

False Conversion — A MORTAL DANGER!

This article affects YOU! The really GREAT DANGER for most professing Christians is here revealed. You NEED to know!

by Roderick C. Meredith

THE END of this age is very near! The "World Tomorrow" is at hand!

Through His work, God is WARNING His people of impending *destruction* and national *punishment*. This warning particularly affects the United States and the British Commonwealth of nations.

We have been materially BLESSED by Almighty God above other peoples. Our people also have been *spiritually blessed* by having *free access* to the Bible—and literally *hundreds* of Bible study helps, and by the complete *freedom of worship* we have been granted. Also, through the material blessings, we have had *more time* to pursue the spiritual things, to *find* God's TRUTH, and to *live it*.

But we have FAILED!

A Dead Religion

Although we cherish favorite opinions and man-made traditions—and *although we hate to be told we are wrong*—our modern religion is a DEAD thing.

Some of us realize it.

But most people hate to ADMIT it. It is painful to admit they have been WRONG. But the END of this civilization is near!

God says He is going to have to PUNISH our people for our national and individual sins. "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD, O Israel!" (Amos 4:12).

Are YOU prepared? God tells us to *get ready!* The time is NOW!

Most of you who read The PLAIN TRUTH regularly realize that before this you had been LACKING something for *many years*.

Now you have come to understand a great deal of *new truth*. A *new way of life* is opening up before you.

Now you are beginning to really

UNDERSTAND Bible prophecies, and the great PURPOSE being worked out here below.

WHY have you been in almost total *ignorance* of the real meaning of Bible prophecy and of world affairs all the years before this?

If you were truly a Christian—a forgotten child of God—WHY weren't you given to understand these things before? *Why* didn't God seem more REAL? *Why* didn't you really *study* and UNDERSTAND the Bible all these years?

And WHY didn't your minister really *understand* and preach the Bible and its prophecies all these years? If he is a true minister of God, *why doesn't he do so now?*

Why does he almost NEVER admit he has been *wrong* about some points? Why doesn't he constantly study, and *change*, and GROW in *grace* and in *knowledge*?

Again, what about YOU? *Why* haven't you been doing these things — IF you have *really* been a Christian and a child of God for many years?

Let's FACE the FACTS! Excusing ourselves will do no good whatever when we are brought before the judgment seat of God!

Does This Mean Someone Else?

The little word *my* is a precious one to most people. They lovingly speak of *my* opinion, *my* job, *my* house, *my* country, *my* religion and *my* God.

We RESENT being told that *our* opinion, *our* faith, or *our* religion is wrong. We like to continue to believe what we have been accustomed to accept as true. Everyone HATES to admit he has been wrong.

Yet, in all this maze of religious babilon, *somebody* HAS to be wrong!

Are you willing to admit that *it could be* YOU?

May God help you to do so! Because

if we will believe our Bibles, we will find that MOST of the people on this earth are steeped in *religious error*. And even most professing Christians are DECEIVED!

One of the *least understood* principles in all the Bible is that God has purposely *blinded* this world and is letting it go its own way and *learn lessons* during this first six thousand years of human history. In Revelation 12:9, God describes Satan as, "that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which DECEIVETH THE WHOLE WORLD."

Hard to believe, isn't it?

Yet—in *many places*—your Bible indicates that this *whole world* has been completely DECEIVED in spiritual things. Remember that a deceived person *doesn't know* he is deceived. He is sincere. But he is *sincerely* WRONG!

The great false religious system dominating our western world today is pictured in Revelation 17. God describes this apostate church as a fallen woman—a *great whore*: "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the *inhabitants of the earth have been made DRUNK with the wine of her fornication*" (verse 2).

Because of false teachings and false concepts assumed since childhood, people are *spiritually* DRUNK—having a distorted outlook—so that they are *unable to see spiritual truths*. Like a *drunk person*, they are stupidly SATISFIED in the foggy, hazy, confused spiritual state in which they find themselves.

They THINK they are all right—on the surface at least. But deep down inside is the haunting realization that *something is missing* — their religion seems EMPTY — God seems UNREAL somehow, and so very, very far away.

A Counterfeit Christianity

The GREAT RELIGIOUS DECEPTION that has gripped this world is the

result of Satan the Devil working through false ministers who preach a *counterfeit Christianity*. After all, a deceiver is a counterfeiter. And Satan the Devil is the *supreme COUNTERFEITER* of the ages! Therefore, his ministers have a doctrine that *appears to be* the TRUTH.

The apostle Paul describes these false, Christian ministers—who were already prevalent in his day: "For such are *false apostles*, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for *Satan himself* is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing that his (*the devil's*) ministers also be transformed AS the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be *according to their works*" (II Cor. 11:13-15).

Yes, Satan the Devil has MINISTERS! They *appear to be* the ministers of Christ! But actually, they teach a doctrine of "no works"—*no obedience to God's law*. Therefore, they themselves will be judged according to their EVIL works!

God warns us to "try" or *test* every spirit or spiritual doctrine that comes through men. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but *try the spirits* whether they are of God: because *many false prophets* are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

Unknowingly, and in most cases sincerely, most of YOU have in the past been deceived by false preaching — which originated and proceeded forth from Satan the Devil through his demon spirits, which inspire and influence the religious system and false ministers of our day! It is time to WAKE UP!

In these last days, before the second coming of Jesus Christ, you need to KNOW whether or not you are *prepared to meet your God!* With an open mind, you should be willing to *prove* whether or not you have ever been *really converted*.

Your *misplaced confidence* in a FALSE CONVERSION is a *great* and MORTAL deception which could very easily cause you to forfeit *eternal life!* It is such a *dangerous* deception because your own personal VANITY will, in many cases, prevent you from admitting that *you have never been converted!*

Are you willing to FACE this possibility? Are you willing to CHANGE if

God shows you *through His Word* that you have never really been converted before?

What Conversion Really Is

God's Word says: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). In plain language, you have to have Christ's *Spirit* in you or you are not a Christian—you have NEVER been converted.

A truly converted person is *filled with* and LED BY the Holy Spirit of God. God places and lives His very *life* within us through His Holy Spirit. By this means, we are *begotten of Him* as children and thus partake of *His very nature!* "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they are the sons of God*" (Rom. 8:14).

Frankly, in the past, most of you didn't even know WHAT the Holy Spirit was, what it was supposed to do in your life, and *what* was the real result of your being led by God's Holy Spirit.

In Romans 5:5, God tells us: "The *love of God* is shed abroad in our hearts BY the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." Through His Spirit, God gives us His love. Thus we partake of His nature — His character. And God's character is expressed in the *spiritual principles* contained in the Ten Commandments — *obedience to God's Law*. "For *this is the love of God*, that we *keep His commandments*: and His commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3).

God's Spirit leads us to OBEY Him as our Maker and Ruler.

The apostle Peter was inspired to write of "the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that OBEY him" (Acts 5:32).

Real conversion, then, involves a real *surrender to obey God and His Laws*. In Acts 2:38, Peter was inspired to tell HOW to be converted. He said: "*Repent, and be baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the *gift* of the Holy Spirit."

You *repent* of SIN. And what is the Bible definition of sin? "*Sin is the transgression of the law*" (I John 3:4). That is the Bible definition of sin — breaking God's Law! So to really be converted, you must REPENT of breaking God's Law. Remember that in the New Testament, this Law was *magnified*

by Jesus Christ — particularly in Matthew 5 and the Sermon on the Mount as a whole. We are to keep not only the letter but the *spirit* or intent of God's Law *in every phase of our lives*.

Jesus said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY word of God" (Luke 4:4). You must *repent* of disobeying God's Law—His Word—His RULE over your life. Then you need to *be baptized* as an outward sign of your willingness to completely BURY your old self—and literally *give* your very *life* to God and to Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, High Priest, and Master.

In Romans 6:1-4, the apostle Paul describes baptism as a *burial* of the old self. It is to be a complete *immersion* of the body under the water as a type of the burial of the human body in the grave.

False Conversion Is Very Common

But frankly, most people attending the churches of this world and having been baptized by them never really knew WHAT to *repent of!* They didn't know WHAT sin really is.

At the time of baptism in most churches, most people sincerely intend to "do better" or to "make their peace with God." But since they have not been taught what sin actually is they completely fail to realize how ROTTEN and SINFUL they have really been!

They don't *really* REPENT! They aren't broken up about the wretched state of their lives and their own human VANITY and *selfishness*, which expresses itself constantly in all of us.

And such people don't immediately begin to *study* and UNDERSTAND the Bible. They just continue to go along with the customs, the ways and the traditions of this world. Their lives are not actually CHANGED. They don't come to *personally* KNOW GOD!

Speaking of *converted* people, Jesus said: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he will guide you INTO all truth*: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you *things to come*" (John 16:13). A truly converted person, then, will be guided into *new TRUTH* by God's Spirit. He will come to *understand* and GRASP Bible prophecy—or *things to come!*

Genuine *conversion* actually REVOLUTIONIZES a human being's life! It

is a *renewing of his mind*—his *attitude*—his *character!*

He comes to really KNOW God—to constantly *study* and UNDERSTAND more and more of God's Word—and he is able to *pray* and talk to God in a personal way. He receives constant *answers* — he is *blessed* — he GROWS more like Christ every month and year of his life!

The sad truth is that most professing Christians haven't even begun to get ready to START on the road to this kind of Christian life!

Are you willing to face this fact and ACT on it?

Face Up to Human Nature

The Almighty God, Who created our minds and our human nature, repeats twice a warning for us in the book of Proverbs. He warns: "There is a way which *seemeth* right unto a man, but the end thereof are the *ways of death*" (Prov. 16:25; 14:12).

It is only human nature to believe that *your way* is right. But God says that the way that SEEMS right to a man ends up in *death!* Remember that the wages of sin is DEATH (Rom. 6:23).

The greatest stumbling block that prevents most people from accepting the *truth* and being *truly converted* is their own VANITY. Most people have grown up in and attended some church or another. And they hate to admit that they have *never been converted!* Human nature makes them want to maintain their OWN righteousness.

God has inspired an *entire book* in His Word to deal with this common problem of human beings. It is the book of Job — one of the least understood books in all the Bible.

The primary lesson in this entire book is that God HATES our own human *self-righteousness!*

Notice Job's attitude throughout this book! "God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove *mine integrity* from me. MY *righteousness* I hold fast, and will not let it go: *my heart shall not reproach me* so long as I live" (Job 27:5-6).

Job again voices his real attitude in Job 31:6: "Let me be weighed in an even balance, *that God may know MINE integrity.*" Even Job's carnal friends could sense his own self-righteousness

and vanity. "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous *in his OWN eyes*" (Job 32:1).

Finally, after dealing *personally* with God and learning a little more about his own *insignificance* and utter *weakness* and *wretchedness*, Job at last REPENTED. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but *now mine eye seeth thee.* Wherefore I ABHOR myself, and *repent* in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

But the real question remains: Have you ever come to really ABHOR *yourself?* Have you REPENTED in dust and ashes? Have you *totally SURRENDERED* yourself to God and given your very LIFE to Him to use *as He sees fit?*

God *commands* us to quit justifying the *self!* "Let the wicked forsake HIS *way*, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). But perhaps you don't think you've been wicked?

The Almighty God declares: "There is NONE righteous, no, *not one*" (Rom. 3:10). Again, He states: "For ALL *have sinned*, and come short of the glory of God" (verse 23).

Yes, we have *all sinned!* We have all *broken God's Law.* And most of us are STILL breaking His Law and *trying to justify doing so!*

God thunders: "For my thoughts are NOT your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9).

Our own human *ways* and *reasonings* are always WRONG!

This means YOU! *Don't* apply this to someone else—apply it to YOURSELF!

It is almost certain that most of you reading this article still have what the Bible describes as a "carnal" mind. Many of you think you are already "saved" when the truth of the matter is that you NEVER have come to the place of *total surrender* to God and His *absolute RULE* over your lives! Therefore, you have NEVER received of God's Holy Spirit and been begotten as His spiritual son.

That is WHY you have not been able to understand Bible PROPHECY before!

That is WHY you never really *understood* the great PURPOSE being worked out here below. And that is why God always seemed so far away—so UNREAL.

This lack of God's Spirit is the reason that you were not continually GROWING in grace and in knowledge—and that you have lacked vital scripture truths so many years of your life.

Now it is time to AWAKEN! Now it is time to be *really CONVERTED!*

What You Should Do

First of all, you should apply this article to your own SELF. And you should strive NOT to get your feelings hurt by the correction and the exhortation which is here given in deep LOVE!

Remember that when Jesus had been showing His disciples that they had to literally "eat" of Him and His message, many got their feelings hurt and drew back. "Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60). But Jesus asked the twelve, "Will you also go away?"

Then Peter gave an answer which has the *same significance* today. He said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? *Thou hast the words of eternal life*" (verses 67-68).

If God has shown you by the "fruits" that *this is the WORK of His Church*, then you should FEAR to turn aside from the *truth!* Where *else* would you go?

Thousands of you have come to realize that you are getting the *truth* and *message* of God through this work — The *World Tomorrow* broadcast and The PLAIN TRUTH Magazine. You are beginning to realize that this is the true Church of God.

But you have never thought of actually DOING very much about it!

If we are the servants of the MOST HIGH GOD, then you ought to *follow* and *obey* our teaching and example as you see it is according to the Bible. You ought to apply such articles as this more LITERALLY and *personally* in your own private lives.

The apostle Paul was inspired to write: "Be ye *followers* of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). The Greek word here literally means to "imitate." You need to *imitate* the example of God's ministers—and of Jesus Christ.

Frankly, most of you have never been

counseled with by one of God's true ministers about *real conversion* and *baptism*. If you realize the vital necessity of this personal contact and guidance of the true servants of Jesus Christ, then tell us and send your name and address *immediately* to Mr. Armstrong.

And ALL of you need to realize the vital importance of coming to a REAL *conversion!* *Don't put it off too long!*

Remember that God doesn't have a habit of doing His work through *false ministers!* If you want to be *really SURE* of your spiritual state, you'd better counsel with the true ministers of God who are being used as instruments to preach His message to this dying world. You had better *humble yourself* to take their advice—to follow their instructions—if you are satisfied they are TRULY God's ministers. If not, you had better MAKE SURE where God is working!

Be Willing to CHANGE

Never forget that before real conversion comes *real REPENTANCE*. You had better humble yourself until you

can sincerely repent as David did in Psalm 51. "Wash me thoroughly from mine *iniquity*, and cleanse me from my *sin*," David cried. "For I *acknowledge* my transgressions: and my SIN is ever before me."

Notice that David did not try to justify himself—he *acknowledged* his sin freely and asked for forgiveness.

He continued: "Against thee, thee only, have I *sinned*, and done this EVIL in thy sight."

God didn't have to argue or "reason" David into admitting his guilt! As Job, David had come to see himself as he really was and to ABHOR himself. *And you are no better!*

When you are finally ready to *repent* of breaking God's Laws, of following human traditions, of *conforming* to this society and its ways, then here is what God requires of YOU. "The sacrifices of God are a *BROKEN spirit*: a *broken* and a *contrite heart*, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17).

When that time comes you will quit

arguing and *reasoning* with the ministers through whom God shows you by the "fruits" that He is working. You will not grudgingly hang on to a *false conversion* any more. You will not get your "feelings" hurt at the correction and exhortation of God's chosen servants.

At that time, you will be *humble* and TEACHABLE like a little child — not assuming that you are a spiritual giant before you even start on the road to real conversion.

And you will realize the *great DANGER* of *assuming* — because of spiritual pride and vanity—that a previous *false conversion* was the real thing. You will KNOW that this kind of vanity could prevent you from ever being *truly converted*—and could *cut you off from God for all eternity!*

You will also KNOW that God has *always* given the right advice through the *SAME* ministers He is using to preach His message to the world.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

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