

# Are the Newman Street Teachers (Catholic Apostolic) Sent of God?

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of testing all doctrine and prophecy against the known truth of God's word and personal experience to ensure that it is from God.*

**Scripture:** Galatians 1:8, 1 John 4:1

**Topics:** "Discernment", "False Teachings"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby addresses the claims of the Newman Street Teachers, questioning whether they are truly sent by God. He emphasizes that heresy often disguises itself and leads believers away from the truth of the Gospel, urging Christians to discern the authenticity of teachings by comparing them with Scripture. Darby warns against accepting teachings that contradict the established truths of Christ's sinless nature and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, highlighting the importance of testing all spirits against the Word of God. He concludes that the failure of prophecies associated with these teachers indicates they are not of God, and believers must remain steadfast in the truth they have already received.

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## Transcript

It is the character of heresy always to conceal itself, to cover the plain statement of the doctrine which forms its basis, or to misdirect the attention, so that the evil really introduced by the heresy may not be apparent. Heresy is not merely error; it is the power of error in seducing men's minds from the plain truth of the Spirit of God, so as to rest in, and be guided by, something besides the gospel.

The attention of many has been directed very much latterly, first to very large hopes, and then to assertion of the restoration of gifts to the church.

The destitute state of the church of God naturally gives great importance to such hopes in the eyes of those who, by Divine grace and the leading of the Spirit, are really interested as Christians in the condition of the church of God. And there are none, whose eyes are turned much upon the Lord, who do not more or less feel its need and troubled state.

The hopes press upon the mind; and they are naturally also much associated with the expectation of judgment, or at least liability to it, on the part of those whose lamps are not trimmed and their vessels full of oil. Under such circumstances the assertion, that persons are sent by God to announce that the gifts

and presence of the Spirit are restored to the church, naturally awakens curiosity or interest.

But the doctrines connected with the assertion are little known, and not put forward so as to awaken the attention of those to whom the announcement of the restoration is made; while the responsibility of attending to the direct message from God is pressed strongly. Hence the conscience, not well informed, may be easily dismayed at the thought of not listening to God thus interfering in mercy, and at the judgments which will be the portion of those who refuse to hear.

But the first question is, before we listen, "Is it God that is speaking?" It is as awful and fatal an error to take that to be God speaking which is not, as to refuse to hear when He does speak.

When once we have taken it for granted that it is God who is speaking, then whatever is said we must implicitly receive. Judgment is gone; all investigation by the word of the truth of what is said ceases. We must follow implicitly every thing without further inquiry. It becomes therefore a very important inquiry, Is it God who is speaking? This indeed would be a very anxious question, but that He has spoken already, and we have His word. Thus therefore I have the opportunity of trying every thing that is asserted to be of God by that which I know to be of God. For the believer has many blessed truths indelibly printed on his mind by grace and the power of God's Spirit; yea, wrought into the framework of the new life, by which, if once touched, he knows that the truth upon which his soul infallibly rests is touched also.

Now I said that the doctrines with which the promises and gifts are identified are little known, and little brought forward into light. I shall state some of them and then Christians may take the word and their own experience (by which I mean God's truth known in their souls), to see how what is here alleged to be of God, and what they know to be of God, agree. If they find it not to agree with God's word, with the known truth of God, then they can say at once, "It is not of God; and I have done with it." The whole question is settled.

There is another simple way of determining it. And this is, if any one thing has been stated by that which we are told is the voice of God in the church which has not come to pass, or has been falsified by the event - as prophecy, not merely a threatening of judgment averted by repentance, but a distinct prophecy which has proved untrue - we can at once pronounce it not to be the testimony of God, and we have done with it as no true light.

Thus Jehovah says, "If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet," etc. (Deut. 13:1-3).

Because God had already claimed their allegiance as the true and only God, this could not be surrendered, whatever happened. It was a trial of allegiance to Him. So in the New Testament, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8, 9). For God had already revealed the true gospel. Now mark, if we do not know that, and what He has revealed about it, so as to have a means of judging any thing else by it, we can have no hope, no knowledge, no expectation about the church at all. It is our sure knowledge of the truth of God's word that gives us any expectation about the church at all; so that those who make these promises to the church must admit this, and be content to be always tried by it, or not to be received at all.

They say, "Receive the testimony; come not judging, but willing to hear: God is speaking, and you must hear; and then you will receive light upon the scripture. What you have read and understood of it hitherto has been in the flesh." If once I do this, I must then receive every thing they say; for I admit that God says it. Take care of this. But the scriptures which they use to make me receive them are not the only scriptures I have read, nor the only ones which God's Spirit enables me to understand, nor the only ones sealed to my soul by His power; nor can they say these are the only ones you are to use. If I have read the scriptures without understanding them, whence my scriptural hope of the gifts? Is that the only scripture a Christian has understood? Well then, if not, I must hold to the rest too, and judge what is alleged to be of God by these known scriptures. One guard in the perilous times is, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned;" the other is, "that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Nor are extraordinary gifts ever alleged as any guide at all. See 2 Tim. 3. We know that they will accompany evil. [See 2 Thess. 2:9, and Rev. 13:13-15.]

If I have been taught any of the scriptures of the Lord, then I am bound to judge that which the spirit they profess to give heed to has said, by every part of scripture which I have been so taught, by whatever scripture I know; or I despise the known word and guardianship of the Lord - I am departing from Him.

The other mark I gave, besides false doctrine, was false prophecy.

"And if thou say in thy heart, how shall we know the word which Jehovah hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken; but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deut. 18:21, 22).

So that, if the thing spoken follow not, Jehovah hath not spoken: we are not to be afraid. And if a sign or a wonder follow, but we are called to do or give heed to any thing contrary to the revealed will and knowledge of God, we are to pay no attention to it whatever, not if it were an angel from heaven, or an apostle himself.

Let me make another remark connected with this subject. Howsoever truly we may be Christians, and whatever attainments we may have made, or gifts we may possess, Satan can use our errors in conduct - what can we do in the flesh? - to only and worse purpose than if we were not Christians at all. "Before that certain came from James, [Peter] did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation." The only effect of the eminence of Peter and the influence which he had was, to enable his flesh to do more mischief when he acted in it. Dissembling Peter carried away all the Jews and Barnabas with his dissimulation. So when the flesh acts thus in a saint, though in the form perhaps of holiness, it carries away all those over whom the saint has acquired influence by his spiritual walk before. But this is not of God, but a delusion of the enemy. Paul withstood him to the face.

Now let us remember well the assertion of God's authority, upon which the present claim to be heard is founded. It is not merely particular things which the Newman Street teachers may say that are in question; their claim to be heard is the appointment and mission by the spirit which speaks in Newman Street. We are therefore to learn from them, as having authority to teach from God, which they allege that spirit to be. Now, I say again, this would be an alarming thing, if we had not already got what we know to be the word

of God; and then the simple enquiry is, Do this spirit and it agree? If not, we must repudiate at once the whole thing as not of God. Blessed be our God, Who has given us His own word to try it by.

Now the doctrine sanctioned by the spirit, alleged to have sent these missionaries here, is that our blessed Lord's human nature was sinful human nature. They are now very guarded in their statements; but they have said quite enough in their most guarded statements to make one acquainted with the subject perfectly aware of their real doctrine. They refuse now to say more, on being asked, than that "Christ was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," adding, that the last clause was not meant to qualify the first. But this is the whole question. The absence of sin did not qualify or characterise the temptations of Christ! In plain words, there was sin mixed with His temptations! for the Lord, they say, does not qualify the statement of His temptations by the latter clause, "yet without sin."

They might have acknowledged it more unequivocally; they could not really have stated it more plainly. We say, scripture adds this qualification, this difference, in the temptations of the Lord; namely, that they were "without sin." There was no sin mixed with them: in our case, there is continually. They say, there is no such qualification of the temptation in the sentence; it is hard then to say what the latter clause is for. If they say that it did not issue in sin in Him, then I get their mind plainly; there is no qualification as to the temptation itself. We know that our temptations are connected with sin; and according to them there is no qualification in the passage before us! Observe, "sin" is the thing in question. It is admitted on all hands, that it never produced as a fruit actual sin in the Lord. The point in which there was no difference in the temptation then is, that there was sin in the nature - sin in the human nature of Christ!

Let us see the matter stated a little more plainly by one more open and undisguised, believing it doubtless to be truth. These are the statements of Mr. Irving, appointed by the spirit by whose authority these persons teach, the angel of the church from whence they come, and the teacher and expounder of doctrine there.

"If then Christ was made under the law, He must have been made by His human nature liable to, yea, inclined to, all those things which the law interdicted."

"Conceive every variety of human passion, every variety of human affection, every variety of human error, every variety of human wickedness which hath ever been realized, inherent in the humanity and combined against the holiness of Him, who was not only a man but the Son of Man, the heir of all the infirmities which man entaileth upon his children."

"If His human nature differed by however so little from ours in its alienation and guiltiness, then the work of reducing it into eternal harmony with God hath no bearing whatever upon our nature, with which it is not the same."

"Was He conscious, then, to the motions of the flesh and of the fleshly mind? In so far as any regenerate man, when under the operation of the Holy Ghost, is conscious of them. I hold it to be the surrender of the whole question to say, that He was not conscious of, engaged with, and troubled by, every evil disposition which inhereth in the fallen manhood, which overpowereth every man that is not born of God, which overpowered not Christ, only because He was born or generated of God."

"Manhood, after the fall, broke out into sins of every name and aggravation, corrupt to the very heart's core, and from the centre of its inmost will sending out streams black as hell. This is the human nature which every man is clothed upon withal, which the Son of Man was clothed upon withal - bristling strong

and thick with sin, like the hairs upon a porcupine." "I stand forth and say, that the teeming fountain of the heart's vileness was opened on him, and the Augean stable of human wickedness was given to Him to cleanse, and the furious wild beasts of human passions were given to Him to tame. This, this is the horrible pit and the miry clay out of which He was brought."

Now, take notice in passing, that reconciliation, in this view, is not reconciling sinners at all but His own sinful nature, "reducing it into eternal harmony with God;" and that incarnation is being clothed upon with human nature. He was clothed with a nature bristling with sin; and so separate then was His nature from His person, His clothing from Himself, that what was in His nature was not in Him. Thus we see the way this view affects atonement and incarnation also.

But, again, Mr. Irving says, "I hold it to be most orthodox, and of the substance and essence of the orthodox faith, to hold that Christ could say, until His resurrection, not I, but sin that tempteth Me in My flesh, just as after the resurrection He could say, I am separate from sinners. And, moreover, I believe that the only difference between His body of humiliation and His body of resurrection is in this very thing, that sin inhered in His human nature, making it mortal and corruptible till that very time that He rose from the dead."

Many such passages might be quoted, but these will suffice. I add, however, a general one. It is an "heretical doctrine, that Christ's generation was something more than the implantation of that Holy-Ghost-life in the members of His human nature which is implanted in us by regeneration."

Now many of Mr. Irving's followers and associates have used stronger and worse expressions than these; but I do not quote them.

It is stated that the spirit rebuked him for using unguarded expressions. This may be; we reason not about expressions but about a fundamental doctrine. Perhaps some may repudiate this, where there is the professed unity of the Spirit.

It is also stated that these things were stated before the spirit was given. Now, though they were held and taught subsequently too, it is most material to see that they were taught previously; because the spirit came amongst them who taught them as the witness and sanction of the doctrine taught (just as the Holy Ghost came down as the witness of the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ). And Mr. Irving honestly and expressly states, that the spirit's coming was the consequence of this doctrine, and that until this doctrine it had nothing to witness to.

This too was yet more expressly shown when Mr. Baxter left the body and wrote to Mr. Irving, stating his error in saying that the law of sin was in Christ's flesh. Mr. Irving maintained his opinions, and told him that the spirit came upon Miss E. C. declaring that Baxter had been snared by departing from the word and the testimony; that Mr. Irving, had maintained the truth, and the Lord was well pleased with him for it. This was followed by another utterance from Mrs. C. and a second from Miss E. C. to the same purpose. Thus, on the point being raised, whether the law of sin was in Christ's flesh or not, the spirit thrice confirmed Mr. Irving's teaching on the subject. I do not say justified his expressions, but "confirmed his doctrine" - his doctrine previously taught. What this is, we have sufficiently seen. Is this spirit then, which has declared that Mr. Irving maintained the truth on these points, a spirit of truth? is it of God?

Mr. Irving has taught that Christ was conscious of every evil disposition which inheres in the fallen manhood; that sin inhered in the human nature; and that Christ's work in the flesh was reducing a nature,

in no way different from ours in alienation and guiltiness, into eternal harmony with God.

After the gifts came, in a work entitled, "Judgment on Decisions of the General Assembly," he says, "There is no other work of the Son in the flesh but this, that He took our nature in its fallen state, and redeemed it into the immortal state."

"It was manhood bristling strong with sin." To say the law of sin was not in the flesh in Jesus, was departing from "the word and the testimony," this spirit declared. Now the scripture says, "He knew no sin" - "was made sin for us," but knew no sin. Either therefore evil dispositions in our nature are not sin, or He was conscious of sin; for He was, they say, conscious of every evil disposition. The scripture says (that is, God has said), "In him is no sin."

This spirit has sanctioned the doctrine that sin was inherent in His nature.

This spirit has sanctioned the doctrine that sin tempted Him in the flesh.

Scripture says, "He was in all points tempted in the likeness [of our nature] except sin."

I cannot therefore believe this to be of God; for it contradicts what God has said, what the Spirit of God bears witness to me that God has said.

It was a "holy thing that was born" of the Virgin Mary; and I am "shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Here is therefore all the difference.

They say, if His nature differed however little in alienation and guiltiness from ours, He did nothing for reducing it into eternal harmony with God.

I have to say, "Cleanse my heart:" was Christ's heart unclean? They say the teeming fountain of the heart's vileness was opened on Him. What do they mean opened on Him? Was not His heart in Him? I read, "from within, out of the heart." Was vileness then in Him - the heart's vileness? The Lord pardon me for using such a word. Is this the truth of God? If we receive this spirit, we must say This is maintaining truth, for it says it is; or reject this, and the spirit, and all the authority, all the promises, and all the assumptions and terrors of them sent by it, as not of God.

After this spirit was amongst them, and the General Assembly had condemned their sentiments, Mr. Irving says, "The duty, which the Christian people owe to their ministers who in the General Assembly did give their condemnation of this doctrine by which we hold the Head, is in their several parishes to go boldly in, and ask them to their face if they believe that Christ came in the flesh, and had the law of the flesh, and the temptations of flesh to struggle with and overcome; and if they confess not to this doctrine, to denounce them as denying the Lord that bought them, as wolves in sheep's clothing."

Nothing can be clearer, then, than that the spirit which has sent the Newman Street teachers to this country has sanctioned, and is identified with, a doctrine which declares sin to have been in the nature of Christ. The teachers here, in attempting to guard their expressions, have made the matter worse. They have refused to say sin was in the nature of Christ, or use their own words on the subject. But since thus on their guard (for they were much plainer at first), they have fixed upon the statement that "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," and that the last clause is not meant to qualify the first. Now this makes it not merely dead and dormant in the nature, which was the way the doctrine used to be defended, but connected with temptation that is acted upon, and made a matter of consciousness by the

temptation, so that we should have sympathy in its actings in us, in its being acted upon so as to be felt by us when we are so tempted. If this be not putting sin into Christ, I know not what is. It must at least be a question of sympathy in our own thoughts, and "the thought of foolishness is sin," In a word, sin dwells in Him, that is, the way it is in us, the way it is connected with our temptations, so as to be acted upon by our temptations! Their effort at securing themselves has made the matter much clearer and much worse. Sin was not only dead but active in Him: for so it is, however repressed, when temptation reaches it. It is in vain their saying they do not mean to charge sin upon Christ. The scripture calls that sin, and the believer knows it to be such (it is a distinguishing point of a believer) and therefore Christ must have been conscious of sin, and this is every thing. I know that some of them would say that it is not sin till acquiesced in and acted on. This admits its being such then, and what they mean. As to its being sin, we are directly at issue, St. Paul has stated it to be such, the believer knows it to be such; he would not be grieved by, and hate it, were it not. Was this in Christ?

We thus see the first mark of the false assumption of prophecy shown, if any signs or wonders come to pass; false doctrine, the undermining the foundation of Christianity, which they do by the way they meddle with the person of the Lord Jesus.

The next mark was, if any thing was spoken, and the thing came not to pass, the prophet had spoken presumptuously: they were not to be afraid of him.

Now multiplied prophecies have been made by the spirit that is amongst these persons, which have proved false: not merely threatening of judgments, averted by repentance, to which they have been endeavoured to be compared; but prophecies of blessings and establishment of the church, and of positive definite facts about people, which have never taken place.

First, it was prophesied that, at the end of three years and a half from the beginning of the prophecy of the witnesses, Satan should take to himself the sovereignty, and stand forth in all hideous power in the person of one man, to receive the worship of all the earth. The person who should be so energized of Satan, and be set up as his Christ, was at a subsequent period declared to be young Napoleon.

At the time this latter point was prophesied, it was declared that within three years and a half, the saints would be caught up to the Lord, and the earth wholly given up to the days of vengeance.

The power came upon another at the same time, confirming the rapture of the saints within three years and a half.

Young Napoleon is dead some time.

It is now said, that the prophecy made him only a type of the man of sin. This is not the statement of those concerned in the prophecy. But, observe, it admits the prophecy, and the responsibility of those so excusing it for it, as coming from the spirit which they own and are sent by. If it were true, which it is not, from the manifest absurdity of making him a type, the explanation is worse or as bad as the thing excused. For young Napoleon, instead of being a type of hideous power in the person of one man to receive worship, died a boy of nineteen, brought up in quietude and retirement, under the care and superintendence of his grandfather in Austria; and was a type of nothing at all. It might do very well for a prophecy of what he was to be after, but to make him a type of it then was ridiculous.

Again, it was distinctly revealed in the power, and, says one who spoke in it, "I was made to utter, that the American Indians were the lost ten tribes,\* and that they should within the three years and a half, appointed for the spiritual ministry, be gathered back into their own land, and be settled there before the days of vengeance set in; that the chief who was now [then] in London, was a chosen vessel of the Lord to lead them back; that he should be endowed with power from on high, in all signs and mighty wonders, and should lead them back, though in unbelief - that he would receive this power here, and be speedily sent forth to them.

\*This is a common opinion among some.

"On another evening, I was made in a most, triumphant chant to address him as the vessel chosen of God, and to be endowed of God for the bringing back of his brethren. The chief went away an unbeliever in the work, and none of the powers have been manifested." Now, this also they attempt to explain by news from America, that two missionaries of theirs have since been in America; that Paul Jones (the name of the American) received them, allowed them to preach to the tribe, and says, searching the records of their tribe, he believes they are the ten tribes; but what is there here of the fulfilment of the prophecy? But we must observe, there is the admission of the prophecy having been so uttered as stated.

I must now give a somewhat longer account of remarkable promises made, which, though waited for, never came.

The failure was afterwards explained, and the promise renewed by the spirit itself, and failed again; and then an explanation and direction given, which contradicted the express testimony of the previous utterance.

The great subject of the hopes raised now quite otherwise stated amongst them, was, that the baptism by fire was to be given, entirely burning out sin; and the gifts of the Holy Ghost were to follow, and miracles to be performed; and that this belonged to a period of three years and a half of ministry, the last ministry on the earth; at the end of which England was to be desolate, the saints would be caught up to the Lord, and the earth wholly given up to the days of vengeance within three years and a half; and the spiritual ministry was to commence from a given Sunday then next ensuing, and mentioned in one of the testimonies or utterances of the spirit. Subsequently to the declaration of the rapture of the saints in their three years and a half (which was itself rather inconsistent with a declaration that the baptism and gifts were reserved for the three years and a half's ministry), there were utterances telling them to enlarge their hearts, lest, through unbelief, they should stumble at the greatness of the favour. A few days afterwards was an utterance, declaring that the Lord had set an individual apart for himself; that from the day that he was called to the spiritual ministry, as mentioned above, he was to count forty days; that this was now well-nigh expired; that, for these forty days, it was appointed he should be tried; that the Lord had tried him, and found him faithful; and, having now proved in him the first sign of an apostle, 'patience,' he would give to him the fulness of them, in the gifts of signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds that the Lord had called him to be an apostle, and by the laying on of his hands, and the hands of the other apostles whom the Lord should call, should the baptism by fire be bestowed. On the fortieth day power should be given, the sick should be healed, the deaf should hear, the dead should be restored. Wednesday was the fortieth day. There was nothing particular on Tuesday; but on Wednesday a prophecy of how much the endowments of the apostles to be sent forth would exceed the endowments given to the twelve apostles. The day passed over, without any manifestation of the power which had been foretold.

However, there were still repeated utterances of the prophecies as to the three years and a half; and the decree of the Lord was pronounced, that within three years and a half the land should be desolate.

It was fully declared also, that the spiritual church could not be fully constituted until the full powers of an apostle were given; and they were unceasing in expectation of them, the day named having passed. It was at this period the prophecy as to the American Indians was given.

However, the designated apostle returned to the country.

There it was declared to him by the spirit, that the power was not given on the fortieth day, because the church (i.e. Mr. Irving's church) in London had failed in love towards the visible church, which God had cast off. Then followed from the spirit an emphatic declaration, that, the day after the morrow, the designated individual and his wife would both be baptised with fire, - the Lord joining himself to His desolate church again, by bringing forth visibly a spiritual church, with spiritual ordinances in fulness of power and gifts, etc.

The day named arrived; and in the evening an utterance in power, "Kneel down, and receive the baptism by fire." They knelt down, lifting up prayer to God continually. Nothing, however, ensued. For six weeks he continued unshakenly to seek for it in vain. Mr. Irving wrote, saying how anxiously they looked to his return with the full powers of an apostle.

A little after, Mr. Irving again wrote, saying one of the prophetesses in London rebuked him for speaking of the time, so repeatedly put forth by the utterance in the person designated apostle, - declaring the utterance to be true about it, but containing a mystery, and that the day was not known. Now, this was important, because it was the recognition (by the prophetic spirit amongst them) of the spirit which in this person had declared so many things which entirely failed. And this prophetess had been owned by the others, and one began a prophecy, and another took it up and finished it. There was another important circumstance - there was rebuke for repeating the time prophesied as a mysterious one. Now, it had been constantly explained and enforced by the spirit, and more than once the power had enjoined ministers to preach it in the flesh, though they had no gifts. Here, then, was contradiction - contradiction at a critical moment, to save the prophecy which had failed of accomplishment, - the explanation and sanction by the spirit in the others attaching it, as they all themselves exultingly had done, to the whole work, and giving us a direct and unequivocal instance of a promise and prophecy failing entirely, and laboriously sought to be escaped from.

They have since, by utterance, appointed an apostle without any power at all, who ordains without any pretence of signs accompanying the ordination. I am informed that the number of apostles is now six [eventually twelve].

Let any one simply weigh the prophecies acknowledged here by the spirit still amongst them, and by whose authority these persons come, and their entire failure, and say, "Is this the spirit whose authority we are to receive?" They attempted to explain all these prophecies about apostolic power, and the baptism by fire, by the reform bill being forty days in parliament! and its being forty years since the French Revolution! so any one may see by consulting "The Morning Watch;" and these are the persons whom we are to receive, as alone having the Spirit

Again, one who had spoken in power amongst them was declared by the two chief prophetesses to speak by an evil spirit: but his call to the spiritual ministry had been declared by another in power, the spirit in

whom had been recognized by the spirit in these same prophetesses.

Again a prophetess (whose speaking one of the above prophetesses had been made to declare in power ought to be heard, and to whom the individual so often spoken of as an apostle had spoken in power as a prophetess, and was again recognised as speaking of the Lord, and who was the first who spoke in power in the congregation at Mr. Irving's) was by the same two prophetesses charged with feigning utterances; and they pronounced in power the whole work to be of the flesh, and not of the Lord; and it was she also who had begun prophecies which these other two prophetesses had finished, and finished what they began.

I need add no more upon this head, though I could add a great deal more of announcements unfulfilled, but these are sufficient, and sufficient to connect all thus speaking together. It is well known that the great body of the work first received in Scotland as of the Lord, is by themselves pronounced to be of Satan; so that the great body of them in Scotland either entirely reject the whole matter, or decline receiving the Newman Street ordinances and authority.

I myself heard a person declare as God in the first person, not "Thus saith the Lord," but, "I will lay on no greater burthen," and encourage to the work of a pastor a person, who, at that time, fully received it, and was designated and sent down as pastor to the place, by the spirit in Newman Street, and so continued for some time; who afterwards renounced the whole thing entirely, judging it in his opinion to be a positively evil work. This was neither in Scotland, nor was it Mr. Baxter. And in that neighbourhood numbers came under the influence, and made all manner of noises, animal noises, and behaved in a way too painful to go into the detail of. I know well that those who maintain the work would say that this was Satan mixing himself with it; but I confess (though I find Satan opposing the work of the Holy Ghost in the early days), I do not find it an occasion of his mixing himself up so intimately with it, as even on their own allegation (being obliged to it by what was said) to say, that he spoke by the mouth of one of their own still recognised prophets. This is a strange way of giving us security; for how can I tell that the other spirit, which was denouncing that as Satan, was not himself speaking by an evil spirit? It had moreover been expressly declared in power, that such a thing would never be allowed.

I have now stated adequate facts on the second head, on which we are taught to reject persons coming with the assumption of God's authority, which, as said, one could abundantly multiply, but I cannot but think it needless.

It is from all this that those are sent who claim to be the only persons that come with authority directly from God, which they allege all this to be, to instruct, and inform, and to build up the church, furnished with this same spirit. Their assertions, however, on the subject now are entirely at variance with their promises then. The spiritual ministry was fixed to begin on a given Sunday, and service was carried on in a church in England (by the individual so stating it) in the power for the greatest part. This ministry was to be for three years and a half; and then the land was to be given up to desolation, and the earth indeed to vengeance and Satan to take all the power in one man. And the baptism by fire was to be given, as the introduction to ushering in of the apostolic gifts, by which, and their consequences, this ministry was thus powerfully to be carried on. The gifts and power of the ministry were to follow the baptism by fire. The testimonies as to the period were repeated.

We have already seen that the promise of the baptism by which the ministry was to be rendered so effectual (the period of which had already commenced) failed; but this is not the point I dwell on now.

Considerably the greater part of the three years and a half of spiritual ministry are now elapsed; and the baptism by fire, instead of being an introduction to the power of the ministry, is now to be a perfecting of the body called out to be the full corn in the ear, whereupon they are, when all perfected, to be caught up to the Lord: so that not only did the prophecy fail, but the promises themselves are quite different from what they originally were.

And here let me add a contradiction in the promises even now made.

One statement they make is, that they are not at present, but to be, as a body, the full corn in the ear. First, the seed sown originally, then the long stalk of apostasy, and then, at last - which is themselves - the full corn in the ear (like the seed, Christ), for whom this baptism by fire is reserved. And when thus ripe, immediately He putteth in the sickle because the harvest is come, so that it is an awful and even fatal delusion to reject them.

Now, they also state that they are the 144,000 mentioned in Rev. 14 redeemed from the earth to sing a new song, which nobody else could learn but they; that they will not be in the judgments and the trouble under Antichrist and the beast; but that others will be saved through all these judgments and be in the harvest.

Now, I do not agree in either interpretation, but they cannot both be true. The full ear of corn cannot be ripe, and immediately the sickle be put in because the harvest is come, and also they be entirely excepted from it, and their distinction be that they will not be in the harvest at all. And it is to be observed, that between the 144,000 and the harvest, instead of immediately, there is the everlasting gospel to every nation, and people, and tongue, and language - another angel of Babylon fallen - another with warning against worshipping the beast - another of special blessing for the dead dying in the Lord - and then, after all this, the harvest, which, according to the other interpretation, was come on the ripening of them, who, on this interpretation, are the 144,000 who have been out of the way so long before.

It may be said of them who teach these things they may err; they do not say they are infallible, though the spirit that sends them is. Of its teaching we have spoken. But these are the promises, and expectations, and interpretations, by which they induce people to hear them, as especially sent by God; and their promises and expectations are themselves contradictory to one another. Who then can rely on them?

If it be asked, how then do Christians come to be deceived? I answer, by departing from the word. Beautiful things are said by these people, very attractive expressions and persuasive teaching: people are not aware of the things behind. Men perhaps of strong reasoning powers, addressed to persons not humbly and settledly taught and grounded in scripture, and persons impressed at the time, and not comparing what is said at different times, and disobediently receiving the spirit without trying it.

These great promises are held out, and solemn warnings and threatenings, if it be not received, given; and people are told they are rejecting God. Departure from the word, and want of humility and spirituality, have been the occasion, as far as I have seen, of persons who, we had trusted, were Christians, falling into it.

The very teachers may be often unaware of the extent the system goes to. The writer of this knows, that those thoroughly initiated into the system have mocked at the doctrine and idea of substitution in Christ's sacrifice. It does not follow that all are brought to this pitch, though one taught of God, and having his senses exercised to discern good and evil will most clearly see it involved in their very first principles. I will state it in the language in which Mr. Irving himself taught it, without saying that the teachers here, at any

rate, are involved so deeply in it. The consequence is obvious on the doctrine of the sinful human nature; but I state it, to show it is no arbitrary charging a consequence not drawn by others. Mr. Irving says, "The man who will put a fiction, whether legal or theological, a make-believe, into his idea of God, I have done with: he who will make God consider a person that which he is not, and act towards him as that which he is not, I have done with. Either Christ was in the condition of the sinner, was in that form of being towards which it is God's eternal law to act as he acted towards Christ, or he is not. If he was, then the point at issue is ceded; for that is what I am contending for. If he was not, and God treated him as if he had been so; if that is the meaning of their imputation or substitution, or by whatever name they call it, away with it from my theology for ever." And again, "It is no reconciliation of individuals, but a reconciliation of human nature. It is not thine, it is not mine, it is not Christ's, but it is the common unity of our being."

And I must add, however I may indulge a hope that one of the teachers here may not be so deeply, as being more recently, involved in the doctrines of Newman Street, that he did not seek to join himself to this party, till he had learnt somewhere to use the language of "the fiction of imputed righteousness;" and had published a tract, the object of which was to show that the Spirit never dwelt in us individually; and that, therefore, we had only to look for it according to the manner it was in Newman Street.

It may be well to add, that cases similar to the one before us, have occurred before, specially about 700 years ago, in which were tongues, prophecies, and more wonders than even now; but the prophecies failing in like manner; reasons given for the non-fulfilment of signs, the very opposite of all their hopes and prophecies taking place, and the whole thing came to an end; many Christians misled by it, and even more prayer, power, preaching, apparent piety, and good conduct, accompanying it. It closed (though not given up by all, for reasons for the failure were published), by a positive testimony that a given person would be raised from the dead on such a day. They went in full expectation of it, but the dead man was not raised at all. But, while it lasted, the influence was wider and more powerful than this has been; and the language, warnings, threats, and promises, just the very ditto of those now used.

It came to nothing. Here I close the ground on which a simple mind will reject it. I add a few observations only, not meaning now to discuss the whole subject. It seems to me there are two great motives which the evil one could have in misleading us in such a manner - first, to discredit the testimony concerning the coming of the Lord, which he cannot like, for it ends all his present power; and, secondly, to frighten the saints from looking continually for the Spirit of God, believing that He dwells in and amongst them, for fear of such consequences, or alarmed by such circumstances as these. If he did either of these, he gains great advantage over the saints. But neither rests on their testimony, but on the word of God: and two cautions I would give as to this. We find terrifying by the near approach of the day of the Lord to be part of the craft of the enemy, in 2 Thess. 2; and one way of its being done was "by spirit." It was presented in a way calculated to trouble and confuse them.

The Spirit of the Lord never makes it the subject of terror to Christian saints, but of great joy and comfort to them - telling them it shall not overtake them as a thief - as walking in patience, separate from evil, it is the day of their comfort, and joy, and gladness, the time of their rest, when their conflicts will be over, and they will enter into the joy of their Lord, the day when they will see Christ with joy. This is a marked difference, Whenever the day of the Lord as instant and impending is brought to terrify a Christian, give no heed to that spirit or teacher. The undoubted apostle beseeches us not. And now, observe, how or by what does he beseech us? Is it by the promise of an extraordinary presence or gift, or baptism of the Spirit which is to secure us? Not at all. He beseeches them "by the coming of the Lord, and our gathering together unto him," by which we shall be not in the day as a day of terror, but up above with Him, and appearing with

Him.

Not a word about the special and extraordinary or restored presence of the Spirit; but there is of signs and wonders accompanying evil, from which they were entirely secure, and only they who had received the love of the truth - chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. Nor is there in any part of the New Testament any reference to any restored or extraordinary presence of the Spirit, as the security of the saints in the latter day. All the Newman Street promises, and the expectations they hold out, are founded on the Spirit's being restored to the church. This is a fallacious promise, there being none such; but it is accompanied with a denial, as indeed the terms and declared hopes and gifts express, that the Comforter is with us, and abideth in us, as given to the church.

In order to receive their promises of its being restored, we must set out with a denial that He dwells with us and in us. Now, the express promise of the Lord, as contrasted with His personal stay upon earth was, that it should abide with us for ever. We must, therefore, deny the Holy Spirit, and the promise, and word of God, if we take their promise of its restoration. If we deny that we have the Spirit, we cannot expect to be kept from the deceits of the enemy. But this is not all; for it makes God a liar, Who says, "abideth for ever," and turns our unfaithfulness in using the gift (which we have, indeed, with shame to acknowledge) into a charge of unfaithfulness in God, in holding to His word, "abide with you for ever." "Let God be true, and every man a liar."

Thus, while it turns away the mind to something as a hope, even the gift and baptism of the Spirit (which is not what the apostle does, but the coming of the Lord, as that which shall take us out of the day), it leads us, in giving us this false hope, to deny it as a present reality; thus leading us to deny the very Spirit it professes to give, while the word of God, which professed He should "abide for ever," is made nought of. How cunningly does the enemy weave his web! To supply the deficiency of New Testament promise, new and fanciful interpretations of the Old are introduced, and the statements of what the church was in the apostle's time produced, to show (but most falsely, I believe) what it must be now. As example of the former I bring this Isaiah 40:1, is the restoration of the apostles now; ver. 3 of Prophets; ver. 9 of Evangelists; ver. 11 of Pastors. As to the latter, I would refer to Rom. 11:22. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: to them which fell, severity; but toward thee (i.e. the Gentiles taking the place of the Jewish branches), goodness if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." This does not look like a promise of restoration.

As to the figure, baptism of the Holy Ghost, I apprehend it rather would show that it could be but once to the church, which took place, we know, at the day of Pentecost. Any extraordinary visitation after the Jews are brought back, I do not enter upon here, as not my subject, I mean not to deny this, but this is not the place for it.

I will only add, further, that the apostle Paul, or the Spirit of God, speaking of the perilous times in the last days, gives also as the security, continuing in the things learned, and the scriptures able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. So to the elders from Ephesus, He commends them to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, etc. So Peter, in an Epistle treating of apostasy, writes, that they may have these things always in remembrance. So Jude writes, and exhorts to contend for the faith once delivered. In none is any extraordinary restoration of the Spirit adverted to, as the guard or security against delusion; while in John, the actual indwelling of the Spirit in all Christians, and individually, is repeatedly insisted upon as a great distinguishing point against being seduced. Now the spirit amongst them calls knowing what is written, and keeping it in remembrance, knowing it in the flesh;

and they deny the actual indwelling of the Spirit, so as that God thereby dwells in us. They upset or deny the securities God has given.

As to the test which they have so frequently applied to try, as they allege, the spirits, it is a mistranslation which, however comparatively immaterial in ordinary times, shows how little they could have been led by the Spirit, when the whole trial of the work rested on this, and they had a mistranslation which affected the whole test in the most material way. "Whosoever confesses [that] Jesus Christ [is] come in the flesh." Leave out the two marked words and you have the sentence. The apostle, in the Epistle, had been opening out the whole value, power, and import of the Incarnation, and then stated the Spirit given us, as a distinctive means of knowledge that the Lord was abiding in us. But then, says he, aware of the danger, do not believe every spirit - try them; and he then gives various notes of them who are of God, and specially this, to try the spirits, the acknowledging Jesus Christ come in the flesh. Devils owned abundantly that He was come in the flesh, but they never owned Him, which makes an amazing difference in the matter. The government of a country would own that a pretender was landed, but they would not own him. A rebel might own, when he could not help it, that the king was come, but it was another thing to own him: this made a loyal subject.

It is, then, owning Jesus as revealed, as incarnate, and made known by the Spirit of God, not merely owning that He is come. This the Spirit amongst them had not at all done, but quite the contrary. It has sanctioned doctrine injuring the person of Christ: doctrine, part of the statement of which was, that the generation of Christ was nothing more than the implantation of that Holy-Ghost-life, in the members of His human nature, which is implanted in us by regeneration. Now, this is just the opposite of the test here given. It militates against the whole truth of the Incarnation. The language also that Christ was clothed upon with a human nature bristling with sin, like the quills of a porcupine, which, therefore, must either have been distinct from Himself, or sin must have been in Him, again militates against it. And this doctrine it was, Mr. Irving says, which this spirit was sent to witness to, and there was not the subject of its witness till this was taught. So that if this be no true account of the Word made flesh, of Jesus the Son of God incarnate, then does the test subvert the whole thing, the authority of the spirit, not establish it. With them the test became a sanction of the sinful humanity of Christ. This failing - the taking it might prove evil, not good; and accordingly, the test was put by the chief authority in one of their churches in England, and taken fully by one who was afterwards proved by them to speak by an evil spirit, and confessed it.

One reference only remains. By the power, the presence of the Spirit is declared to be the security against being in the hour of temptation which shall come on all the world - this restored form of the Spirit, which was to be greater amongst them than the endowments of the twelve apostles. Now, I read thus in the word of God: "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and has kept my word and has not denied my name . . . . Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them which dwell upon the earth." There is not a word about the Spirit, but it is what the Spirit says. It says not great gifts and endowments, but a little strength. It says not of itself - the extraordinary presence of its restored power, but "hast kept my word - hast not denied my name - kept the word of my patience." Can any thing be more opposite to the hopes and promises held out? Here, it is this spirit which promises that it will be the security to those who trust in it in the hour of temptation which shall come on the world; but I read, that keeping the word is the security. See Rev. 3:10.

What then? Keep in communion with the Lord, cleave to Christ in spirit, leaning entirely upon Him. Hold fast by the word. Give no heed to doctrines which would bring Christ in any wise into the state of a sinner,

except vicariously, a sinless substitute for us (that, cling to fast). But try the spirit, if need come of it, not by what they who receive them say of them, but by what they, the spirits, have already said and done. And do not receive them till you have ascertained this; for false prophets, perhaps I may say many, are gone out elsewhere, and in a little measure here. You are acting in disobedience if you do not act thus, and therefore cannot expect to be kept; for as to the appearance of the thing, Satan can transform himself into an angel of light. One word more: be not terrified if they say, Take care that you do not reject God. First ascertain if it be God; as to this, I have given you some evidence here. Nor if they say, Take care if it be the Holy Ghost, you do not call it Satan; it must be one or the other - leave them to settle that. Ascertain if it be God, or His truth; and if not, reject it, whatever it be: and be in nothing terrified by them. Simply by the help of God (as bound to do by His word, or you act in direct disobedience to Him), try the spirits by what they have said or done, before you listen to them. Listening first, and trying after, is no way, if they have, already testified to any thing. It is not by the spirit directly, which they profess to speak when sent, but that they came by the authority of it. The point to be ascertained is therefore their authority; and this must be seen by what the spirit has said and done, by which they are sent. Look to that, and take and hold fast the word of God already known. J. N. D.

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