

'IF THE TRUMPET MAKE AN UNCERTAIN SOUND.'

Br. Irwin Doran

We are living in the day when the trumpet should be blowing loud and clear in the land of anti- typical Israel. God has seen to it that the whole world is hearing the trumpet of liberty, marking the beginning of the 'times of restitution of all things.' In Zion also, the trumpet should be blowing loud and clear. But something is muffling the sound.

We believe that never in church history have the evil influences been So active. They are multiplying false doctrine. They are diverting action from the truth. And what better way to divert the brethren from the truth than by muffling the loud end clear tones of the trumpet and having the trumpet give an uncertain sound?

We are all familiar with the fact that in olden days, the signal for action in an army was the blast of a trumpet. It was the signal for the soldiers to put their armor on and to follow the captain's orders. However, if the trumpet made an uncertain sound, the soldiers would not know whether it was an actual signal to get ready or whether the trumpet had accidentally given an unintended sound. Not being sure, the soldiers would not make themselves ready.

The same meaning can be deduced from Paul's words in # 1 Corinthians 14:8, when he said 'If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall gird himself for the battle?' Or, in other words, who will understand the important kingdom message of present truth if the preaching is not clear and definite?

So today, the evil influences have conspired to have the message garbled So that it is like the uncertain sound of a trumpet. How is this done? This is done by introducing unprofitable and irrelevant questions about truths that we have all learned well and have accepted them as gospel. Here are a few specific examples: 1. The chronology is questioned. 2. The Jubilee type is questioned. 3. The beginning of the times of restitution in which we are living, is questioned. 4. The 7,000 year day is being stretched to more than 7,000 years. 5. Our Lord's reign is being deferred. And, brethren, you could add to that list. This causes the same uncertain sound that happened in the nominal system.

On reprint page 2646 the Pastor pointed out, 'Religious doctrines have softened, .. Instead of conviction has come uncertainty, doubt, skepticism and the general feeling that 'NOBODY KNOWS—we may be right, you may be right or all may be wrong.' Brethren is that the way we learned the truth? Was it maybe the chronology is right? Was it maybe the restitution trumpet is blowing? Maybe we are in the beginning of the times of restitution? Maybe the Lord is reigning?

If you will recall, brethren, one of the reasons the truth thrilled us So was because there were no, 'maybes' about it, and WE KNOW what we believe. We have taken the Apostle's counsel in # 2 Timothy 2:2 when he said 'And the things thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' And what we learned we are teaching others without any shadow of doubt, with the clear conviction that what we learned in those Volumes was not error, but truth.

Just when we are nearing the exaltation and glory of the church, every imaginable device is resorted to, to beguile us of our reward; and, if possible, to frustrate this feature of God's plan. Of course we know it is impossible to frustrate any part of the divine plan, but it is scriptural, that '.. if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived.' {# *Matthew 24:24*} It is not impossible to knock us out of the race, is it? One way of knocking us out of the race is to shake our faith by making us doubt the veracity of what we have learned.

Because of these snares which would come upon the church, our Lord warned in # Revelation 3:11, 'Take heed beloved, let no man take thy crown.' If we value the glorious hope set before us, we will not allow ourselves to become subject to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils about which the Apostle warned us in # 1 Timothy 4:1.

One of the things that will help us to strengthen our faith in these days when everything is being shaken, that can be shaken, is to remember that we are a peculiar people. We are separate from the world, and we are separate from Nominal Christians. We are peculiarly separate by being favored with a clearer insight into the deep things of God, So we do not have to doubt what we have learned. We have been given the truth! The whole truth! We know what the Father has in mind for us. We know what he has in mind for the whole world of mankind. We know when he plans to do what he will do. How do we know? Are we more brilliant than

others? Did we find these things in the Bible through some special talent? No.

In due time our Lord came and girded himself to serve us meat in due season, through that 'wise and faithful servant' to whom he gave all his goods. Through this agency, written down in the six Volumes of Scripture Studies and Tabernacle Shadows, and made plain on tables, like the chart of the ages, we that read may run to do His bidding That's how we came to know God's Plan and His Word! Not one of us here learned it any other way. God chose this way, at this end of the age, to tell us about His plan, just as any loving father would tell His children, what he has in mind for them.

In # Hebrews 1:1 Paul said, 'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son.' To emphasize our peculiar separateness even more, in # John 15:14,15 Jesus said, 'You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth, I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his master doeth, but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of the father, I have made known unto you.' Isn't that marvelous? Everything that the father told Lord Jesus, he told us, because we are his friends. We are his brethren. We are participating in His church and today, we have been given the whole Truth in one well- organized plan of the ages.

It's like being born with 'a silver spoon in your mouth,' as the old saying goes about rich men's heirs—you've got everything. And do we need more? The Divine Plan has put it all into a capsule for us. Because we are a class thus separate from the world, and because we are thus separate from Christians nominal, who have not been taken into the Lord's confidence, we don't wonder if we find them all out of harmony with us, either ignoring or opposing us. We don't wonder either that we are out of harmony with others, described in # 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 'God shall send them strong delusions that they shall believe a lie.'

We hear, with increasing frequency, that much of what we have learned has been found to be wrong, or at best what we have learned is questionable. We hear the uncertain sound of the trumpet—seeds of doubt. Yes, in the 15th verse, Paul told the brethren to stand fast and hold the traditions which they had been taught by word or by his epistle. Don't change your mind, he was saying. The things that you learned, hold on to them. Haven't we been taught by the Pastor's words and his epistles, leading us to the

Truth in God's Holy Word? Is there a faster, better way for anyone to learn the Bible than to study it topically out of the Volumes?

Conversely, we should be alarmed if we find we are in harmony with the teachings of nominal Christians, or we find we are in harmony with those who suddenly have found that the meat in due season somehow included some meat that was spoiled. What other lesson could we get if we find that the chronology we learned, the teaching that we live in the beginning of the times of restitution, the jubilee types, and our Lord's reign at the present time—are all questionable, even though it was the meat in due season we had all been eating?

In # 1 Corinthians 10,11 Paul told us to all mind the same things: 'Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things; and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, for it has been declared unto me, my brethren, that there are contentions among you.' Apparently, even back there in the Apostle's day there were differences of opinion, and there are today also. But, we are almost becoming used to differences. In fact, many of God's children have come to feel that it is wrong to have perfect unity of thought, of mind. Some consider it a wrong condition, actually a subserviency. In our text, the apostle shows he is not in agreement with any such idea. Actually, the apostle is criticizing any sentiment that brings about differences.

There were obviously INDEPENDENTS in the church then, as now. Some THEN, as NOW, set themselves up as teachers and boast of their independent thinking. They boast that they do not agree with the volumes and the reprints on certain features of truth. By implication, they give the impression that they should be the more highly thought of on account of this independence. It's not for us to judge their motives or intentions. However we must believe they are deceived. They are working more injury to the cause of the Lord than they are probably aware. And brethren, these are not Bro. Doran's words. These are the Pastor's words back in the 1900's when these differences were occurring as they are now, only we don't have the Pastor to go to as they could then, except we have his writings. (Reprint 4446)

From the text {# 1 Corinthians 1:10,11} it's rather clear that the apostle's conception of the divine truth, is that all who are speaking and teaching should teach and speak the same thing. Elsewhere he says we should all mind the same things. Now, we

know that when the apostle said things like this in his epistles, he wasn't just saying this as a passing reference. He was concerned about this situation in the church. And we must be concerned, but not from the standpoint of anything except that we should have no doubts about what we believe, especially where we are on the stream of time.

Should we question how it would be possible for many men of many minds, to view the divine truth in exactly the same light? Should we point to the various creeds of Christendom which contradict each other on so many points of doctrine and say, 'See, it's impossible to have the same thoughts.' Apparently the answer to all these divisions in the nominal system simply points out the truth of what the Apostle was saying. The sectarian spirit has torn the word of God to pieces. The spirit of Christ, which would have preserved the unity of the body of the church in the bonds of peace was neglected, and a spirit of INDEPENDENCE was fostered. What's the result? Babylon, confusion. Doubt spawns confusion—'if the trumpet give an uncertain sound.'

The remedy is the one the Pastor sought to present in all of his writings. He said let us ascertain the mind of Christ, the spirit of the truth, by the acceptance of the ENTIRE word of God. It was the bringing of every interpretation into alignment with God's word, and rejection of everything found contrary to his word; and he put it all together into one divine plan.

The questions of the present time are: 1. Have we, who believe in present truth, greater mental acumen and greater ability in the interpretation of the word, than our forefathers for 19 centuries? 2. Or, is it because we are living in the glorious epoch designated as the Harvest Time? and 3. Shouldn't we give the Lord the credit for having brought to our attention the harmonies of the Divine Word?

We realize too, that it is so far above and beyond the natural man's ability that it would be a miracle for any man to construct such a theory. It would be the most stupendous miracle of which we have any knowledge. If we see this plan now as not of men nor by man, but by the holy spirit, then the holy spirit should be looked upon as the teacher and not some human instrumentality through which the presentation has been made to the church.

We pray in the hymn, 'Be thou my teacher, Lord,' but surely we pray in vain if we, in practice give no heed to the Lord as the teacher. We pray rather on the contrary if we encourage independence of thought. If we suggest that anybody can strike a

spiritual match which would give greater light and throw parts of the Divine Plan back into the shadows—whoever believes such a thing to be possible cannot believe that the Divine Plan is the truth—the true plan of God. It cannot satisfy his longing as nothing else would do. If it did, he would not be seeking for something further, would he? He would not be looking for an independent or a special light.

If he were satisfied, he would be overawed with the grace of God. He would wonder that the light of divine truth had percolated through his blindness of previous superstitions. He would So marvel at the light of the knowledge of the glory of God that he would be bowed down in humility and gratitude. He would fear to lift his eyes, even for a moment from the vision which was written down and made plain on tables lest he should miss a single feature. Could he rationally expect to find a grander vision than what we have? I don't see how if he has really tasted the riches of God's grace and truth; and hasn't this truth been made manifest to God's saints?

There is only one explanation that fits or explains our present condition. The present bright shining of the divine word—the Pastor himself gives us the explanation. He gave assurance that at his second presence he would make himself known—to everybody? No!—only to his true, loyal and faithful servants. He said he would gird himself. What does that mean? He would become their servant! A girdle is a symbol of servitude; and he would cause them to sit down to meat. And what's this meat, that he caused us to sit down to?—The Studies in the Scriptures! He would bring forth from the treasures of divine Truth 'things new and old.' {# Luke 12:37} Is there any other explanation of the wonderful light we have on the divine plan now shining? It didn't come by man; it came from God through our Lord Jesus Christ, to his church. There can't be any other explanation for the bounties that crowd the table of the Lord's faithful ones. Meat to eat indeed have they of which the world knows nothing.

What do we suppose the Lord is proving? Could it be he wants to see to what extent we recognize Him as the giver of all good?—to what extent our hearts are feeding on the Truth? Does he want to see to what extent we are being nourished spiritually?; to what extent in others there is merely a feverish excitement?; a dissatisfaction, a looking for something new?

Let's face it. If you have everything, you don't look for something else do you?—not unless you don't know that you have

everything. Isn't it logical to suppose that those who are in a dissatisfied condition, that Satan, always alert, through his fallen angels, especially during this present age, will present himself as an angel of light, and offer them food and other 'light'. 'Newer and better,' he will say. We all know that if we get on a mailing list—say you buy a lawn mower through a catalogue—what happens? When merchants find out you like lawn mowers, you are on their list for fertilizers, grass seed, home improvements and other related items. That's the way that evil forces also work. If you give any indication you are not satisfied with what you have, he will show you some beautiful looking things—on the surface. Isn't it logical to suppose that God will permit such delusions upon his people to prove them, or test them?

The Pastor received many inquiries in 1909 regarding this matter of minding the same things. One of the questions he got was 'What shall the Lord's sheep do when those who have been leading them object to references and quotations from the Studies in the Scriptures in study meetings at which there is otherwise full liberty of expression?' The questioner went on to say that the leaders say this is man worship or book worship; and that God's people should use God a book only—the Bible. (I don't know what we have been studying all these years, brethren, if it hasn't been the Bible. Actually, all of the references in the Volumes are to the Bible, nothing else.) What does Studies in the Scriptures mean?—unless we fail to tie the two together that the Scriptures and the Bible are the same thing. The Pastor's reply to the questioner was 'Tell the leader we are unable to see the difference between hearing a teacher expound orally and having the teachings in printed form or quoted by another.' If teaching by the printed word is wrong, he said, then all teaching is wrong. If it's reasonable, he said, for us to hear with respect the words of one who claims ability to assist us in the right understanding of God's word, it should be reasonable to hear the words from these books which already have actually and truly taught us nearly all that we understand of God's word.

Is that true? Where did we learn So much about the Bible that everyone here who has studied these books can put most ministers to shame in an understanding of God's Word. Did we suddenly, one day get an inspiration, pick up the Bible, leaf through it, and the Holy Spirit shed a spotlight on it and showed us all the things we have learned? If we ever conclude to have the one human channel of instruction, our decision will be to stick firmly to the one God has used, and blessed to our enlightenment, rather than to an oral teacher who thus shows his opposition to the agency that God used and blessed to us.

Here is another letter which was addressed to our Pastor: 'Our chosen class leader or elder is a clever brother. Yet, we often think his exposition is slightly in error—different from our own views taken largely from our study in the Scripture Studies. When we call this elder's attention to this matter, he generally replies that it is a good while since he has had a chance to look at the Scripture Studies; and as for the Towers, he says he is really too busy to read them. What would our duty, as a class, be?'

The Pastor answered: 'There are two duties for the class: the duty toward the leader would be to tell him in love and kindness that according to his own statement he is overcharged with the cares of this world, and it is your duty toward him to excuse him from leading the class that he may have more time for personal study and development.' The ecclesia runs the ecclesia, brethren, not the leaders of the class. The second duty of the class, said the Pastor, was to set up as a leader a naturally less talented brother, but one possessed of more time for study, or one who has more zeal for the truth. Elect him elder and then everybody turn in and help him by studying well the questions for each lesson.

Remember that our forefathers had Bibles and attempted to have Bible studies and Bible classes, without gaining much wisdom or light, as a result. Ask yourselves and other brethren, 'Did the light which you now enjoy come to you by independent Bible study? We doubt it. What are the Studies in the Scriptures but the Bible arranged topically, with citations for every point and paragraph?'

Is it not probable that our adversaries, the fallen angels (now running amuck because they don't have the leadership of Satan who is being bound—he doesn't have control of his empire any longer), are delighting to pose as angels of light, upholders of the Bible; and isn't it possible they are trying to deceive some of us? How? By casting doubt upon what we have learned—by making the trumpet have an uncertain sound? Isn't it possible that efforts are being made to draw us away from the Great Light which our Lord has now provided?

The Apostle Paul had something very definite to say about any message that was different from the one he had been teaching and which the brethren had learned. In # Galatians 3:1- 3 and 1:6- 10 we must, from the context, understand that the Galatians, after having been spiritually enlightened, were apparently going back to the Jewish Law. Listen to what Paul said to them, 'Oh foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the

truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ had been set forth and crucified among you. Are ye So foolish, having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh? I marvel that you are So soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another gospel. But there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let them be accursed.'

Notice, brethren, that Paul was saying that if he were to come to them with some message other than the one he had been preaching to them, that he himself should be accursed under such conditions. He was definite, wasn't he? Notice that he did not say that 'no matter what anybody preaches or teachers, it isn't really important—all that matters is love!' Remember that this Paul talking here is the same Paul who wrote the 13th chapter of 1 Cor, —the famous, well- known chapter on one subject, LOVE. In that chapter, in the 6th verse, he said, 'Love rejoiceth in any doctrine'—is that what he said? No! He said 'love rejoiceth in the truth;' and we have been given the truth. Notice also that Paul thought his advice about preaching a different doctrine than what they had been hearing was So important, that he repeated it in the next verse. He said, 'As we said before, So say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel than that which you have received, let him be accursed.'

Whenever we hear strange doctrine, brethren, that is, teaching other than those which we received through that wise and faithful servant, who was sent to us by our Lord, this warning of Paul's we would do well to keep in mind. For he that thinketh he stand, beware lest he fall. We thank God that he has, through our Lord Jesus Christ and the 12 apostles, given us meat in due season, at the end of this age, through that human instrumentality. Our own faith, as a result, is firmly planted on the Bible. We recognize the Bible as the only divine revelation of the will and plan of our Creator. The servant gave us the keys to unlock the mystery and we shouldn't throw away the keys.

I want to close with an example of how we can keep that trumpet blowing loud and clear in Zion, and not let it make any uncertain sound. Executives of business concerns are expected to carefully study their own company's plan. Every year most companies make a plan. The plan says we are going to make So much profit; we're going to sell So much; we are going to make such and such products; we're going to open So many branches, So many plants,

and So on. And, these executives are expected to know the plans of the company.

Many companies take their executives once or twice a year far away from the business to some pleasant, isolated, restful spot where they can present the company's plan without interference from business cares; and where the executives can concentrate on receiving those plans and understand them. And incidentally these plans are put forth with anything but an uncertain sound. There is no doubt in anyone's mind about the success of the venture, nor the soundness of the plan. It would be unheard of, and the last time the executive would be heard, if one got up and said, 'I'm not So sure about that profit, gentlemen. I believe our president may have been over enthusiastic about our sales. Matter of fact, I understand that some of the figures are wrong and that a mistake has been made. I know you have all been looking forward to this being a good year, but due to the errors that have been creeping into our reports, I'd say we can't be too sure about this coming year. Let's all do the best we can, but we can't be sure of this plan because of the errors. What do you suppose the head man would do with an executive like that?

Another point in our example is that not everybody in the company is entrusted with knowing these plans. Many of us work for companies where plans are unknown to us. Only a select few, a few favored ones, know these plans.

God told us of His plan just as he told His friend Abraham what he was going to do. In # Genesis 18:17 He said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, seeing that Abraham shall become a great nation? and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?' Just think, brethren, if the executives of earth are considered favored by a careful and continuous study of their companies' picayune plans, we with God's Plan we surely can say, 'Zion what a favored lot is thine. For God loveth the gates of Zion! He shall build up Zion. He hath chosen Zion. He founded Zion. He shall comfort Zion. He shall set up his kingdom in Zion. We are the precious sons of Zion. We have been given His precious plan for mankind, without error. We need no prod to study it. The careful and continuous study of God's Plan is our daily delight and we believe it is right.

In studying God's plan we are imbibing the spirit of his plan. Back for a moment to the earthly executive—he imbibes the spirit of his company's plan largely because he believes it. He has no doubts about it. Most of us know executives like that. What does this faith

in the company's plan do to them? They are So active that they work day and night, travel far and wide, at whatever cost or sacrifice necessary—they are imbued with the spirit of the company plan.

How is it with us in our imbibing the spirit of God's Plan? How is it with us in our zeal? Can we see ourselves as God sees us in # Psalms 97:8? Does the scripture there say, 'Zion heard, but wasn't sure, and was sad?' No! 'Zion heard and was glad.' They shall come with singing unto Zion.

One more point in our example. The company executive—does not study the plans of other companies because he is in doubt about his company's plan. He studies the plan of his company and believes that his company's plan is free from error and better than any other company's plan. He is too busy also carrying out the plan to have time for looking at other plans.

We have been given God's plan by our Lord through his servant. If we have heard the certain sound of the presentation of this plan, we won't have time nor disposition for strange doctrine or any suggestion of a change in the plan. We are imbibing the spirit of God's plan. We will not listen to any plan other than His. Like the company executive our time is not our own. What would his company say if the executive were getting paid 20, 30, 50, 100 thousand dollars a year and using time to study some other company's plan? And the Lord is paying us good wages, isn't he? We have dedicated our time to God. We don't have time to investigate fanciful theories and doubts to the neglect of His plan pointed to by His wise and faithful servant.

The Apostle warned us, 'Shun profane babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness.' He also said study to show ourselves approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith. # 2 Timothy 2:15,16 and # 1 Timothy 1:3,14.

So then, let us adhere closely to the written word of God in our teaching as we have been taught by a divinely appointed agency. If we will heed this advice, the trumpet will not make an uncertain sound and we will have our armor on, ready for the battle and be protected to make our calling and election sure.

(Irwin Doran- 9)

