

# **The Apostasy Sweeping Over The Churches**

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*This address was topical at the time - referring to then recent developments, such as denial of inspiration, etc. We include it here because today - over 80 years later - its unequivocal call and message has become more pertinent than ever before....*

The greatest evidence that man has a darkened mind and a corrupt nature is not the existence of the gambling den, nor the house of ill fame. The greatest evidence is unbelief; the fact that the human heart definitely and positively refuses to listen to the voice of God; that there is a heart which hates the light and loves darkness; and the greater the light which is rejected and refused, the greater the darkness, and finally God who is Love and Mercy can do nothing else. In fact, He must mete out judgment for a race which refuses to listen to His voice. That has been the story of the race from the beginning. God did not leave man, after he had transgressed, without light. Man had the light of creation and though there was not a written word, yet there was the Word of God nevertheless, and yet as you follow the Divine Record, you find that man's evil nature was evidenced by turning away from that Light. And though in 1650 years of the first age of this earth, they built cities, invented instruments, were lovers of art and music--the race wandered away from God, the earth became filled with violence and vileness, the voice of God was rejected and finally God had to bring a judgment upon the earth. And let no one imagine that that judgment, the deluge, is a myth; it is not. It is written in the Book and it is verified by science, by geology and by tradition.

When you look to the favored race, the people of Israel, you find the same evidence of the darkened mind and corruption of human nature. The nation which received the tokens of God's grace and mercy, were led out of Egypt, miraculously delivered from the hands of the enemy, seeing the demonstration of the power of God, the giving of bread out of heaven and water out of a rock and witnessing miracle after miracle, listening to the voice of Jehovah at Mount Sinai. A little time after, behold them bringing their earrings and making a golden calf, stripping themselves naked, dancing about this calf, saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Think of it! Though God had given the highest manifestation of His presence, His power, His mercy toward His people, yet they could plunge into this apostasy and if you follow their history, you will find that it is made up of revivals and apostasy, and revivals and apostasy--always turning finally against God, against His Word, and sinning against the Light until you find this Divine Record in 2 Chronicles 36:15 and 16.

"And the Lord God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers rising up betimes and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place;

But they mocked the messengers of God and despised his words and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy."

Finally when the Lord of Glory came to that nation, educated in the very school of God, with a history of miracle behind it and promises of glory before, they rejected the Lord of Glory and, instead of giving Him the Throne, they gave Him the Cross.

But what about the age in which we are living? Has human nature changed? Is it different today from

what it was before the flood or amongst the people of Israel? What does the Word of God say about it?

This "Christian" age, as we call it (though not quite scripturally) has brought forth the greatest Light, the greatest Revelation and the greatest Offer which God has ever made to man. God at last exhausted the omnipotence of His Love in the gift of His Only Begotten Son and in the gift of His Son, He has shined forth in the clearest light, in the purest light, and given a revelation which outstrips every other revelation in that He comes to His creature--man--on the simple condition of accepting this offer--nothing to pay, nothing to do--an offer of taking man from his deplorable depths of misery and making him a child and an heir of God. What is man going to do about it? What is man going to do about this Light, this revelation and this offer of the grace and of the love of God?

The New Testament gives an answer. It tells us how this present age is going to act about the Light, the Revelation and the offer of God as given in Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament scriptures. I want to show you the forecast first before we reach the very fulfillment of that forecast and demonstrate that the race today is just as rotten as it was five thousand years ago. Let us listen to the Lord Jesus. We must always put Him first. What had He to say about the conditions of this age and of the race?

In a parable, He tells us how He, the Son of Man, brought a good seed and another one brought a bad seed and the good and bad seed grew up together until the harvest. In another parable, He tells us about a woman taking leaven and corrupting the truth of God by it.

Twice He uses past history to give a prophecy about this age when it is going to end, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of Man comes." "As it was in the days of Lot, so it shall be when the Son of Man comes." And then the question "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find the faithful upon the earth?" Then listen to His great utterance prophetically given when He describes the events preceding His coming, speaking of man becoming more unrighteous, lawless, the age finally to end with a time of great trouble. There is not a word as to what theologians teach about the world growing better through the process of evolution, etc., and not a word about righteousness and peace, but the Son of God predicts apostasy as it was in the days of Noah and as it was in the days of Lot. Wherever these learned men get their message from, we don't know; they don't get it from the Word of God nor from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice again what the apostles have to say about the conditions of this age and what the last days of this age are going to bring forth. Who were these apostles? If they had been uninspired men as they tell us today they were, (not more inspired than Socrates, Ruskin and Shakespeare)--if they had been uninspired men who invented a new religion or a new system of theology, they would have done what every uninspired man has done when he said something nice and beautiful--they would predict that their messages and what they taught would ultimately be accepted by the whole world and sweep the whole world, but their inspiration is evidenced by the fact that they predict the very opposite to that which a natural uninspired man would have predicted.

Think of the apostle Paul, when he said farewell, to the elders at Ephesus (Acts 20:28, 29): "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."

He did not say, "You are going to have a big revival and everybody is going to be converted and everybody is going to join the church; but, "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" (v.

30).

That was very pessimistic, was it not? He did not speak about a great revival but said, "Listen, the worst is coming, the worst is coming--what is going to happen in Ephesus?" and then let me read what Paul has to say in the second chapter of Thessalonians, verse three, "Let no man deceive you by any means for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

So take note that Paul says before the day of Christ comes, there will be a falling away and that man of sin is going to be revealed.

Then I read from 1 Timothy 4:1: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils."

And 2 Timothy 3:1-5: "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy..., etc., etc."

Listen again to Chapter 4:2-4: "Preach the word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables."

They sometimes tell me Paul was a sour pessimist, but was he the only pessimist of New Testament Scriptures about the condition of this age?

Listen to James in the fifth chapter where he speaks to the rich man in verse four: "Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth."

Here you have the root of the matter of the high cost of living. It is simply a number of deacons and elders in some church who are storing up and storing up and defrauding the poor.

Now listen to Peter (2 Peter 2:1): "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 John (1 John 2:18): "Little children it is the last time and as ye have heard that anti-christ shall come, even now are there many anti-christs whereby we know that it is the last time."

And once more let me read you a testimony of one who was not an apostle but a servant of Jesus Christ (Jude 1:11): "Woe unto them for they have gone in the way of Cain and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward and perished in the gainsaying of Core."

And if you continue reading in the book of Revelation, you will find that the Lord Jesus Christ predicts that the last of His professing church on earth will be Laodiceans and that the Laodiceans will finally make a confederation with the world and become the world church domineered over by the harlot Rome, rejecting every bit of the revealed truth of God. This is the forecast of the New Testament and no man who believes the Bible can challenge these things for they are written here black on white; human nature has not changed one bit. The same unbelief exists, the same hatred of light and the Great Light rejected must become the greater darkness, and this day, dear friends, has come and we are right in the midst of it. All over this land, in Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand, in the mission fields of China, in the mission fields of India, everywhere are evidences of the fulfillment of this prediction. "Oh,"

somebody says, "this is simply sporadic." If you say that, you know very little about what is going on. Denying Christ is a universal thing today as it never was before in the history of the church. It is an apostasy which defies God, defies His Word, which rejects and blasphemes the most precious things which God has revealed to man.

Now then, let me tell you about this apostasy. The cornerstone of it is the rejection of this Book as the authority of God making known to man the truth which man is to know and by which He is saved. The rejection of the inspiration of the Bible, that it is the Word of God, is really a rather recent thing. Of course, the devil has always rejected it, although he knew better; and blasphemers, heathen and infidels have always done so. Study the Reformation and there is the clearest note as to the authority of this Book; in fact the belief in this Book produced the Reformation and gave birth to Protestantism. It is only during the last hundred years that you can trace the deliberate satanic attack upon the Word of God to rob the Bible of its divine authority and as soon as that is done all is lost. Everything rests upon the cornerstone--the Bible, the revelation, the infallible Word of God. Destroy this cornerstone and the whole collapses and that has become the popular thing in Christendom--to attack the Bible, to belittle the Word of God, to show up its supposed errors and rob it of its authority.

Some months ago, someone in New York grabbed me by the arm and said, (I didn't know for the moment who the man was) "Gaebelein, do you know you are a back number?" and turning around I found it was my friend Dr. Burrell, Pastor of the Collegiate Church, and he said: "Don't you know that you and I, who stand four - square on the Book, are back numbers and out of date?" Then he told me what they say about him, yes, what they say about any other man who still holds to the inspiration of this Book and who takes his faith, his courage, out of this Book. And do you know, it is the big men of learning who have the popular message for the world and the starting point of the apostasy is centered in the so - called Christian institutions so many are backing and which are supported by the cash of people who believe the Bible. In these institutions is the stronghold of this infidelity.

Let me take you on a trip. We will start in Boston as the hub, the city I know for I have been going there for a month during the winter for at least twenty years; the city which used to be famous for its men who preached the gospel and the Word of God. There is Boston University of the Methodist Episcopal Church--one of the rankest hot-beds of the rejection of the Word of God. Harvard is another institution where the Bible is absolutely rejected and put upon the same level with other good literature. Then there is Newton Theological Seminary of the Baptist Church equally teaching error. Go down to Providence and you will find the same story in its universities and colleges--the professors teaching that the book of Genesis is a myth, and that evolution is still the thing which explains the existence of this universe. Then go to New York City and you will find Union Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church which every once in a while turns out preachers and when they are examined for entrance into the Presbytery and ordination, say they do not know whether Jesus Christ was born of a virgin or not; and about physical resurrection, they say they have not yet made up their minds as to that.

Then go up the Hudson to Poughkeepsie. One father told me with tears in his eyes that his daughter had attended Vassar. She had gone with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and came away an infidel. Go to Chicago and there you find the worst kind of corruption in the Chicago University. Oh, the pernicious literature which is sent out from there! I wish I had kept track of the stacks of appeals which preachers and others send me and say, "For God's sake, do something to stop it!"

Go to Garrett or Northwestern or keep coming West to the Coast up to San Francisco and all along through Canada. Institution after institution has adopted the theory of reasoning which comes out of their teaching that there cannot be an infallible Word of God, and these institutions are responsible for the men who stand up in pulpits today and deny the Christian faith.

Now, let me give you the vilest attempt which has been made upon the Word of God during the last

year. It is "The Shorter Bible," by Charles Foster Kent, of Yale. Methodist preachers today, before their ordination, are forced to read the books of Charles Foster Kent--books of infidelity.

I have gone over this New Testament, endorsed by many great men, newspapers, etc., and it seems the whole world endorses it. As I read the endorsements, I found that "It is a thrilling account of the life of Jesus and His great social and economic teachings," and as I went on, I found that everything about the blood, redemption, the cross, salvation, eternal life had been cut out. It is just a little bit of a book--you can slip it into your vest pocket; but friends, this is something more blasphemous than anything Jehoiakim ever did when he cut the roll of Jeremiah. They have cut out the heart of Christianity, which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Then let me tell you to what this apostasy leads. It leads to the rejection, not of the Bible only, but of the Person who is revealed in the Bible, the Son of God. These are the tactics of the devil--first destroy the Word of God which makes Him known and then attack His Person. As a result, you have hundreds of preachers of every denomination who deny the virgin birth; who do not believe that salvation is a definite gift of grace but that it takes character and a life-time to be saved; who deny the physical resurrection; who deny future punishment; in one word, who sweep every bit of faith out of every page. That is one result.

The next result is that it has led to the prostitution of the church itself. That is one of the results of this war. This war has clinched the religious apostasy and the war and future conditions are going to open up into that prostitution of the professing church and the truth of God and the complete apostasy of which this Book speaks. The professing church adopts today the program of the world. They started in with that miserable lie that the world can be made safe for democracy, then the lifting up of humanity, and making the world better, and then having a religious brotherhood.

Observe what is going on. We have several churches that are doing this in New York, but mark you, it is not in New York alone. I have had letters from the state of Kansas, Nebraska, Louisiana, Texas, where the same thing in smaller communities is done. The pastor of a very prominent church in New York says, "A spirit of progress is awakening in all churches, although it has not manifested itself in all churches. I am a Christian, but I believe the best in Christianity and the best in Judaism are identical. We already have about fifty Jews and some Hindus in our membership; Chinese will be welcome regardless of faith. You will notice Christianity is not mentioned in our statement of doctrine. This church is an institution of religion seeking truth and wisdom knowing no sect, class, nation or age; but welcomes each one into its service." That is what I call the prostitution of the church. It is coming, and is the result of rejecting the Word of God, and bye and bye--it may begin today, right here--you will find a cleavage between God's true church and those who dishonor His Word and His Christ.

But there is another result. The rejection of the Bible as the starting point of the apostasy leading to the rejection of Christ and the Gospel, leads to immorality. Who is responsible for it? The men who have robbed this Book of its power.

Let me read a verse which you may not have noticed in reading your Bible (1 Chron. 10:13): "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord which he kept not and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit to enquire of it."

Saul rejected the Word of God and did not keep it; then he turned to a witch and got his message, and, mind you, it was not a spurious witch--she had a familiar spirit, she was possessed by a demon.

In the latter days some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits. The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. Their ears shall be turned away from the truth and turned to fables.

Therefore, because the apostasy is here, people reject the Bible and the masses are following witches.

Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy's whole system is witchery. It is juggling with the Word of God and perverting the Word of God and I predict it is going to grow in just the degree that the Bible and the truths of the Bible are rejected. If you could find a place on this continent of a thousand inhabitants, where everybody knew his Bible, a Christian Science church could never be built. It is always the result of having rejected the Word of God. God permits error to come in the form of witchery.

New Thought is another form of witchery that they are trying to accommodate as much as possible to some things which are still found in this Book. But Theosophy and Hindu philosophy are a definite turning away. Then let me point out to you the most prominent witch of spiritualism, with its demon-possessed women. Today in England hundreds of thousands have accepted the witchery of spiritualism, mostly through Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Conan Doyle. Sir Conan Doyle has written a book, "The New Revelation," but he lets the cat out of the bag when he says the "old revelation has made too much of the blood and the cross of Christ and we have discovered our boys are in glory without having accepted the Gospel as it used to be taught in the church." Don't you see the witchery instead of the Word of God? I promise that for every demon cult success in this world now that its glory will suddenly end and judgment will certainly follow when the Lord comes.

And now let me come to the most solemn part. What is God's call? I will give it to you as it is written in this book. Moses comes down from the mountain. He sees the altar and the golden calf, the naked multitude, drinking of wine, the words of blasphemy and the first words he speaks are (Exodus 32:26): "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me." The next words he speaks are: "Consecrate yourselves to day to the Lord" (v. 29) and then the third, take the sword and cut them off (v. 27). God's call today is the same. If you are washed in that precious blood, stand out and out on the side of the Lord Jesus and consecrate yourselves fully unto Him and stand aside from the multitude doomed to perdition save when you go to offer them the gospel of the Son of God.

Listen again--Aholiab and two hundred and fifty princes had revolted against Aaron. They rejected Aaron as priest and said, "We also are holy, we don't need Aaron." This is the same thing Christendom says today. "We do not need Christ, we have good things in ourselves, we don't need His priesthood."

What did Moses say? "And he spake unto the congregation saying, 'Depart I pray you from the tents of these wicked men and touch nothing of theirs lest ye be consumed.'"

He says, "Depart; do not touch a thing; get out of their tents; out of their villages, even if it is a brother or sister; get away from them." But you say, "That is the command of the law. Whoever says that is harsh and that is unchristian." Is it? Listen to what the beloved disciple says. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ knoweth not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, (the Cross and all that goes with it) he hath the Father and the Son. If there are any that come unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not in your house, neither bid him Godspeed..." etc. That is the same thing Moses said and whether it is in the Law or in the Gospel, God does not change His demands when it comes to believing on Himself and His Word.

That is God's call, "Depart!"-- get away from them; do not touch their books; do not buy their literature; do not support their institutions; do not pay the preacher's salary if he does not preach the truth. If you do, the Lord is going to hold you responsible for them.

Again Paul says, "From such turn away;" purge yourselves from the vessels which are dishonored that ye might be vessels meet for the Master's use.

Some Christians have told me that they are to remain in Laodicea until the Lord gives them a call to

leave. He has given the call. It is here and what is happening and will happen is the separation of God's true church from the church of the world, the church of the apostasy and of Laodicea. But you say, "Where am I going?" Well, go first to the Lord and then you will have fellowship with the true saints of God. When you get into the fellowship of the true saints of God you get power, you get blessing, you have the reality of the Lord and He is going to use you.