

Chapter 1

THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES

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We are living today in what many are calling a post-modern age — an age when there are no absolutes and almost anything goes. A more realistic designation, however, might be the Post-Christian Age, when almost any kind of belief and practice except biblical Christianity is tolerated and even encouraged.

Our nation was founded on biblical principles, as a Christian nation, largely by founding fathers who were serious about their faith in God and the Bible. This faith was implicit, not only in the writings of the pilgrims and other early settlers, but also later in the Declaration of Independence and then the Constitution with its Bill of Rights. The various state constitutions and court decisions (at least those prior to the 20th century) reflected the same Judeo-Christian faith of the fathers. Our laws had been largely derived from the British common law, which in turn had been mainly developed from biblical principles — both the Mosaic laws and the teachings of Christ.¹ The early schools and colleges of our country likewise had built their programs around the same foundation, freely including the Bible and prayer in their studies and activities.

But now a great apostasy has set in. Although it began with the rise of deism in the 18th century, the real roots of the apostasy are in the resurgence of ancient evolutionism in the form of Darwinism during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This system had soon triumphed in the schools and courts (under the guise of separating church and state and science from religion). These developments eventually fomented the infamous student revolution in the sixties, with its accompanying emphases on anti-nationalism, sexual freedom, one-worldism, and anti-Christianity in general.

These bad seeds and bitter roots have come to full flower in this post-Christian age. Ancient pagan religions are experiencing a great revival in the form of a plethora of New-Age cults, accompanied by tremendous expansion of eastern ethnic religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.) and militant Islam, even here in “Christian” America — even more so in the nominally Christian (or more realistically post-Christian) nations of Europe, South America, and Australia.

The moral standards of much of the world are rapidly “slouching toward Gomorrah” as Judge Robert Bork has expressed it. Even in the United States, its twice-elected immoral president Bill Clinton not only was a notorious philanderer and adulterer, but also had been a persistent liar and even perjurer (with impeachment swirling all around him). Even worse was the fact that his political party and (seemingly) 75 percent of the population seemed to approve of him.

Some may argue that the American people are still quite “religious.” About 90 percent will say they believe in God (but their concept of God is often radically different in nature from the God of the Bible), and about 50 percent will say they have been “born again,” (but they often are thinking in terms of some religious experience drastically different from biblical regeneration through

personal repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, as described in the Holy Scriptures (John 3:3–8; Rom. 6:1–14; Titus 3:5–7; 1 Pet. 1:23; etc.).

The “mainline” churches, seminaries, and denominational colleges have largely capitulated to theological liberalism and often to New Age concepts. The same is true to a lesser degree among a significant number of evangelical churches and educational institutions.

There are, of course, a goodly number of American evangelical and fundamentalist churches and schools that still believe in biblical inerrancy and the saving gospel of Christ, and I believe that God has withheld divine judgment on America thus far mainly because of this remnant of genuine Christian believers in the nation.

But even here there is cause for concern. There is much less emphasis on systematic study of the Bible and solid Christian literature than there was a generation ago, with more emphasis on psychological counseling and social involvement. Adultery, pre-marital sex, divorce, and other evils are much more common among Bible-believing Christians than they used to be.

Most Christian bookstores carry few solid and substantive Christian books nowadays, catering more to frothy devotional and self-help books, and also to so-called “holy hardware” and other such items as found in secular gift stores. The seemingly endless parade of new Bible translations, promoted to replace the beautiful God-honoring, time-tested King James Bible, has caused great confusion and a significant decrease in genuine Bible knowledge. Contemporary repetitive “worship choruses” have largely displaced the beautiful Christian hymns and meaningful gospel songs that Christians used to sing, and this is true even in most Bible-believing churches. Emotionalism has replaced thoughtful reverence and insightful Bible exposition in too many church services and evangelistic crusades. I have been actively involved in such churches all my 80+

years and personally feel a great sense of spiritual loss because of these sad trends.

We need to consider seriously the poignant question of the Lord Jesus Christ. “When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find (the) faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8; KJV). As we get deeper into the last days, and opposition to true Christianity intensifies (remember 2 Tim. 3:1, 12, 13), will our present faith and practice stand the test? In this country, we Christians have enjoyed almost four hundred years of religious freedom and even politico-legal favor, but this situation is rapidly deteriorating. The enemies of biblical Christianity are becoming stronger all the time and would like, if they can, to totally eliminate true biblical faith from the earth.

But actually, this is nothing really new. God’s people have lived under the threat of violent opposition ever since Cain killed his brother, Abel. The whole world population, except for Noah’s family, was destroyed by the God-sent flood because of their wickedness, and then God later had to disperse the peoples at Babel because of their new rebellion against Him. His remnant of chosen people were later enslaved by the Egyptians and, after they became a free nation, under Moses, the later prophets and other God-fearing Israelites “had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment” by their own leaders (Heb. 11:36). Finally, Christ was crucified by both Jews and Gentiles, and then His followers likewise were persecuted. In fact, He told them that “the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that He doeth God service” (John 16:2). And so it has been, all through history. Bible-believing Christians have been persecuted successively by the Romans, the Moslems, and even by other professing Christians.

In this country, and other Christian countries after the Reformation, thankfully, the widespread circulation of the Bible and the modern missionary movement has

been accompanied by a long period of freedom from all but isolated incidents of persecution. But this period is soon coming to a close.

In this past century, there were mass persecutions of Christians in Russia, China, and other communist countries, as well as Nazi Germany (along with the Jewish holocaust). More recently have come the persecutions in Nigeria, Sudan, Rwanda, and other “liberated” African countries, not to mention political actions — even in America — against Bible teaching, prayer, and Christian witnessing in schools and other government institutions. Especially onerous and harmful in its long-range effects has been the promotion of evolutionism and anti-creationism in the schools. Many of the bitter fruits of such indoctrination will be discussed in more detail in other chapters of this book.

Right now, however, we need to recognize that all this is part of Satan’s long war against God. It has been going on for ages, and will continue until Christ returns and banishes Satan and all his allies, both human and demonic, from the earth.

The Two Views of the World and Life

Indeed, a cosmic warfare has been raging between God and the devil ever since the beginning. Every age, every nation has been involved. Each of us is also involved on one side or the other and this becomes apparent in our respective views of the world and its meaning.

There are really only two basic world views. Either we can seek to explain the origin, development, and meaning of all things in terms of continuing natural processes or we cannot. One world view is expressed in terms of evolution and the other one by divine creation. These two perspectives embrace everything in the world of sense, knowledge, and understanding. We must believe in either one world view or the other; we cannot really believe both because