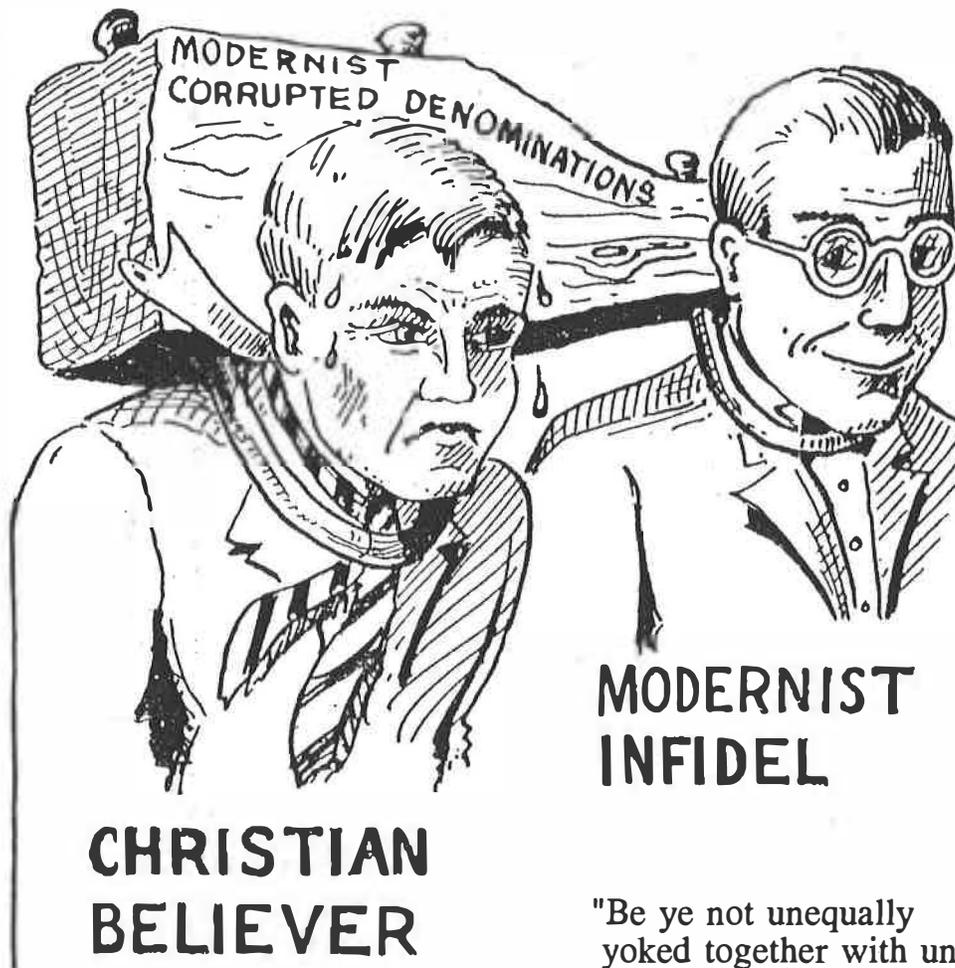


The Biblical Doctrine of SEPARATION

And Its Practical Outworkings



"Be ye not unequally
yoked together with unbelievers"
(2 Corinthians 6:14)

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The Biblical Doctrine of Separation

PROPOSITION 1

**The basis of separation is found
in the very nature and character of God Himself.**

The seraphim Isaiah saw in his vision were overawed by one attribute of the Lord: “**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**, is the LORD of hosts” (Isaiah 6:3). The Hebrew word for “holy” (**Kadesh**) and the Greek word for “holy” (**Hagios**) both have the same basic, root meaning--namely, “set apart, separated.” The word “sanctify” is a translation of these same Hebrew and Greek words and carries the same root idea. Literally the angels said, “**SEPARATED, SEPARATED, SEPARATED, is the LORD OF HOSTS.**”

**I. God is absolutely separate from all that is earthly or created.
This is a Holiness of Divine Majesty.**

Study Psalm 99:1-3 and Isaiah 57:15. Compare Isaiah 6:1-2.

**II. God is absolutely separate from all that is morally unclean.
This is a Holiness of Moral Purity.**

Study Psalm 99:4-9 and Psalm 24:3-4. Compare Isaiah 6:5.

Thus in studying the doctrine of separation we must begin with GOD Himself and we must ever keep before our minds the fact of His awesome holiness and His separateness: “Be ye holy: **for I AM HOLY**” (1 Peter 1:16).

PROPOSITION 2

All believers are separated positionally.

Each and every believer is a “saint,” a person set apart and separated unto the living God.

Study: Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Jude 1; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 1:1;

Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; Hebrews 3:1; 10:10,14,29;
Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 2:9.

PROPOSITION 3

Each and every believer, having been positionally separated unto God in Christ, is responsible to walk and conduct himself in a manner worthy of and consistent with such a position and standing.

Study: 1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 2 Timothy 2:21; Romans 6:19; Hebrews 12:14; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Titus 2:3.

PROPOSITION 4

Biblical separation is twofold:

1) Separation From; 2) Separation Unto.

Separation From	Scripture Passage	Separation Unto
Who hath delivered us FROM the power of darkness	Colossians 1:13	and hath translated us INTO the kingdom of His dear Son
For God hath not called us unto uncleanness	1 Thessalonians 4:7	but UNTO holiness
Wherefore, come out FROM among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing	2 Corinthians 6:17-18	and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty
For I the LORD am holy, and have severed you FROM other people	Leviticus 20:26	that ye should be Mine
Let us cleanse ourselves FROM all filthiness of the flesh and spirit	2 Corinthians 7:1	perfecting holiness in the fear of God

Ye turned to God FROM idols	1 Thessalonians 1:9	to serve the living and true God
But is passed FROM death	John 5:24	UNTO life
He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness	John 8:12	but shall have the light of life
Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin	Romans 6:11	but alive UNTO God through Jesus Christ our Lord
And be not conformed to this world	Romans 12:2	but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind
Even when we were dead in sins	Ephesians 2:5	hath made us alive together with Christ
But now in Christ Jesus ye who once were far off	Ephesians 2:13	are made near by the blood of Christ
And you, that were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works	Colossians 1:21-22	yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight.
That we, being dead to sins	1 Peter 2:24	should live UNTO righteousness
Unto Him that loved us, and washed us FROM our sins in His own blood	Revelation 1:5-6	and hath made us a kings and priests UNTO God and His Father

PROPOSITION 5

God has put a difference between the saved and the unsaved and God demands that this DIFFERENCE be evident and well defined—hence the need for separation.

The Word of God delineates this difference as follows:

(See the next page)

Unsaved	Scripture Passage	Saved
death	John 5:24	life
darkness	John 8:12	light
night	1 Thessalonians 5:5	day
lost	Luke 15:24	found
unrighteousness	2 Corinthians 6:14	righteousness
infidel	2 Corinthians 6:15	believer
condemnation	John 3:18	no condemnation
perish	John 3:16	eternal life
perish	1 Corinthians 1:18	saved
death unto death	2 Corinthians 2:16	life unto life
children of the devil	1 John 3:10	children of God

There is **no middle ground** between the saved and the unsaved: “Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed” (Luke 16:26).

God, in His Word, demands that this distinction between saved and unsaved be maintained.

Study: Leviticus 10:10; 11:44,47; 20:24-26; Deuteronomy 7:6; Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 6:10-11; Ephesians 4:17-20; 5:6-7,8,11; Colossians 3:5-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5; 5:4-8; Titus 3:2-4; 1 Peter 1:14; 4:2-4; Jude 19-20.

PROPOSITION 6

The believer is to be separated, not isolated.

Study: John 17:11,14-18; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; Acts 1:8; Philippians 2:15-16; 2 Corinthians 5:20.

The believer is **in** the world but not **of** the world. The monastic philosophy which declares “to be holy you must live in a hole!” finds no basis in the Scriptures. Believers are pilgrims and strangers (1 Peter 2:11; Hebrews 11:13) and citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20; John 14:1-3) who have the privilege of representing Christ on the earth (2 Corinthians 5:20; Isaiah 43:10-12) as He represents us in heaven (1 John 2:1-2). As we represent Christ **in the world** we are to keep ourselves unspotted from the world (James 1:27) because we are not **of the world!** The Lord Jesus was our perfect example of a man “separate from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26). Yet He strongly condemned pharisaical

isolationism (Luke 5:27-32; 7:29-34; 7:36-50; 15:1-32; 18:9-14; 19:1-10). The believer in Christ has explicit responsibilities towards all men as he represents Christ in the world.

1. He is to be a witness before all men (Acts 1:8).
2. He is to be Christ's ambassador to all men (2 Corinthians 5:20).
3. He is to preach the gospel to all men (Mark 16:15).
4. He is to shine as a light before all men (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15).
5. He is to do good to all men (Galatians 6:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:15).
6. He is to walk in wisdom towards all men (Colossians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 10:32).
7. He is to pray for all men (1 Timothy 2:1).
8. He is to provide things honest in the sight of all men (Romans 12:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:12).
9. He is to live peaceably with all men (Romans 12:18; Hebrews 12:14).
10. He is to let his moderation be known unto all men (Philippians 4:5).
11. He is to honour all men (1 Peter 2:17).
12. He is to have a good report (testimony) before all men (1 Timothy 3:7; 2 John 12).

PROPOSITION 7

Separation from all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God.

Study: 1 John 2:15-17; James 1:27; 4:4; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Peter 2:11; Titus 2:11-12; Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:16; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

In the area of questionable practices and associations the believer is bound by the law of love (1 Corinthians 8-10; Romans 14). That is, in deciding whether or not something should be done, it is not enough for the believer to act according to knowledge (1 Corinthians 8). It is not enough for the believer to ask such questions as these: "Is it right?" "Is it lawful?" "Is it permissible?" Rather he must make his decisions on the basis of the law of love which will result in the consideration of such questions as these: "Is it profitable?" "Is it useful?" "Will it edify?" "Will it glorify God?" "Will it hinder my growth or the growth of others?" "Will it present a clear testimony before the lost?" The Scriptural basis for this latter group of questions can be seen by studying such verses as 1 Corinthians 8:9; 10:23; 10:31-32; Romans 14:21; etc.

PROPOSITION 8
Separation from an immoral Christian brother
is commanded of God.

Study: 1 Corinthians chapter 5. In seeking to obey God in these matters such passages as Galatians 6:1; 2 Corinthians 2:1-11 and 2 Timothy 2:24-26 should also be kept in mind.

PROPOSITION 9
Separation from all religious apostasy is commanded of
God.

Study: 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 (compare Deuteronomy 22:9-11, God hates mixture!); Revelation 18:4.

When an ox and a donkey are yoked up together they are involved with the same work. They are “on the same team,” laboring together for common goals and objectives. Believers are not to work together in co-operation with unbelievers. See the example in Ezra 4:1-5. The Lord Jesus never enlisted unbelievers to carry out the work of God. The football player would never think of giving the ball to a member of the opposite team!

Other passages which demand separation from false teachers and from religious apostasy are as follows:

1. **AVOID THEM** (Romans 16:17).
2. **REJECT** (Titus 3:10).
3. **RECEIVE HIM NOT** (2 John 10).
4. **FROM SUCH TURN AWAY** (2 Timothy 3:5).
[Compare 2 Timothy 3:5 with Romans 1:16 and 1 Corinthians 1:24. It involves a denial of the gospel.]
5. **LET HIM BE ACCURSED** (Gal. 1:8-9).

PROPOSITION 10

The obedient believer must separate from every Christian brother who is consistently and wilfully disobedient to the Word of God.

This would include separation from the believer who is disobedient to the commands as listed under PROPOSITION 9.

Study carefully: 2 Thessalonians 2:15; **3:6,14-15**. Note carefully the five commands: 1) *Note* that man; 2) *withdraw* yourselves; 3) *have no company*; 4) *count him not* as an enemy; 5) *admonish* him as a brother.

Who are the disorderly? Carefully read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 and make a note of every time you read the word “disorderly” (it is the same word found in 1 Thessalonians 5:14, “unruly”). The Greek word means “not keeping order, out of line, out of place.” It was a military term used of soldiers who would march out of order (not keeping rank, breaking rank). It is used of a person who neglects his duty and evades his obligations. The word means the opposite of SUBMISSION (Eph. 5:21). Thus the word describes a person who is not willing to bow before authority. He refuses to bow before God’s Word and before God Himself. He refuses to bow before the authority of those that are “over him” (see 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14).

Disorderliness can manifest itself in many different ways. In 2 Thessalonians 3:11 some of the Thessalonians refused to fulfill their God-given responsibility to work with their hands and earn a living. Paul had made them aware of their responsibility (see 1 Thessalonians 4:11).

When Paul was with them he commanded them to work (see the last part of 1 Thess. 4:11).	They did not obey and Paul had to tell them the same thing in his first letter (see the first part of 1 Thess. 4:11).	They still did not obey and Paul had to write a second letter to deal with this same problem (2 Thess. chapter 3).
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We see then that these disorderly ones were guilty of disobeying a clear command, both by word and by letter.

Consider 2 Thessalonians 3:6 and compare this verse with 2 Thessalonians 2:15. These disorderly ones were also guilty of not holding fast to the tradition that was handed down to them. Usually when we think of “traditions” we think of some erroneous teachings of men that have been handed down to us. In this case, however, “traditions” refers to the teaching and the letters (epistles) which had been handed down by the apostles (2 Thessalonians 2:15—apostolic tradition, and compare Acts 2:42—“continue stedfastly in the teaching of the apostles”). If a person does not hold fast to the apostolic traditions he is in trouble because these traditions have come directly to the apostles FROM GOD!

The Thessalonian letters deal with a specific problem of believers not working, but the term “disorderly” should not be limited to only those believers who fail to work. The term would fit any

believer who is persistently disobedient to the traditions handed down to us from the apostles, which we now possess in written form in the New Testament books. It could involve any kind of persistent disobedience to the clear commands of God given through the apostles.

The action taken by the believers in the local assembly, as severe as these actions are (2 Thessalonians 3:6,14), are intended to restore such a person back to the place of submissive obedience. It is to help him, not to harm him. May the Spirit of God give each of us wisdom to carry out God's commands in God's way for God's glory, being careful not to be a stumbling block to the Jews, to the Gentiles nor to the church of God (1 Corinthians 10:32).

Lesson From Church History

Church history has proven again and again that separation is the only solution to apostasy. There is not an instance in all of church history where a denomination has departed from the Word of God and then some time later returned to a more solid Biblical position. Sad but true, the only effective answer is to come out from among them and be separate.

Dr. John Whitcomb has said it this way:

The only possible way to perpetuate His truth is to separate it from all forms of error and compromise. A refusal to recognize this fundamental fact is the fatal blunder of modern ecclesiastical ecumenism in all its forms, including evangelical ecumenism. ***Truth cannot be perpetuated through compromise and compromise cannot be avoided without separation.*** This is a formula which God's people have discovered through centuries of sad experience with the weakness of fallen human nature in the presence of "the god of this world," and especially through the direct teachings of God's Word (*Christ, Our Pattern and Plan*, p. 14).

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan also spoke of the urgent need for separation:

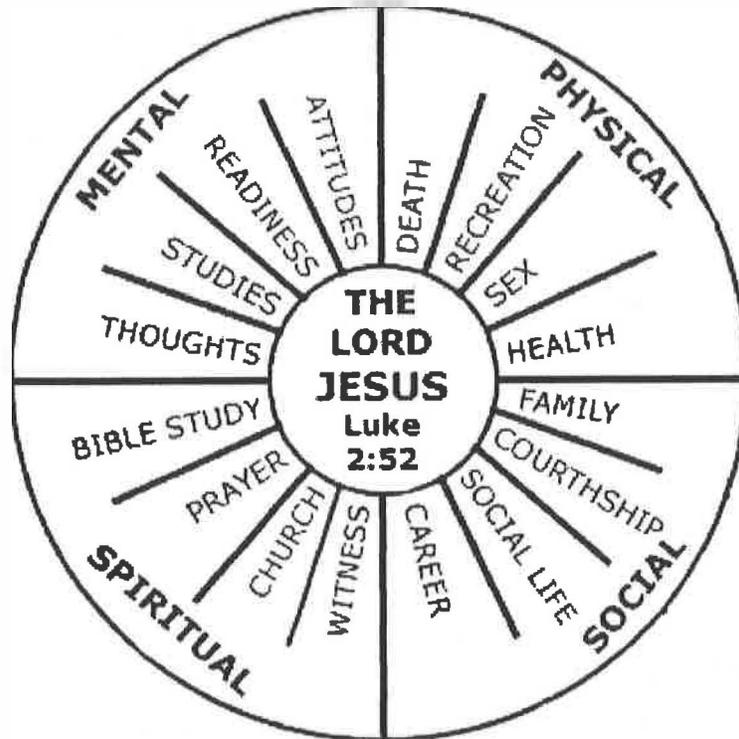
There is a toleration which is treachery. There is a peace which issues in paralysis. There are hours when the church must say NO to those who should ask communion with her, in the doing of her work, upon the basis of compromise. Such standing aloof may produce ostracism and persecution; but it will maintain power and influence. If the Church of God in the cities of today were aloof from the maxims of the age, separated from the materialistic philosophies of the schools, bearing her witness alone to the all-sufficiency of Christ, and the perfection of His salvation, even though persecuted and ostracized and bruised, it would be to her that men would look in the hour of their heartbreak and sorrow and national need. The reason why men do not look to the church today is that she has destroyed her own influence by compromise.

* * * * *

George Zeller, 1975

The following is taken from a paper written by Robert Lawton who for many years has been evangelizing and training international students on college campuses.

The doctrine of personal separation will be examined within the framework of the four aspects of life set forth in Luke 2:52—“And Jesus increased in **wisdom** (mental) and **stature** (physical), and **in favor with God** (spiritual) and **man** (social).” The following diagram may be helpful (taken from *The Four Aspects of Life* by Robert Ramey, “The Philosophy of Christ’s Life,” unpublished class notes, Grace Theological Seminary, n.d., p.2).



Separation in the Christian’s Mental Life

Thoughts

All practical godliness must begin with the thought life of the Christian, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). Separation in the thought life is particularly important because the Christian possesses two natures: two dispositions which are continually striving with each other for the control of the believer (Galatians 5:17). If the Christian is to “walk in the Spirit,” he must distinguish the desires of the Spirit. To make the differentiation easy, Paul has given the believer an objective criterion for distinguishing the desires of the flesh from the desires of the Spirit in the form of a list of examples (see Galatians 5:19-23). By meditating upon this list, the Christian will be able to readily discern between the desires of his old nature and those of the Holy Spirit and will, by obeying His desires, be controlled by the Spirit.

Reading and other activities

The realization that the Christian still possesses his old nature, as a kind of caged-up wild beast

looking for a way to get out, ought to make him careful of the kind of “food for thought” he allows to come in. The Christian must distinguish between that which feeds the flesh and that which nourishes his new nature in the things which he allows to enter through the eyes and ears. David failed to turn his head at the first glimpse of Bathsheba, and paid the consequences. Split-second discernment and reaction is becoming imperative for the Christian living in a world where modest women dress like the harlots of ten years ago.

Attitudes

To be pleasing to the Lord, the right thing must be done in the right way. Israel had served the Lord, and yet He said:

Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies whom the LORD shall send against thee” (Deut. 28:47-48).

The Christian must be extremely discriminatory in the choice of attitudes which he manifests. He must be as set apart from wrong attitudes as he is from wrong actions. As the Apostle Paul stated:

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you (Eph. 4:31-32).

The true Christian, then, will be a fanatical separatist with regards to his own attitudes.

Separation in the Christian’s Physical Life

Dress

The Christian’s outward appearance is a matter of concern to the Apostle Paul, particularly in the case of Christian women for whom he lays down some guidelines: “In like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel . . . (1 Timothy 2:9). Modesty in dress, especially today, requires careful discrimination. The Christian is not to be conformed to the world’s sensuous standards, and must set aside the majority of the fashions of today. At the same time, the Christian ought to display good taste in the clothing he wears, and not draw attention to himself with extremism in either direction. Pastor George F. Parsons has set forth the following principle:

Whenever a new style or a new way of dressing or a new way of saying something is seen or heard by me, I will look to see if it pictures truth or error. I will see if it agrees or disagrees with God’s Word and God’s ways. I will see if it makes clear or confuses and clouds up God’s Person and God’s Word. I will see if it mixes truth and error. May nothing detract from the message I want to present: “I belong to the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

Physical contact

The Christian is most certainly to be discriminatory to the extreme, however, in the matter of whom

he touches. Absolute separation is axiomatic for unmarried Christians of opposite sex. This is particularly true for the Christian worker:

A minister, especially a young one, who puts his hands, however innocent-mindedly on the person of womankind, particularly young girls, is in the mildest language I can command, an unmitigated fool (Homer A. Kent, Sr., *The Pastor and His Work*, p. 57).

The Christian is thus to be set apart in this regard, too.

Entertainment

While proper recreation and exercise are necessary for the Christian, the Christian must use discernment in the activities in which he engages in leisure time. The Christian is to be separate from “worldly amusements and unclean habits which defile mind and body.” A chapel speaker recently gave a good rule of thumb for deciding about doubtful things:

Anything that dims my vision of Christ, or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult is wrong for me and as a Christian I must turn from it (Cited by Dr. David Nettleton, former President of Faith Baptist Bible College, in the Grace Seminary Chapel, November 27, 1973).

To “turn from” something is separation: we are beginning to see something of the scope of this subject!

Speech

Discrimination is also the order in the use of the Christian’s tongue. Every thought which comes to mind is not to be broadcast by the child of God. Paul makes this clear:

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers (Ephesians 4:29).

The Christian is thus to be drastically selective in his choice of words. Not only is he to separate out all vulgarity from his speech, but positively, his words are to be a blessing to the hearers.

Separation in the Christian’s Social Life

Friendships

While the Christian is to exhibit genuine love for all of mankind, the Word of God makes it clear that a believer is to be discriminatory in the choice of his close companions (see Psalm 119:63). Solomon saw that, “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Proverbs 13:20). The Apostle Paul likewise noted, “Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals” (1 Corinthians 15:33). As Dr. John Whitcomb has observed, “All things being equal, bad apples make good apples go rotten, and the good apples do not make the rotten ones any better.” Thus, while the Christian is to be cordial towards all, especially towards those of like precious faith,

he, nevertheless, is to be selective in his choice of close companionships. The best way to do this, of course, is to have the right interests, and to allow our interests to govern our close friendships.

Courtship

If ever there were an area where neglect of separation has led to heartbreak, it must be in the realm of courtships. How often have we heard stories of a Christian dating a non-Christian for the sake of witnessing, with a resultant unscriptural (and usually disastrous) marriage. Yet the practice of Christians dating unbelievers continues. Since it is certainly not God's will for a child of God to marry an unbeliever (2 Corinthians 6:14, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers"), one is hard pressed to defend any position other than total separation of Christians and non-Christians in the area of dating.

Career

As Dr. C. F. Yoder (*God's Means of Grace*, p. 468) has stated, "In occupation the Christian should remember that God is his senior partner." The Christian should therefore beware of making partnerships with unbelievers. Moreover, the Christian businessman must be discriminative in his business methods. The dishonest practices which are a matter of course in many firms are to be put away from the Christian in the business world.

Separation in the Christian's Spiritual Life

The personal devotional life

In order for the Levitical priests to enter into the Holy of Holies, they themselves had to be holy. The Christian, then, ought to be discriminative in his own devotional activities. This would apply, for example, to the Bible version which he reads. Peter says, "Desire the sincere (pure) milk of the word . . . (1 Peter 2:2). A paraphrase may be good for occasional comparison, but it ought not to be the daily food for the Christian's soul. The prayer life, too, ought to be purged from all that is unfit for God's presence. The Christian, especially the young Christian, ought to make a distinction between talking to the Lord of Hosts and "shooting the breeze" with his dormitory roommate.

Fellowship with other Christians

The Apostle John says, "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). The joy of fellowship with other true believers is indeed a blessed assurance of the Christian's salvation. Nevertheless, the Word of God plainly teaches that there are times when the obedient believer must purposefully part company with disobedient fellow Christians. This is true in the case of a brother who is living in sin. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no, not to eat (1 Corinthians 5:11).

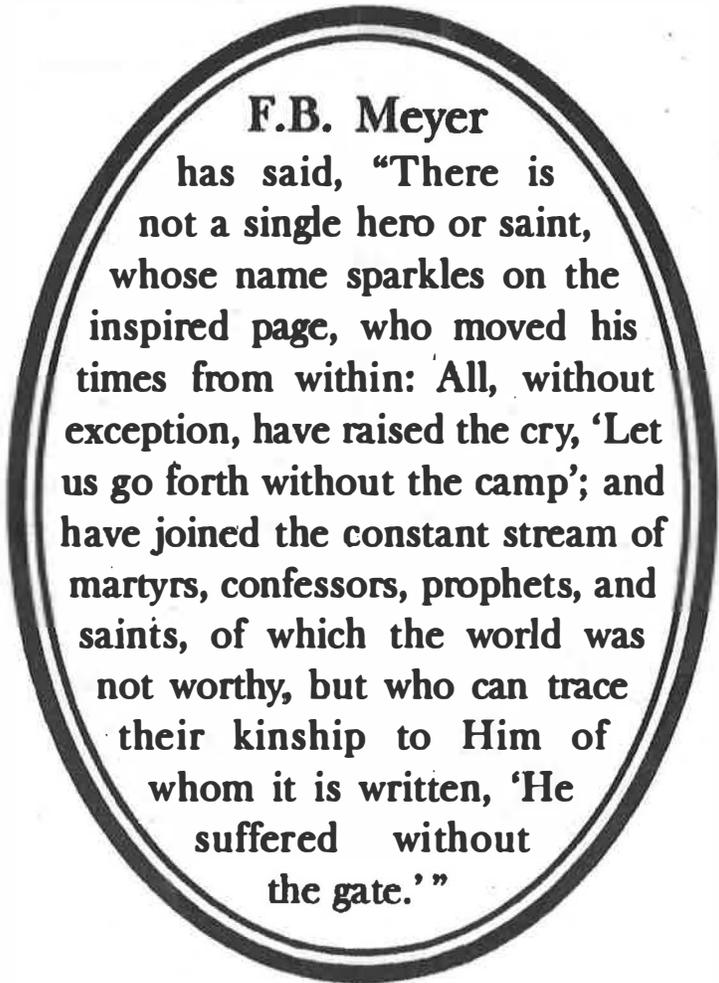
This is also true, however, in the case of a brother who teaches doctrinal error or who fails to obey the truth:

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us . . . and if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed (2 Thessalonians 3:6,14).

This instruction seems like hard medicine to swallow, but as the Apostle points out, it is in order that the brother in the error may take stock of himself and turn from it.

The Church

If a Christian is to be separated from individuals who hold to and teach doctrinal error, he most certainly is to be separated from entire assemblies with the same problem. Withdrawing from a much loved church which has fallen into error is not easy, but it may remedy the problem. In any event, it is unethical to remain in and teach a doctrinal position contrary to that held by the assembly. The Christian ought to withdraw in such a case, and pray that God will open the eyes of the congregation.



F.B. Meyer
has said, "There is not a single hero or saint, whose name sparkles on the inspired page, who moved his times from within: All, without exception, have raised the cry, 'Let us go forth without the camp'; and have joined the constant stream of martyrs, confessors, prophets, and saints, of which the world was not worthy, but who can trace their kinship to Him of whom it is written, 'He suffered without the gate.'"

NO MIDDLE GROUND - ONLY A CHASM

*"The Faith which was once
for all delivered unto the saints."*

Modernist Theology

1. The Bible IS the Word of God.

"The Book judges man."

2. Jesus Christ is THE Son of God in a sense which *no* other is.

3. The birth of Jesus was SUPERNATURAL.

4. The death of Jesus was EXPIATORY.

5. Man is the product of special CREATION.

6. Man is a SINNER fallen from original righteousness, and apart from God's redeeming grace is hopelessly lost.

7. Man is justified by FAITH in the atoning blood of Christ; result - supernatural regeneration from ABOVE.

1. The Bible CONTAINS the Word of God.
"Man judges the book."

2. Jesus Christ is A Son of God in the sense which all men are.

3. The birth of Jesus was NATURAL.

4. The death of Jesus was EXEMPLARY.

5. Man is the product of EVOLUTION.

6. Man is the unfortunate VICTIM of environment but through self-culture can "make good."

7. Man is justified by WORKS in following Christ's example; result - natural development from WITHIN.

Peace

courtesy Moody Bible Institute Monthly



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