

# **Separation from False Churches Imperative**

**Henry Barrow**

**{Brief Discovery of the False Church, 1590}**

Seeing that we have received a most sure Word of the Lord our God, it behooveth us to give heed thereunto, as unto a Light that shineth in dark places, whilst we travel in the dangerous wilderness of this world. In which Word, the whole Wisdom and Council of God for our direction and instruction in all things are fully revealed unto us; so that now we are not to say in our hearts, "who shall ascend into heaven; that is, to bring Christ down from above; or who shall descend into the deep; that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead;" or who shall go over the sea, and bring it us, and cause us to hear it, that we may obey it; for lo, "the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart;" and set before our eyes for obedience to the faith; the sound of the Gospel having been long since carried forth through all the regions of the whole earth; so that no nation shall be excused, which will not serve and obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; which being proclaimed with his own blessed mouth, sealed with his own blood, written with the pen of the Holy Ghost, delivered and commanded by his holy Apostles and Prophets unto us as his Last Will and Testament; whereunto nothing may be added, nothing diminished, altered, or changed, violated, or willfully neglected according to the fleshly wisdom or worldly policy, without most heinous transgression, sacrilege, and impiety. Neither hath any angel in heaven, any mortal man, no nor the whole Church, power or prerogative to alter or neglect the least iota or tittle thereof; but God hath especially committed these Holy Oracles to the careful custody of the Church, there to be inviolably preserved, as inside of the ark of the covenant,

purely taught, expounded and delivered without corrupting, mixing, hiding, obscuring, or wresting; there to be precisely observed with all reverence and fear, without any willing or known transgression, or swerving either to the right hand or to the left, of the whole Church or any member thereof. And hereunto is the whole Church, and every particular member thereof, both jointly and in unison as one, bound together, both because they have all of them interest in the Tree and River of Life, all being bound to the maintenance of the Faith which is given, and is common to all Saints, and because they are all of them the members of Christ, and together his body and each other's members in Him; therefore are they so often by the Apostles charged and stirred up to exhort, edify, and admonish one another, to stand upon the watchtower of their faith, to scout, and observe them diligently which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which they have learned; to try the spirits, to examine the doctrine whether any man teach otherwise, and consent not unto the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness. Many weighty and grave reasons are added to induce them to be the more vigilant and careful; the doctrine being likened to the light of the eyes, to food; yea, to the life of the soul; as also error and corruption associated with darkness, leaven, poison, &c. Moreover, such teachers are compared to false and deceitful workmen, blind and unfaithful guides, to grievous and ravaging wolves, to thieves and murderers, &c., whatever counterfeit titles and sheep's clothing they take unto themselves; yet the Holy Ghost speaks evidently and everywhere warns, that these builders shall seek to destroy the temple of God, whose house and building we are, &c., for these blind guides shall seduce and mislead us in the ways of death and destruction, these thieves and wolves shall spoil and murder us; {if the Lord delivers us into their cruel hands.} Now to what extent these poisons are the spiritual death of the soul, by so much are they more carefully to be avoided, shunned and eschewed. Therefore our Savior Christ and his Apostles, as they were most vigilant and faithful, did both present and foresee diverse dangers and great evils to come, so gave they very earnest, and often warnings

hereof unto the disciples, unto the churches, commanding the porter; yea, every servant of the house to watch, to beware and to take heed, showing them that many false Christs and many false prophets should arise, showing great signs and wonders, whereby to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. He foretold them of antichrists original increase and exaltation, how he should behave himself, what havoc he should cause in the Church of God; as also of the general defection, and even of the very beginnings thereof. How immediately after the tribulation of those days; namely the destruction and desolation of the earthly and material temple, the sun should be darkened, the moon should not give her light, the stars should fall from heaven and the powers of heaven should be shaken, and the beauty thereof wrapped up as a scroll; that the whole world should be drowned in sensuality and security, as in the days of Noah, because iniquity shall be increased, and true faith scarce found upon the earth at his coming. So that if those days should not be shortened, there should no flesh be saved. Yet, that all these things must and should undoubtably come to pass, he showed it by the nearer things; namely, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple; as also confirmed yet by the truth and steadfastness of his Word, showing how the heaven and the earth should pass away, but his words should not pass away, neither should this generation pass, until all these things were fulfilled; and as far off, and by diverse types as one finds in Is.14:13,14, Nahum 3:4-7, Dan.9:27; also Is.13:10-13, Ezek.32:7, Joel 2:31, 3:14,15. But the Apostles gave much more evident and plain warning of these things, chiefly they that lived longest, and came nearest to these times. As the Apostle Paul to the Elders of the Church at Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears;" {Acts 20:28-31;} and in all his epistles

plentifully. The Apostle Peter in his Second Epistle, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction; and many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." {II Pet.2:1-2} The Apostle Jude; and John in his Epistles; but especially in that Heavenly Book of the Revelation, wherein he most lucidly describes these things, even from the original, in several visions, according to the several ages which would ensue; wherein he shows the blessed state of the Church, whilst God's glorious Throne was in the midst of the Elders, and whilst it was yet enlightened with the burning lamps of God's Spirit, and whilst that the book was received and opened of the Lamb, and whilst Christ sat upon the white horse, his own holy Word, and whilst that they remained together in that heavenly order, wherein Christ had placed and bestowed every member, and the Apostles those excellent workmen had planted and left them, being fitly coupled and joined together by every joint, for the service and help of the whole, according to the effectual power that is in the measure of every part, until Satan I say, that ancient enemy of all righteousness, had that great sword given him, wherewith he made and still shall make bloody war, and raise up grievous persecution against the woman and her seed without, and within, even whilst they slept and were negligent, sowing his darnel of errors, and tares of discord amongst them, raising up sects through the ambition and vainglory of some, drawing others into schism through pride and hypocrisy, others into heresies, through their headstrong and unbridled affections; all into his snare, through the general default of all, who slacked their duties, and kept not their orderly watch one over another, and jointly over the whole, as they were commanded and prescribed by the Apostles. But as the age that arose after Joshua and those elders of his time, was soon corrupted, and soon forgot the ordinances of their God, and the great things the Lord had done for their forefathers; so these soon fell from the Apostolic Order, and left their primitive diligence and care. The people also rendered superstitious reverence and preposterous esteem unto

their teachers and elders, resigned up all things, even their duty, interest, liberty and prerogatives into their hands; suffering them to alter and dispose of all things after their own lusts, without inquiry or controversy; whereupon the true pattern of Christ's Testament, so highly and with so great charge commissioned by the apostles unto the fidelity of the whole Church, was soon neglected and cast aside, especially by these evil workmen, these unsent hirelings, who loved to have the preeminence, and sought to draw an absolute power into their own hands; procuring unto themselves, those positions in the church as servants of Christ, and turning them into swelling titles of fleshly pomp and worldly dignity. Thus wrought the mystery of iniquity; yea, so far were many of them carried away with a vain opinion and false estimation of the excellency of their gifts, as they under feigned pretenses of doing good unto others, sought also under this cloak a jurisdiction and regency over other congregations also, which was easily obtained, the people through the just judgments of God being now so bewitched and blinded with their sweet tongues, that they easily consented. - Thus Antichrist being now established and fortified in the midst of his strongholds, he now receives the grand charter of his prerogative, even the dragon, his power, throne, and authority. He now boldly opens his mouth against God, blaspheming the Tabernacle of Christ, and them that dwell therein; innovating and changing all things after his own lust, the ministry, government, order and worship; thus exalting himself against all that is called God, and sitting in the temple of God as God, showing himself that he is God, causing all men to worship his image, to receive his mark, to buy his wares, &c., bringing forth his harlot upon the stage of the world, stately mounted upon his beastly power, pompously arrayed, and gorgeously decked and adorned, the more to allure and entice; whose cup of fornications was carried far and near, to many nations, people, and tongues, so that the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, the inhabitants of the earth were drunk with the wine of her fornication, which she conveyed unto them by the hands of her proselyting merchants, who are waxen rich with the abundance of her pleasures. Yet in all this defection, corruption, and apostasy hath God still reserved a seed, a poor

small remnant, who have been marked with the mark of God on their foreheads, and have been preserved from the sting of these scorpions, the plague of these locusts, which have had light in the midst of these hellish fogs, {"but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings;" Ex.10:23;} which have not bought, nor sold with the mark of the beast, neither drunk of the whore's cup, neither have been defiled with her fornications; but have been the Lamb's called, chosen, and faithful soldiers, following the Lamb in white array wheresoever he goeth, who leadeth them from faith to faith. These by the light of the Word, read the harlot's misery written in her forehead, discover her skirts, and all her abominations, and by that same light make her known to be that spiritual Babylon, where the servants of Christ are kept in servitude from the practice of his Word; where the true temple, his Church, and all the vessels and instruments thereof, are utterly ruined, defaced, profaned and trodden underfoot. These also do show by the same light, even from the ancient prophecies, her, and all her synagogues, to become the very habitation of Devils, the hold of all foul and wicked spirits, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. - It behooveth us therefore, whilst yet God vouchsafeth us time, carefully by the light of God's Word, to examine our ways, and to reflect upon our condition, whether we be in that broad way that leadeth to destruction, amongst those multitudes over whom the whore sitteth and reigneth; or in the straight and narrow way which leadeth unto everlasting life, with Christ's little flock and marked soldiers, whom the Lamb leadeth and ruleth? Whether we be in that great defection, in that spiritual Babylon under Antichrist and the beast; or whether we be in Mount Zion, in the spiritual Jerusalem, where the commandments of God are kept, and the faith of Jesus? - Therefore let us, for the appeasing and assurance of our consciences, give heed to the Word of God, and by that golden reed measure our temple, our altar, and our worshipers, even by this Rule whereby the apostles, those excellent workmen, planted and built the first churches; {"Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord;"

Eph.2:20,21;} for as there is but One Truth, so whatsoever is diverse more or less than that One Truth is false and to be repented of. Henry Barrow {Brief Discovery of the False Church, 1590}

**Henry Barrow or Barrowe {1550? – 1593} was an early Non-Conformist, and Separatist from the Established Church of England, who cried out against her abominations, was consequently jailed, and after a long six year imprisonment, was then executed by hanging for his Faithful Confession of Christ.**