

WHY SPEAK AGAINST THE CHURCHES?

This question is often asked in sincerity, and is certainly a most legitimate and reasonable one, and any person daring to raise his or her voice against those organizations looked upon as so many doors swinging under different names to admit souls into the kingdom of Heaven, commits a crime against humanity unless able to give reasons based on the Word of God. Fully realizing then, the awful responsibility involved in speaking against the churches, let us inquire carefully into the meaning of the word church.

We purpose in the third edition of this pamphlet to dwell more particularly than formerly upon the distinction which must be made between "The Church" and "the churches."

Any scholar will tell you that the word church is from the Greek word *ekklesia*, meaning "That which is called out." This is the word chosen by Jesus Christ, which according to His teaching and example, meant separation from "this present evil world." (Gal. 1:4).

"THAT WHICH IS CALLED OUT," called out from what? Listen to His words: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are NOT of the world, BUT I HAVE CHOSEN YOU OUT OF THE WORLD, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:9).

"THEY ARE NOT OF THE WORLD, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:16).

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me OUT OF THE WORLD." (John 17:6.)

Of this called out company which He named "MY CHURCH," He said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This is the Church of which the apostle Paul writes later, explaining its relation to Christ in the following words: "He is the Head of the Body, the Church." It is the Church to which "the Lord," not man, added such as were being saved. (Acts 2:47.) He keeps the record of names in that book called more than once His "Book of Life."

His Church made up of every soul "born again" of the Spirit of God, of whatever earthly name or creed, moves on with Him as its Head, "conquering and to conquer."

This Church must always be distinguished from local churches in whatever spiritual state. While He has given directions for the general management of visible assemblies, there is none so small, and no company of professors so vast, that either can lay claim to being THE Body of Christ. It should constantly be made plain that only as individuals are joined to the Head by a living experience, are they members of His Church.

Returning to the definition of the word church, we ask if there is a Bible standard raised for "that which is called out?" There is. "But as He which hath CALLED you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (conduct)." (1 Pet. 1:15). Again: "For God hath not CALLED us unto

uncleanness BUT UNTO HOLINESS" (1 Thess. 4:7). Throughout the Scriptures the sin of worldliness is likened to adultery, spiritual uncleanness. Read (James 4:4:) "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

We ask in all sincerity if this is the standard of the modern churches as a rule, or are the words of the apostle Paul (2 Tim. 3:1-5) concerning the last days being fulfilled? Looking down through the years to the present time, he sets the example for us, in speaking against the churches of our day. In preparing to give his black list he says, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." The word, "PERILOUS," is a stronger word than the word dangerous, and why perilous? Because the sins of this black list were to be found in the churches. It begins with these words: "MEN SHALL BE LOVERS OF THEIR OWN SELVES." It closes with: "LOVERS OF PLEASURES more than lovers of God, having a FORM OF GODLINESS, but denying the power thereof." These last words locate the conditions in the professed church, and if found there, bear in mind the apostle added: "FROM SUCH TURN AWAY."

"Why speak against the churches?" For the reason, that, generally speaking, they are fulfilling the words quoted above: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." What is the power? The power that brings the knowledge of God to souls as they are born into His family.

We were much impressed by a letter written to a church in the south land with quite a large member-

ship, signed by several people who felt they could no longer remain in its fellowship, and will give the substance as we recall it:

"We are not leaving you because we feel we are wiser than you, for this is not true. We are not leaving you because we feel that naturally we are better than you are, neither have we ought against anyone personally, but we have learned that while churches are supposed to be places where souls are 'born again' by the Spirit of God, we have not found this organization to be doing this kind of work."

In these few words written from honest hearts we have a pen picture of world-wide religious conditions. Having a form of godliness but denying that power which alone gives churches a right to exist.

"From such turn away." Regardless of all that is being said against those who refuse to fellowship present day conditions in the churches, the fact remains that the history of the true Church has been a history of coming out from false systems of religion.

One minister said not long ago that the Body of Christ had been split times enough without our splitting it again. Impossible! The Body of Christ has never been split, but united to its Head, has ever witnessed against false religion, often suffering with Him even unto death.

No one who understands "the last days" as pictured in the Word of God, will teach that where Christ IS truly preached a large number are being "born again," for such was not His teaching.

Sometime ago there appeared in a daily newspaper an article with this title: "Is the Church a

Failure ?" and signed: "One Who Wonders." The question was taken up and an answer given of which the following is a part:

"The Church is not a failure in any age, for in every age it does the work specially committed to it. What is the work of the Church in the closing of this Christian dispensation ? Is it what it is popularly supposed to be, the salvation of multitudes ? We answer most emphatically, NO. Located in a perverse and degenerate age of matured wickedness, when multitudes 'give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils,' when 'the harvest of the earth is ripe,' when 'because of abounding iniquity the love of many shall wax cold,' facing Paul's pen picture of last day religious perils, (2 Tim. 3:1-5) and Christ's significant question: 'When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth,' the Church cannot expect big revivals, and large ingatherings of converts.

"In undertaking to do what Christ said would not be done in these last days, the churches have resorted to many questionable methods including revivals of the 'Billy Sunday' type, with the result that they are filled with unconverted people.

"Tie artificial apples on to an artificial apple-tree, and then ask: 'Is this apple-tree a failure ?'

"The particular work of the Church in this time of the end, is to cry out against sin in the churches as well as on the outside, and warn of approaching judgment. It is chiefly as she stands related to these things that she is to be determined a failure or a success.

"Each age of human history has filled full its cup of iniquity, and ended with only a remnant of men saved. This closing age will be no exception.

"Because the Church is unable to save many souls in these gleanings days, is no evidence of failure. Men made churches are a failure, but the Church of Jesus Christ—never."

With this truth before us, we can understand how the churches with their large unconverted membership must multiply their efforts to keep these deceived souls in line. As they are the "lovers of pleasures," and "lovers of their own selves" already mentioned, they must get up new contrivances to please themselves and others, from banquets and suppers served on beautifully arranged tables, to minstrel shows. The amusements carried on within the walls of buildings supposed to be dedicated to the service of Almighty God, are simply appalling.

We have a card before us received from a well known publishing house, advertising books to help out in these church performances, one entitled, "It is to Laugh." There are the significant questions: "Do you have good times at your church?" and "Do you know what to do when your party or social threatens to go dead," along with the picture of a young woman in modern dress, blindfolded, being pulled around the church parlors by two young men blindfolded, while half dressed women and their partners are looking on laughing.

How the heart of the child of God draws back from the awful deception that invents and carries out that which is a travesty on the work of God, and that makes possible the constant calls to a lost world to come in and participate in the nonsense. Below are given just a few samples of thousands of

notices posted on church buildings, on the lawns, and carried in the columns of the newspapers:

"A musical comedy, 'The New Minister' was held in the chapel of the Methodist church "The troubles of a thriving church in a country town where they have been without a pastor for six months, were set forth in the comedy. The unmarried ladies desired a pastor without encumbrances, the young men wanted a short stop for their base ball team. The upsetting of their plans by the new school teacher, furnished an amusing climax."

"The Rev. . . . of the Pitney M. E. Church, beat the president of the Ladies Aid Society, as a devourer of pancakes. Mrs. H. ate 30 cakes, then announced that she was finished. The pastor managed to get outside of 32. More than \$25 was added to the building fund of the church."

"Come to the Baptist church Tuesday evening and laugh for an hour and a half." Such laughter was promised because the Rev. Mr. Lombard was to give a humorous lecture on "What I see from the Pulpit."

"Witches and choice spirits of darkness will hold high carnival at the Congregational chapel Friday evening. Come prepared to test your fate. Costumes, witches, ghosts etc."

Recently there appeared in illuminated letters over a moving picture palace these words: "Laughing Sinners." Shall we believe that when Jesus Christ comes suddenly to judge the world, He will say to those who enjoy what they call "funny stunts" in the church parlors and chapels, "Come ye blessed of my Father," and then to the "Laughing Sinners" across the street, "Depart ye cursed?"

Who cannot see the folly of such a representation of the justice of God? It must be said however, that a large majority of professors today, believe in taking in the fun at both places, and expect God will save them at last because they are church members, while the sinners who sit beside them, enjoying the same folly, will be lost because they have not "joined the church." We have no such God.

One of the blackest lists of sins in the Bible, (Mark 7:21-22) closes with the word FOOLISHNESS," and this will have its punishment along with the vile sins with which it is classed.

There are a few in the churches who will say, "We do not believe in these forms of pleasure and keep away from them. We enter into the spiritual side of church work." These are the kind of people who will say sweetly: "We feel it would be wrong for us, but do not condemn others who differ from us. It is not ours to judge." So they go on to judgment hand in hand.

"PRIDE," another reason for speaking against the churches. "Place pride," "race pride," "face pride," form pride (it could be put in plainer words) flourishes under the name of Christian, but especially wretched today is this sin as it relates to dress. Fashion following, at its best forbidden of God, and always a menace to spiritual life, has become shocking, almost unbelievable, and the churches are well nigh a unit in allowing and defending that over which the Church is suffering. It is one of the sins that the "lovers of pleasures" unite in enjoying from childhood down to old age. It is pitiful to see the little girls with very little to cover their nakedness. Fathers and sons, properly clothed from their necks to their toes, while mothers and daughters

walk beside them into the doors of the churches in shameless indecency.

As in the matter of amusements so in the manner of dress, there are some who will be conservative, and will say they do not believe in extremes, but this usually means that they take pleasure in going far enough to be popular, and shun any reproach for the cross of Christ. No, they will not judge others, but leave everything to the individual conscience. One minister said he told his people, "Dress as plainly as you will, but let other people alone."

Conscience according to the teaching of scripture is a dangerous monitor when wrongly educated, and who is responsible for its education? Those who have taken upon themselves to be recognized as "ministers of the Gospel."

A most urgent reason for speaking against the churches is found in the lives of those who are leading souls on in their deception. Like those who are following them, many of these men are the product of backslidden Protestantism, and have never had an experience with God. Others have had the beginnings of spiritual life before entering the colleges and schools of training, but it was smothered in the midst of ungodly association, in institutions honeycombed with infidelity. Modernism, only another name for Unitarianism and infidelity, is back of much that is carried on in the churches under the eyes of those supposed to be guides to the conscience.

A young man came to his pastor after joining the church and asked him if he thought it would be wrong for him to attend a dance that had been on his program. The reply was, "I feel it would be

wrong for me in my position, but you must obey your conscience." This is soul-murder.

The harlot mother of fallen churches brought to view in Rev. 17 and 18 is specially represented as trafficking in the costly merchandise of earth, and we find included in that traffic the "SOULS OF MEN." Costly indeed! Souls, bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ but deceived and trapped into the false systems of religion, in many instances to swell the membership, and give the hireling ministry a better standing, a larger salary, and a place of honor among the false prophets around them. The Church knows the sorrow of seeing the young for whom she has labored, welcomed into such associations where they escape the reproach of the Cross of Christ, and add sin to sin by going through the forms of religion with no experience in the knowledge of God.

There are more Modernists in the pulpits than are known as such, but when they are known, there is the same spirit of, "We do not believe as they do, but it is not ours to unchristianize."

Even the prominent Fundamentalist John Roach Straton, when pressed by his opponent Dr. Potter in their debate on the "Virgin Birth" which he was defending as an "Essential Christian Doctrine" denied strenuously and absolutely that he unchristianized good Unitarians as Dr. Potter charged.

There is an awful battle against the truth of God as expressed in these words: "Have no fellowship with the works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph. 5:11) This command will search out and put a mark upon those in the churches who are a dangerous counterfeit of the real. These are moral, refined, cultured, asthetic, and withal religious.

They study their Bibles, are in love with "Fundamentals," pray regularly, and talk religion, but their worldly manner of life, their social standing, their dress and general carriage, do not savor of the reproach of Christ, nor do they reproach the world. They are the subtle foes of spirituality, and only the spiritual detect them.

It takes eternal vigilance for the Church to keep separate from religion that is barren of salvation. The churches are largely made up of persons with a deceived heart and a false hope and it means persecution to declare it. Sometime, somehow, for some reason, they joined a church, and SOMEONE persuaded them to believe they were Christians, and someone will be accountable for it in the Day of Judgment.

False religion is the chief agency through which the devil works. It is his pet child. Touch it and you touch him and you will feel his hatred and the hatred of his children.

We can readily see if all this is true, the world on the inside will be the same as the world on the outside, and that means all manner of sin will thrive on the inside, when God has declared His Church is a holy people. Unnameable sins, uncleanness the Judgment alone will reveal, sins in the past life against others, never confessed, and restitution made, unpaid bills, old debts outlawed, ? dishonest business methods, novel reading, leading to all manner of unfaithfulness, abominable means of preventing the cares of motherhood, vulgar stories told, repeated and listened to, profanity, evil speaking, backbiting, anger, strife, and jealousy, abound under the name Christian.

Mention has been made of a comic lecture given by a hireling minister on "What I See from the Pulpit." What a subject for a heart-searching sermon! What is a minister supposed to see from his pulpit? Souls that will be saved or lost eternally, and as surely as the apostle Paul spoke the truth against the churches of our day, awful sins are wrapped up in the hearts of those who tread the aisles and sit before the preachers.

Are the churches largely filled with the covetous whom Jesus condemned? To covet is to "wish for more" for self and not alone for the glory of God. Where are the souls who are obeying his express command, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth?" How many couples divorced for "every cause" are living in open violation of His teaching, ministers and members alike?

How many are members of secret orders in direct disobedience of the command, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," ministers and members together?

In (Heb. 7:26) are found four of the characteristics of Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, and each one of these we find elsewhere applied to the members of His Body, the Church: "Holy," "harmless," "undefiled," "SEPARATE FROM SINNERS."

Looking down upon His Church He says, "Be ye HOLY, for I am holy." "Be blameless and HARMLESS, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world." "Blessed are the UNDEFILED in the way." "Come out from among them and be ye SEPARATE."

He was in the world to get souls out of the world, and His children are here for this same purpose. "Separate from sinners," and yet His life was given and His blood shed to save them FROM SIN. The awfulness of sin is little preached today. How lightly it is spoken of. Instead of a burning testimony to the power of the Blood of Christ to cleanse from "ALL SIN," it is the creed of "sinning every day in thought, word and deed," of "crooked paths" and "many sins." This is one great cause of the spread of infidelity throughout the world.

Our souls are stirred to the depths, as beautifully printed circulars come into our homes, showing pictures of Robert Ingersoll, Thomas Paine, and other infidels, lifting up their teachings, and urging the youth to be free from the bondage of the religion of Jesus Christ, and using the names of Lincoln, Carnegie, Edison, and many others to spread their literature. We read of Bolshevism and Communism as being against the faith of our ancestors, but how about the teaching from the pulpits of the land ?

One writer and lecturer rightly calls Modernism, "Religious Bolshevism." Was it true religion that turned Russia against the churches ? Read of the jewel studded palaces called churches where pride and pomp had full sway, and you can see what the people tired of supporting. It is estimated that St. Peter's cathedral in Rome cost two hundred and a quarter millions. Is it a wonder that men tire of the religions that produce such monuments of man's pride ? Are Protestants free from this same spirit of worldliness, or is it found among Modernists and Fundamentalists as well ?

Thousands of magnificent church palaces are being built all over the civilized world, in an effort to keep the people, and it does cater to the pride of the human heart, but there is so little faith in all this stands for in name, that the congregations are fast becoming hot-beds of infidelity.

We read of some of the "fighting pastors," that is, those who are fighting "corrupt politics" and trying to "clean up" their cities, when there are enough lewdly dressed women parading the aisles of their churches, and standing in their choirs sending up beautifully voiced lies to God, to corrupt the morals of a city, and multiply its infidels.

Those who speak against the churches are accused of having a lack of love, but the love of God in the human heart will be true when it sees deceived souls on their way to meet Him in judgment, and He has said, "A true witness delivereth souls."

Even before the death of the apostle John, the risen Christ gave His messages to local churches thus early in their history, showing conditions that finally headed up in a false system of religion called, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." (Rev. 17:5.)

The Protestant churches of today have so far followed in the steps of the Mother of Harlots in "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," that, as the apostle John "heard a voice saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues, so the present call is, "From such turn away."

It is not strange that in the face of multitudes of false works outside the regular churches, many of them bearing the name "Holiness," that this question should be asked: "If we turn away from, what shall we turn to?" Hundreds of leaders have launched religious works as did Aimee Semple McPherson, and only those in touch with God by His spirit can detect them.

During the past year, riding along on the train we saw in a newspaper across the aisle a Salvation Army bonnet, and looking closer to see the woman's face in it, discovered round about the picture, scores of names of the leading actors and actresses of the country who were to give a big night in New York to raise money for the Salvation Army, and directions to send to one of their leading officers for tickets. Do you say the money was for the poor? Then let them call themselves The Benevolent Army, or the Philanthropic Army, or The Sympathetic Army. "Salvation is of the Lord," and He is not working with actors and actresses.

Coming out from the churches does not make one a member of His Body, but if you know your name is written in the "Lamb's Book of Life," and you cannot longer fellowship evil after faithfully witnessing against it, He will guide you aright. If you must give the message alone, or among the "two or three of you" where Jesus promised to be "in the midst," His presence in your life will be "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Be not afraid of being called narrow. There is something about the slur, "Narrow Track Minds," from which the natural heart recoils. Few weapons

formed by Satan have been used more successfully than the fear of being called "narrow-minded." It is ever a refined subtle temptation.

The cry of these days is for all to be "BROAD-MINDED" "BROAD-SPIRITED," and of "BROAD VISION," which always means a "BROAD WAY."

So sure as God's Word is true, if we find many following any way we know it is "BROAD", while HE said, "Narrow is the way that leadeth unto life"—"FEW" in it. "Broad is the way that leadeth unto death"—"MANY" in it. (Matt. 7:14).

Some reasons for speaking against the churches, only a few of many that might be given, we are prayerfully sending out with but one motive—the help of souls. It brings little but reproach so far as this world is concerned, but the salvation of ONE is worth a lifetime of effort in HIS NAME.

Mrs. C. T. Pike

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