

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

The Danger of False Teachers

By Samuel Matthews

Loved ones, the apostle Peter was emphatic: **“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you...”** (2 Pet. 2:1). Please note that Peter states that the existence of false teachers among us is a certainty. Peter also makes it clear that false teachers are absolutely destructive to the souls of men and women. They **“secretly bring in destructive heresies”** (v. 1b).

A heresy is a false doctrine, and it destroys the faith of people. Then there is the reference to these heresies being of the most basic and fundamental type: **“even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction”** (v. 1c). Many false teachers spread destructive heresies denying the Lord Himself.

Next, Peter states the real danger of false teachers: **“... many will follow their destructive ways because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed”** (v. 2). Just look around you in the religious world. It seems not to matter how outrageous the false doctrines are which men can invent, there is always an audience for them. Catholics revere a mere man as the “vicar of Christ.” Mormons believe a young boy was given “another Testament of Jesus Christ,” and Scientologists must commit themselves to a sci-fi story about a galactic warlord named Xenu.

Do you remember way back to 1997 when the Hale-Bopp comet passed by earth? A whole cult, called Heaven’s Gate, committed suicide, dressed for travel, and with their suitcases at their feet. They believed there was an armada of spaceships following behind the comet that would scoop them up and take them away. They should serve as an illustration of the power of a false teacher. Truly, Marshall Applewhite brought swift destruction to himself and to those who followed him.

False teachers are not limited to the cult world or the denominations. There are false teachers who trouble the Lord’s church as well. Men in the churches of Christ teach error about many Bible doctrines. The work and organization of the church is under assault from within. False teachers have adopted many false positions on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, and even Christians have disobeyed God and put away their mates for a cause other than fornication and remarried (Matt. 19:6-9). With every new departure from the truth, brethren are forced to stand for the truth and face the anger of those who argue for broader fellowship.

A milkman is a milkman because he delivers milk. His character and goodness do not enter into it. Teachers are false because they teach **“destructive heresies.”** They do not have to be wicked, mean, or have evil intent. Hymenaeus and Philetus taught doctrine that was **“cancer,”** but nothing is said about their motive or personal disposition (2 Tim. 2:17-18). Evil intent or not, their doctrine was cancerous and deadly.

False teaches are a certainty in this world. Peter said so. The danger is evident. Let us not forget that the souls of men are in jeopardy. Let us oppose their error with the truth (2 Tim. 4:2-5). ■

“WE’RE COMING FOR YOUR CHILDREN!”

By LaGard Smith

“We’re here, we’re queer, we’re coming for your children,” shouted LGBTQ activists at New York City’s annual drag queen parade. Then there’s the feisty, if not terribly catchy, lyrics of the San Francisco Gay Men’s

Chorus: *“We’ll convert your children, happens bit by bit; quietly and subtly, you’ll barely notice it. You can keep them from disco, warn about San Francisco...we don’t care. We’ll convert your children; we’ll make them tolerant and fair.”* Really? In 2023? No generation in history has ever been as tolerant and fair! So, what are you really saying?

Hardly just “tongue-in-cheek humor,” as claimed, the message in the chorus provides a chilling clue: *“Your children will care about fairness and justice for others; your children will work to convert all their sisters and brothers. Then soon, we’re almost certain, your kids will start converting you!”* As in the Hitler Youth movement. As in Mao’s Cultural Revolution, when children snitched on their own parents if they resisted radical changes. Win the hearts and minds of the youth, and game over. Don’t miss the bigger picture. This isn’t just about gays. At stake is parental authority versus the state, because whoever controls the youth controls everything.

The battle between “progressive” school boards and parents over sex education, explicit books in the library, and students being counseled about gender transitioning without parents being informed is only a single front in a wider war. In 2021, the Democratic candidate for Governor of Virginia spilled the beans, saying, *“I don’t think parents should be telling schools what they should teach.”* It’s not just the belief that professional educators know better than parents what’s best for children to learn, but about isolating children from parents in order to freely indoctrinate them about every aspect of life—political, social, ethical, and economic.

Shades of Marxism and communism, even Plato’s utopian “city” in which the traditional family would be replaced by a communal arrangement wherein children would be raised as wards of the state. Yet this latest round of statism is about raw power, preaching lofty social ideals but perverting even the moral assumptions of its idealistic predecessors. And when you consider that communism and Marxism have always led to authoritarian rule and loss of freedom, today’s morally-unhinged incarnation would unleash a nightmare of... unfairness and intolerance!

Given these ungodly times, it’s easy to see the potential for danger when young people are under the influence of mentors other than their parents. But have we been blind to a similar dynamic happening even in a godly setting? With the purest of motives and not the least quest for power or influence, youth ministries and “children’s worship” have served to isolate children from parents, and to relieve parents of their own teaching responsibility. The umbilical cord having thus been severed, children’s primary spiritual mentors are no longer their own parents, upending the educative relationship between parent and child, and radically changing the culture of the church. Well-meaning as it is, the youth-ministry model has made young people all the more vulnerable to militant secularism. Even now, they’re abandoning the church and faith in droves.

Passive parents, arise! Having been forewarned that the ungodly are coming to convert your children, it’s time to step up. Schools and school boards need to hear from you! More important by far, when it comes to spiritual mentoring, it’s not church leaders but parents that youngsters need to hear from most! It’s no jest, “They’re coming for them!” Are your children ready? ■

Food, Gimmicks and Recreation

By Jeff May

How ashamed we ought to be if we think people are drawn to Christ with food, recreation and entertainment. There’s enough power in the tree of Calvary. Jesus Himself said, ***“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself”*** (John 12:32). The man who sees his problem will come to Calvary’s tree for his remedy. He needs nothing else. He desires only ***“Jesus Christ and Him crucified”*** (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

The use of such gimmicks is a direct reflection of lack of faith and trust in the word of God (Rom. 1:16). What is the difference in this and in using creeds, robes, incense, instrumental music and other such gimmicks to make the worship “entertaining”? Are we at worship to please ourselves or God? ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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