

## DANGERS FACING THE CHURCH

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Church Has Always Faced Dangers and Always Will.
  - A. Judaism threatened to crush the life out of the early church.
  - B. Roman Rulers put thousands of the early Christians to death.
    - (1) But the early church thrived on persecution.
2. The Early Church Slowly But Surely Drifted Away From the Apostles' Doctrine.
  - A. 2 Tim. 4:1-4: "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables ..."
  - B. 1 Tim. 4:1: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits, and doctrines of demons."
  - C. Gal. 1:6-7: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ."
  - D. 2 Thess. 2:3-4,7: "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day (the second coming) will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God showing himself that he is God...For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way."
  - E. 2 Peter 2:1: "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction."

- F. 1 John 2:18: "Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour."
- G. 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many prophets have gone out into the world."
- H. Jude 3-4: "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

3. The Task of Saving the Lost is Taking on Enormous Proportions.

- A. The world's population is going to double in the next 25 years.
- B. We must turn and walk in the old paths:
  - (1) Jeremiah 6:16: "Thus says the Lord: 'Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'"
- C. We must turn back to the faith of our fathers. We cannot let the fire go out.

ILLUS. Man refused to move from his house when T.V.A. backed water.

He said, 'See that fire in the fireplace. My great grandfather built this house and started that fire. My grandfather kept the fire going and then my father. When my father died, the last thing he said was, "Don't let the fire go out." He said, "I have faithfully kept the flame of my forefathers going."

The T.V.A. moved the fire and kept it going and it was put in another house.

I. **IN THIS BATTLE FOR THE SOULS OF MEN, THERE ARE MANY DANGERS WHICH FACE US ON EVERY HAND.**

A. EXTERNAL DANGERS:

1. Catholicism is making a bold new threat against New Testament Christianity.
  - a. They are powerful in Numbers, Wealth, Politically.
  - b. Have established the Knights of Columbus; Yoemanettes to advance cause.
  - c. Hold powerful controls on Press, Radio, Television, Magazines, Books.
  - d. They advocate a powerful union of Church and State.
    - (1) Education is the key to their success.
      - (a) Argue for government aid to buses and schools.
      - (b) Teach duty to Pope first and to America last.
  - e. Making a bold move to convert every Black in the South to Catholicism.
    - (1) Once they obtained voting rights, it gave the Catholics power in the South where they have always been weak.
  - f. They preach tolerance when they are in the minority.
    - (1) Yet, in Spain, Ireland, South America, Portugal, there is no tolerance.

NOTE: A Catholic Priest has said, (Barrett)

"And in the future as in the past whenever battles were to be won, Rome will use gold, Rome will use steel, Rome will use silvery lie, Rome will stoop to conquer."

2. Denominationalism has created dangerous confusion and chaos.

- a. This very division plays into the hands of the Catholic Church.
  - b. Christ is robbed of glory because of over 400 different kinds of churches.
  - c. The world is unevangelized - We spend our resources fighting each other.
    - (1) Our hands are tied. We must move back to unity.
3. Modernism is cutting away the very foundation of Christian Doctrine.
- a. Not founded overnight - been developing over 100 years.
  - b. Has permeated every religious group - Some more than others.
    - (1) Religious Seminaries - Preacher training schools lead the movement.
      - (a) Deny the verbal inspiration of the Bible.
      - (b) Deny the virgin birth of Christ.
      - (c) Deny the Existence of Sin.
      - (d) Deny the Existence of Hell.
      - (e) Deny the fact that blood has anything to do with Salvation.
      - (f) Deny the physical resurrection of Christ.
      - (g) Deny the miracles of the Bible.
  - c. Harry Rimmer has said in his Internal Evidence of Inspiration,
 

"It is folly for men to claim that they believe in Jesus Christ, when they deny or reject the sole source of evidence that tells of Him. If the Devil and his emissaries can wreck the Bible, which is the foundation of Christianity, the entire structure will, naturally, collapse. For this reason, the Bible is today

under fire. For this same reason, the most vicious forces known to humanity have ever been arrayed against the Scriptures. The battle is more intense today than it has ever been before. Criticism of the Bible is highly fashionable and is supposed to be an evidence of learning and culture. So the bible is criticized in the pulpits of many churches, where it should reign, in the classrooms which owe their very life to the freedom which comes from the light of the Scriptures."

4. Communism has enslaved at least half of the world's people.

a. Das Kapital and The Communist Manifesto, the first by Karl Marx and the second by Marx and Engels, have probably had a more profound affect upon the world than any other books except the Bible.

(1) Communism is an economic interpretation of history which leaves God completely out of it. This materialistic philosophy has engulfed millions and will continue to do so in the years ahead.

(2) A True Communist would also be an atheist - Religion viewed as opiate.

b. Christianity could not thrive in any Communist state.

(1) The timetables around the Communist world are working to enslave you.

(2) It is no worse than other of Pagan religions - economic philosophy might be better. But it is in bitter conflict with the religion of Jesus.

B. INTERNAL DANGERS WHICH FACE THE CHURCH IN THIS BATTLE FOR THE SOULS OF MEN:

1. Unconverted and Untaught Membership -

a. Luke 14:28-33: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it--lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'... So likewise,

whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”

b. Hebrews 5:12: "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.”

(1) The First Scripture points up the reason for the second.

(2) They never were truly converted in the first place - They did not count the cost. Thus, they would have no desire to study - grow.

2. Worldliness has permeated the Church.

a. 1 John 2:15-17: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

b. The Dividing Line between the world and Church has been erased.

(1) Because of the sinful life members of the church lead, they become ineffective in reaching the lost - yea, they are a stumbling block.

3. Neglect and Indifference is a problem in every church across the world.

a. Hebrews 2:1-2: "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation.”

(1) Neglect to train our children - contribute to delinquency.

(2) Neglect to study the Word of God.

- (3) Neglect to attend the Bible Study classes.
- (4) Neglect to visit the sick and needy OR the Unsaved.
- (5) Neglect to give of money, time, talent.
- b. Sermons Fell on Deaf Ears - They always apply to the other man.
  - (1) Members say: "They ought to do this, and they ought to do that ... "
  - (2) Most members don't really know how little work they really do.
- 4. Apostasy is a great danger which faces us internally.
  - a. Paul could tell Timothy: "Take Heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."
  - b. We must be sure that the Church does its work according to the pattern.
  - c. We must demand that our preachers declare the whole counsel of God.
  - d. We must not water down the gospel and make it tasty to innovators.

**II. THESE ARE SOME OF THE MAJOR DANGERS AND PROBLEMS, BUT THERE ARE MANY MORE.**

- A. Every child of God should recognize these things and resolve to stand and -

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.." (1 Tim. 6:12)

- B. Brethren: This is Everyone's Battle - Will you join and help us in this city?

"Must I be carried to the skies, On flow'ry beds of ease,  
 While others fought to win the prize, And sailed thru bloody seas  
 Sure I must fight if I would reign, Increase my courage Lord,  
 I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, Supported by Thy Word.