

The Doctrine of the Church In These Times

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SUMMARY

"During the Boxer Rebellion hundreds, probably thousands of Chinese Christians were martyred. There they knelt, with their heads on the block, the knives trembling in the hands of their executioners. All they needed to do was grunt out a Chinese word that meant 'I recant' and their lives would be saved. Now, what should I have done under these circumstances? And I speak not simply personally, but in a representative capacity, for I think the rest of you are very much like myself. With my head on the block I suspect I would have said, 'Hold on! I think I can make a statement that will be satisfactory to all sides.' F. J. McConnell. **"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Jude 3, 4).

1. The Church of the New Testament was a Messianic community claiming the spiritual promises to Israel, and professing to be the fulfillment of many of its prophesies. In spiritual heritage, in original membership, it was vitally related to Israel.
2. The Church is presented in the New Testament under many figures of speech, thus giving to the people of GOD a rich description of its nature and character.
3. True Churches can be identified by certain marks of spiritual authenticity, so that men may know the true Churches from the false Churches. **A true Church preaches the pure Word of GOD, properly administers the divinely given ordinances, and applies the doctrinal and moral disciplines of the Word of GOD, keeping its doctrine pure and its life consistent.**
4. The ministry of a true Church is called of GOD, has a truly evangelical Christian experience, preaches the apostolic Gospel under the anointing of the Spirit of GOD, and seeks to get men to prepare to meet their GOD by salvation of their souls through the atoning CHRIST.
5. True Christian unity, based upon a firm and clear acceptance of the great doctrines of the Christian faith should be the hope and prayer of every Christian heart, and encouraged by every Christian leader. At the same time unscriptural unity must be rejected, dangerous compromises refused, and human schemes examined critically, keeping in mind the possibility of apostasy.
6. The liberal theological movement with its stress upon religious unity independent of

acceptance of fundamental Christian doctrines, seems to be leading to that predicted apostasy of the Church against which we are warned in Holy Writ. The new Catholicism, giving a sanctity to an institution apart from sanctified individuals, giving spiritual authority to an ecclesiastical organization composed of fallible and sinful men, leads inevitably to a cold, sterile, high-Churchism, whose perils are illustrated in the coldness of Unitarianism, the emptiness of ritualism, the moral impotency of a corrupt Catholicism. True believers must not accept a false unity, unknown in Scripture and potential in apostate tendencies.

The doctrine of the Church in our times as set forth in the New Testament is in peril in the house of its professed friends.

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