

STRAIGHTWAY

"And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" [Mark 1:18].

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

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CHRISTIANITY: MOST CREDIBLE? OR HARDLY PLAUSIBLE?

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Apologetics, like its cousin the philosophy of religion, is a type of Christian Theology. But we must not use any division of any of the theologies to narrow the scope and effectiveness of the entire witness of the Christian Faith. We must minister where Christ is most credible and even hardly plausible.

For the sake of the general society we must not seek to present the Gospel in a relevant and pragmatic way, comforting ourselves that we have reached the world **en masse**, effectively.

The history of Christianity is replete with a wide range of exemplary modes of proclamation if we look beyond the confines of only theology and philosophy.

This Gospel proclamation should seek out mankind in the minority and the majority, the individual and the group, the child and the family, the husband of one and the father of

many, the rare person needing a solution for his personal doubts and the ordinary people needing solutions to ordinary problems.

The Christian scholar and the average pastor, both need to deal with the entire segment of humanity God has brought to the influence of each.

Recently, in my own ministry, I was brought face to face with a single individual who seriously presented to me his over-whelming struggle of the doubts of Christianity. I had known him for over thirty years and never realized his grave situation of heart. I was so moved by his problems of faith I had to pause and write a serious booklet just to relieve my obligation which I had before him and God.

Just nine months prior to that during a summer retreat for study and prayer, God gave me a large burden for some eighty children in our Christian school and church, and I was constrained to write a book for children

and parents concerning the need of "God consciousness" in the lives of children. I then proceeded to urge each child I knew to read this book and I urged the parent to do so, too.

Simultaneously, during this same nine-month period in my ministry, I have been brought into the private lostness of a prisoner; the cultural misunderstandings of a number of foreign students that I teach in the college; the backsliding of a professing Christian I have known for 20 years; an early teenager of a Christian home, who told me he was an atheist; the backsliding of a young man of the Spence family; the desire to set forth a special gift to my beloved wife as she nears a large birthday anniversary; a remembrance in a season of prayer concerning a recent enemy; private audiences with several pastors who are burdened over certain deep-seated, modern problems among some of their men; the remembrance of the dear minister who led me to Christ, by extending correspondence to him; realizing the burden of one of our Board of Trustees' father, facing death, unsaved; being burdened for the whole world I live in; exercising

concern to a missionary overseas who is passing through a physical trial along with his dear wife; and seeking God's face for a private, spiritual need in my own life; and I took time to write a sacred oratorio.

Although I am a militant separatist, fundamentalist, I do not give all my energies to that one area of life, although there is much to fight about and I fight much. But it is the wider scope of the ministry that keeps my heart on the road of victory. I do not believe I could give my life to just ranting and raving against God's enemies. I must do other things for God, too.

There is architecture to the Christian life; there is literature; there is music; there is joy; there is wife; there is responsibility; there is beauty; there is hope; there is life!

In spite of the impressive publicity televised and paraded around the world that Christianity is having a landslide in evangelism, a revival, an awakening, a renewal to millions; there is much evidence that the Christian life is weak, serving many good works without biblical conviction and conscience. There is much evidence of great, unanswered questions in the heart of deeply troubled souls.

When you read the statistics of the charismatics, one-third of the world is Christian, and by the year 2,000 they predict one-half will be Christians. Of course, they boldly include the liberals, the ecumenists, the Romanists, and make little claim to biblical doctrine and separation. They simply reduce the test to "Spirit," subjectively measured by the yardstick of personal feeling and human witness.

The "Promise Keepers" present a

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Christianity that advances horizontal fellowships and human covenants with each other. The emphasis upon only the inclusion of the "male" promises is weakened greatly by the unseparated and undesignated identification of any heresy or heretic which might be among them. The winning ticket is fellowship and union whether fundamental or not; The "Promise Keepers" keep the Lord's Supper by any and every practice of it, whether Romanist transubstantiation or other.

There are at least seven observations which may be made to set forth the current deeds of man's doing as he lays claim to a prosperous and popular Christianity in a world where genuine Christianity is hardly plausible to say nothing of being credible.

First, there are agnostics, in a growing number, which seem to flourish in the midst of the present adherents to Christianity, and who hold serious doubts to a historical, biblical Christianity. Because of the little emphasis presently being made upon Bible doctrine, the questions of the agnostic are tolerated and even ignored by professing Christians. Recent polls indicate that only 28 percent of Americans believe in absolute of truth.

Second, the life-styles of the Christian world follow "the rich and famous," with the styles and fashions following exactly that of the intersexual and immodest age. The standards of our churches and Christian Day Schools have moved sharply away from the moral and spiritual moorings of our beginnings.

Third, art forms and a basic biblical culture are fading from the home, the church, and the Christian

community. Every year the music of our private lives and public worship are increasing echoes of our contemporary world. Our lectures upon these subjects are defending the practice of the contemporary song. Former separatists have moved closer to the world as the world moved further from God. Next to the message of the pulpit are the messages of our songs and the music itself. Both are slipping from their biblical anchors.

Fourth, we hear much about the separatists being legalists, the holy being self-righteous, and the standard-bearer being too straight. All of this is being said when you can hardly find a practicing separatist, a holy man of God and a Bible standard-bearer. Where are all of those legalists, self-righteous, straight individuals? I have no addresses of them; I know no one who lives by that accusation. We are too suave; we are too pragmatic for the time. Things are so critical, I would welcome one legal, holy, straight man, to come and hear the Gospel, for I believe he would be a candidate for the grace of God.

Fifth, the Christian home is presently plagued with grave problems. I have never known in my sixty-eight years so many Christian homes in so much trouble. Husband headship is waning; wife dominance is more prominent. Children are more disobedient and untrained. Separation and divorce are on the increase in Christian homes. Severe problems exist.

Sixth, loyalty and respect for brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus are often replaced by evil surmisings and bitterness. Gossip and falsehoods are

ever-increasing and rarely does a brother seek out a brother, personally, to repair the damage of dishonest quotations and presumptuous lies. The Bible continues to read that we are to think more highly of our brother than we do ourselves; love thinketh no evil; and love provoketh not evil at all. We are seeing evidence that a brother treats and accuses a brother exactly like an apostate, while still claiming to be his brother.

Seventh, there is evidence that Fundamentalism, as a movement, is getting smaller, although the cry against them is loud enough that you would think that there must be millions of them. It is hopeful, however, that the reduction of force among the claimants to Fundamentalism is a testimony that the fundamentalists are more genuine. If this be true, and I believe it is, this remnant shall not perish in the earth. Thank God, we still know the names and addresses of a number of them.

If the credibility of Christianity is waning in the hearts of some in this earth, may we persist anyway. We must even be comforted that our Lord Jesus worked in fields where Christianity did not even seem plausible. If the Lord would ask us the same question, “will ye also go?,” may we also give plausible response, “To whom shall we go, Thou has the words of eternal life.”

The falling away of these last days have caused many to no longer believe Christianity. If this is so, we must still do all we can to make our Faith at least plausible. Credibility is often the result of the “lighting” of the world; plausibility results from the “salting” of the same world.

Rome Keeps Coming Back

A number of years ago, in Oklahoma City, blaring forth from the dazzling neon lights of a local nightclub marquee, announcement was made concerning the return of a cheap stripper, saying: “Wanda is Back! Wanda is Back!”

Without entering into the den of iniquity, any passerby could easily conclude an entire story from those three words: “Wanda is Back!” Wanda, evidently, had been there before; she had enjoyed a successful engagement and parade of her visible pornography and nudity. She had left but was remembered, and by popular demand, “Wanda was coming back!” It could be easily surmised that this second engagement would break all former records and add to both the former viewings and persistent imaginations of the past performances. And all were invited back to extend their sinful memories into deeper experiences of evil as the double-feature of Wanda would carry the spectator down into deeper despair.

Well, Babylon and Rome are back!

They have returned by popular demand and will, undoubtedly, bring a larger audience and following of people than ever before in history.

For many years now Christian scholars and preachers have earnestly discussed, debated, and declared concerning the end time and the return of Babylon and Rome—whether it will be Babylon or Rome. But there is no doubt in the thinking of the biblicist—they *will* be back.

With the Word of God and church history, we are now able to view the complete progress of this lengthy experience of Babylon and Rome. In reality, we might be able to construct a significant and credible outline of this matter, as follows:

1. Romanism Conceived in Babylon
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3. Romanism Reared in the Church
4. Romansim Refuted by the Reformers
5. Romanism Renewed by the Neo-Ecumenists
6. Romanism Restored by the Apostates for Antichrist
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