

Extracts From Correspondence

by John Gifford Bellett

The Church must keep itself pure and focused on the kingdom of God, even in the face of error and apostasy, and present a rejected Jesus to the affections of the saints.

Scripture: Luke 11:21, 1 Corinthians 5:11, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Thessalonians 2:10, Hebrews 13:8, 2 Peter 3:3, Revelation 17:3

Topics: "Church Discipline", "Spiritual Purity"

Description

John Gifford Bellett emphasizes the unique and narrow path of the Church, highlighting the need for her virtues and morals to be of a divine quality, distinct from those of the world. Bellett discusses the importance of the Church's discipline and how it differs from societal norms, urging believers to uphold sanctity in all aspects of life. He warns about the prevalence of error in the last days, urging Christians to stay pure and focus on nourishing the good rather than exposing all forms of evil. Bellett also touches on the revival of Catholicism and the need for believers to focus on the rejected Jesus and the coming glory beyond the present challenges and apostate movements.

Transcript

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J. G. Bellett.

from Miscellaneous Papers

(R. L. Allan)

1.

The moral activities that are abroad are surely immense, and the pressure upon the social system of influences full of deceivableness, I suppose, is beyond all precedent. It is desirable to keep the soul increasingly alive to the fact that the path of the Church is a narrow and peculiar one. Even her virtues must have a peculiar material in them. Her common honesty, her good deeds, too, her secular labours, her fruitfulness, purity, and the like, are to be peculiar in their functions and their springs. Her discipline does not act after the pattern of the mere moral sense of man. Society, as another has observed, would disclaim the offence contemplated in 1 Cor. 5; but society would never deal with it as the Church is there called to deal with it. Society, for instance, would never put covetousness or extortion in company with it,

but the saint is instructed to do so. The moral sense of man would there make distinctions, when the pure element of the house of God resents all alike as unworthy of it.

This is "fine gold" dear brother -- gold refined again and again. Even the morals of the Church are to be of another quality from those of men. What sanctions are brought in in 1 Cor. 5, 6 as to the common matters of life. If the saint be to abstain from fornication, it is because his body is a temple: if he be to refuse the judgment of others in the affairs of this life, in their most ordinary ways of right and wrong, of debit and credit, it is because he himself is destined to be a judge in the seat of the world to come, even from a throne of glory. Is not this "fine gold?" Does not such sanction make morals divine? What, in the world's morality, is like this? And I ask further, is not the need of this divine or peculiar agency to the effecting any moral results intimated in Luke 11: 21-27? If it be not the stronger man possessing himself of the house, is anything done for God? If it be merely the unclean spirit going out, the end of the history of the house is, that it becomes more fitted for deeper evil. The emptied state, even accompanied by sweeping and ornamenting, is only a preparation for a worse condition, and nothing is done for God but when the stronger enters the house. No instrument of garnishing according to God, but Christ. And in the remembrance of these verses, dear brother, ask yourself what is doing in and for the house of Christendom at this moment. Is not many a broom, many a brush sweeping it and painting it? Is this making it God's house, or getting it ready to be the house of the full energy -- the sevenfold energy -- of the enemy?

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Plenty of error is abroad, I doubt not, and that of all sorts, doing all kinds of mischief. May our hearts be pained when we think of it. But it is not for all of us at least to meddle with it in the way of exposure. To separate "the good into vessels," the precious from the unclean mass, and nourish it with divine provisions may be a happier business.

I think we may learn that all forms of error will have something of full-grown representatives in these last days. The infidel leaven will (2 Peter 3: 3, &c.); the loose, the morally relaxed condition of evangelical profession will (2 Peter 2, and Jude); religiousness, which leaves the soul exposed to the "deceivableness of unrighteousness," will (2 Thess. 2). These, and others, will be in full strength, in the last days, that the judgment of God may meet them, as has been the way of divine judgments, in their day of full-blown fruits. In a general way I would put brethren in Christ in mind of all this, that they may keep themselves pure. But it is endless to follow the mind of man, as it is in this day of its peculiar activity, filling the scene with its fruit.

Ranke's history of the Popes of the 16th and 17th centuries is a remarkable witness (though perhaps not fully so intended to be by its author) of the present movement. We are witnessing a second regeneration of Catholicism, as Ranke says the close of the 16th century did. And this revival is destined, I judge, to set the woman on the beast, till the beast and his kings dethrone her to perfect their own form of apostacy, which the just Lord who judgeth righteously will visit in His day.

Great principles such as these are to be put before the saints, that their minds may be delivered from the perverted expectations of this generation. But this is to be done rather incidentally, more for the sake of the kingdom that lies beyond, all this, than with the intent of acquainting the mind with these evils and apostate reprobate things themselves. A rejected Jesus is to be presented to the affections of the saints, and the coming glory is to be shown as that which suits Him as such a rejected One.

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