

THE DEPARTURE OF A PROPHET

By C.W. Wood

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In December of 1965, God saw fit to take home His Prophet, William Marrion Branham. Many were his enemies as he crossed our nation and the nations of the world, preaching the soon coming of the Lord. But, it was not only to preserve Brother Branham from his enemies and to give him rest, that God withdrew His tired and faithful servant.

There were precious results to be brought forth that few, if any, understood in those dark days of his departure. As men rejoice in the freedom which truth brings, they are inclined to lift up those whom God uses to break the chains of error. Satan seeks to divert men's thoughts and affections from God, and fix them upon human agencies, to honor the mere instrument, and to ignore the Hand that directs them.

The work that God would do through His earthly servants is often retarded by this spirit coming on the supporters of God's true messengers. Our Lord desired this message and this work to receive, not the impress of man, but of God. The eyes of men had been turned toward Brother William Branham as the expounder of truth, and so he was. He was removed that all eyes might be directed to the eternal Author of all truth, Jesus Christ.

Brother Branham's death was a matter of great concern to his family, friends, and followers. Inquiries concerning him came from all over the world. His enemies boasted that God had removed him to stop his false doctrines, but they were soon to learn that his absence

accomplished a work which his presence would have failed to do.

After a few years of silence following Brother Branham's death, other laborers began to feel new responsibility. Now that their great prophet-leader was removed and God had poured healing balm into their grieving hearts, they pressed forward with new faith and earnestness to do all in their power so that the work, so nobly done, might be continued.

His enemies, who had seemed pleased at his death, were now more agitated by his absence as the message he had brought was reproduced and distributed throughout the whole earth. The established religions saw with discomfort that his teaching against their walls of separation was not dying out, but rather, was intensified through his followers. Though at first content at the death of William Branham, they now sought to cast shadows of doubt concerning his life and ministry.

The wildest rumors were circulated in an attempt to discredit him and his message. Those who had been enraged against God's prophet when he was alive were now filled with concern at his death, as they saw increasing numbers join the cause of that heroic man who had at such fearful odds defended the Word of God. The message was

constantly gaining in strength. The seeds that God's prophet had sown sprang up everywhere the soil was found to be right in a human heart.

But God also allowed Satan to move, who now attempted what he has tried in every other true move of God, which is to deceive and destroy the people by sending them a counterfeit in place of the true message. Just as there were false Christs in the first century, so there arose false prophets in this century. A few men, deeply affected by wrong spirits, imagined themselves to have received special revelation from Heaven. They claimed to have been divinely commissioned to carry forward a work only started by William Branham.

In truth, these men were undoing the very work which he had accomplished. They rejected the fundamental principle of the message, which is the Word of God as the all sufficient rule of faith and practice. For that unerring guide they substituted the changeable, uncertain standard of their own feelings and impressions. By this act of setting aside the great detector of error and falsehood, God's Word, the way is opened for Satan to control minds as best pleased himself.

But even this seeming disaster is a part of our Lord's Master Plan. He was not surprised nor

disappointed at the turn of events following His prophet's death. Before the foundation of the world, He had made a plan, and as in the life of His Son, He saw His plan completed, so in the life of our Brother William Branham was His plan completed.

What a monument to our God's power and faithfulness are these words of scripture in Daniel 4:35, "**And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His Hand, or say what doest Thou.**"

The preaching of Brother Branham had caused some people all around the world to feel the need of reform, but now some really good people are being misled by the pretensions of these new, self-made prophets. It is true that there are spirits of no ordinary kind on some of these men, but what spirits are they? Many in the message, especially overseas, now wonder what course to follow. On the one hand, let us beware of quenching the spirit of God, and on the other of being tricked by Satan.

We still have God's Word, which declares, "**By their fruits ye shall know them.**" The fruit of these new prophets soon becomes apparent when the minds of the people are diverted from the Word, or else prejudice against it. The men who think themselves competent to lead the people succeed only in bringing them to the brink of disaster; to leave the written Word is disaster.

The opposition of the denominational churches had not caused the followers of the Message so great concern and distress as they now experienced

from the professed friends of it. From these professed friends, have now risen its worst enemies. The very truths that have, in the past, brought peace to troubled hearts have now been made the cause of confusion in many places.

In bringing the world the last day message, Brother William Branham had been urged forward by the Spirit of God, and had been carried beyond himself. He had, by no means, purposed to take the position that God gave him. He had been only the instrument in the hands of infinite power, as God revealed Himself through human flesh. He had said, I had rather face God as a quitter than as one who caused the people to think more of a man than they should. And he did at one time quit the ministry for this reason. Never-the-less, God's plan cannot be changed and he was compelled to finish the work he had started, though he often trembled for the results of it.

The true doctrines, as taught by William Branham, have not caused any evil, but throughout the world today many are charging him with the flagrant error now being taught by some so-called followers. The work was not his, but God's, and God will not allow it to be corrupted by superstition or fanaticism. His called ones will see it aright.

The generality of these men who teach error are men of hasty and violent temper, who while claiming to be especially illuminated from Heaven, will not endure the slightest contradiction, or even the kindest correction. Taking upon themselves supreme authority they require everyone, without question, to acknowledge their claims.

May God in His mercy preserve us from teachers who know not

how to be humble and repentant themselves, and who forget that reform should begin first with themselves. Many of these teachers are ambitious to obtain position and influence, and are unwilling to be second to anyone.

A very grave danger is seen in some of the teaching that is leading people to throw off the restraints of all civil authority, and to break away from all control, thus giving vent to their prejudices and passions. While history clearly shows governments to eventually become anti-Christ when left so long, yet it is the Christian's duty to obey the laws of the land, so far as they do not contradict God's Word.

And this was the doctrine of God's prophet, William Branham. His teaching has not been the cause of the rebellion we are now seeing in some supposed message followers. The work of Heaven should not be degraded by being classed with this fanaticism. How often are censure and reproach cast upon God's true servants because they stand fearlessly for truth. Often men who are agents of Satan are praised and flattered, and even given the highest seats of influence, while those who should be respected and followed are left to stand alone, under suspicion and distrust.

Counterfeit holiness and make-believe sanctification is still doing its work of deception. Under the guise of the End-Time Message, it exhibits the same spirit of error as seen in the days of our Lord Jesus. It diverts minds from the scriptures and leads men to follow their own impressions and feelings rather than yield obedience to the laws of God.

Fearlessly, did William Branham defend the gospel from

the attacks that came from every quarter. The Word of God in his mouth proved itself a mighty weapon in every conflict. With that Word that had been entrusted to him, he warred against every man-made teaching in the denominational world. Even the rational philosophy of the great scholars lay bent and broken before this one with a seventh grade education.

Each of the opposing church groups was, in their own way, setting aside the Holy Scriptures and exalting human wisdom as the source of truth. True Christianity was to be found in God's prophet, William Branham, in that he received the Word of God as the *great treasure house of inspired truth*, and the final test of all inspiration.

Many ministers in nominal churches are now very alarmed that the common people who follow Brother Branham's teaching are able to discuss with them the precepts of God's Word and that their own ignorance is regularly exposed; the weapons of their carnal reasoning being made powerless against the Sword of the Spirit. The systems have summoned all their power to stop and put down God's message, but the more they resist, the greater becomes the desire of God's own to know the truth. The more the systems condemn the prophet, the greater is the anxiety of the elect to know what he really taught.

William Branham's message was welcomed in the hearts of the poor, the humble, and the outcasts, for these, the Bible becomes a new book. The study of the scriptures in the light of God's revelation to a prophet, is working a mighty change in the minds and hearts of these simple people.

Happily, William Branham had persuaded his people that their faith ought to be founded on the oracles of Holy Writ. Now, in these last hours before the coming of the Lord, crowds gather to hear the truth preached by those who have been enlightened through his ministry. Most of these men have not been to man-made schools of theology. One is reminded of John the Baptist who came out of the wilderness, uncouth to the church world in his informal dress and strange food, yet he knew who Messiah was, while the high priest knew not the Christ.

The painful ignorance of some great educated ministers has been made apparent as their arguments are met by the simple teaching of God's revealed Word. Women and children, lay members and secular workers, following the prophet's teaching, have a better knowledge of the scriptures than do the learned doctors of divinity.

These humble people have found in the message food for their souls, and have turned away from those who so long fed them on the worthless husks of human tradition.

Yes, the death of God's Prophet, William Branham, was ordained of God, even as was his life. Though many questioned the way in which he was taken, and many followers wondered at the timing of God in taking him. His death was as much a part of God's plan as had been his life, or else we must believe that God was out of control for a season. Truth is, our God has never for an instant been out of control, and all things are working together for good to those who love the Lord and are the called according to His purpose.

Now, while this great servant of Christ enjoys rest from the

terrible, hard, burdens he experienced on earth, his message burns like fire in the hearts of those ordained to hear. Gone are the sounds of his footsteps from the churches of America where a precious few let him come, but his voice is still heard by tape recording as he pleads for repentance and warns of a soon coming judgment.

Dear Friend, do you know the Christ that this mighty prophet made so real to those who heard and saw his ministry? He broke the Bread of Life to hungry souls, in that he lifted up Jesus Christ before them as above popes, kings, presidents, and the mighty men of Earth. He did not seek glory for himself, but hid behind the man of Calvary, presenting Christ as the only hope for lost and dying sinners. Though the prophet is gone, his Christ still calls individuals to repentance! Will you come?

The above tract was written by Brother Wood some ten years ago. Having rediscovered it in the files, it was thought to be even more needed today than then. We are living in the most solemn period of this world's history. The destiny of teeming multitudes is now being decided. This earth's time, as we have known it, is so close to being over that a man's decision against serving his God could well be his last chance. Our future life in eternity depends on the decisions we make today. Tomorrow could be too late.

Also, the salvation of other souls depends upon the course that we Message-Believing Christians are now taking! Every follower of Christ should earnestly inquire, "Lord, what will Thou have me to do?" We must study the Word daily for ourselves, for the danger of false

clergy is all around us, both in and outside of our beloved Message. With the many scriptural warnings against such, we wonder why the people are so willing to commit the keeping of their souls to the clergy. Today, there are thousands of religious professors who can give no other reason for the points of doctrine they hold, other than that they were so taught by their religious leaders.

They pass by the Holy Scriptures as if it were a book of fiction and place full confidence in the words of their ministers, many of whom have not been born-again themselves! When Jesus of Nazareth came to preach, the common folks heard Him gladly, but the Chief of the Priesthood and the leading religious men were determined to condemn and destroy His teaching. Though they were baffled in their efforts to find fault in His life, and though they could feel the divine power that flowed from Him and heard the wisdom of His mouth, yet they encased themselves in prejudice and rejected the clearest evidence of His Messiah-ship.

These enemies of Christ were men whom the people had been taught from childhood to

reverence and trust. "How is it," they asked, "that our rulers and learned scribes do not believe on Jesus? Would not these pious men receive Him if He were the Christ? And, they also rejected Him in order to follow their clergy." It was the leadership of such men, holy, educated, and trusted, that led the Jewish nation to reject their Redeemer.

The spirit that motivated those priests and rulers is still on Earth today motivating preachers who make a high profession of knowledge and piety. They refuse to examine the scriptures concerning the special truths for our day. They point to their numbers, their wealth, their education and popularity, and look with contempt on the small, unpopular groups who stay with the truths that Paul taught, regardless of the cost.

A lack of moral courage to step out of the worn trail of religion is again binding the masses with chains of error. When God sends to men warnings so important that they are proclaimed by the same Pillar of Fire that came to Saul (Paul) on the road to Damascus, then He requires every person with reasoning powers to heed the Message. The fearful warnings of judgment for taking the Mark of

the Beast, and the worship of his Image, should lead all men to a diligent study of the scriptures to discover what this Mark is and how they are to avoid receiving it. But, the masses will not attend the little Holiness groups who are receiving revelation of the Word and preaching it. It is often because the Holiness preaching, if followed, would interfere with the desires of their worldly, sin-loving hearts. By staying in their own systems, their clergy supplies them with the deceptions which they love.

But, God will have a people on Earth who will maintain the Bible truths. The opinions of learned men, the creeds, and decisions of ecclesiastical councils will not sway them from it. As numerous and as different as their doctrines are, not one of them should be regarded as having the full truth. The very fact of their great popularity stands as spiritual evidence that they are wrong! Never has the truth of God's Word been popular with the worldly religious groups. Before accepting any doctrinal teaching, we should demand, "Thus saith the Scriptures" in its support. Amen!

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