man, in Adam, has brought a crass ignorance, a double-ignorance that man needed never to have. Romans 1:22 says, of man's rebellion, 'Professing themselves wise, they became foolish'. Man then needs to be taught. He needs doubly to be taught because of the Fall.

(ii) Man needs to be taught the truth. The truth is things-as-they-really-are. That is, things as God has essentially constituted them. Man needs to know not only the truth of creation, but also the truth of redemption. He needs to know what he has rejected, and what God has purposed to do in time and history in order to redeem man.

Jesus knew that the mystery of the Father and the Son was something man needed to know. We slightly pre-empt matters we will speak of, ahead, when we say that knowing fatherhood as it is essentially is one of the indispensable needs of man's heart. He needs fatherhood for achieving his maturation. He cannot have that without the true and divine Fatherhood. Hence man must know the Father. However, as the Father sees it, they must know the Son. Then they can come to the Father. Hence Jesus said, 'No

one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, “And they shall all be taught of God”. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me’.

This is important. The Father is, essentially, Teacher. In Isaiah 54:13 God says to His people through the prophet, ‘All your sons shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the prosperity of your sons’. In Jeremiah 31:31-34 God says that ‘they will no more teach every man his neighbour saying, “Know the Lord”, for they shall know me’. The inference is that God comes to them and teaches them. In Isaiah 2:3 the nations say, ‘Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us His ways, and that we may walk in His paths’. This is repeated in Micah 4:2, where, incidentally, *what* God teaches is shown.

The Father then teaches His people, and He teaches His Son. Paul says, in I Thessalonians 4:9, that the church does not need anyone to teach them brotherly love for ‘You, yourselves, are taught of God’. That, of course, is obvious. Where the Father is there is the Family, and so the children are brethren, under the Father’s love.

Our great point then is that God is Father, and that the Father is the true Teacher. That fathers should be teachers, especially teachers of true godliness and wisdom, is shown in Deuteronomy 6:6f God says, ‘And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart, and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise’. The fathers must be always teaching, as is the Father.

CHAPTER FOUR

GOD IS TEACHER—II

The Son is Teacher

Keeping in mind the unique ministries of Father, Son and Spirit we can see the heinousness of any who should presume to take the place of God, and represent himself in the role of *the* Teacher. If the Father is Teacher, so is the Son. This is clear from the simple fact that he taught, whilst on earth, and taught effectively. A quick run through a concordance of the Gospels will show how many times, and under what circumstances he taught.

One example is the Sermon on the Mount. That teaching has had universal acclaim and even by many religions which otherwise oppose Christianity. In Matthew 5:1-2 it says, ‘Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying’. The long discourse of teaching then follows, and at the conclusion of it Jesus claimed that those who heard but did not heed and obey would be like the man who built his house on sand. Some crisis would come and his house would be destroyed. Those who heard and heeded would be like a man who built his house upon a rock, and no crisis would destroy it. Matthew records, ‘And when Jesus had finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching for he taught them *as one who had authority, and not as their scribes*’ (7:28-29).

Jesus was called ‘Rabbi!’ many times. Acts 4:13 says that the Sanhedrin (the Jewish parliament of 70 elders)

‘saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated common men. They wondered; and they recognised that they had been with Jesus’. The meaning of this must be that the trained scribes and elders considered Jesus to be a man without academic education, yet they knew the disciples spoke, even as Jesus had, with authority.

(i) The Demands of the Teacher, Jesus

Much is made of Jesus’ demands for discipleship. The *locus classicus* of this is Luke 14:25-35. This, in conjunction with the parallel passage of Matthew 10:34-39 appears to show Jesus making most stringent demands. There is no doubt that they were exacting, but rightly understood they were neither heavy nor excruciating. Any teacher of that day demanded that his disciples either fully listen to him, or not listen at all. Jesus was making this same kind of demand. He was saying, ‘Have no relationship which will distract you from hearing me, and so obeying me fully’.

Much has been made of these demands as though Jesus asked for great sacrifice, and even hatred of parents, children or spouse. In fact Matthew 10:37 is the best commentary. Jesus demands that his disciples put love for him first. This is the same as putting it first for God. However, Jesus’ ministry as a teacher is unique. That is something we have to repeat and underline. *Jesus’ ministry as a teacher is unique*. Whilst he may be seen as one amongst many teachers, yet he is unique amongst all those teachers. Hence his demands for discipleship are beyond the demands of any other teacher. This is because his teaching is beyond theirs.

One element which is often forgotten is the actual, living, and powerful teaching of Jesus. To have an academic or detached study on Jesus’ demands for discipleship *without his direct confrontation, call, and attraction* is to miss the whole point. We do not simply mean he

was unusually attractive, and personable, or even had a *charisma*. We mean that ‘never man spoke like this man’, and never man taught like this man, and his conditions for true discipleship would be—rightly understood—the most powerful ever issued. In a theological lecture room they are far removed from the hour of his powerful ministry and personal communication.

(ii) The Modes of the Teacher, Jesus

Jesus said, ‘If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then has the Kingdom of God come upon you’. He was the King-Messiah in action. His teaching was actions, his actions were teaching. His words were effective. He said, ‘The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life’. This could not be claimed of the words of any other man.

His teaching was by action, example, and precept, but one element was not divorced from the others. He was teaching the Kingdom by showing it. His parables concerning it were never divorced from himself or his Father. No one could say he used difficult words, abstruse ideas and arguments, or mysterious and esoteric reasoning. Yet his parables were only simple to the truly simple. For others they hid the truth, as indeed they were intended to do (Luke 8:9-10). He said constantly, ‘He who has an ear to hear, let him hear’. On the night of his betrayal the disciples said, ‘Ah, now you are speaking plainly, not in any figure (parable)!’ Had they then previously understood his parables?

His greatest teaching was his action of life. This may have covered many elements such as love, humility, compassion, pity, and so on. John recorded him as being ‘full of grace and truth’. That was the impression John gained, over all. Such would have been seen, not only in his healings, his miracles, his care and concern for men and women in healing, and deliverance of persons from guilt, sin, disease and Satanic powers, but in the nature of the

events of the Cross and the Resurrection. There he taught most powerfully of all. This of all teaching of all history is the true teaching, the teaching *par excellence*.

CHAPTER FIVE

GOD IS TEACHER—III

The Holy Spirit is Teacher

(i) Jesus' Teaching Incomplete

As we mentioned, Jesus sometimes said, 'He who has an ear to hear, let him hear' He was saying that true understanding is primarily related not to intellectual ability but to willingness. It is related to the wish of the heart. It is clear that sometimes his disciples did not wish to hear. Whilst the twelve called disciples kept close to him, others, even having been baptised, later left him because his words were too demanding. 'This is a hard saying', they muttered, 'Who can hear it?' (John 6:60). Peter and the eleven alone remained, and Peter said, 'To whom shall we go? You have the words of life...'. Jesus had just said, 'The words that I speak, they are spirit and they are life' (John 6:63, cf. 66t).

However, the disciples also did not hear many of his words. Later he said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled'. They had not wished to hear of the Cross. Coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration he gave what must have been his second of three predictions of the Cross. In Luke 9:45 it is said, '... they were afraid to ask him about this saying'.

What we mean is that Jesus, whilst being the teacher of all times, could not effect full communication and total response. Whilst it is true that reaction is often as much a

sign of good teaching as is response, yet he could say on the Cross, of the act of crucifixion, 'They know not what they do'. If then, Jesus the true Teacher in some sense could not communicate sufficiently, what was to be done? It is clear from the Gospels that the disciples were continually puzzled and mystified by what Jesus was saying. Even after the feeding of the five thousand, we are told, 'their hearts were hardened' (Mark 6:52). From Matthew 16:5-12 we see that what had been taught had faded all too quickly. Was there, then, some deficiency in the Teacher? John 7:17 gives us part of the clue: 'If any man wills to do His will he shall know the teaching . . .'. The other scripture which is closely related is, 'He who has an ear to hear...'

(ii) The Holy Spirit Needed to Teach

The answer to our question, 'Was Jesus not quite sufficient as a teacher?' is that he surely was, but that his hearers were deficient. Yet, even more, the time for their hearing and full understanding was not yet come. Another Teacher had to come—the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, 'I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor'. A counsellor is one who gives advice. He is one who imparts wisdom and knowledge (cf. Isaiah 11: 1-4). Jesus said, 'He will be the Spirit of truth'. If truth is 'things-as-they-really-are-and-will-be', then only the Spirit can teach truth. Hence Jesus said, '... he will teach you *all things*, and bring to your remembrance *all* that I have said to you'. He also said, 'He will tell you things to come'.

In other words, nothing that Jesus said would be lost; nothing forgotten. They would know it all, so that Jesus' teaching would not fail or be in vain. Later Jesus said, 'He will bear witness to me'. He meant, 'He will show the world who I really am'. Finally he said, 'When the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into *all the truth*: for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to

come'. (John 14:15-17, 26, 15:26, 16:12-15.) On another occasion previously Jesus had said that when brought before kings and governors the disciples would have no need to meditate beforehand what to say for the Spirit of their Father would speak from within them. Hence, instant teaching, and instant utterance!

Jesus was to leave his disciples. Yet in another sense he was to come to them through the Spirit (John 14:18). He was always to be with his people through the Spirit (Romans 8:9-11, Ephesians 3:16-17). This Spirit would be the one to teach. He would dwell with each believer, and teach them what their Master would have them know.

(iii) What the Spirit Teaches

Man's inability to know the truth comes from the Fall. His rejection of God made him proud in his own eyes. He had believed the eating of the tree of knowledge would enlighten him. It was 'a tree to be desired to make one wise'. What need then of a teacher? 'Professing themselves to be wise they became fools' (Romans 1:22). The truth had gone from them. It needed one who could penetrate into their depths, the depths so to speak of their very spirits. Who better than the Holy Spirit who himself searches the depths of God.?'?

(a) The Truth as Doctrine

In Scripture the truth is primarily something one *does*. It is a thing of action. John speaks of those 'who lie and do not the truth'. Paul talks about 'truthing it in love'. Paul also talks about those 'who suppress the truth in (acts of) unrighteousness'. John says, 'He who does what is true (truth) comes to the light'. (See I John 1:6, Ephesians 4: 15, Romans 1:18, John 3:21.)

If the truth is a way of life (John 14:6), then it is also known to the mind, as to the heart. The will needs to be informed, and to respond. Hence the truth has to be taught

also as ideals, precepts and principles. Also acts of God have to be interpreted. We saw in John 6:45 that God had ever been teaching by the law and prophecy, and this through the persons of priests and prophets. When, however, Jesus became not only the Word-in-flesh, but also 'law-in-flesh' and 'prophecy-in-flesh', then the true moment of teaching and learning had arrived.

Even though this was so, the acts and events of Jesus puzzled most, if not all. Even the great John the Baptist was puzzled (Luke 7:18ff). It needed a Teacher, even a Teacher other than Jesus, to interpret the things of Jesus. It needed one who could interpret the events of Jesus' life and death in the light of the OT prophecies and law, as also the OT prophecies and law in the light of the events of Jesus. So the Spirit had to teach this truth. *This he did at Pentecost.*

Pentecost

Pentecost was the initial occasion on which the Spirit of truth led them into all the truth. Whatever they learned in the interim between the resurrection and the coming of the Spirit, that was all brilliantly illuminated at Pentecost. Suddenly they knew the truth for they began to tell 'the wonderful works of God'. We are not told fully what these works were, but if Peter's sermon on that occasion is any indication then they told of the Cross, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. At the same time they told these matters in the light of the OT prophecies, and thus made reason of Jesus' life and ministry.

Whatever happened in the actual preaching, Acts 2:42 speaks of 'the apostles' doctrine'. We know that there was none before that day, not anyway in a crystallised form. We know that from that day there was a deposit of truth which was basic and binding for all believers. To be one of the apostles was to be able to state the truth fully. To be a Christian believer meant one did not part from that doctrine. 'They continued in the . . . doctrine . . .'. This was the fruit of Pentecost.

The Anointing

We know that the Jewish listeners (who had faith) were enlightened at Pentecost. We know the Samaritans, following Philip's ministry and the coming of the apostles with the Spirit, were also enlightened. Likewise the Gentiles at Caesarea, and later more Jews at Ephesus (Acts 2, 8, 10, 19). We mean that the Spirit brought the truth with him in a powerful and principal way.

We also know that wherever the proclaimers went the Spirit brought the truth to the hearers. This is the thrust of Acts 1:8, I Peter 1:12, I Thessalonians 1:5, and I Corinthians 2:5—amongst other references. Hence John can say twice in his first letter (2:20-21, 26-27) that his hearers have an anointing from the Holy One (i.e. the anointing of the Spirit), and they know all things. They need no one to teach them the truth: they know it.

We conclude that those who were absent from the Jewish, the Samaritan and the Gentile outpourings of the Spirit are not deprived of truth. What was proclaimed then is known now. This deposit of truth is contained in the Scriptures. Indeed that is the truth of which we speak. Also the Spirit anoints persons today as he did then. The fruits of Pentecost are always with the church.

(b) The Truth as Practice

Since the truth is what one does as also what one knows, so the Spirit teaches action. One is *led* by him as was Jesus (cf. Luke 4:1, Romans 8:14, Galatians 5:16, 18, 25). One learns prayer, worship, fellowship, love, unity, the exercise of gifts, the production of fruit, and similar matters. Both the Acts and the Epistles abound in showing this and telling us these things. To have the Spirit is to have the truth and to live in it. The ultimate relationship of the Spirit to the believer is shown in Romans 8:26-27, where the heart of the believer, and the mind of the Spirit are one. Hence life lived in the Spirit is one of learning wisdom

and the practice of wisdom; truth, and the practice of truth.

(iv) The Searching Spirit

I Corinthians 2:6-14 is a beautiful passage telling us that the Spirit teaches (cf. verse 12). The worldly man knows his world. There is indeed the spirit of the world (cf. Ephesians 2:2) who teaches evil. Then there is the Spirit who is the Spirit of God. He searches the 'depths of God', and reveals these things to us. How deep are the things of the Father, and the things of the Son (cf. John 16:15, 3:35, Matthew 11:27)! No human being could comprehend such things, but the Spirit does, and he communicates them when and where they need to be known.

What we ought to observe is that the Spirit has ever worked with the Father and the Son, and the Son was enabled by the Spirit to do all that he did (cf. Matthew 12:28). Hence he knows these things of the Son intimately and so can impart them to us.

We conclude then that the Spirit, no less than the Father and the Son, is the Teacher man needs, especially man who will listen.

CHAPTER SIX

GOD IS FATHER—1

'You Have One Father'

(i) Introduction: Teaching and Fathering

If we cast our minds back to Jesus' attack on the Pharisees it was primarily because they were usurping the place of God as fathers, teachers and masters. Quite probably most of this was unconscious, but it was no less wrong for all that. If we keep in mind *the functional need* of human beings for fatherhood, teacherhood and masterhood, then we can see how evil it is for those of the sect of the Pharisees, and those of the cults, modern and ancient, to usurp any part of God's ministry to man.

We have seen that God is Teacher, essentially, and that man needs to be taught because he has to learn knowledge and wisdom in which he is deficient. The rebellion of man against God, and man's bias against the truth make it impossible for him to know truth apart from God. The 'spirit' of a man cannot know, tell or recognise truth until the true 'Spirit of truth' comes to him, and affects him.

God does not withhold from man that teaching, that wisdom, and that knowledge which he requires in order to live usefully, purposefully, and even pleasurably in this world. More, He gives him that teaching which will redeem and regenerate him. Hence to have a true human teacher is to have one who is in union with the heavenly Teacher, God Himself as Father, as Son, and as Spirit. There is, of course, no better teacher for the matter of human living than one's own natural father. At least that is how it ought

to be. In Deuteronomy 6 we saw that the father, as also the mother, teaches the children by example of life as also by uttered precepts, advice and wisdom. Hence God as Father is also God the Teacher.

(ii) God is Father*

‘Call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father who is in heaven’. Many times Jesus says, ‘Your heavenly Father’, or ‘Your Father who is in heaven’. Why does he put it this way? The answer is that to think firstly of one’s own earthly father, and then think of God is to miss true understanding. A bad father will give us a bad comparison and a good father will give us a mightily deficient comparison of which we could not be aware. God of course is immeasurably beyond the best father, hence neither a good nor bad father has a right to act as an analogy. God is not really analogous to an earthly father. We have to have a whole new revelation of God as Father, indeed a whole new revelation of Fatherhood itself.

(iii) God as Father—in the OT.

In Genesis 6:2 we read of ‘the sons of God’, and this seems to mean those who were born of Adam through the line of Seth, who himself was a substitute for Abel. In I John 3:10-12 Abel is designated a ‘son of God’ and Cain a ‘son of the devil’ (cf. John 8:44). However, the notion of God being Father seems primarily to be covenantal. This is seen in many passages such as Exodus 4:22, (cf. Hosea 11:1), Deuteronomy 14:1, 32:6, Jeremiah, chapter 3, Isaiah 63:16, 64:8, Malachi 2:10—amongst many others. God also has His special Son, as is seen in Psalm 2, Psalm 89:26, and so on.

In Acts 17:24-28 Paul describes God to the Athenian Greeks and quotes one of their poets as saying, ‘We are his offspring’. Luke 3:38 says, ‘Adam was the son of God’. It seems then that not only those of Israel, but others also, may be called sons or children of God. Doubtless this truth could be pressed from the OT. However the richest revelation of His Fatherhood had to wait the actual appearance of His own Son, who alone could represent Him to men as Father, the heavenly Father.

(iv) God as Father in the NT.

The NT amply and richly portrays God as Father. In Acts 17:28 He is the creative originating Father of all persons. However, the idolaters have denied this, making representations of God in any other form *but* that of the Father! For this they have to repent (Acts 17:28-30). Nevertheless God may be known as Father.

John 1:11-13 makes it clear that (a) No one can be a son of God without being given the authority to become one, and (b) Becoming sons is by the supernatural miracle of regeneration (cf. John 3:3f, Titus 3:5-7).

One of the most beautiful statements is that ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we beheld his glory as the only Son from the Father’. It is beautiful because it really says the Father was (is) ‘full of grace and truth’. John expands this. He says, ‘The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ’. He means that law, wonderful as it was, was primarily accredited to God, but now we have to accredit Him with ‘grace and truth’. He is the God of grace and truth. That is very wonderful Fatherhood.

John 1:18 says no man has ever seen God, but that the Son, having come, has declared him fully, as Father. Hence Jesus said, ‘He that has seen me has seen the Father’. He made it clear that he did nothing from himself, but learned and heard from the Father, and executed what the Father demanded (cf. John 1:18, 5:19f, 10:17, 14:9, 10, 30-31).

* For a fuller treatment see *Father! My Father!*, G. C. Bingham, New Creation Publications Inc., 1977.

We must recognise one thing very clearly. In the OT although God is depicted as Father this primarily relates to Israel, and is not the most outstanding of all teaching about God. In the NT a rich, new, and brilliant revelation is given of God as Father. John 3:35 says the Father has given all things into the hand of the Son, and Matthew 11:25-28 should be read closely. Jesus (in verse 27) makes the statement that *no one* knows the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Father is pleased to reveal him. It is clear that just as a son may reveal his father (and of course none other can do this), so the Son revealed the Father, and did this in wonderful ways.

Jesus revealed the Father by relating to him, and showing that relationship to certain people. He showed the Father by teaching about Him, eg. the Sermon on the Mount, and he showed the Father by obeying Him, 'even to the death of the Cross' (Philippians 2:5-11, John 10:17, 14:31, etc.).

(v) God Experienced as Father

God extends His Fatherhood to those who believe (John 1:12-13). He does this by renewing man in His image (Colossians 3:10, Titus 3:5, John 3:3f), and He does it by giving him the status of 'son'. This is often called 'adoption' but it is better to rise the verb 'makes him son', i.e. gives sonship.

John 14:6 speaks of Jesus being the *way* to the Father. Ephesians 2:18 and 3:12 say that we have *access* to the Father by Christ. Galatians 4:4-6, Ephesians 2:18, and Romans 8:15-17 insist that the Holy Spirit brings us to *sonship* of the Father. The Spirit cries, 'Abba!' i.e., 'Father!', and so do we, and so there is a joint-witness to true sonship, and God's Fatherhood.

(vi) God Has Always Been Father

For some a curious impression has been received and retained. The Bible has what is called 'progressive revelation',

that is in time God has quietly, and often slowly, revealed elements of Himself which are not clearly apparent at the time of man's beginning. For example, little is said or seen, explicitly, of the Son in the OT. Much of it is seen in the NT. Likewise salvation as a universal event comes only in the NT. Similarly God's Fatherhood is clearly revealed in the NT. Does this then mean that God only becomes Father—especially in this way—in the NT? The answer is, 'Decidedly, no! He has always been Father'.

This is simple to understand. In the OT the Son is not explicitly present as the Son. Hence the Father's revelation cannot come through in the brilliant manner seen in the NT. We must repeat, however, that God was always Father. It is just that the time for this full revelation (of Fatherhood) had not arrived. In the NT the revelation is in 'the fulness of time'. Now His eternal Fatherhood is seen clearly at the right time.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GOD IS FATHER—II

(i) The Son and the Father

We have already seen that just as the revelation of the Son is in the Father's hand, so the revelation of the Father is in the hands of the Son (cf. John 6:44f, Matthew 11:27, John 1:18, 14:6). Whilst it is right and proper for the Son to speak of 'heavenly Father', 'Father in heaven', yet this signifies nothing until the revelation is given. Jesus, so to speak, has to reveal Him as He is in heaven, and only He who has seen Him, that is He who has come from heaven, can do this. Jesus is that one (John 6:46-58).

Jesus, moreover, teaches us how to relate to the Father. The Sermon on the Mount tells us what the Father is like and how He acts. To imitate Jesus' Sonship is to live with the Father. Paul makes this point. He says, 'Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us, and gave himself up for us, a sweet-smelling savour and a sacrifice'.

The point is that if Jesus says, 'You have one Father', then we need to know how to live with that Father, and this in contradistinction to living with earthly fathers. The danger we face is that we may live in an earthly manner with the heavenly Father, or in a seemingly heavenly manner with an earthly father who has usurped the position of God as Father. Jesus gave some pointers as to how to live the life of children under the heavenly Father. In Matthew 5:9 he said, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God'. This reminds us of

the command of Hebrews 12: 14, 'Follow after peace with all men . . .'

Jesus also spoke of loving one's enemies. In the classic passage of Matthew 5:43-48 he points to total love for all men. He said, 'So shall you be sons of your Father who is in heaven'. I John 3:16 says we know the love of God in Christ dying for men, and adds in I John 4:10 that it is the giving of the Son for the propitiation of the world that tells us God loves man. To live with the Father then is to love all.

This teaching is fortified by Jesus himself. To love the brethren is to show the world they are disciples of the Son (John 13:34). However, following the resurrection he calls them 'brethren', and with this a whole new concept is released (John 20:17, Matthew 28:10). The truth is that now all Christ's people are the sons of the Father and so brethren of one another. So potent is this truth, that if realised it would mean men could only live before the Father as His sons, and so with one another as brethren of the holy family. In this case no one could possibly call another man 'Father!' as the Pharisees and scribes desired men to address them.

When we see how sons live, then we know Jesus has introduced us 'to your Father which is in heaven'. The new level of Fatherhood breeds a new type of fatherhood. In Hebrews 2:11-14 and Romans 8:29 Jesus is the elder brother, who is not ashamed to call us brethren. We could not know sonship apart from his Sonship. We cannot know brotherhood apart from his Brotherhood. I Thessalonians 4:9, as we have seen, tells us the Father Himself teaches us brotherly love. First filial love, and then follows brotherly love. That is why Paul says we must walk as he walked.

(ii) The Spirit and the Son

The Holy Spirit is always in a work which concerns another. It is either the Father or the Son. Or, again, it is

us. In Galatians 4:6 he is called 'the Spirit of His Son', and in Romans 8:9-11 'the Spirit of Christ'. In Acts 16:7 he is called 'the Spirit of Jesus'.

In the Gospels Jesus is born of the Spirit in regard to his physical birth (Luke 1:35). He is baptised of the Spirit (Luke 3:22). He is led to the temptation by the Spirit (Luke 4:1), and ministers in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14, Matthew 12:28, Acts 10:38). He offers himself on the Cross by the same Spirit (Hebrews 9:14), and is raised by him from the dead (Romans 1:4, 8:11). He ascends by the same Spirit (Ephesians 1:19-20, cf. Romans 8:11). He leads Jesus in this work, and is intimately related to him throughout. He enables him to fulfil his sonship, from the point of his baptism when the Spirit comes upon him and he is declared to be the Son (Matthew 3:17). The Spirit then is the one concerned with the Son.

The Spirit *at the one and same time* is both the Spirit of the Father (Matthew 10:20) and the Spirit of the Son (Galatians 4:6). This means he enables the Son to be Son and to accomplish the work the Father has given him. It also means that as the Spirit searches the deep things of God, that he knows both the deep things of the Father and the deep things of the Son. He is the Spirit of truth and so knows truth in its most personal and intimate forms. *This means that he can communicate the life of the Son to those who believe.*

This latter statement is most important for our examination of Matthew 23: 1-12. It means that Fatherhood, which is known through the Son, is brought to man's understanding by the Spirit revealing the Son. When the Son is revealed he conducts man to the Father. No human being could possibly act as father in the sense that God is Father. Nor could he reveal Him in the way in which the Son reveals Him.

One important statement of Jesus was 'When the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak He will glorify me, for he will take what

is mine and declare it to you. *All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said he will take what is mine and declare it to you*'. This must mean that when the Spirit shows the Son he also shows the Father. All that we need to know of the Father and the Son is shown by the Spirit.

In practice this means *we can know the heavenly Father*. If that were not wonderful enough it also means *we have the actual Spirit of the Son himself dwelling in us* and so *we have the very Son dwelling in us*. This accords with Ephesians 3: 14-19. When the Son dwells in us, then we call no earthly man 'Father!' Paul says in Galatians 4:6 that the very Spirit himself, in our hearts, cries 'Abba!', i.e. 'Father!' In Romans 8:15 we, by the spirit, cry 'Abba!', i.e. 'Father!' Yet it is true that the cry is not merely emotional, not only truly filial. It is also functional; it is the cry of willing obedience.

A person who does not see God as Father can only seek for one on earth who is a father. It may well be true that the one who knows God as Father may see, and recognise, and be glad to relate to fatherhood in another—if that be the case. He is however aware that it is God's Fatherhood through a person, and for that he will be quietly grateful. He will not be deceived by false or deficient fatherhood. However, he who does not truly know the Son will be easily deceived.

We also need to remember that the very Son also had that divine Fatherhood flowing through him. The ancient prophecy said he would be called, 'Wonderful counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father'.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GOD IS MASTER—I

(i) The Meaning of 'Master'

If the term 'master' in Matthew 23:10 were fully synonymous with 'Lord' then all we would have to do would be to call the Father 'Lord!', the Son 'Lord!', and the Spirit 'Lord!'** However, the term 'master' has a specialised use, and we should look at it.

The actual word 'master' here in Matthew 23:10 is used only in this place in the NT. The modern Greek use of the word is 'professor'. The use at the time of writing the Gospels was variously 'master', 'guide', 'instructor', whilst cognate nouns are 'ruler', 'leader', and 'chief'. The word is *kathegetes* and relates to the verb *hegeomai*. It is from this verb we derive the English word *hegemony* which means 'leadership' and today is used of one State of a confederacy. For example, China objects to Russian or American hegemony in any given area of the world. It is then a strong word.

The words related to the verb *hegeomai* can be found in Mark 13:9 and Luke 21:12 where Jesus said his disciples would be called before kings and *rulers*, i.e. *hegemonas*. This can mean *governor*. In Hebrews 13:7, 17:24 the *hegoumenois* are the ones ruling or leading the church, i.e.

* A little later, in fact, we examine the Lordship of each of the three Persons of the Trinity. Whilst the Father is addressed as 'Lord!' in the OT, and described as such in the NT, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as Lord in only one reference, II Corinthians 3:18, and the term 'the Lord the Spirit' is variously interpreted by scholars.

elders. In Acts 15:22 Barsabas and Silas are 'leading men', i.e. *hegoumenous* among the brethren.

We see, then, that it is an extremely important word. To call any person 'Master!' in this sense means to virtually put one's life in his hands. It is to surrender the mind to him, and to be led by him. The one under him comes under his instruction, and one is guided by him. No wonder Jesus said, 'Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ'. In this case he warns them against taking the leadership of this kind, that is usurping what must obtain only with God.

There are other words for 'master' in Greek. The word *despotes* is used for God in II Timothy 2:21, and for earthly masters of servants or slaves in other places. We of course derive our English word 'despot' from it. Often the simple word 'Teacher' was used for 'master' (*didaskalos*). From this we get our English word 'didactic'. The word sometimes used is *epistates*, and always for Christ, though a lesser form than the word *kurios* ('lord') and *rabbi*, which is always translated 'master' or 'teacher'.

We will see many times that in the cults the leaders are called 'Father', 'Teacher' and 'Master'. It is a serious thing to come under the total leadership of any person. To do this must mean we accept the 'truth' he possesses, and believe he has the wisdom and insight to which we may entrust ourselves. As we say, this committal is a serious one with long-ranging consequence.

(ii) God the Father is the True Master

Jesus said plainly, 'You have one master, the Christ'. Had any Jews been listening who did not accept the fact that he was Christ (Messiah) they would nevertheless have had to agree with him in principle, even if they did not accept him, personally, as Messiah. The Messiah of the OT was one who was going to rule the nations and have an eternal Kingdom, and be Son of the living God. For this reason every Jew could, and indeed must, commit himself to Messiah as his *kathegetes*.

If we take the meanings of guide, instructor, leader and master to be contained in this one word then God is Master. The Father is Master. In the OT so many times the Jews remembered with great joy and triumph that God had led them. In Deuteronomy 8:2 we read, 'And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness . . .'. In many of the Psalms the saga is told, especially Psalms 105-107. Even the beautiful 23rd Psalm must not be read merely pietistically. When the writer says, 'He leads me in path of righteousness for his name's sake', and 'He leads me beside the still waters', he is thinking of a person being like a sheep, trusting himself to the faithful shepherd. Thus very beautifully in Isaiah 63:7-14 God is pictured as a Shepherd caring for His sheep, i.e. Israel in the wilderness. The Holy Spirit is also present to lead. The writer cries, '... who led them through the depths... So Thou didst lead Thy people, to make for Thyself a glorious name'.

The term 'master' is almost synonymous with that of 'teacher' so that these two concepts mingle in this word— guide and instructor, leader and teacher. If we ponder the thought we are amazed that we could commit ourselves to any man, as such, to be our *kathegetes*. Yet God has always led His people, and He is to be trusted. This fact is so self-evident, that merely to record it like this is to sound almost banal.

Think of it on the practical level and life can be either frightening or thrilling. The terms guide or leader carry deep implications. When in Hebrews 13:7 and 17 the writer keeps urging the people of the church to 'obey those who have the rule over you' or, 'obey your leaders', he adds, 'For they are keeping watch over your souls *as men who have to give account*'. In I Thessalonians 5:13—a similar thought—Paul says, '... esteem them very highly in love because of their work'. Life has often been pictured as a small vessel ploughing through seas that are vast. At times this life is tempestuous, frightening, and the seas unknown, strange and foreign. At other times this sea is

quiet and pleasant, and at yet other times the barque of life is lonely and becalmed. Whatever the poetic thought may be, who can guide his barque through all of life, and then into the harbour of death, and beyond? Who has wisdom enough to handle the whole matter of life? Yet the one who will be *kathegetes* to another had better be knowing, wise, competent, understanding and loving. He had better know the way well for himself before he attempts to guide another!

In family life parents set out to be *kathegetes* to their children. The father of a family has to guide, instruct, lead and be master. How does he cope with the womanhood of his wife, the childhood of each child? How does he set his compass for others? The news of child-bashing, or home-desertion, of remote and fearful fathers, and of mothers who break down under the strain is the story of many lives. Each story is a sad testimony to the inability of parents to be true guides in a world of confusion.

It is the heavenly Father who is the true, the essential *Kathegetes*. He leads the entire human race. His sagacity is from ancient times, but is ever new and fresh. His love is unchanging, embracing men and women in all times, ages and places, though they do not desire that love (Matthew 5:43-48) and even shrink from it. It is He who leads His flock of humanity, picking out the places for them to graze and drink and lie down. It is He who goes ahead and destroys the enemies of man.

We raise the question again. Who, amongst men, has the temerity to call himself *kathegetes* or allow himself to be called this? Who dares of himself to take on such a responsibility? The answer is that none ought to dare. At the best, a man or a woman should seek to be this only under the calling of God. So near to God must that one be that the image of God in him is burnished gloriously, and the humility of him is the joy of the great, the Father—*Kathegetes*.

CHAPTER NINE

GOD IS MASTER—11

You Have One Master, Even Christ

(i) Introduction

We have suggested that man has three functional needs, and that they are deep. These needs of Teacherhood, Fatherhood and Masterhood mean that man seeks them amongst men in the forms of human teacherhood, fatherhood and masterhood. He may even fiercely reject them when they come to him, and his rejection may be perverse. He will be in a kind of ambivalence — demanding and rejecting. This is often seen in homes, schools, and at work. Sometimes man's rejection is fiercest because of his disappointment. He has not been fathered well, or leadership has been weak and vacillating. Sometimes his teacher is mute or blundering. Sometimes man's rejection is the expression of his rebellion, sometimes of his fear. He sees no competency which will give courage to his frightened spirit.

If the prophets had never foretold Messiah, then it seems man would have been forced to invent the idea of a messiah, i.e. a *Messiah-Kathegetes*. It is no secret within the human scene that men often call for a dictator. They want a Hitler to come and convince them that he can lead and establish a new era. They want him to father them with force, and even with brutality. They want a *kathegetes* who impresses them that he knows all things and is even, himself, near divine. The cults, then, are nearly always messianic. Also they are nearly always Utopian. They look

to see and experience in time that which can only be known this way in eternity.

(ii) Israel and Messiah

Israel was proud of its Godly history. God had led them out of the slavery of Egypt into a wide desert. They were free, but also dependent. Whilst they remained dependent God was good to them. At times they rebelled, did not believe and obey Him and they suffered fearfully. Finally He took them through many vicissitudes into the land of Canaan. There they became a settled nation, and later a great kingdom.

They had a history which took them back to creation. It realistically included the fall of man, and the promise of God that He would send a man—'seed of woman'—to destroy the evil and deceitful serpent which had edged man towards the fall. It included a strange but beautiful prophecy, a promise that, 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples'. (Cf. Genesis 3:15, 49:10.) It envisaged one born of Israel. Later it narrowed down to the house of David and then, in Judea to an inhabitant of Bethlehem who would rule the nations of the world (Micah 5:2).

Other prophecies envisaged a near-divine or a divine-human person who would be 'Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father'. There was to be no end to his Kingdom, the Kingdom of God. With him was another, if not the same, one who was like a son of man, to whom the Ancient of Days (Great Yahweh) gave the same Kingdom. In another prophecy he was a King, albeit meek and humble, riding into the centre of the world, Jerusalem, to take up his Kingdom. (Cf. Isaiah 9:6-7, Daniel 7:13ff, Zechariah 9:9, cf. 14:9.)

Because of these Messianic prophecies Israel looked to a *kathegetes*, even a triumphant lord who would solve her

problems. Israel had been be-devilled with idolatry and covenant-breaking. The most opulent and successful of her kings had been Solomon, but idolatry had been at the heart of his reign. His liaisons with many women brought their idols into Jerusalem. The truly great king of Israel had been David. He had tightened up the loose confederation of tribes, had centralised its worship and rule at Jerusalem—which he had conquered and taken from the Canaanite idolaters. He had set up what seemed to be the ideal kingdom. The prophecies spoke of ‘Great David’s Greater Son’ yet to come. So Israel looked with anticipation to the coming of Messiah. This one would set up a kingdom far surpassing that of his father.

Many messiahs came, all false, all seeking to cash in on this functional need of a battered and chastised nation. Its hope could be fulfilled by no man of merely human capabilities. Such had been tried and found wanting. The tyrants who ruled Israel made short shrift of such. John the Baptist found the nation eager for Messiah. In fact he seemed so much a strong man, and so much a man of the Spirit that they would happily have made him Messiah. Instead he pointed to Jesus, son of Mary and Joseph, and proclaimed him as that one. In passing we can observe the madness that infects a man when he wants to be a messiah to others. We can see the greatness of this man, John, who said, ‘He must increase, but I must decrease’.

(iii) Israel’s Messiah, Jesus

The test of a man is not what he ought to be, but what he actually is—in action. No one has to listen to his opinions of himself, nor his rationalisations of his failures, nor even his pride in what he claims to have accomplished. For Israel’s Messiah there were to be three tests:

(a) *What the prophecies said he would be*, for this he surely must be, and only he who fulfilled the prophecies could claim to be Messiah.

(b) *What God would say he was*. In prophecy God had said what he would be. Now if God were to speak and attest, then that was what he was.

(c) *What he was in action*: his actions would fully attest to what he was.

After the Resurrection Jesus confronted his two disciples on the road to Damascus. He demanded that they believe all that the prophets had spoken, and he challenged them as to whether this was not so. Had Messiah not suffered and entered into his glory? (Luke 24:26-27, 44f). In the Book of Acts the gossellers claim that they ‘speak only that which the prophets foretold’. Jesus was truly the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies. In the Gospel accounts the Father attests to Jesus at the baptism (Matthew 3: 17), and at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5) by saying, ‘This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased’. In the latter reference He adds, ‘Listen to him’, reminding them of the solemn prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:19 (cf. Acts 3:22-23). Again in John 12:27-30 God says He will glorify His Son. Jesus says clearly (John 5:37), ‘The Father who sent me has Himself borne witness to me’.

The actions of Jesus are written clearly in history for all to read and know. They are the words and actions of a responsible man. Not only do they fulfil the prophecies, but they reveal them in a manner which enhances them. On all counts then this man is genuine, and competent. He is self-evidently, ‘Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father’. He is the true *Kathegetes*.

(iv) Messiah is Master

In Matthew 23:10 Jesus is called *kathegetes*. ‘You have one master, even Christ’. He is the true leader, the true Guide, the true Instructor, the true Governor. He has hegemony over living and dead. ‘For this cause Jesus died

and rose, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living' (Romans 14:9).

It is on him the Spirit has descended, and not by measure. He is totally and utterly the Man of the Spirit. This anointing Spirit is the 'Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord'. Now we look at him who is truly Master. He has the wisdom to be able to guide his followers. He has the knowledge of the true Way, the true 'Tao'. He is that Way himself. Also he is that truth and life of the Father. If any man enters in by him he shall be saved, and go in and out and find pastures. He is the Shepherd who leads beside the still waters, in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake, and through the very valley of the shadow of death.

All through the Gospels they give him titles which we translate as 'Master', yet, as we have seen, these titles refer to different elements such as teaching, governing, and instructing. This title of *kathegetes* means that man can come to him, out of his bewilderment, his personal anguish, out of his sin and failure, and out of his inability to cope with life and the fear of death, and the true Leader is there. He has blazed the trail to God through the tangled thickets of man's sin and rebellion. He is the pioneer of the faith. He is the initiator and the completer of that faith.

Jesus is truly the true, the authentic Master. Who else then, in his own being, would dare to nominate himself as 'Master' or allow another to so nominate him?

CHAPTER TEN

GOD IS MASTER—III

The Holy Spirit is Master

(i) Introduction: The Creative Spirit

We have been taught, by some, to think of the Spirit as self-effacing. He is, so to speak, anonymous. This error has sprung up by a misreading of John 16:13. The King James Version reads, 'he will not speak of himself', but other translations are correct when they say, 'will not *speak from* himself', meaning 'not on his own authority or initiative'. Jesus also would have to be 'self-effacing and anonymous' if this were the case for in the KJV. John 14:10 says, 'I say nothing of myself', when in fact Jesus says a lot about himself.

On the other hand, the Spirit is always, so to speak, the Spirit of something other than himself. He is 'the Spirit of God', or 'the Spirit of Christ', 'the Spirit of the Lord', 'the Spirit of Jesus', and even 'the Spirit of holiness', and so on. Even so he has his own discrete personhood, and is of great power. He is the Spirit of creation (Genesis 1:2, Romans 8:2, II Corinthians 3:17, Psalm 104:29-30), and the Spirit of life. In his sphere of operations he is the great Master. We have seen what kind of Spirit he is when he descends upon Messiah (Isaiah 11: 1-2).

(ii) The Spirit of the Master

It has to be seen that in his earthly birth, baptism, temptation, ministry, death and resurrection the Holy Spirit was

the Spirit of the Master, i.e. of Jesus the Christ. We can say, simply, that Jesus exercised his 'Mastery' by reason of the spirit. This was how the Father had designed it to be.

We have also seen that that 'Mastery' was not fully recognised nor understood, let alone availed of whilst Jesus was in Palestine. We have seen that it awaited the revelation of the Spirit (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:12-15) at Pentecost and following. It was then he revealed Christ as the true *kathegetes*.

Even so, the Spirit is the Master. He is referred to in II Corinthians 3:18 as 'the Lord the Spirit', a Scripture from which the Creeds of Christendom have derived, 'The Lord, the Giver of Life'. He too is Lord. He too sustains creation as does the Son (cf. Psalm 104:29-30, Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:2-3). In the new redemptive order *he is Master*, and he is Master in the many senses that that word 'Master' carries.

(iii) The Mastery of the Spirit

First it carries the sense of a guide and leader. In Isaiah 63:11-14 the Spirit is depicted as leading Israel through the desert into the land of Canaan. In 63:10 we read, '... they rebelled and grieved (or, vexed) His Holy Spirit'. It is to this that Paul refers in a most important passage in Ephesians 4:25-32. This passage speaks of living the new life, and not rebelling, not grieving the Spirit who has sealed them for redemption. In the wilderness they grieved their Leader or Master. Ultimately (as a Shepherd) he led them into rest (verse 14 of Isaiah 63). In this very sense he is still Master.

So far as the Son was concerned the Spirit was his Master. In the Gospel we read he was led by the Spirit, into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. It is made clear that he went in the anointing of the Spirit, and returned in the fulness of the Spirit, so that the One who led him as Master, also enabled him as Master! Likewise in Romans 8:14 it is written, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God,

they are the sons of God'. He who was Master of Jesus is Master of us.

It is in Galatians 5:16-26 that we see this ministry as Guide or Leader. In verse 16 Paul says, 'Walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desire (lust) of the flesh'. This lust of the flesh is the most powerful thrust of desire a man may experience when it comes to doing evil. The opposite thrust is that of the Holy Spirit himself. He thrusts against the evil lust. His drive is one of love and purity. Hence to walk according to the Spirit (cf. verses 25-26) is really to have the Spirit as our *kathegetes* and to come under his hegemony. In other words, this one would Master us to bring us to, and keep us in, holiness. What human creature could accomplish this?

Secondly, in Galatians 5:18 Paul says, 'If you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law'. This also is deeply significant. The man who is under the law has severe problems. He is trying law as a way of life. He seeks by law to be justified from his sin. He seeks by law to free himself from guilt. It would be easier to climb a sheer, glassy, vertical cliff-face, than to be able to accomplish this. In fact many ignorant gurus, spiritual fathers and masters are urging their devotees to do just this. The man under law lives fearfully. He seeks to reach the ease of conscience which only sinlessness could give on the one hand or genuine justification on the other. Since no man has ever been sinless—apart from Jesus—then man is shut up to the way of justification by faith. Law-way cannot give him ease of conscience.

It is of course the Spirit who brings the truth and experience of justification to man. This is seen in Romans 8:2, II Corinthians 3: 17, and II Corinthians 3:6. These Scriptures, rightly seen tell us that the Spirit applies the Gospel of justification to the heart and keeps a man free. Again, then, we are faced with the fact that to entrust ourselves to any other spirit, whether of a man or a supernatural being, who is not the Holy Spirit is to become cultic, and to lose the true freedom of the Spirit, which is also, at the same

time, the freedom the children know with their Father, the freedom they know with Messiah (Galatians 5:1), and which will be ultimately consummated in 'the glorious liberty of the children of God'.

(iv) Being led by the Spirit

When Israel was led by the Spirit it nevertheless rebelled, and the Spirit was grieved. This meant suffering for Israel also. Christ was willingly led by the Spirit for he knew the nature of the Spirit. We have seen that he is competent to be *kathegetes*, competent to have hegemony over the human spirit. We saw that he is the Spirit of prayer, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of power, and so on. In him are the great stores and reserves of wisdom, insight, knowledge and understanding that man needs for the pilgrimage he is upon, and the venture of life that he is undertaking. Without the Spirit he is pathless, and without him he is powerless.

The early church knew what it was to have this Leader, and to be led. We saw that at Pentecost he 'led them into all the truth', i.e. truth as true knowledge and the way of life. We saw that he led Peter to Caesarea to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. He led the church at Antioch to send Paul and Barnabas to the Gentile nations. We saw that when Paul, Silas and Timothy would have spoken the word in Asia they were led away from that point, as also, indeed from Bithynia. He led them to Troas, and the vision which took them to Macedonia. Later the same Spirit virtually led Paul to Rome.

His leading is not limited to geographical and evangelistic situations. He leads in love. He leads in the actions of prayer, worship, fellowship, unity, the exercise of gifts, and the ministry of caring. He who is submitted to the Spirit knows what it is each day *to be filled in his own spirit* (Ephesians 5:18), and *to receive that which the Spirit supplies* (Philippians 1: 19), and *to be aglow with the Spirit* (Romans 12:1 I) so that his life is rich and positive. What

earthly father, master or guru could supply such? Often the promise seems sure from many an unusual and dynamic leader, but in the ultimate the human spirit cannot receive all it needs from one who is just a man.

(v) Conclusion: God is the True Master

Poor wayward man, restless in his spirit, in anguish because of his rebellion and striving earnestly to achieve his own goals, is doomed to bitter disappointment. He may give over to cynicism and hardness, to bitterness and hatred, or he may become hopeless in despair, and cease to struggle. He may even seek the foolish way or trivial and banal living. He may resort to fierce and evil pleasures. He needs a Father-Teacher-Master. He needs God.

On his restless pilgrimage he may stop at many altars and view with hope the strange gods who dwell there. He may taste many religions, many philosophies, and his brilliant mind may labour powerfully to structure such ideas or to live by them, but in the end they will yield nothing of worth. Man has mined his own ideas for milleniums. It is scarcely likely that at this late stage he will suddenly come upon the true riches, some unique pearl of great price. The religions, gods, and avatars promise great wealth, but in the end only useless baubles are held, grasped in the nerveless hands of disappointed devotees.

God is his true answer. Christ is the truth of God. The Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Under their hegemony man may know peace and achievement. He may know salvation. What then will make rebellious man come under this hegemony?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE EVIL COUNTERPARTS, THE CLEVER COUNTERFEITS—I

(i) Introduction: Man's Great Need

We have already made the point that true Fatherhood, true Teacherhood, and true Masterhood are functional needs of every man. No man comes into the world without the participation of fatherhood, even though that father may deny his responsibility, be killed before the birth, or abdicate his fatherhood following it. Somewhere there is a father. Somewhere in the mind of the child is an image of fatherhood, be that image good or bad.

Likewise man is not born with the wisdom which comes from experience. This is by nature of the case. He has no ready directory, printed for him, a blueprint directive for his life. He needs a teacher, and so the gaining of knowledge and wisdom. He needs one to guide his vessel in uncharted seas, or to lead him to the rich and useful places of life. If then the man who should be his father, or the woman who should be his mother should be absent or fail him, or be selfish, possessive or indolent, then he will be disappointed. It is to be doubted that his disappointment can be computed by human methods. He may become bitter or hopeless. He may even begin to seek another, or other helps in the form of a father or teacher or master. He may, as many do, simply reject the possibility of finding such, and turn in upon himself with anger or despair.

In any case most human beings will sooner or later gravitate to some figure. It may be a mother- or father-figure. It may constitute a teacher or a master. The image may be more in the mind of the seeker, than in the person of the sought. What we mean is that man is mightily vulnerable. He can be greatly exploited by his fellow man.

The most dangerous of all persons is the one who believes in himself, that is in his fatherhood, or teacher-hood or masterhood. He is even more dangerous when he believes all three of himself. The explosion point of danger is reached when he believes, in fact, that he is as God. He is not merely father, teacher and master. He is, in his own eyes, Father, Teacher and Master.

It is about this evil we wish to speak.

(ii) The Source of Evil Counterfeits and Counterparts**

The study of non-Christian religious, of the occult and its many divisions is so wide a subject as to demand a very wide coverage. What we are concentrating on in this treatment are the cults which have grown up recently, with some reference to Christian influence upon syncretistic religions which have grown up in the past few decades. For this reason we will limit ourselves in speaking of evil counterfeits and counterparts.

The high pride of Satan makes him think he can attain to the status which God alone can possess. 'I will be like the Most High God'. The created cannot become the creator, Satan is a creature, and he cannot become 'uncreate'. Nevertheless he seeks to be like God. In one sense this should be a good thing, for God is good. The evil in the ambition is that Satan seeks to do this out of his own imagined powers, his own so-called 'goodness'. He seeks to be like God independently of God. Likewise the first couple thought they would 'be as God, knowing good and

* For a more detailed treatment of the subject see Appendix One, 'Spiritual Reality and its Evil Counterpart'.

evil', and God even said 'They have become like one of us, knowing good and evil' (Genesis 3:22). The trouble was that the way in which they knew good and evil was itself evil, and dangerous.

Satan seeks to be worshipped as God in the temple of God, which, in the NT is the people of God (cf. II Thessalonians 2:3-4, Ephesians 2: 19-22, I Peter 2:4-6, Revelation 21:1-5). It is most likely then, that he will counterfeit all that God is and does. The word 'counterpart' is probably better than 'counterfeit'. He wants to prove that what God can do and make, so can he*. What concerns us, however, are the three elements of fatherhood, teacherhood and masterhood.

(iii) Satan Seeks to Fill Up the Functional Needs of Man

(a) Satan the Father

Jesus told the Jewish leaders who opposed him, 'You are of your father, the devil' (John 8:44). They had argued they were of father Abraham. Jesus said, 'The children of Abraham do what Abraham did'. He said, 'You do the works of your father, the devil'. Satan then seeks to be a father, so emulating God. He seeks to draw men to him, and away from God. In II Timothy 2:26 Paul says the devil captures men to do his will. In John 8:44, Jesus says to the Jews, 'Your will is to do your father's desires'. A true son of course, does what his father desires. This was the way of Jesus with his own Father.

In 1 John 3:10-11 John says that the child of the devil does not do righteousness and he does not love his brother (cf. I John 4:20). He then goes on to say that Cain was of the Evil One and (so) slew his brother. In Ephesians 2:1-3 Paul makes it clear that men are in thrall to Satan, and John states bluntly in I John 5:19 that the whole world lies

in the Evil One. Satan then has his wish: he is a father. He has a family. In some curious, but unsatisfying way to the children, Satan is father to his people. It is not the fatherhood of love, but of hate. Yet, perversely, his children get some twisted sort of fatherhood from him. They desire to do his will.

(b) Satan the Teacher

As the true children of God are taught of God, so are the children of the devil taught by him (the devil). Rebellion against God brought man to states of foolishness (Romans 1:22), but this foolishness is to him 'wisdom'. Hence I Corinthians 1:17-25 speaks of the wisdom of this world, that is the wisdom of Satan's powerful and highly organised system. To this wisdom the true wisdom of God which is Christ and his cross, is foolishness. The Jews see religious intensity *without grace* as wisdom, and the Greeks see intellectual brilliance as true wisdom. In Romans 12:1-2 Paul points out that the world keeps seeking to condition men's minds, and the Christian man needs continual renewal of the Holy Spirit to counter the 'brainwashing' effects of evil (cf. Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3: 10).

There can be no doubt that as God teaches His children, so the Devil, as a father, teaches his. They are under the prince of the power of the air who energises them (Ephesians 2:1-3). The Scriptures point out that Satan goes out to deceive the world, and that the flesh, its lusts, Satan, his minions, the world, and sin are all forms of deception. This means that very clever teaching is given to counter the truth, that is 'things-as-they-really-are'.

A glance at certain Eastern religions, the various forms of the occult, and such things as divination, necromancy and the like will show that a great body of teaching has built up. There are many variations of old forms of religions, decked out in attractive modern garb. There is something to meet every mood and every felt need. He would be foolish indeed who did not see the religious

* For a more detailed treatment of the subject see Appendix One, 'Spiritual Reality and Its Evil Counterpart'.

rationalisations of creation, theism, and life, as brilliant. In other words, there has been no lack of teaching from the upper echelons of the world system, and from Satan himself. It is by no accident that the Christian church has had to face an unrelenting barrage of perverted teaching. It has had to face outside enemies in this realm, and even worse, the enemies from inside.

Within the NT Scriptures we find references to sectarianism in I Corinthians 3, 'there is jealousy and strife among you... one says, "I belong to Paul", another, "I belong to Apollos",' this against 'all things are yours'. There is the word of Hymenaeus and Philetus 'which eats its way like a gangrene'. In I Timothy 1:3-7 there are those who occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies, and those who desire to be teachers of the law who have wandered away into vain discussion. This theme is repeated in Titus 3:8-11. In II Peter 2 (the whole chapter) there are those who are evil, divisive and licentious. Much the same theme is pursued in the letter of Jude. In both the Colossian epistle and the Johannine epistles the problems of gnosticism have arisen. Other problems of hyper-spiritualism and intellectualism are also present.

Perhaps the greatest evidence of Satan's power as a teacher is the emphasis the NT gives upon true teaching and sound doctrine. Teaching of course does not merely affect conceptual doctrines, but the whole way of life of the child of God. Satan constantly seeks to teach those things which will draw away people from God. Paul is deeply concerned about this matter. He sees the Judaiser: as destroying the Gospel (Galatians 2, Philippians 3:1-3, 17-19). In II Corinthians 11 he speaks of the deception of Satan (verses 1-6). Later in the chapter he speaks of evil clothing itself as with light.

Paul, as also the other apostles, does not underestimate the attraction, fascination and immense power of Satan as both father of lies, and teacher of deceit. Rebellious man welcomes such deceit, tailored as it is to meet his requirements. That this deceit must ultimately destroy man is not

seen in the temporary relief of being able to deny God and His creation.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE EVIL COUNTERPARTS, THE CLEVER COUNTERFEITS—II

(i) Satan is a Master, a Guide and an Instructor

Satan is the *kathegetes* of the evil world. Paul said of unregenerate men, 'You followed the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air'. Just as Jesus calls men to follow Him, so Satan calls men to follow him. Indeed much of mankind is pressed into service: it is forced to follow its master. His service is bondage, but that is not seen until man tries to wrest himself away from his ruthless master. In the cults it is unbelievable that men would entrust themselves so much to one person. As Jesus said to the opposing Jews, 'Your will is to do his (Satan's) desires'. We have seen that the father is the teacher and is also the leader or guide. So with Satan. He fathers, teaches and leads his people, though never to their lasting advantage or profit!

His hegemony is the kingdom of darkness. Paul speaks of man being under 'the powers of darkness' (Colossians 1: 13). In Galatians 4:8 he says men were under 'bondage to beings that by nature are no gods'. He says in Colossians 2:20 that men were under 'the elemental spirits of the world', and in I Corinthians 8:5 he says, 'There be gods many and lords many'. This is also the complaint of the prophet in Isaiah 26:13-14, i.e. 'Other lords besides Thee have had dominion over us'. This is the hegemony of Satan.

The true *kathegetes* not only leads and guides but he also indicates the goal to which his followers move. A goal and a purpose are indispensable to full, rich human living. Satan promises many goals. He promises fulfilment in this life, a promise which is often called materialism. He promises that the gods man worships will yield up rich satisfaction. He clothes all the elements of life with a powerful mystique. Sex can yield its own delights, of itself. Money or riches has no end to its delights also. Intellectual attainment will bring wisdom that will bring life. Positions of power will deeply satisfy the human spirit. These are some of the inducements, but there are others. Satan can ring the change on his promises. Asceticism has a fierce and cold joy all of its own. Perfectionism keeps the human spirit at the stretch. Religious mysticism gives a sense of power and accomplishment. Then, to cap all these the denial and loss of selfhood is of the highest order. One can be free of desire. One can be lost, without egoism, in the bosom of Nirvana.

To confuse, there are variations of these. *Karma* or fate is something set for man. On the other hand, there are modern inducements to influence *karma* and make retribution. For the negative and despairing there are greater orgies of despair promised. One may attain to some great height, only to fall again as the cycles recommence.

In other words, there is no path in which there is no *kathegetes* for man. Most cults and religions speak of a director, a man of wisdom and knowledge. Sometimes one adverts to men who have attained to great heights and learns from them. Sometimes one needs a mediator with the great, students of the *guru* who are now themselves *gums*.

Let us make no mistake. The heart of man will not be satisfied, in the ultimate, with that which is only gross. 'Thou has put eternity (or, the world) into man's heart so that by searching he cannot find out the end from the beginning' (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Man is in the anguish of needing to know, and being unable to complete his know-

ledge. It is to such persons that every cult, under the greatest of all cultists—the arch-cultist Satan—offers the prospect of a journey and a pilgrimage which will bring a reward. One of course is in need of a leader, a ruler, an instructor and a guide. It is in these situations that the cults find their feeding grounds. They prey upon the needy.

(ii) Satan the Confuser: Man the Confused

We have already seen that Satan is the deceiver, the arch-deceiver. It is, however, the manner in which he deceives which gives us the basis for the deception of the cults. Jesus said by inference that Satan comes to steal, and to kill and to destroy (John 10: 10) and insisted that he himself—by contrast—came to give life and life that was full. Satan had lied at the time of man's primal temptation. He thus delivered man over to death. He had given rebellious man the illusion that he could live autonomously in the universe, independent of God.

Because the universe is functional (Genesis 1:31, Ecclesiastes 3:11), and can only be enjoyed thoroughly when it is received and used functionally (I Timothy 6:17, cf. I Timothy 4:4), then man is a disjointed and dislocated existent in his world when he uses it malfunctionally. If he were to know this, and understand his foolishness, then there would be great hope for him. However, he not only refuses the fact of his foolishness but he rationalises his actions as being right. God, if anyone, is the foolish one in the universe; if, of course, there is a God!

When one has lost the functional key to the universe—the key to true understanding—then one is confused. When one feels the anguish which the conscience works through the many channels of law, and when one cannot find pure joy because living is not simple and pure, then one is burdened with guilt. Guilt in its turn causes some kind of slow-burning fire in the conscience. The need to justify oneself by religious endeavour, or to quench the flames of guilt by induced forms of pleasure and joy, lands

man in a hopeless quest for satisfaction, peace and joy. Man rings the changes on his sensual feelings, on his refined elements of art, culture and intellectual pursuits. He specialises in his sports, his accomplishments, anything to find fulfilment.

In all of these pursuits three great needs continue to be felt, and desire for their fulfilment persist. Man needs the warmth and comfort and direction of fatherhood. He needs the true knowledge of the authentic teacher which will clear his bewilderment and give him the necessary understanding and wisdom. He requires the assurance of a true guide and leader to take him through the confusion, out into places of sensibility and genuine living. It is in this climate that Satan can do his special work. He can be the arch-father, the arch-teacher, the *arch-kathegetes*. He does this by giving to certain men and women the impulse to fulfil these roles. These, unwittingly, become the agents of the God-emulator, Satan. Such persons, for their part, will be unable to avoid, in the ultimate, being self-seeking. They inevitably come to exploit others, and hold them in servitude.

(iii) The Great Babylon of the Human Race

Back of all the endeavours to know and enjoy this world, and the life lived in it, is the whole world system, with its many enticements. For man there are in it delicacies for the mind, the body, and the depth of the spirit. He may take his pick of forms which are gross and materialistic, or which are sensitive and refined. He may be sure that such elements will always be present, and always be available to him. They merely require endeavour to obtain them. One must of course work for them. But they are there. Babylon is a city of great merchandise.

The eighteenth chapter of Revelation pictures this city in graphic terms. It is a city in which is every form of evil and vice. It is inhabited by demons. Yet the same city has been seen by men as being of surpassing beauty. It has been like

a queen decked out in beauty, majesty and glory. As the Bride of Christ is pure and evokes the love of her people, so Babylon is bewitchingly beautiful and promises great joys to her citizens. Babylon of course can never perish. Her merchandise of pleasure, wisdom, delights and culture will always be there for man. This is the deceit of Satan. Whatever Satan may know of its transient character does not appear to worry him. He offers great inducements to the human race to find its fulfilment in life apart from the truth of God as set forth by Jesus the Son.

Mankind often sees God's people as a pitiful and powerless minority. He sees the triumphs of the secular world system as the paramount accomplishment of modern times. The offers of fulfilling functional needs quickly grip the unwary, and they accept. So evil flourishes, and the cults have their day.

PART TWO

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE WORLD WHERE MEN ARE

In our study of the true Father, Teacher and Master we have seen that the fontal source of all human fatherhood, teacherhood and masterhood is God. From Him flows all that is necessary to fulfil these functional operations in the human realm. How needed, too, are fathers, teachers and masters. At the same time we have seen how Satan is compulsive in his jealousy of God and his desire to occupy counterpart functions. He too 'energises the children of disobedience' with his perverse forms of fatherhood, teacherhood, and masterhood, and this much to man's anguish and suffering.

What we will seek now to do is to look again at the 23rd chapter of Matthew and see what Jesus warns us against, and why. In this long passage several things become clear. They are these:

- (i) Jesus does not reject what the Pharisees and scribes say if it is the truth. He even agrees that men should obey the precepts they utter.
- (ii) Jesus' listeners are not to follow the practice of the scribes and Pharisees, for they are corrupted. Their lives are not consistent with the essential truth of the law.
- (iii) The sect of the Pharisees has devised a heavy legalism which is killing to men; beware of such and note that the Pharisees themselves do not obey these tenets.

- (iv) *The real desire of the Pharisees is power.* They desire the three-fold office of father-teacher-master, but they have missed the principle of service being true greatness.
- (v) When the Pharisees convince a person, teach him and make him a convert, he is even worse than they.
- (vi) The Pharisees have outward obedience and rituals, but inwardly they are evil, so much so that when confronted by true prophetic truth they will destroy the very prophets who truly speak from God.
- (vii) Jesus' final pronouncement is that judgement is coming upon these evil people.

'You Are All Brethren'

What is it that makes men desire to be great? Why do men spend their time and energy being accorded greatness? What is the compulsive drive that makes men seek the praise and admiration of others? It must be said bluntly that it is a desire to be in the place of God Himself. It is the old Adamic desire to be as God. It is unwillingness to be creaturely and dependent in the face of God's presence. God's prerogatives of essential Fatherhood, Teacherhood and Masterhood are the goals of the power-hungry heart.

Another way of seeing it is that man has lost his glory through the fall (Romans 3:23). He knows he should have glory. He feels inferior. He works to restore glory, but such an effort is self-defeating, by nature of the case. Hence he must ever, compulsively, strain to establish that glory. If he can get others to see his glory, then perhaps he can believe in it himself! The tragic fact is that the attainment of some glory is fatuous and demands further attainment. To attain glory which is not the glory God gives to man is to increase inner guilt and so further compel the self-devotee to move further along the path to self-worship.

Jesus said, 'But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher and you are all brethren'. What did he

mean? He could have meant that they were all *equal* and none was above the other, and had better not be. He could have meant, 'I am your teacher, and you are all of the same ilk—brethren'. Yet it seems that what he was saying was of such importance as to transcend these ideas, however excellent they may be. What he meant was, 'Always you are brethren. Nothing will ever alter that. If ever anyone of you exalts himself beyond being a brother to others and imagines himself of another quality or of a higher status, then he is wrong'.

If we look closely at this statement we will see how important it is. It means that not across the whole spectrum of man, in all time and history, has one man ever risen beyond what it is to be a man, for to be a man is to be brother to all, and for all to be brethren to him. If this does not seem important then look again. It needs to be stated even more strongly: 'He who thinks he is above being a brother to men has established some non-human godhead of his own'. The implications of this are very far-reaching.

Being Above Being Brethren

Let us first discount egalitarianism. The Scripture does not seem at all interested in the current debate of equality or inequality. The facts of life are that no two human beings are equal. Mankind would have to be homogenised for this to happen. When we say, 'No two human beings are equal', we mean that as to ability, gifts, skill, colouration, genes, height, and so on, we all differ. Even to say we require equal opportunity to exercise the life we have is a statement void of practical meaning. The levels of our wills to use such (hypothetical) opportunity also differ. We do not, then, speak of men as being equal, anymore than we speak of them as being unequal. We speak of each person having life, gifts, skills and varying levels of will, but *each having function and purpose within life*. We may not speak of the equality of the sexes anymore than we may speak of their inequality. We speak of function. There

are so many functions we are structured to fulfil, and for the Biblical Christian these relate to the will and purpose of God, especially in the ultimate.

What then—if he does not indicate egalitarianism—does Jesus mean by, ‘You are all brethren’? He must mean at least that no man who exercises fatherhood, teacherhood or masterhood ever rises above being a brother. Hence all his practise of these three elements (or any one of them) must be as a brother to all others. He can never attain a category in which his brotherhood is obliterated. It means even more, too, than this. It means that no human being is capable of exercising any of these functions unless he remains human, i.e. recognises his place amongst humans as a human, and so, as a human brother.

In addition, to be a brother means the inherent fact of familyhood in the human world. Brotherhood implies love, loyalty, service, consideration. A father, then, within his own family is also a brother to his children, rightly understood. A teacher is a brother to all men, and a master must not see those he leads as other than brothers. If we contemplate this principle for a moment we will see how stunning it is, and how vast its implications across mankind.

Being Above Ourselves

Satan’s drive was, ‘I shall be like the Most High God!’ Man’s drive was, ‘I shall be as God’. More modestly stated a man may say, ‘I will be a god, of sorts’. The common cry is, ‘I want to be myself!’ One is, of course, one’s self, whatever one may have done with the original materials provided. One has reacted or responded (or both) to life, its circumstances, opportunities and restrictions. What is generally meant by wanting to be oneself is wishing to have total independence, a privilege which cannot be granted to any human being. To be independent is to go against the principle that true selfhood is found in the context of relating to others and not just to one’s self.

To read the stories of the sects and cults, at least in the past twenty years, is to read of persons who have taken up the elements of fatherhood, teacherhood and masterhood, abrogating them to themselves, as persons, and riding to power on the backs of their followers. The present writer and his wife spent some time reading accounts of the modern cults and all that they do is certainly related to the leaders of the cults abrogating for selfish power reasons the places of father, teacher and master. Sadly enough the returns they give to their devotees are very meagre indeed. For the submission of the wills of their disciples they give back very little, if, in fact, anything.

We do not have to be told what it is to be above ourselves. We quickly recognise it in others. To study photographs of the leaders of the cults is to see the look in the eye which tells the egoism of the leader. Sadly enough cruelty soon joins the leadership success of the new guru.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE TRUE FATHER

Abraham is a man who is recognised as being a true father. The Bible gives him high rating for this position. It even says that those who are children of faith are children of Abraham, and the children of Abraham are really children of the Father, God. (Galatians 3:7, 9, 26, 29.) Igor Shafarevich in his essay, 'Socialism in Our Past and Future' in *From Under the Rubble** points out that Abraham came out of a socialistic culture. Here personal choice was denied the inhabitants of Ur of the Chaldees. Family life was not permitted. God took this man out of that civilisation and with him began his great theme—the people of God, the true community. Idolatry and socialism were attacks upon the functionality of familyhood.

The life of Abraham is a fascinating study. It is the study of a man being prepared for fatherhood. His name Abram meant 'exalted father', and his new name Abraham, 'father of multitude'. As Abram he went many years without having a child. He was in his eighties before Ishmael was born, and a hundred before his true heir was born. By this time he had built a powerful household with 300 fighting men in it. His full household, including men, women and children must have been considerable. Yet Abraham has no sect and develops no cult. His kindness to his nephew Lot is proverbial. His wisdom towards his children earns him the title, 'Father Abraham', which has been a comfort to three great peoples—the Jews, the

Muslims and the Christians. If we would want to rate a man as father who most closely approaches God in fatherhood, then it would be Abraham.

It is noticeable that Abraham was never a man who was greedy for materialistic gain. He loved simply, and when he had to put his fatherhood to the supreme test by offering up Isaac he did this. In so doing he operated from his knowledge of God, and that knowledge was greatly increased on the mountain when he must have seen the nature of the true Father who was to give His Son for His own children.

When we compare such a father with the 'fathers' of the cults we are saddened by the contrast. The Rev. Jim Jones, it is said, visited Father Divine in Philadelphia in 1961, and a sudden change took place in him. Father Divine, of course, was one of those cult-fathers who gave himself out to be God. As we have said already, the drive to have fatherhood is deep in man, seeing that God is Father and man is created by Him. Father Divine had taken the place of Father-God. Indeed that is what his name—as well as his claim—implies.

Jim Jones changed after visiting Father Divine. He then demanded to be called Father, rather than Jimmy. Some of the letters addressed to himself within months of the Jonestown tragedy are addressed to 'Dear Dad', and the quality of them is almost at the level of illiteracy. Their thinking is childish and pathetic. Their minds have become subjugated to this phoney father.

Many Fathers

Books written on the modern cults show that for the most part the leaders wish to be known as 'Father' or 'Teacher' (guru) or 'Master'. These leaders demand absolute surrender, not only to their teachings but to themselves. In the Gospels this is exactly what Jesus demands. In Luke 14:25-35 and Matthew 10:32-39 Jesus demands love for himself before love for parents and family. Never-

* Compiled by A. Solzhenitsyn. Fontana/Collins, 1976, England.

theless he did not call for emotional hatred of parents and family, but rather the love that was first for God, and so for His Son. In his teachings he exalts the family, and the Christian message has always centred around the depth of family life. Loyalty to parents is one of its strongest tenets.

In the Unification Church under its head Sun Myung Moon, this founder has come to be known as 'Father', and the whole group of the cult as 'the Family'. In fact it teaches that Adam failed to be the true father of the human race because of his sin, and Jesus failed to become the new true father because he was crucified. Hence a third Adam is to arise who will marry and with his wife—the true Mother—be the true Father. There is no doubt that he poses himself as just that Father and his wife as that Mother.

Father Moon has complete control over his devotees. With few exceptions the new cultists are so trained, or as some say, brainwashed, that they lose contact with their natural parents, and seem to have no desire to return to them. This 'Father' controls the destinies of his 'Family'. In fact the Unification Church and associated concerns has enormous wealth, and the devotees have to work hard to develop this high income.

In some of the cults the term 'Father' is not used for the leader, but he virtually controls, through a hierarchy of leaders or shepherds, very much as a father. Thus in the Children of God Mo (David) Berg has a powerful control over his devotees. He is strongly opposed to families and parents, posing as the head of this large family. One of his letters addressed to parents, 'You, my dear parents, are the greatest rebels against God... To hell with your devilish system . . . God is going to destroy you and save us'.* Likewise the leader of the Way cult, Victor Paul Wierville.

So the story proceeds, in the cults, and not only Christian cults. The West has been invaded by Eastern cults. In these there are leading Gurus who profess to have secret knowledge, and we will look at them under the heading of teachers, but they too profess to be fathers. The term 'Baba' is often used for them, a term which is equivalent to the Jewish 'Rabbi' but also holds the idea of 'father'.

The Fathers of Love

In the Biblical tradition the father of the family was a man who loved his children and led them aright. He talked with them, sitting down, and rising up, and walking, and, indeed, everywhere. He cared for them and watched over them. The spiritual fatherhood as we have depicted in the Scriptures often had to be because of the neglect of spiritual matters by earthly fathers. We find Elisha calling Elijah, 'My father!', because as a prophet-pupil he had formed his life and practice upon that of his leader.

In the NT we see Paul calling Timothy his son. However, Timothy is his 'beloved and faithful child in the Lord'. Paul is not exalted above a man. He can tell the Corinthians they have many guides, but only one spiritual father. 'I became your father through the Gospel'. Here there is no domination. The richness of 'fathering' in a man such as Paul is shown in II Corinthians 12:14-15. 'Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you; for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you the more, am I to be loved the less?' Here the father does not make demands on the children for their support but rather seeks to support them. Modern 'fathers' such as Jim Jones and his ilk may call on their devotees to give up all they have *to* the father and his cause, but in the Gospels Christ simply calls them to forsake all, and he requires nothing of what they have had.

* Quoted in *The Youth Nappters*, p. 144, Victor Books, Wheaton, 1977

The aged and faithful John can easily call his converts, 'My little children', and it well becomes him for he, like Paul, has suffered for his converts. Elijah, Paul, and John —amongst many such fathers— do not exalt themselves above their natural humanity. They use such Spirit-led and Spirit-filled humanity to help their spiritual children. They themselves hold to the eternal and heavenly Father from Whom derives all true fatherhood, natural and spiritual.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE DEMAND FOR A TEACHER

When Jesus said, 'You have one teacher', he meant that all true teaching comes from God. We have seen that the Father is Teacher, the Son is Teacher, and the Holy Spirit is Teacher. All that is necessary for salvation and growth in spiritual life is contained in the Scriptures. Hence in II Timothy 3:16-17 Paul says, 'All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. The true follower of Christ needs no more, surely.'

In the cults the leaders are often called teacher. The leader of The Way is called 'Doctor', the equivalent of rabbi or teacher. The term 'guru' is compiled from 'gu' or darkness and 'ru' or light. A teacher brings from darkness to light. Paul said, '... the time will come when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths.' (II Timothy 4:3-4.) Many who have professed the Christian faith have turned with pathetic anticipation to Eastern mystics and gurus to give them truth.

Many of the old religions are finding that their basic tenets are being challenged. New religions are being fashioned out of old. Some Eastern religions have been syncretised. Elements of Christianity have been added to them, whilst the religions themselves are re-shaped. People have to be taught anew, and many teachers are presenting

themselves. One might add dryly that often the cost of such teaching courses is very high.

What is the grip such teachers are able to have on their devotees? Why do people seek to find these new truths? The answers may be many. The Western world seems to have run the gamut of its own materialism, and is seeking truth in some way that is not materialistic. Perhaps decadence in doctrine and practice has been a stumbling block to many in the Western churches, so that they have left, unable to find the answer to their needs. However, probably it is true to say that there are other elements also. On the one hand, some seek reasoned and intellectual world-views which they do not seem to find in Christianity. Others seek experiences which will give them emotional satisfaction. The truth is that many Eastern religions do not make moral demands, such as are found in Christianity. Perhaps even more is the appeal to the mind, and the desire of the human heart to know 'the secret things'. Most teachers or gurus pose as those who have secret truth concerning the universe and man's progress. The ancient gnosticism found prior to, and in, the early Christian centuries has revived, and so teachers have a hold over their devotees. Nowhere else can the student find truth!

The True Teacher

One thing about Scripture is clear: its teaching is plain. There is nothing cabalistic about it, nothing esoteric. Whilst some of its prophecy may not be fully understood until the time when it comes to fulfilment, yet what is to be fulfilled is clearly stated. The passage we have just quoted from II Timothy says plainly that all one needs may be found in Scripture.

Whilst it is true that Paul claims certain revelations, even in regard to certain teaching (eg. Ephesians 3:1-11, Romans 16:25-26), yet this teaching is also plain, and is verifiable by Scripture. No teacher of God desires to have a

hold over his pupils. In Ephesians 1:9-10 Paul says God has supplied the wisdom and insight whereby we can understand His plan to unify all things in Christ. In the same chapter, verse 15ff, Paul prays that the Ephesians will have such a spirit of wisdom and revelation that they themselves will understand the truth of hope, of inheritance, and of the power of God. In other words, he wishes them not to have to rely on him for understanding.

When it comes to the practice of Christian life he points them to things such as 'the spirit of faith', 'the spirit of sonship' and 'the spirit of love, power and self-control' (II Corinthians 4:13, Romans 8:15, II Timothy 1:7). He means that each believer can be habituated within himself to have the 'spirit' of these things. He wishes them to grow in action and maturity without needing dependence upon himself.

The apostle John writes in somewhat the same vein. In I John 2:20-21 he says that they have been anointed (by the Holy Spirit) and so they know all things. He does not write to them to tell them what they do not know, but what they already know. He is like Peter (II Peter 1:12-15) who is constantly going to say the things he has already said so they will know them fully, and act on them. When he is gone they will remember. John, then, wishes to crystallise for his hearers what they in fact already know.

In all of these elements we see that Christian teachers do not covet having disciples who are dependent upon them. They urge them to read the Scriptures and study them, and also teach others, that those others may teach yet others also.

We ought to observe here that even within the Christian church an intellectualism can be found which purports to have an edge on the common man, as though knowledge of the original language and structured theological study is an apparatus a teacher must have, and without which he is no true teacher. Sometimes this intellectualism despises the elements of the experimental and substitutes intellectual understanding for it. Doubtless both are essential, but

understanding the Scripture commences with the will rather than the sole use of intellect. The true teacher— whatever his apparatus— is a humble man, and lacks intellectual pride and arrogance.

The False Teacher

When we advert to the cults we see how dangerous are their teachings. So often the leaders of these cults are persons who could not relate within the structures of churches. They had to 'do their own thing'. Often they could not accept the discipline of their leaders. Many of them had a perverse bent of mind. Some sought to discover the unusual, and the novel. Hence their attraction.

However, most of all the cult pattern is very attractive to persons who seek social or group security. For example, members of the Hare Krishna movement have confessed that whilst the public looked upon them as freaks they felt social oneness and personal warmth in this kind of group. This would be the same for sects and cults which see the world around as their enemy, and all as corrupt excepting themselves. Hence the tenets of their teacher are not questioned within the cult. In fact the more they are questioned by those outside, the more convinced are the members, within the cult, of their authenticity.

Because of this the cultist-teacher has a powerful grip over his devotees. Doubtless, having been acclimatised to his teaching, members of the cult could not afford to withdraw. It has been said that Jim Jones led his followers to a place where they were entirely dependent upon him. They had given over even their wills. They had no mind for anything other than what he taught. There was nothing left for them anywhere in the world. They could only go to death with him, and death, as he had taught them, was the way to a new birth of life.

It is this grip of teachers upon their devotees which is so terrifying in its power.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE LOVE OF LEADERSHIP

In all our examination of the cults we have not sought much to give psychological or sociological reasons for people drifting towards the cults. The reason is that these vary so much, from individual to individual. What, however, is puzzling at first sight is the fact that often it is those who rebel against their own parental leadership, and who seem to reject all authority, who turn to the simplistic authoritarianism of the cults.

In Scripture authority is delegated from God in various hierarchies. These hierarchies are apparent, but today prove unpopular when they are thus stated. Many theologians insist that they are simply cultural, and should be understood in terms of their day, and the prevailing culture. There may, of course, be something in what they say, but if what they say is total then it must mean that these principles the Scriptures state are not universal, neither are they functional for man generally.

Authority in the Scripture is always for the benefit of those who are under it. Fathers and mothers are there to bring up their children to fullness of life, so that they too may rear similar families. Kings are to be fathers to their people. Priests are to intercede for men. Prophets are to warn people for their good. In the NT the orders of ministry are for the upbuilding of the church. Elders are to be respected for they keep watch for men's souls and seek to do them good. Whilst authority is always 'authority for others' sakes', yet authoritarianism is 'authority for (the) authority's sake'.

Biblically man at the beginning rebelled against God, and so against authority. This has invaded every area of his life, including the family. The history of man has been that of rebellion against governmental authority, and pretty much against local and family authorities. Today the egalitarian approach has shown authority to be useless and purposeless. Nevertheless apart from adopting anarchy authority has had to be maintained.

When then it comes to those who are drawn into cults, sects, or similar operations, it can be said that the problem of authority is present. On the whole, where authority is exercised for the benefits of its constituency—say in a family or a state—then a certain security is afforded to the one under it. There is no genuine security in authoritarianism, for there the authority is using the subject for its own benefit, and often exploits and uses that person. The strange thing, as we have observed, is that the one becoming a devotee is glad to give up the battle of life as he or she knows it, exchanging this tension and turmoil for the seeming security of submission. We quote again Dostoevski: 'He has no more pressing need than to find somebody to whom he can surrender as quickly as possible, that gift of freedom, which he, the unfortunate creature, was born with'.

To repeat; it is often the one who has most trouble with authority who now surrenders to it. The normal conflicts of life, far from destroying character, build it and bring maturity. Opting out of them leaves them unsolved, and cuts the nerve of future endeavour.

The Manipulating Leaders

We have suggested that man has three basic drives which need to be fulfilled, or rather three functional needs which have to find fulfilment, that of fatherhood, teacherhood and masterhood. That these are powerful drives is seen in that man cannot be satisfied without their fulfilment. Hence the teachers and fathers and leaders are able to

appeal to these elements. We know they are satisfied in God, and directly through Christ His Son. 'You have one master, even Christ'. We have seen that this *kathegetes* has true *hegemony* over those who lead.

When those in Christendom reject the ancient tenets of their faith, they still need leadership. There are plenty of thoughtful people in the community to whom they can turn. Whilst political leadership is available it is generally leadership in the area of their interests which appeals to them. This may be in education, in personal interests, in sport, hobbies, music or culture. These elements often fill up the life of Western man. Sometimes, however, they pall on him and he seeks leadership in the realm of the intellect or the heart. He is the one who will be open to attractive leadership.

In an article on why people join the sects *Time Magazine* (4th Dec. 1978) suggests that 'About one-third are very psychologically distressed people. The other two-thirds are relatively average people... but in a period of depression, gloom, being at loose ends'. Those writing on the cults of the Moonies and the Children of God (amongst others) speak of certain types that the cultists will not approach, namely bright integrated and purposeful people.

When persons are entered into the cults they are generally conditioned to the ways and principles of the cult. This is natural enough, but the processes often resemble those of brain-washing. It has been established that when members of a cult are taken out of their environment they do not know how to handle life. Many of them have had to go through stringent deprogramming, so deeply their minds have been gripped. The technique by which such people are gripped is the loving attention given to them by cultists already themselves conditioned. There is no doubt about the family and group spirit which exists. Even those who left Jim Jones Temple cult had to say that they had not since found any group so warmly integrated, displaying such personal love.

The Responsibility of True Leadership

As we have suggested before, all human beings need leadership. They need a person or persons who have trodden the path before, or at least know which is the path and where it is going. Jesus implied that he knew the way, and would lead his people. Moses was such a man. To face life without knowing what it is, and to live in ignorance should not be a man's lot. He then who would lead men must be wholly sure of his knowledge of the way. He might easily and quickly lead men to destruction.

Hitler and his ilk, down through history, have promised good leadership, and men sigh with relief and commit themselves to the strong man, only to find at the last that he too is lost, and his people with him. The suavity of some gurus who exploit the gullibility of their devotees is maddening when it can be seen they are blind leaders of the blind.

The Biblical picture of man astray in his world because of his rebellion means the task of the true leader is twofold. Firstly he must bring man back to God, and then, secondly, must lead him along the Way to the Father. That is, he must negate the ignorance that man has inherited by rejecting God, and he must teach and lead in the new and living way. We are filled with admiration for men, who down through history, have done just that. The prophets announced the way of God with clarion calls. John the Baptist pointed to Messiah, and Messiah led his people to God. The Spirit, as we have seen, is the true Leader of this age, and he has equipped numberless followers to assist others.

If there were no True Leader then man would be not only dismayed, but despairing, fearful and lost. Christ's 'I am the Way . . .' can find no substitute in the multitude who clamour to lead men. He leads to the Father. He exercises his Masterhood in loving kindness and holy firmness. He is the authentic Master, the true *Kathegetes*. Only under his hegemony can we be secure.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

'HE WHO IS GREATEST...'

Whilst it may well be true that many fathers, teachers and leaders—so called—may be deliberately deceitful and manipulative of their devotees, and seek to exploit their personalities and their finances, it is also true that many such leaders are totally convinced they are right in what they are doing. Some may be cynical, but others are sure they are doing good. Some leaders have sacrificed themselves all along the way, and have sought to bring truth, as they saw it, to their disciples.

The true test of leadership, which the Pharisees could not pass, is that the truly great person is the one who serves. Jesus said, 'He who is greatest amongst you shall be your servant; whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted'.

We can see now, clearly, why James urged, 'Let not many of you become teachers my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness'. There are temptations in taking leadership. One who has set out with simple heart and humble mind may gradually be moved from simplicity to complexity, from humility to pride, from gentleness to arrogance, and what is more not ever perceive the transition from one to the other.

A glimpse at the Pharisees and scribes will illustrate what we mean. They had become hard, proud, praise-demanding, censorious, legalistic and exploitative. Yet once they had been the simple and humble people. Within the sects there may be mutual love, tenderness, care and concern. Yet none can be so vicious and censorious

towards others as the sects towards those who do not hold the same tenets. Church history has shown that the sects can be more severe in persecuting than those churches from whom they escaped.

Christ embodied true servanthip. Predicted to be the Suffering Servant he was just that. Never servile he yet served. In Mark 10:45 he says, 'The Son of man has not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many'. He served in his life of ministry, but he served most greatly by giving up his life in redeeming sacrifice.

In some of the sects today there is strict discipline. This is understandable. In some of them there is even cruelty. This is by no means in all of them. Yet the cruelty of having one's mind taken over is perhaps worse than manual punishment. There are also other forms of punishment, such as withdrawing affection, or downgrading a devotee. In some cults from the East it is withholding further steps in teaching, even if only temporarily. Yet the truly great father, teacher and leader is the one who serves.

'He Who Humbles Himself...'

Man is not by fallen nature humble. He is proud in his rebellion, especially because he is made in the image of God. Humiliated he may be from time to time, but humiliation is not humility. Humility is an attitude of the heart of man. It is a spirit he comes to know when he is crushed by his sins. This is all spoken about in the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit...' 'Blessed are those who mourn...' 'Blessed are the meek . . .'. This kind of humility was seen in Christ, but whilst his spirit was poor and humble it was not because of his sin. In a sense ours first has to be seen as poverty-stricken because of sin, and we have to mourn the matter of it, and so be humbled. Then follows blessing.

The father who is humble will serve his children, the teacher his disciples and master his followers. When such

become proud then inevitably the one being father is crushed by the nature of his children. The teacher has taught wrongly and will see the fruits of his teaching. The master will lead not to the true goal but to some desert place, some place of crass failure and bitterness. Such ministry is not for the ambitious or the self-confident.

There was no humbler father than Abraham. That is why his bosom is agreeable today to the needy. The Negro spiritual says you can't get over it, under it, or around it. This humble man has been accepted wherever men need comfort, and a sight of good earthly fatherhood. Christ the humble produced truly humble men. Paul, Peter, John and Barnabas were humble. History speaks of the great fathers, teachers and leaders who have been spawned by the Gospel.

Against these are those, not only in the sects, but the churches themselves who have coveted leadership, honours and applause. The battles fought for ambition are sad and senseless. In the ultimate he who walks humbly shall be exalted, even if men do not see that exaltation in this world.

In Union or Not in Union

We have said, time and again, that all true fatherhood, teacherhood and masterhood comes from God. Because it is dangerous for men to exercise these does not mean they should not attempt it. All who have children must exercise fatherhood and motherhood. All who are teachers, in whatever situation that must be, must teach. All who are given leadership must lead. What they must remember is that this fatherhood, teacherhood and masterhood must be exercised in union with God.

It was in this way Christ fulfilled his roles. It was after this order that the apostles, prophets and people of God have exercised their gifts in humility. So needful are these gifts to man, that to use them wrongfully is a high crime. Had man never sinned these gifts would be deeply needed.

Because of his sin and rebellion they are more needed than they would have been otherwise. Man's great anguish, the ignorance of his mind, the fracture of his relationships with God and man, all demand a high—but humble—level of ministry.

To be in union with God is to be a person who loves. It is love which protects against error, against false teaching, against pride and greed, and against exploitation of others. This kind of love flows from God and is not to be confused with fallen human love which often seems to motivate people deeply. Only in true union with God can such love be exercised, and such humility practised. Only then will the cults be unnecessary, or if they exist because of our frailty will operate in true health.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE PROBLEM OF THE CULTS

What causes cults to come into being? The answers— some of which we have already seen—are many. In some cases a person is unamenable to leadership within a church. This may simply be a personal problem, probably stemming back to that person's childhood and difficulties with parents. In this case the one who will not submit to authority greatly desires to exercise authority in some form of leadership, and so a cult arises. Doubtless the person himself (or herself) does not see the basic cause, but rationalises the matter in spiritual terms.

In some cases a person who cannot agree with orthodox doctrine opts out and rationalises the Scriptures to exclude certain dogma, and include certain other doctrines. Almost without exception the cults have diverged from orthodox Christian teaching. It is significant that many of them deny the teaching of hell, and many of them are in fact unitarian although they would not put it that way. There is probably little of false doctrine in any cult today which was not formerly propounded in the first few Christian centuries.

Other cults have formed from a desire to initiate effective action rather than merely have credal formulations and patterned worship. Some of them have very worthy social goals, and even commendable political purposes. Many of them are actually busy in ameliorating the lot of mankind, even if in a limited way. By this we mean that they generally care for their own, or make those they care for their own, which amounts to the same thing. Cults rarely spread themselves widely to ameliorate man's social hardship.

The Nature of the Sects

One sociologist (Bryan Wilson, *Religious Sects*) indicates that the sects are roughly divided into the categories of conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, manipulationist, reformist, Utopian and thaumaturgical. Doubtless this is a convenient classification but many elements of these may be present in any one cult or sect. It is worth noting that most divisions that have come, and from which breakaway groups have been formed, have centred around the nature of the church, ministry and sacraments rather than around doctrinal tenets as such. Even so, the outward cause of division has often been posed as being that of doctrine. In fact more often than not divisions have been caused by some person or some couple who have personal problems within the church rather than doctrinal problems or problems of practice. This is why, when a generation or two has passed reuniting has often been possible.

The Basic Cause of Cults and Sects

Non-Christian cults and sects obviously arise when certain persons reject the faith and practice of their old religions, or devise something new which they claim will meet the needs of man. Revolutionist sects will arise when there is desire for change. Revivalist sects will arise when a new kind of life is desired. In Japan, following World War II, a great number of dynamic sects arose to fill the vacuum caused by the denigration of the Emperor. Some of these sects were thaumaturgical, that is they produced healings and forms of miracles to appease the hunger of men for the supernatural over and against the deadly conformity of Japanese life and culture.

Christian sects may spring from disaffected people, or persons who wish to reform a decadent church, or even from those who wish to separate and build a perfect community. Many of these causes are obvious. They often

relate, as we have said, to a person or persons who have this goal in mind. Yet is there not a deeper reason even, than the enthusiasm or problems of cult-forming persons? The answer to that question is, 'Yes'.

The Trinity

A close study of the doctrines of the cults will reveal basic divergences from historical orthodox Christianity. We have hinted that certain basic doctrines such as the Trinity are unacceptable. In fact the truth of the Trinity is the foundation stone of all Christian theology. Whilst many may have difficulty in formulating it, yet the deity of each Person of the Trinity must be established over and against the attempt to make the Father alone to be God, and the Son and the Spirit to be of a lesser order. It is not simply the philosophical difficulty of a Godhead having three discrete Persons within it which is the trouble. It is the denial of their essential unity which denies that the Godhead is love. We should expect in the cults and sects which deny the Trinity to find deficient views also of man, and to have problems regarding the love of God.

The Nature of God and Man

Problems with the doctrine of the Godhead (as revealed in Scripture) must lead to other problems. Man, being in the image of God, cannot be known or understood until God is known and understood. As Creator God has created His world functionally and purposefully, but both function and purpose cannot be understood apart from the Trinitarian work of creation, redemption, sanctification and glorification. Not to understand God's creational work is not to understand creation. Hence the world-view which Scripture presents will not be comprehended.

The Nature of Creation, Sin and Atonement

Without understanding the true nature of God man cannot comprehend the enormity of the fall, and the essential nature of sin. Hence, when he does not comprehend the holiness of God he will fail to understand His righteous wrath and judgement. All of these elements are explicated in Scripture in the light of the true nature of God. Hence the need for, and the nature of, the atonement will not be truly understood. Indeed the incarnation, ministry and death-resurrection acts of Christ will be shorn of their true significance.

The Nature of the Last Things

Again eschatology ('the last things') will be misunderstood. However, since the last things relate to the first things of Creation, and the things of Christ's redemption, they too cannot be truly understood. It is clear that the cults and sects have much to say about the last things, and also clear that man desires to know what is ahead. Because of their eschatological emphasis the sects and cults are able to grip the interest of many.

Failure to Understand the God of Grace

Most deeply rooted in much cultist and sectarian misunderstanding is failure to understand grace. It is a curious fact that with very few exceptions the sects are set on a works-righteousness. That is, they see man's endeavours as necessary to obtain salvation—in the ultimate. Whilst many of them speak of the atoning work of Christ they lay down conditions of obedience and works which virtually cancel out the grace they have expounded.

A glance through accounts of recent cults will show that members within the cult are expected to work hard in the service of the cult. Often it is really in the service of the father-teacher-master. If they question anything within the

closed system of doctrine, or even any of the practices of the cult then they are threatened with expulsion, and expulsion from the cult, it is inferred, is expulsion from God Himself. The cultist dreads to be left—as it were—naked in life, and so comes to be subject to the cult without question. The final stage of his bondage has been reached.

We have to be very clear and say that the churches contain large numbers of people who also do not understand grace. This would also be the case in the doctrines of the Trinity, creation, man and sin, as also salvation, sanctification and eschatology. Yet within the churches those who do not understand are not bound within a closed system of thinking. They are at least free—if they will—to examine the doctrines of historic orthodoxy.

The Nature of Love

To examine the faulty doctrines and practices of sects and cults is a vast study on its own. We could point out that in the Moon cult the doctrines as outlined in 'Divine Principle'—the official doctrine of the cult—are so unlike what is in the Bible as to be ludicrous. Again Mo Berg's departure from the moral norms of the Bible is also incomprehensible. He advises the use of sex to bring people to Christ!

Other cults which receive extra-Biblical revelations can at least be understood as having foundations other than the Bible. Hence their view of the Bible will be greatly conditioned by these other revelations. Examples of this are the Mormons and the members of the Armstrong cult. In the latter case the claim is made that for some 18.5 centuries the truth was hidden, to be revealed afresh to Herbert W. Armstrong so that the real truth began to be expounded about 1934.

Where, however, the real problem lies is in the use of the term 'love'. Without doubt something of love exists within sects and cults. Past members have testified to the warmth of love within the People's Temple cult under the Rev. Jim

Jones. Yet violence was on the increase, and towards the end guards were used, and the experiment finished in murder-suicide. Within the Children of God a very closely-knit family existed from the beginning. Yet, when examined this love is cultic rather than the *agape* of the NT. In the Indian originated sects of Hare Krishna, and the Guru-type groups there is a cultic bond which is very strong. Nevertheless it is to be doubted that in any of these cases true *agape* is present. True *agape* would give the devotees of cults a love towards those who were not cultists and those who fiercely oppose or ridicule them.

If God is not understood then love cannot be understood. The strong sociological ties which hold cultists together in a group are found in other groups which do not profess religious faith. The mutual self interest and the mutual security ties will hold a group together for some time. Only when this relationship is found to have faults and weaknesses, and when the hearts and minds of devotees are not fully satisfied will the falsity of this love be uncovered.

God's love cannot be known apart from the atonement of Christ. Whilst members of churches may benefit from the Christian love they find in their congregations, they too will not know love until they come to the Cross. It is axiomatic that if the sects do not know grace, then they do not know love. In fact they do not know faith, and so 'faith which worketh by love'.

Herein lie the weaknesses and the dangers of the cults and sects.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

COMMUNITY AND OVERSIGHT

Many attempts have been made within the two Christian millenniums to prove that the early church lived communally. That it was a community is not in doubt. The church functionally is intended to be the people of God (cf. I Peter 2:9-10). However to say that it lived communally in the sense that Christians have formed communal situations is not consonant with the facts of the NT.

In the Book of Acts we find the community of believers in Jerusalem facing an intense crisis precipitated by Pentecost, and the polarisation the Spirit brought. Christians were followers of the despised Nazarene, so much so that they were known as being of the Nazarene sect. Twice the leaders of this Way were called into the official Jewish Parliament, the Sanhedrin or Council of Seventy Elders. This Council had decided to have Christ crucified, and stood resolute in their condemnation, even in the light of the reported resurrection. Hence Christians within the Jewish community were in danger. Socially they would have been ostracised. Many of them were already poor, and many were indigent. To this need the wealthier Christians brought their resources and probably used them up. So much so that the church at Jerusalem was depicted as needing the aid of Antioch during famine, and the Asia-European church-offertories. A detailed study would show that the church in any locality was a community and as such was under the oversight of elders. The elders may have been presided over by a pastor, but they too were men of the Holy Spirit, and 'apt to teach'. The material

needs of the community were always kept in mind, and deacons gave service to those in need whilst the elders shared the problems encountered by the community, giving them leadership and help, whilst 'watching for their souls'.

Today groups of Christians have sought to establish communities, and the value of such communities must, doubtless, be decided in each case. The fact is that there are such communities. Ideally, normally, every church should be a community, a Christian community. Where there are deficiencies and faults these should be corrected and the community be made even stronger. In what we might call a specialised community there will doubtless be strong reasons for the genesis of such groups. It may well be, and even unknown to the originators of the community, that the community has come together because it seeks fulfilment of deep emotional and relational needs, and has a desire to obtain the experience of family which may have been missed in the course of life. This could well be so.

Dangers in Community

The functional needs of people within specialised communities are not other than those outside them. It is just that being in community the members will seek to have these needs fulfilled. Hence there will be the desire to have a father, a teacher, and a master. Indeed all three will be required. It is at this point that leaders of true ilk will be greatly needed. Those who become leaders will need to guard against unconscious domination of the community. They will need to guard against the rise of personal pride, arrogance, and self interest. They will need to heed the injunction to be humble. What we mean is that they will need to be in union with the Father for dispensing the required fatherhood. They will need to be in union with Christ and the Spirit to dispense true teaching, and they

will need to be in union with the same Son and Spirit to give authentic leadership.

Most communities have some sort of hierarchy. This may be accepted by the weak and not, always, by the strong. Nevertheless it will need to equate as far as possible with the requirements of elders set out in the Pastoral Epistles. The exercise of leadership by those who have hitherto refused to be led will be most difficult both for the leading one, and the one who is led. Both will have to endure a period of apprenticeship. The point which should be kept strongly in mind is, 'And you are all brethren'. That is the urge to be someone, and to think one is greater than others will have to be fought. True humility which is a fruit of the harvest of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) will have to be experienced and expressed.

The Community and Love

If community is formed simply to meet the emotional and relational needs of persons then it will not be enough. Such a community will founder. The Christian community does not exist simply for this kind of fulfilment. The true church, the real Christian community exists not only to share in fellowship and worship of God, but to witness to its Head and Lord, Jesus Christ. Acts 1:8 makes this clear: 'You shall receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and all Judea, in Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth'.

The witness of the community then is not merely within itself but to the community of the world. It is not limited geographically but must reach out both ethnically and geographically. If it does not do this then it will dwindle. It will fasten upon its own ills and seek to heal these. It will develop an unintentionally egotistic philosophy. It will become inbred. It will go through its exercises of mutuality in love, but fail to heed the needs of a sinful world. It will therefore atrophy.

The strong love of the atonement will alone renew it. To know such love is to tell such love, and so to be finished with communal narcissism. A group which is orientated to those outside will have less problems with egoism in the oversight, and presumptions leading by the appointed fathers, teachers, and leaders.

CHAPTER TWENTY

SOME THOUGHTS IN CONCLUSION

The State of the Churches

Once, when the writer pointed out to a friend that revivals always seemed to arise in the older main-line denominations, the friend grinned and said, 'That is where they are needed'. How right he was! Yet the truth is that God does not abandon such prosaic and tradition-bound churches. His great economist the Holy Spirit is always utilising whatever material is at hand.

It is true that ancient churches have gone into error, and that new churches have been formed to counter such error. It is true also that these new churches often themselves become moribund. These, then, will need renewal. One does not have to be a profound student of church history to realise that no church is God's favourite or that the freshness of today's church does not guarantee its vitality tomorrow. The whole church depends upon the leadership of its Lord, Christ, and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. Even the finest creeds or confessions will not ensure that churches remain in the centre of faith and true practice.

The Dangers of Leadership in the Churches

If self-generated communities have their peculiar problems, so do the historic churches and the new churches which are in the way to becoming historic also. They have the very problems Christ warned against in Matthew 23. It

would be grossly wrong to think that the whole Jewish community at the time of Christ was living as the scribes and Pharisees against whom he used these warnings. John was gladly heard by large numbers. The common people heard and admired Christ. Much of Israel was in good heart.

Nevertheless the problems were there. And they are in the churches today.

One of Dostoevski's most famous passages is that in the *Brothers Karamazov* where the (medieval) inquisitor faces Christ and tells him he is a nuisance to the church. He, Christ, came to disturb. The church has worked out a better pattern, and for this reason the church will not allow Christ to disturb men afresh. That is the gist of the matter.

Some leaders still love to be called 'Teacher!' or 'Father!' and to imagine they are just that, in truth. Some love to wear their flowing robes and their badges of office, and to receive salutations at the great Councils, and the Conventions and Conferences. Some relish the plaudits of men, loving the praise of men more than the praises of God. Some are ruthless in their use of ecclesiastical power, and some dominate the lives of their parishioners by being little popes or lords over the flock.

It is scarcely edifying to continue in this vein. We know that such lording over people is not confined to the churches. Jesus said the Gentiles love to do this thing. The pomp and splendour of kings and rulers is replicated in every little club and pub of our lands, today. We need not grow peachy about it. We have only one matter to look to —ourselves.

The Attaining of Humility and Love

There is no doubt that Christ was humble. His humility was not subservient, servile. It was strong enough to scourge evil-doers from the temple and warn the proud and evil of judgement. That too, was a service to the wrong-doers. All his life is the picture of service. He is the true

exemplar of humility, and he sealed this humility by dying in submission to God and to evil man. The Lion of Judah is verily the Lamb-that-was-slain.

To seek to attain to humility is difficult, if not impossible. Humility is scarcely sensed when one has it, although known to be absent when one does not possess it. The truth of the matter is that humility and love are both products of the Gospel. They flow from God's love and grace. In one sense they are the product of the Spirit who brings liberation to the human spirit. In another sense they are the response of the human heart to the humility and love of God.

The fruit of the Spirit are not character qualities which we attain by seeking to imitate God so much as they are the spin-off of the new love which has entered our lives from the atonement, through the Holy Spirit. God's grace stuns us and so humbles us. God's love evokes the response of love within us. Indeed the love of God has been flooded into our hearts (Romans 5:5). The constant operation of humility and love, then, depend upon our appreciation of the atonement, and our response, continually, to God's love for us.

Habituation in Humility and Love

We see humility and love as the criteria which prevent pride and arrogance. We can be fathers, teachers and leaders when humility and love are present. We can see ourselves as brethren under such conditions. Under these elements we can remain humble and serve gladly. How then do we habituate these fruit of the Spirit?

(i) Abiding in Christ

John 15:1-27 is the great passage on abiding. Abiding in Christ may be thought to be quasi-devotional meditation, a constant thinking of Christ and a seeking to remain in him, mystically. For most of us that exercise is too difficult

We do not even understand what it means. If we take the general thrust of John chapters 14-16 we see that abiding is recognising the being of Christ as the saving Son of God. We not only agree with him but unite with him in his work. Primarily he does the work of the Father, and so the Father is present when we work. He purifies the vines and prunes them so that they are fruitful. The vine-branches are in the vine-stock, Christ. They are one with him. Abiding, then, is obedience, conformity with the will of the Lord. This, too, involves love of the brethren. It involves being hated by the world, and not giving in to the desires of men.

Abiding is more practical than mystical, more operation even than meditational. The Book of Acts shows the practical way of abiding—being filled with the Spirit and doing the will of the Lord of the Church. That is, it is witnessing to Christ, and building the church as it goes out in proclamation. In this there is no self-aggrandisement. Ananias and Sapphira must go down for the count when they try to abide in themselves and not in Christ. Likewise Simon Magus is in danger when he covets the greatness of action for himself. The true people of God are busy in the work of the Lord. The oversight is busy with the programme, and with loving people. It has no time for self-advancement. This is true abiding.

(ii) Walking in the Spirit

To walk in the Spirit is to abide in Christ. The NT speaks so much of Christ being in us through the Spirit (eg. Romans 8:9-11, Ephesians 3:14-16, 1 John 3:24, 4:13). It also speaks of us being in Christ through the Spirit. Nevertheless this is not mere mysticism or if it has an element of mysticism then it is faith-mysticism. Walking in the Spirit is very practical. Walking of course is simply one's manner of living.

In Galatians 5:13-26 Paul is speaking of two ways of living. One is to live in the flesh and produce the works of

the flesh, which are horrible. The other is to walk in the Spirit and so be free of fleshly legalism. One walks in liberty but one walks in love. Indeed the whole law is summed up in one word, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. Because of this, because of the Spirit, we are, through love, to be servants one of the other. To walk in the Spirit is to be led by the Spirit. To walk in the Spirit is to have the fruit of the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit is to love.

In a devotional sense this is all very well. We have our devotional exercises and then come to the nitty-gritty of life which we find so different from our devotional times. Quite. Without the Spirit we could not succeed. By the aid of the Spirit we can walk the way of love and humility.

What is made clear to us in Scripture is that we can have an habituated *spirit*. When Paul talks of the 'spirit of faith' (II Corinthians 4:13), 'the spirit of sonship', 'the spirit of wisdom and revelation' and 'the spirit of love and power and self-control' (Romans 8: 15, Ephesians 1: 17, II Timothy 1:7), he is talking about realities. He means that the Holy Spirit brings these elements to us, and expects us to so live in him (the Spirit) that we develop and habituate the elements in which he encourages us.

The use, then, of our wills is greatly needed. Constantly abiding in Christ is indispensable to habituating these good elements of humility and love. Without that deliberate exercise, and the use of our wills we will lapse into the praise-seeking attitude Jesus condemned. We will seek praise and salutations, and we will gradually become ruthless and egotistic in our fatherhood, teacherhood and leadership. If at this stage we do not accept the chastisement of the Father (Hebrews 12:3-11) then we have to fear even more terrible judgement.

It is not we who matter, but those to whom we are called to minister. We must serve them correctly in humility and love. That is what we are commanded to do, and that is what they need.

The Brethren! The Brethren!

The pictures of piled-up bodies in the Jonestown mass-suicides are a tragic witness to the evil of wrong leadership. In Hitler's Germany millions of Jews were destroyed as the result of the Dictator-cult. Millions more perished in a dreadful war that need not have been. Hitler seized a moment in history when the weak were looking for a strong leader. This pattern is reproduced, time and again, in the case of the cults.

The tragedy is that false fathers, teachers and leaders are dealing in the material and substance of human life. Many are working out their own problems of life by the use of other people. Yet, by creation we are all brethren, however much Adam may have failed, and we in him may have sinned. We are still brethren. In Christ we are brethren in a deeper, richer way. We are in the presence of the Father and this teaches us true brotherly love (I Thessalonians 4:9). Hence we do well to be warned against the manipulation of others, the using of their lives to work out our own inner problems.

We do not take the occasion in this book to examine the drives which set these leaders in their cultic drive, nor which attracted numbers of needy persons to them. We know that is an issue of great depth. What we do know is that man's basic rebellion against God places him at the mercy of dreadful forces within. These are forces which were once wonderfully functional but have now been twisted from their original intention to be used perversely. Not even the most knowledgeable psychiatrist can understand the state of sinful man. No wonder he seeks something to palliate him, and it is of little wonder that men rise up to take advantage of this enormous hunger within man. They offer answers, and may even believe they can supply the needs of the needy. What we have to remember is that we do not cause these ones—little or not little—to stumble.

We know who is the True Father, and that all man's deprivation of full fatherhood and parenthood can be fulfilled at that great Source. We know who is the True Teacher, and who it is that can give men knowledge and wisdom until they are filled to repletion and understanding. We know who is the True Master, the one to whom men can entrust themselves in a bewildering and tyrannous world. What is more, we know the Gospel which can heal and redeem man, and bring him into the way of love and everlasting life.

If we are occupied, obediently, in sharing these things we know, then we will be proof against the arrogance, pride and self-aggrandisement the Pharisees knew, along with the scribes. We will remember that God is our Father, Christ our Teacher and Master, and we will likewise remember we are all brethren.

In this remembering we will have our own peace, and in this remembering we will bring peace to others.

APPENDIX

SPIRITUAL REALITY AND ITS EVIL COUNTERPART

1. Introduction

Any study under the heading of 'Spiritual Reality' must first define true spiritual reality, and this is of course God Himself. Assuming the basis and authority of Scripture, all true religion is revealed religion. The Scriptures inform us that God reveals Himself through various media such as creation, the word of the prophets, angelic visitants, the described acts of God, the incarnation of His Son, and the special coming of His Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Included in these media would be the church with its proclamation of the Gospel. In fact we only know these media are such because the medium of Scripture tells us so.

In our study we seek to see that God is the true spiritual reality, and so what He creates is in its own essential form part of the true reality. Things which oppose creation or which fail to correlate with it, are not reality, but unreality, even though they purport to equal that reality. The Biblical doctrine of creation as seen in Genesis chapters one and two, and allied passages (eg. Psalm 8, Job chapters 38-41, Psalm 104, Colossians 1:15-17, John 1:1-4, I Corinthians 8:6, Hebrews 2:10, and 11:3) is that God created out of His own powers, and in fact out of 'things which do not appear' (Hebrews 11:3). Hence in no way can it be said that any created thing finds its source of being in anything or anyone else other than God. In no sense can God be said

to be the Creator of evil, although in another sense He may be accredited with creating calamity.

All that is evil has its genesis not in pure creation, but in the act and operation of opposing and defying the creational reality. In other words when God completed creation and saw that it was 'very good', that goodness is functional, moral, and authentic. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says 'You have made everything *appropriate* in its own time'. Paul repeats, 'Everything created by God is good, and to be enjoyed' which defines its true nature and use. It is against this that all that purports to be reality is tested, and is found to be either true or false.

2. The Orders of Reality and Unreality

(i) The Order of Reality

In looking at God's reality we find that His true creation expresses His nature. Romans 1:20 claims that 'His eternal power and deity' can be clearly seen *in* (or, *by*: Gk. *tois*) the things that have been made. Psalm 19 says that the heavens declare the glory of God, and man also is intended to convey the same message (I Corinthians 11:7, cf. Genesis 1:26ff). Genesis One conveys the fact that there is *order* in creation. Even the sun and moon are to *rule* by day and night. The *fixed order* of things is stated in Jeremiah 31:35-36 (cf. Psalm 89:36-37) so that we gather God is not at all arbitrary or capricious in His person as Creator. Hence Peter says we can trust our souls to a faithful Creator (I Peter 4: 19).

Accepting the fact that the order of the universe is harmoniously functional in its essential form, we have to add one further observation. It is that prior to creation the historical procession of events and the ultimate climax had been planned by God. Many Scriptures underline this (eg. Ephesians 1:4-14, I Corinthians 2:6f, I Peter 1:20, II Timothy 1:9, cf. Acts 3:21, John 17:5, 24, etc.). In other words, the universe, although it has its internal fixed functional order is nevertheless proceeding towards its

destined end. It is neither aimless, suspended, nor static in its operations. Also it is continually contingent upon God for its life and operations since He is continually present *to* it (cf. Psalm 104:29-30, Colossians 1:17, I Corinthians 8:6, Hebrews 1:3, Acts 17:28). Even man cannot plan his own path in truth (Jeremiah 10:23, cf. Genesis 1:28f).

When in Colossians 1:15-17 (cf. John 1:1-3) we see that terrestrial and celestial orders are created by God through the mediatorial action of the Son, we assume that both orders ultimately constitute the one entire creation. That is 'things seen' and 'things unseen' are not separate orders, but of the one piece in that both subserve the Creator. In this sense angels are said to be ministers to certain human beings, and human beings will ultimately judge angels. On the other hand, the seen is an order within itself, as also the unseen is an order within itself, especially for the terms and purposes of time and space. When we say these orders subserve God we mean that they not only live after the order of their creation, but for the purposes of creation, and these include redemption, and the ultimate renewal of the heavens and the earth. All things, creatures and persons who live in conformity with God's will and purposes for His universe can be said to be obedient and truly functional. They can be said to live in the true order of reality. In this sense there is no disjunction between physical and spiritual reality.

(ii) Rebellion Against Reality

The Scriptures bring through generally, and yet clearly the fact that there has been rebellion against reality. The first creature to rebel was Satan.* Whilst the principle of his rebellion may be deduced from a number of Scriptures, the actual event of this is given under certain pictures or figures (cf. Isaiah 14:12-14, Ezekiel 28:1-19, Revelation 12:

1-10, I Timothy 3:6, cf. Luke 10:18, John 8:44). Satan desired to be 'as God', and to rule the angelic powers, i.e. to 'set his throne above the stars of God'. Revelation 12 shows him rebelling and taking with him one third of the angelic powers.

What is puzzling concerning Satan is his claim that the kingdoms of the world have been put under his authority (Luke 4:6). Christ does not affirm this, yet neither does he deny it. Satan does not claim he *innately* has this authority, but says, 'it has been delivered to me'. Without doubt Jesus refers to a *kingdom of Satan* (Luke 11:18), and uses the term 'the prince of this world', whilst Paul calls him 'the god of this world'. We assume then, that in his rebellion Satan has formed about him his own system which he controls. This is the fruit of his rebellion.

The story of Genesis 3:1-15 shows the fall of man who has acceded to the temptation of the serpent. However in Revelation 12:9 Satan is called 'that ancient serpent' which seems to refer to the incident in Eden. We take it then that Satan has incited man to rebellion. By this we do not mean that man is not responsible for his rebellion against God: he is responsible.

It should be clearly seen that when angelic powers rebel, and man rebels, they carry into their rebellion the gifts, and even the authorities God has given them. Jude 8-10 indicates that authority is not necessarily withdrawn from angelic powers and men, but that these powers have to be considered in the order of things.

(iii) The Emergence of Unreality or Falsity

It is axiomatic that God being Creator is King over all His universe. It is also axiomatic that the essential nature of things cannot be altered, God being God and Creator. Whilst the essentially true may be used (misused or abused) malfunctionally, yet the statement stands true 'it is very good' and 'All things created by God are good', 'the earth is the Lord's and everything in it', and 'nothing is unclean

* See *The Dominion of Darkness & the Victory of God* (G. Bingham, N.C.P.I. 1977) for a wider treatment of this whole theme.

of itself'. This being so, we have to see how things in fact become evil (as against good) and unclean (as against clean). Also how do things become malfunctional.

(a) The Principle of Deception

The proposition we shall examine is that when Satan rebels against God he likewise rebels against the true creational order. Since this order cannot essentially change it must be made either to seem to change, or to be charged with itself being false or unreal. Satan must first of all delude himself, hence Christ's statement that 'he has nothing to do with the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and *the father of lies*' (John 8:44). Satan has to delude himself, his powers, and mankind.

As we might expect, this is how Scripture portrays him. Revelation 12:9 speaks of Satan deceiving the whole world. This is repeated in 20:3, 7-8, 10, whilst 13:14, and 19:20 speak of the beast and the false prophets as deceiving, and 18:23 speaks of the nations being deceived by the sorcery of Babylon. In 13:13f the second beast is said to work lying signs and wonders in the presence of the first beast and so to deceive those who dwell on the face of the earth.

All connected with Satan is deception. In II Thessalonians 2:9-10 we read that, 'The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and wonder with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception...' As we will later see, false Christs will come (Matthew 24: 11, Mark 13:5-6) and will deceive, if it were possible, even the elect (Matthew 24:24). In the OT we read of 'a lying spirit' (I Kings 22:22), which is a spirit used by God for certain purposes.

Deception is not limited to fallen angelic powers. Human beings likewise are children of Satan (John 8:44, Ephesians 2:1-3, I John 3:10ff). They too are deceptive. We are warned continually not to let any person deceive us (Matthew 24:4ff, I John 3:7). Men, however, deceive

themselves, even believers. This is seen in I Corinthians 6:9, 15:33, Galatians 6:7, Ephesians 5:6. Man comes under the deception of sin (Hebrews 3:13, Romans 7:11). He can be so deceived as to think he does not sin (I John 1:8). Also he can be caught up in the deceitful lusts of the flesh (Ephesians 4:22), and one of these lusts is that for riches. It is the deceitfulness of riches which chokes the word of God (Matthew 13:22). Even preachers, if they are not careful, can handle the word of God deceitfully (II Corinthians 4:2).

(b) Deception and the Creation

Deception, then, is to present the evil order as the good, and the good as evil. Isaiah 5:20-21 speaks of such deception, and Jesus says to religionists of his day, 'If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!' (Matthew 6:22-23). What then is the great deception or lie? For Satan it is the denial of what is true and his attempt to re-fashion the universe after his own deceit, which is in fact the lie. For man it is much the same. He has rejected God and must turn to face the essential nature of his universe, and to re-fashion it to fit his desires and his needs.

In Romans 1:18-32 the story is told. When man knew God he did not honour Him as God, and was not grateful for God and what He had done, and for what He does. Verse 25 says of rebellious mankind, 'They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served *the creature* rather than *the Creator*'.

Of man we have to say this: Since he was formed in the image of God then a rejection of God as He is a rejection of man as he is. Also it is a rejection of the universe as it is. Hence the whole functionality of the universe is a system which man must reject with his rejection of God. This involves man in a re-rationalisation of (a) God, (b) himself, and (c) the universe. Man must spend most of his time fitting these rationalisations to his relationships and universe, or they to them.

His rationalisations are (a) Atheism, or (b) Agnosticism, or (c) Idolatry. There will be gradations of this 'lie' Romans 1:22-23 says the new 'wisdom' of man led him directly to idolatry. This also seems to be the thrust of Acts 17:24-30 where Paul says they have rejected the originating Father-Creator for idols. Likewise the reversal of this is I Thessalonians 1:9, 'You turned from idols to serve the living God'. Idolatry is a most dynamic system, as I Corinthians 12:2 points out, 'You were moved by dumb idols'. 'Ephraim is joined to his idols: let him alone' means it is hopeless to separate him when he is in that (irrational) love. Not for nothing is idolatry called adultery and fornication, because it substitutes the true (creational) love for God for other things, and deities, and systems.

(c) Satan's Deceptive System

Man does not have to work out a system. He simply has to fit with 'the course of this world (aeon)'. He simply has to (and must) follow the 'prince of the power of the air' (Ephesians 2: 1-3, cf. I John 5: 19), for 'the whole world lies in the power of the Evil one'. Whether or not he likes it he must for he is now under the bondage of elemental powers (Galatians 4:8). I Corinthians 8:5-6 makes it clear that there are no *essential* gods, but one God only, the Father. There are no *essential* lords, but one Lord, Jesus Christ. Yet for practical and sinful purposes there are 'gods many and lords many' (cf. Isaiah 26:12-14).

The system of Satan is called the world (*aeon, kosmos*) and has world powers (Ephesians 6:11-12). It has the name 'this present evil age (aeon)' (Galatians 1:4-5). It has changing fashions (I Corinthians 7:31) and is corrupting and passing away (I John 2:15-17). It has its own wisdom which is an anti-God wisdom (I Corinthians 1:20-25). At the same time it is, in a sense, a brilliant system, since it is headed up by its god, Satan, and has great powers which rule. It has turned man's head so that he believes a lie. He believes (a) God either does not exist, or if He exists has

erred greatly in His creation, and (b) that Satan does not exist. This latter is a great lie so that those doing evil will not fear to do it. There are, of course, variations in this deceit such as humanism (the faith that man will ultimately manage all things including his world and his destiny), anarchism, nihilism, and materialism.

3. Satan's Order and his Conflict with Reality

Satan has created a brilliant system of evil. However, we will never understand it unless we first see the system God has created. God's system is created out of, and consistent with, His own nature. He is Creator-Father, and His Son is Mediator-Creator. The Holy Spirit is Agent-Creator, and is at once the Spirit of the Father and the Son. God creates man for His glory, and determines to have His children before Him at the end of the age. Another way of saying this is that there will be a people of God out of every nation and people, kindred, tribe and tongue. God has eternal wisdom, and out of this designs His plan, creates His creation, and rules His universe. It is the system of love, but love that is consonant with His nature of holiness.

Satan is a creature gripped by intense pride and jealousy. All that God does he must do. All that God does he must denigrate. All that God creates he must emulate, and what is essentially God's he must seek to destroy. An example of this is John 10:10, 'The thief comes *to steal and to kill and to destroy*'. Christ comes for the opposite reason, 'I am come that they might have *life*, and life that is *abundant*'. Hence everything that God does Satan must seek to do, in emulation. If this is a genuine principle then we will expect to find God rivalled by Satan's endeavours. This is exactly what happens.

This Appendix cannot go intricately into the various modes of evil imitation, counterfeiting, usurpation, and the like. Some comparisons, however, will show the nature of emulation and rivalry. It is common to call these '*counterfeits*', and this well may be. Basically, however,

they seek to be *counterparts*, that is Satan seeks to set up the equivalent of what God is and does. In this way he seeks to be 'like the Most High God'.

(i) **The Kingdom of God.** Satan has his own kingdom, as we saw (Luke 11:18).

(ii) **God is King.** Satan is the prince of this world, and also, the prince of the power of the air (John 12:31, Ephesians 2: 1-2).

(iii) **God is God.** Satan is 'the God of this world' (II Corinthians 4:4).

(iv) **God is to be worshipped amongst His people** (John 4:24). Satan is to be worshipped (a) by Messiah (Luke 4:7), and (b) in the Temple of God (II Thessalonians 2:4).

(v) **God sends His prophets.** Satan sends false prophets (1 John 4:1, Revelation 16:13). Christ is the true prophet (Acts 3:22). Satan has a parallel prophet (Revelation 16:13, 19:20).

(vi) **God is true, and tells the truth** (John 17:3). Satan is a liar but presents the lie as the truth (John 8:44-45).

(vii) **God initiates and uses prophecy.** Satan copies and uses prophecy, knowing its dynamic. Hence false prophecy, divination, and the like. These tell of the future. They lack moral dynamic, however (cf. Deuteronomy 18:9-14, 15-22).

(viii) **God is Father, has a Son, and sons** (*i.e. a family*). Satan is a father (John 8:44). He has a son—the son of perdition (II Thessalonians 2:3). He has children (I John 3: 10ff, Ephesians 2: 1-2, cf. John 17:12). He has a family (I John 3: 10).

(ix) **God is Holy.** Satan gives himself out as perfect (Isaiah 14:12-14, Ezekiel 28, II Thessalonians 2:4).

(x) **God is Triune.** In Revelation 13, Satan (the dragon) has a peer, the beast *who is wounded*. In Revelation 5:1ff, the wounded Lamb is powerful. A third arises—another beast (cf. 'another Counsellor'). He has power in his breath (cf. Hebrew *rauch*, Greek *pneuma*=*'spirit'*, 'breath'). This third one is linked with prophecy (Revelation 16:13). Here is a counter-trinity.

(xi) **God has His city—the City of God, the Bride and Wife.** Satan has his city Babylon, the great harlot (Revelation 16:19, 17:1-18:24).

(xii) **God has His army.** Satan has his army. God's army fight for good, righteousness, holiness. Satan fights for the opposite whilst thinking it to be true and pure.

These are but a few of the elements of true reality and their evil and false counterparts. It is when we get into the area of the occult that we see how many variations there are on this theme of emulation. What we have to see is that they are not mere imitations, but *parts of another and total functional system*. If they were mere lifeless imitations they would be foolish and powerless. Unfortunately they are attempts to equally use the functional powers of the universe, and attain (for evil) those ends for which they were created, i.e. ends which are good. There is, so to speak, innate power in the functional order. Its moral use depends on the contingency upon God by those using the functional order. The evil depends upon rejection of this contingency and resort to evil operations.

4. The Occult and its Falsity

(i) The Biblical Occult

The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes the occult as 'Kept secret, esoteric, recondite, mysterious, beyond the range of ordinary knowledge; involving the supernatural, mystical, magical'.

Secret things always have an attraction for human beings. Roughly speaking, we may talk of two sets of secret elements, viz., those which we may know, and those which we may not know. In Deuteronomy 18 we see things we may not know (vs. 9-14) and those which we may, and even, must know (vs. 15-22). Deuteronomy 29 is a chapter to be studied carefully. In this, these facts emerge: (a) the children of Israel are to keep away from the idols of Canaan. (b) They are to know *the revealed things* of God, so that they can keep the law. The knowledge that is related

to idols is forbidden. The knowledge that is related to God is enjoined, but its outcome will be obedience to the (moral) law.

In I Corinthians 2:9-14 Paul speaks of the knowledge of 'the deep things of God'. This is not forbidden to the Christian, but *he must know it though the Word and the Spirit*. Hence 'the things that are revealed (i.e. by God) belong to us'. At the same time, the things that are not revealed belong to God alone.

Simply we should agree that the knowledge of God is not forbidden. All that man may know and should know, may be known. What a man ought not to know he should not seek to know. Nothing will be withheld but holy things from dogs, and pearls from swine. He who has an ear can hear all he needs to hear.

What then of the occult, the penetration into the secret things, and things esoteric? The question is, 'Are these things true, and can they be known by human intelligence and investigation?'

The answer is at once both 'Yes', and 'No'. It is 'Yes' because anything which is intelligible through words, and to reasoning can be known. 'No' because to know certain things, especially by involvement in them, may be greatly hurtful.

Let us look at one principle or point. Since Satan perverts a functional principle it does not mean that the principle is wrong, but only the use of it. It does not even mean that there is no (functional) power because the principle is perverted. For example, adultery is the use of a functional principle, but it is the wrong use. Nevertheless the dynamic of sex is present, even if wrongly used. Again, prophecy is one of the most dynamic of all principles. Since hope is essential to dynamic human living (especially as related to purpose) therefore prophecy must be dynamic. Since God reveals Himself through prophecy, therefore the use of ungodly prophecy will bring a revelation *of some thing*. It will minister to *hope* and *purpose*. If the prophecy is wrong the hopeful hearer will

be the loser. If it is true the faith in the (false) use of prophecy will be strengthened. We mean that evil powers would often be correct in prediction. However, since prophecy is not only prediction the innate value of prophecy would be lost or perverted.

Since Satan and man have re-rationalised the functional system of creation, intense interest in this counter-system will be evinced by the rebellious, the cynical, the guilty, and the jaded (amongst many others). They will be stimulated by the mysterious, the esoteric, and so on. Hence the fascination of eastern religions and man's philosophies. By nature of the case, most of these are incredibly brilliant. They would need to be brilliant to counter the natural functional system of creation.

Nor does it mean that all that is said is directly false. It is often the *slant* or *bias* of it which is false. Often many of the facts are true. Yet God forbids any use of the dynamic of prophecy through divination, soothsaying, augury, sorcery, charms, mediums, wizards, and necromancers (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). The attraction of mysterious and esoteric thinking and 'truth' is linked with the whole evil system of Satan. It is allied to the demonic.

(ii) The Demonic

Idols, the occult, and demons are closely linked. In I Corinthians 10:19-22 Paul shows that idols and demons are related. Worship of idols involves demons. This is the thrust of Deuteronomy 18 and 29 as well as other passages. To worship idols is to practise the occult. Dumb idols are not interesting enough. God is the living God and His worship is alive. God is the God of actions. The gods must have actions also and these are in the realm of the occult.

Those who have studied the occult of today are amazed at the enormous variety of ideas, practices, mystery and apparent results. Whilst Christians may have the pre-supposition that everything will be faked or false, or foolish, this is by no means the whole story. Very astute

writers have rationalised the systems of the occult, hence the followers are many. In the ultimate of course it cannot be satisfying. Only God can satisfy in the ultimate, but few are looking to the ultimate. They seek satisfaction in the present. Curiosity, excitement, even elements of fear motivate to deeper and deeper involvement. The deceit covers the evil, the tragic and the banal. Eventually, however, tragedy strikes. There is no mercy with the one who comes to steal and to kill and to destroy. Satan hates what God has created, and most of all man who bears the Divine image.

(iii) The Materialistic

It has been noted that it is the rich, the intellectuals, the folk satiated with affluence who are most prone to the occult. Some have noted that often this trip commences with illicit sex, developing into drug addiction (alcohol, soft drugs, hard drugs), and this leads to the occult, and the occult esoteric religions. In all our discussions we forget that an enormous portion of mankind is gripped by mere belly-living, i.e. materialism. Satan seduces and satiates. It does not need the illicit excitements of the occult. The rationalistic may scorn the occult but their intellectualism does not satisfy. The affluent may not feel the need for more than their materialism, but both are no less in the grip of evil.

It is interesting to note in the Revelation that Babylon is the mother of harlots. Fornication is her forte, and fornication in the Bible is generally idolatry. In 17:4-5 she has a cup of abominations. These are generally occultic uncleanness. In Revelation 18 this city has become the dwelling place of foul demons and evil spirits, i.e. the city affluence is demonic. In verses 11-14 the merchants of the world are sad for the loss of their dainties of affluence. This reminds us that in Colossians 3:5 and Ephesians 5:5 *covetousness is idolatry*. That is, man worships as sufficient in itself the

things of materialism, i.e. the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

All of this is the counter-culture of the Spirit, where 'fulness' is the Person and love of God, and where this spiritual affluence is constituted in the nature and gifts of God, especially in the fulness of life in Christ and the Spirit. In being aware of the evil of the occult we must be no less alert to the seduction by Satan through temptation to selfish use of the creational gifts.

5. Conclusion

We have barely touched the subject. What is clear in Scripture is that Satan rings the changes on his patterns of attacking and commanding man. He threatens, throws into fear, comes as mysterious and powerful, seduces by the seeming truth appearing as an angel of light. He also uses signs and wonders and powers. He uses prophetic modes and means. He satiates with materialism. None of these is less or more powerful than another, but man meets them at certain points of his life and existence.

If we may conclude thus, we ought to be aware of Satan's devices. On the one hand we must not be seduced, and on the other not dominated by threats. Satan and all his hosts are but creatures, dependent upon God for their continued existence and answerable to Him in the ultimate. The doom of all evil is sealed, and will eventuate. The lie that death does not matter is the greatest lie of all, since these creatures themselves are death-creatures and doomed to death.

There is only one reality—God and His creation, God and His redemption, God and His ultimate regeneration of all things. Let us hold to these and reject foolish curiosity about the concocted systems of evil, and the attempts of man to rationalise his own rebellion.