

Ministry of Heresies

#0862

Study given by W.D. Frazee—May 20, 1961

Romans 8:28. I suppose that this is one of the most quoted, most often repeated texts in the Bible, and properly so. There's a great deal of encouragement in it, is there? Shall we read together, read together the words of scripture?

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” Romans 8:28.

What do all things do? They work together. As we view them here in this world, they seem to be working at cross-purposes, don't they? But all things are working together, and they're working together for what? For good; but not for good for everybody. Good for those who love the Lord. Would the Lord like to have them work together for good to everybody? Yes, He would. Having given man the power of choice, it rests with man as to whether everything that's working together is working together for his personal good or not. But we must never lose sight of the eventual triumph of God's purpose, the eventual carrying out of God's plan. And we must never for a minute think that those forces which seem to bring defeat are nevertheless being used by God. All things are working together for good.

Notice how Paul speaks of this in 2 Corinthians 13:8. Paul's “nothing” in this text is quite as strong as his “all things” in the text we've just read. One is a complement of the other.

“For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth”
2 Corinthians 13:8.

Isn't that wonderful? Even the Devil can't do anything really against the truth. Now, he's trying all the time. And here in this world he seems to be having his way a great deal of the time. But this morning let's look behind the scenes a bit. God is working out His will. And we can do nothing, and no one else can do anything, against the truth, but for the truth.

Take another text on this, Psalm 76:10. In the great crisis that is ahead of the church (perhaps I ought to say into which it is even now entering), we shall need the courage, as well as the wisdom, that comes from reminding ourselves of these promises and appreciating their full import.

“Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shall Thou restrain” Psalm 76:10.

God uses even the wrath of man to praise Him. Now man shouldn't get any credit for that. No. But God should get a great deal of credit for using even the plans of His enemies and the wrath of the dragon to work out His will. God should get a great deal of credit for that.

Isaiah 54:15-17. Speaking of those that gather against the remnant church in the hour of peril:

“Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. Behold, I have created the smith that blows the coals in the fire, and that brings forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shall condemn...”
Isaiah 54:15-17.

God says to His people, “You see all those out there gathering together against you? Don't worry. They're not on My side. But not one weapon that they form against you is going to prosper. Remember, I've created them. I've created every one of them. They're creatures, not creators. They're subjects, not kings. And no matter what they do, no matter what they may seem to do to the church of God and to the truth of God, no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.”

Well, I'm glad for these wonderful promises this morning. Let's review them now a moment. What was that first one? “All things work together for good to them that love God”; and the one in 2 Corinthians? “We can nothing against the truth, but for the truth.” And Psalm 76:10, what happens to the wrath of man? It praises God. And if there should be any wrath that wouldn't praise Him, what does He do with it? He restrains that.

And now this one; who is it that's created? The smith that blows the coals in the fire and brings forth an instrument with which to harass, or to attempt to destroy, the church of God. Who is it that created him? God did. God's going to take care of him, in other words. God will not allow him to do anything without in advance weighing the matter and seeing as only divine wisdom can see that some good purpose can be accomplished by it.

Now remember in all this, this is no credit to Satan. This is no credit to any of his devils that work with him. And it's no credit to human beings that fall to his devices. No. No. They must all suffer in the final judgment for their rebellion against God, and for the specious things which they have advocated in advance. All of that they must meet God in judgment over. They are as guilty, watch this point, as though they had

succeeded in

subverting the truth of God and unseating God from His throne. They are just as guilty as though they were successful.

But nevertheless, God is to be glorified as we rejoice in this wonderful fact that not one of them is going to succeed. Jesus says, "He that sent Me is with Me, and no one is able to pluck My children out of My hand." (See John 10:28-29.) I'm glad for that this morning, aren't you?

I've been led to study this, dear friends, as I have contemplated this statement from the messenger of the Lord in an article from *Signs of the Times*, January 6, 1898. This is a thrilling statement. It's one of those inspiring statements that show that it was an inspired author that was writing:

"It is thought by some to be a misfortune when erroneous theories are advanced, but the Lord has said, 'All things work together for good to them that love God.' The contention among the Corinthians made it necessary for Paul to write his wonderful epistles to them" *Signs of the Times*, January 6, 1898.

Aren't we glad we have First and Second Corinthians? Yes.

"If the Gentiles had not backslidden from the faith, [this is speaking about Galatia] Paul would not have written, 'I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you out of the grace of Christ unto another Gospel, which is not another.' It was a misapplication of the Scriptures, to prove falsehood and error true" *Ibid.*

Are we glad that we have the epistle to the Galatians? What caused it to be written? Oh, there was heresy there in Galatia. Paul was meeting it:

"If the Thessalonians had not misinterpreted the instruction they received, they would not have entertained the belief that the Lord was immediately to be revealed in the clouds of heaven, thus making it necessary for Paul to present the truth as it is in Jesus, leaving on record truth important for all time" *Ibid.*

You remember how in 1 Thessalonians Paul in writing vividly of the coming of Jesus said, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds..."? The Thessalonians read that first letter and they were just thrilled with the prospect that in just a little while Christ was going to come.

Time went on. Some of their loved ones died. Some of them were inclined to be a bit discouraged. Paul wrote them another letter. You remember there in 2 Thessalonians

2, he pointed out that before the coming of Jesus there would be the great apostasy. Paul knew it because Daniel had foretold it.

So we see, friends, that 2 Thessalonians was given because of a misunderstanding. And 1 Thessalonians had been written because of some misunderstandings, erroneous theories.

“And so opposition against light and truth called from Christ a clearer definition of the truth. Every time that error is advanced, it will work for good to those who sincerely love God; for when the truth is shadowed by error, those whom the Lord has made His sentinels will make the truth sharper and clearer. They will search the Scriptures for evidence of their faith. The advancement of error is the call for God's servants to arouse, and place the truth in bold relief” *Ibid*.

And so this morning I want to study with you the ministry of heresies. The ministry of heresies. Why God allows erroneous theories to come to His church, either from without, or from within, because the Scriptures clearly teach that both can happen, and both *do* happen. Paul said, “...grievous wolves shall 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.” Acts 20:29-30.

So, my question: why does God allow these things to happen? Why does God allow His church to be rent and torn with schisms, faction, contention, discussion over this, that, and the other thing? Why is the unity of the church threatened at times by these things? Ah, you can see all ready from the texts we've read, God has a purpose. God must have a purpose or He wouldn't allow it.

This morning I want to bring to you 3 great purpose accomplished through the ministry of heresies, 3 objectives that God has in mind in allowing heresy, erroneous theories of various kinds to find their way to you and me.

Could God stop them? Oh yes, He could stop them. Why does He let them come? Why does He let the mail be flooded with this thing and that thing? Why does He allow people to come with this message and that message and another message? Why is it, friends? The ministry of heresy, as we study this subject, will give us the answer, at least 3 answers to this, and in your study, you may find some more.

The first is to sift out the false-hearted. Let's turn to 1 John, the second chapter, and we will read what the Scripture says on this:

“Little children, it is the last time...” 1 John

2:18. The American Revised says it is the last “hour.”

“Little children, it is the last [hour]: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last [hour]. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” 1 John 2:18-19.

There you have it. What happened? They went out. Why? That it might be manifest. What does ‘manifest’ mean here? Clear, revealed. Notice how it’s put by the servant of the Lord in Vol. 5 of the *Testimonies*, page 707. This is a wonderful statement on heresies:

“God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, page 707.

What do the heresies do? They sift the church. What happens to the chaff? It’s separated from the wheat. And never forget, my friends, that as the winds blow, whether they be the winds of heresies or the winds of persecution, it’s the chaff that goes out. It’s the wheat that remains.

“God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat” *Ibid.*

Now that, as the servant of the Lord says in *Selected Messages*, is a terrible ordeal. And oh how sad we are as we see the sifting going on. And yet, as Ellen White said long ago as an early sifting took place back in the 1850s, she wrote:

“The sieve is moving. Let us not say: Stay Thy hand, O God. The church must be purged, and it will be”
Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, page 100.

The church must be sifted and purified, and one of the agencies that God allows, that in a sense, as we’re studying this morning, God uses is heresies. Heresies have their ministry to act as a pruning knife in the hand of God to separate from the living vine the dead branches, to blow the chaff from the threshing floor of the church that the wheat may remain.

“God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, page 507.

And remember my brother; do not fool yourself, if there is a false hearted one something will come along that will get you.

A number of years ago I was visiting in Florida and a friend who had an orange grove took me over to the packing sheds where all those great truckloads of oranges come in. And he took me through the place where they were sorting the oranges, grading them according to size. It was quite interesting to watch. As they passed over a certain place, there were little holes and the tiniest oranges, they dropped through those holes. And presently as the oranges went along on this belt there was another place. The holes were a little larger, and the little larger oranges, they went through there, and so on.

I want to tell you something, dear friends: just because you are not fooled with one heresy, be careful how you pat yourself on the back. In my imagination I have looked at those oranges coming along, and I've heard them saying, shall I say the medium-sized oranges, "We're not going to fall through. We've already been through this one and this one and this one, and we didn't fall through. We're going right on through." You haven't been clear through the sieve yet.

"God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat" *Ibid*.

I say to you, friends, our only safeguard against being sifted out by some heresy is to be sure that we are anchored in Jesus and His truth, and that we love God and His church more than we love ourselves and our own opinions. Some of the heresies that the Devil brings in are so crude and bungling that it is amazing to me that they fool anybody. I could mention one or two that have arisen over the last 20, 30, 40 years as I have observed them.

But, ah, the Devil is not through yet. And God is not through. The Devil is not through the work of bringing heresies among God's people. And God is not through with allowing him to. Some far more subtle, more seductive, more difficult to discern and detect than we've ever yet seen are doubtless on the planning boards of the Devil's corporation. Remember that every one that sees the light will have to have God's permission before it gets to us. But, oh, remember that the Devil is studying your mind and character, and if there is anything false-hearted there, he will design something that will sift you out.

Now, let's turn over to 2 Kings. I want to study with you another purpose of the ministry of heresies. I trust that God will use this to bless some hearts who might feel secure, who might be secure as far as theology is concerned. 2 Kings 9 and 10 tell the story of Jehu. You remember about Jehu, don't you? He was the king that was raised up by the Lord to deal with the apostasy of Ahab and Jezebel. You remember that Ahab led by Jezebel had led all Israel into Baal worship. I say all Israel. Not quite all; there was a remnant, 7,000 that never bailed the knee to Baal.

But Elijah's message had aroused some in Israel and finally the great decision day had come at Mt. Carmel. The falsehood of Baal worship had been exposed. The prophets of Baal were slain. But Elijah failed in the crisis hour that night. In the hour of discouragement he fled for his life because of the threat of Jezebel.

You remember when God, after a period of weeks, was finally able to get his ear, He sent him back from the cave at Horeb to carry on the work of reformation that was begun in that wonderful event at Carmel.

Now hold this in 2 Kings 9 and 10, but turn back to 1 Kings 19:15-17, and you'll find that at the time God gave Elijah his commission, He told him to anoint three people as he went back. One was Hazael to be king of Israel, we know he was a great persecutor and opposer of God's people, and then here was Jehu, the son of Nimshi, who was to be anointed king over Israel, and Elisha, the son of Shaphat, to be prophet in Elijah's room.

Well, it's not difficult to see why God would call for Elisha. But we wonder, perhaps, at God's calling Elijah to anoint Hazael and to anoint Jehu. I shall not study either Elisha or Hazael with you this morning. It's an interesting study, these 3 characters. But I would like to have you note just in passing this character of Jehu.

My point is, according to 1 Kings 19; he was anointed by the prophet of God. God Himself arranged for Jehu to be king of Israel. What for? To meet the apostasy of Baal worship, for although the prophets of Baal had been slain by Elijah, Jezebel didn't stop her work merely because of that. She arose in her fury. And so we find that all through the lifetime of Ahab and his sons that Baal worship continued. And so finally Jehu was raised up to destroy the dynasty of Ahab and to root out Baal worship in Israel.

Now, he did it. You can read about it here in 2 Kings 9 and 10. He did it with a vengeance. His sword just went right and left as he cut off the worshipers of Baal. There are 2 or 3 texts that I'd like to have you notice as we get this picture of Jehu; and then I want to read you some inspired comments on Jehu. 2 Kings 9:20. The king of Israel, seeing in the distance a chariot coming, had sent out a messenger to find out who it was. And as the watchman watched, he gave this answer to the king:

"And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the *driving is like* the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he drives furiously" 2 Kings 9:20.

In other words, Jehu was a driver. And he has descendants today, my friends. Jehu was a driver. He was furious against the apostasy and heresy of Ahab, and rightly so. But ah, my friends, there was something that he lacked. He lacked love. He was full of zeal. Turn over to 2 Kings 10:15-16. Here's another picture of his driving in the

chariot. He's a driver. He's going places. He's going to get rid of Baal worship. Watch him in action:

“And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot. And he [Jehu] said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot. And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spoke to Elijah” 2 Kings 10:15-17.

Was he doing God's work? Yes, he was. Was he doing it in God's way? No. He went, and God was using him. Don't forget that. Baal worship needed to be rooted out, and Jehu was the man for the job. But I don't expect to see Jehu in heaven, friends.

Now why am I reading this this morning? I'll tell you why, friends. I'm reading it because I read something here in the book *Testimonies to Ministers*:

“All who are longing for some engagement that will represent Jehu riding furiously will have opportunity enough to distinguish themselves” *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, page 333.

Jehu's chariot is still riding. And like the Jehu of old, Jehu today will stop the chariot just long enough to say, “Is your heart right as my heart is? If it is, get in and ride with me. We are going to go places and destroy Baal worship in Israel. Get in and ride with me in the chariot and I will show you my zeal for the Lord.”

“All who are longing for some engagement that will represent Jehu riding furiously will have opportunity enough to distinguish themselves” *Ibid*.

Now let me read another inspired comment from the Ellen G. White statements in the closing pages of the commentary:

“Men are slow to learn the lesson that the spirit manifested by Jehu will never bind hearts together. It is not safe for us to bind our interests with a Jehu religion; for this will result in bringing sadness of heart upon God's true workers. God has

not given to any of His servants the work of punishing those who will not heed His warnings and reproofs. When the Holy

Spirit is abiding in the heart, it will lead the human agent to see his own defects of character, to pity the weakness of others, to forgive as he wishes to be forgiven” S.D.A. *Bible Commentary*, Vol. 2, page 1038.

And so this morning I would echo the words of *Testimonies to Ministers* page

501: “Let not men yield to the burning desire to become great leaders, or to the desire independently to devise and lay plans for themselves and for the work of God”
Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, page 501.

Yes, part of the ministry of heresies is to give opportunity for Jehu to manifest himself. But because we see those in the church rising up militantly to defend the truth, to get out there swords, to ride in the chariot zealously is no evidence, that they will be with God’s people at the finish.

Note the warning in Vol. 6, pages 400-401:

“As trials thicken around us, both separation and unity will be seen in our ranks. Some who are now ready to take up weapons of warfare will in times of real peril make it manifest that they have not built upon the solid rock; they will yield to temptation. Those who have had great light and precious privileges, but have not improved them, will, under one pretext or another, go out from us” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, page 400.

There’s more than one way to get out, friends. We can get out the way Ahab got out. We can get out the way Jehu got out. God keep us from either path of peril. What do you say? But remember, God was using them all. God was using them all.

So while part of the ministry of heresies is to sift the church, blow out the false-hearted, part of the ministry of heresies is to give Jehu an opportunity to manifest himself, to show the spirit that is in his heart, to ride in the chariot furiously, to drive against apostasy, and to give all who like that sort of approach an opportunity to ride in the chariot with him.

Now there’s a third ministry of heresies. Let’s turn to Acts 17:11. Oh I wish that every one of us here is this morning might be one of those for whom the ministry of heresies accomplishes this third purpose—to lead us to study the Word of God. Concerning those in Berea it says:

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and

searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so”
Acts 17:11.

In Vol. 5 of the *Testimonies*, page 707, I read:

“And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness.”

...“The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition and worship they know not what” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, page 707.

So you see, one of the reasons that God allows erroneous theories, heresies of various kinds to come in, is to lead us to go to the Word of God and study for ourselves what God has said. Is that right? And if heresies accomplish that, has not some good been accomplished? If erroneous theories lead us to get out the books, the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, and dig into the inspired counsels, cannot we say, “Truly, the wrath of man praises God?” That’s right.

You know, we need more than a superficial knowledge of the Bible. Satan is adept at quoting Scripture. When he went to Jesus in the wilderness of temptation, and with the first temptation he met an answer from Christ from the word, Satan said, “Well, I can do that too.” And so with the second temptation, he brought it from the Scripture. Do you remember? That’s right.

Mark the point. Merely because a man quotes Scripture doesn’t mean that he’s teaching truth. Merely because he gets out leaflets and mimeographed material that is liberally sprinkled, perhaps made up entirely, of quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy, that doesn’t mean that he is an angel of light, my friends. Oh no.

May I say to you, and this may be the most important point in my sermon for some heart here this morning, the thing we need to study is the original sources, the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. I want to repeat that. The thing we need to study is the original sources, the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

Note this statement in *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, page 298:

“Perilous times are before us. Everyone who has a knowledge of the truth should awake and place himself, body, soul, and spirit, under the discipline of God. The enemy is on our track. We must be wide awake, on our guard against him. We must put on the whole armor of God. We must follow the directions given through the spirit of prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His word. He has spoken to us through the testimonies to the church and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy.”

...“I beseech those who are laboring for God not to accept the spurious for the genuine. Let not human reason be placed where divine, sanctifying truth should be...Let not erroneous theories receive countenance from the people who ought to be standing firm on the platform of eternal truth” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, page 298.

So I appeal to everyone this morning, my dear friends, let us understand these 3 reasons why God permits heresies: first, to sift out the false-hearted; second, to reveal the hard-driving spirit of those who would deal with heresies and apostasy through Jehu-like methods; and third, that the true-hearted may go to the Word of God and the Testimonies and study as never before the original sources to know what God says, as He said it, not as twisted and reassembled and put together in human documents, but oh, to get truth in its setting, my friends. There it shines in its native luster and its native purity, un-shadowed by the error of human imagination.

Remember, friends, down through the history of this movement there have been men, shall I say good men, educated men, experienced men, that have lost their way and fallen on the dark mountains of unbelief because the enemy succeeded in leading them away from truth even while they thought they were pursuing truth with all their hearts. We need God. We need the help of our brethren. We need the Holy Spirit. We need to dig deep into the written word and the inspired commentary of the Spirit of Prophecy.

In *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, page 273 is this statement:

“Our people need to understand the oracles of God; they need to have a systematic knowledge of the principles of revealed truth, which will fit them for what is coming upon the earth and prevent them from being carried about by every wind of doctrine” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, page 273.

That's it. Why, just the other day I heard of someone who was teaching that, according to certain prophecies in the Bible, it would be just so long from a certain event in the future to another event in the future. And even some of our own dear people are accepting that. Do you know why? Well, they lack what this speaks of as a "systematic knowledge" of the principles of revealed truth. One who is really acquainted with the teaching with the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy would know that prophetic time closed when? October 22, 1844. That's when the prophetic periods closed, right there. And all endeavors to bring some of those prophetic periods down here today and satisfy the curious mind with the knowledge of just how long it is going to be between one event and another is time worse than wasted.

But listen. The fact that there are those and many, many other heresies, I've mentioned that one only as an illustration. The purpose of my sermon is not to deal with that subject. The purpose of all these things, why God allows them, is to get you and me to study into the original sources and to get a systematic knowledge of the principles of truth, to see how the different principles of truth fit together, to get them woven into our mind into a tapestry of truth, to get them built in our minds into a solid temple of truth, to have on every piece of the armor, for we shall need it in the battle in which we are now engaged.

We are living; we are dwelling, in a grand and awful time, in an age on ages telling. To be living is sublime. Oh friends, that God may solemnize our hearts that we may not be so wise in our own conceits, so sure in our own opinions or in the opinions of others, that we fail, as little children, to get down on our knees and say, "Dear Lord, there is much I don't know. But I want to know You and Your way and I want to be kept from the delusions ahead." We shall need to pray that prayer, my friends, again and again. We shall need to intercede with God. We shall need to know, for we're in the time and entering into it more and more when, as Vol. 5, page 80 says, "Every wind of doctrine will be blowing; every wind of doctrine. How sweet it will be to be hidden in the cleft of the rock with Jesus.

Remember, He gave His life that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, understanding His truth and living it out.

Shall we bow our heads?

Precious Lord, seal to our hearts the truths we have read from Thy Holy Word this morning. Rightly interpret them to our souls we pray. Forbid that the enemy of souls should twist and pervert and distort that which we have presented. Oh, grant that in humility we shall sense our need of Thy Divine Spirit, sense our need of the counsel of our brethren, sense our need of all that God can do for us to keep us from

the
devices of the enemy and to prepare us for the coming crisis. We ask it in Jesus'
name, Amen.

[Praise session follows]

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