

DANGERS IN CHRISTIAN BOOKSTORES

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Never have Christian books been so readily available to the average Christian and never has the spiritual danger associated with such books been so great. Sadly, the average member of a Bible-believing church does not know how to protect himself and his family from these dangers.

The following three crucial Bible truths can protect the child of God in these end times:

FIRST, THE LAST DAYS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY APOSTASY, NOT REVIVAL. Thus it is not surprising that we are confronted today with a vast amount of heresy and spiritual compromise. If ever there were a time when God's people need to be knowledgeable and cautious it is today. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. ... For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 3:13; 4:3-4).

SECOND, GOD WARNS HIS PEOPLE TO TEST EVERYTHING BY THE SCRIPTURES. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

THIRD, SPIRITUAL ERROR IS CLOTHED IN THE APPEARANCE OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. It is subtle and can deceive us if we are not well educated biblically and exceedingly careful. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). "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 if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

In this report we will cover some of the dangers in Christian bookstores under several headings. What we will not cover are the areas of Bible Versions, music, church history, missions and evangelism. There are many dangers in these areas, but for sake of space we will not deal with them here. (We have covered the danger of contemporary Christian music and the danger of the modern Bible versions in many books and video presentations which are available from Way of Life Literature.)

1. THE DANGER OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF NEW EVANGELICAL POSITIVISM

One of the greatest dangers facing fundamentalist Christians today is the New Evangelical philosophy that has pervaded evangelicalism over the past 50 years. It is particularly dangerous because it appears at first glance to be biblically sound. The heart of New Evangelicalism is not the error that it preaches but the truth that it neglects. It focuses on the positive, largely avoids theological controversy and unpopular subjects (i.e., ecclesiastical separation, a fiery hell, separation from the world).

The New Evangelical narrows down his message, focusing only on a portion of the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). This means that much that the New Evangelical preaches and writes is scriptural and spiritually beneficial. The New Evangelical might say many good things about salvation, Christian living, love for the Lord, marriage, child training, sanctification, the deity of Christ, even the infallibility of Scripture.

When faced with a requirement of coming out plainly against error and naming the names of popular Christian leaders, though, he will refuse to take a stand and will, more likely, attack the one who is trying to force his hand or will lash out against "extreme fundamentalism" or "second degree separation" or some such thing.

Billy Graham is the king of positivism and non-judgmentalism. Graham's books are on the shelves of the vast majority of Christian bookstores today. He is extremely influential, and his message has been described as "hard at the center but soft at the edges." He says his job is merely to preach the gospel, that he is not called to get involved in doctrinal controversies.

In 1966 the United Church Observer, the official paper of the ultra liberal United Church of Canada (in 1997 Moderator Bill Phipps said Jesus Christ is not God), asked Graham a series of questions. His answers demonstrate the New Evangelical positive-only, non-judgmental style:

Q. In your book you speak of 'false prophets'. You say it is the 'full-time effort of many intellectuals to circumvent God's plan' and you make a quotation from Paul Tillich. Do you consider Paul Tillich a false prophet?

A. I HAVE MADE IT A PRACTICE NOT TO PASS JUDGMENT ON OTHER CLERGYMEN. ...

Q. Do you think that churches such as The United Church of Canada and the great liberal churches of the United States that are active in the ecumenical movement and whose ministers study and respect the work of Paul Tillich and other great modern teachers are 'apostate'?

A. I COULD NOT POSSIBLY PASS THIS TYPE OF JUDGMENT ON INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES AND CLERGYMEN WITHIN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA -- my knowledge of The United Church of Canada is too inadequate, and my ability to make such discernment is too limited. My books and writings are public knowledge but I love fellowship and work with many Christians who don't agree with me theologically in everything. As to my calling everyone 'apostate' who reads and gets help from Tillich -- this is preposterous. There are too many shades of theological opinion in a large denomination to lump them all off as liberal, neo-orthodox, conservative, fundamentalist, or what

have you!

Q. Does your organization stand with us for a modern, enlightened, scholarly attempt to explain to our people what 'The Bible says'? Or does it stand with those who describe us as 'an apostate church spreading our unbelief'?

A. OUR EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION IS NOT CONCERNED TO PASS JUDGMENT -- FAVORABLE OR ADVERSE -- ON ANY PARTICULAR DENOMINATION. WE DO NOT INTEND TO GET INVOLVED IN THE VARIOUS DIVISIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH. We are simple Gospel preachers, not scholarly theologians -- though several of our team members have their earned doctorates. We feel that our calling is that of specialists -- winning people to a personal commitment to Jesus Christ! We do not intend to allow ourselves to become bogged down in the many religious crosscurrents ("Billy Graham Answers 26 Provocative Questions," United Church Observer, July 1, 1966).

This is pure New Evangelicalism. The New Evangelical will preach against error in general terms but rarely will he do it plainly and specifically.

Graham's refusal to preach anything beyond the most basic aspects of the gospel (and even that much is questionable) is why he is acceptable both to Roman Catholics and theological Modernists. Charles Dullea, Superior of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, said: "Because he is preaching basic Christianity, he does not enter into matters which today divide Christians. He does not touch on Sacraments or Church in any detail. ... The Catholic will hear no slighting of his Church's teaching authority, nor of Papal or Episcopal Prerogatives, no word against the mass or sacraments or Catholic practices. GRAHAM HAS NO TIME FOR THAT; he is preaching only Christ and a personal commitment to Him. The Catholic, in my opinion will hear little, if anything, he cannot agree with" (Dullea, "A Catholic Looks at Billy Graham," Homiletic & Pastoral Review, January 1972).

Graham is only one example of the multiplicity of New Evangelical authors who fill the shelves of the average Christian bookstore today.

The emphasis of the books available in these bookstores is not on solid Bible preaching and teaching and plain exposure of those errors that are corrupting God's people and work today. Rather, the emphasis is on "a positive proclamation of the truth" and feel-good shallow pabulum. As J.I. Packer says about Richard Foster and the Renovare books, they are "mild on sin but firm on grace" (back cover to Foster's book *Life with God*). Packer meant this to be a compliment, but it is actually an indictment, because the Bible is firm on sin as well as firm on grace. You can't have a proper perspective of grace without a proper emphasis on sin, because it is the awfulness of sin and the greatness of God's holiness and terrible justice that allows us to see grace in its proper perspective. Otherwise, it is "cheap grace," and cheap grace is what lines the shelves of the average Christian bookstore.

You have, for example, Robert Schuller's "Turning Hurts into Halos" and Kay Arthur's "Lord, Heal My Hurts" and Charles Stanley's "The Source of My Strength (Healing Your Wounded Heart)" and David Jeremiah's "A Bend in the Road (Experiencing God When Your World Caves In)."

2. THE DANGER OF THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

Christian bookstores today are filled with volumes promoting the ecumenical philosophy, which says that unity and fellowship are more important than doctrine and zeal for the truth and exposure of error. Consider some examples.

In his popular autobiography, *Just As I Am*, Billy Graham praises the pope and tells of how he turned his converts over to Roman Catholic churches. He also describes his close association with theological modernists for the sake of “evangelism.”

Chuck Colson’s popular book *The Body* claims that Protestant and Catholic doctrine is converging and says that they are part of the same “body.”

John Maxwell’s book *Failing Forward* promotes Catholic missions as a genuine form of Christianity.

Philip Yancey’s *Where Is God When It Hurts* claims that Roman Catholic missions are part of the “body of Christ.”

Jim Cymbala, in his book *Fresh Power*, says that Jesus prayed for all his people to become one, whether they are Evangelical, Charismatic, Baptist, or Lutheran.

Max Lucado, in his book *In the Grip of Grace*, praises God for the Church of Christ (who teach the heresy of baptismal regeneration), Pentecostals, Anglicans, Southern Baptists, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics.

Popular author Elisabeth Elliot, who is an Episcopalian and ecumenical in philosophy, spoke at the Roman Catholic Franciscan University in 1989 and at Notre Dame in 1998. She had nothing negative to say when her brother Thomas Howard joined the Roman Catholic Church. In her book *Taking Flight* Elliot says:

“Those who receive Christ. are given not an ‘instant kingdom’ but the ‘right to become children of God.’ ... It does not say God makes them instant children of God. It says He gives them the right to become.” p. 12). This, of course, is heresy pertaining to the very Gospel.

3. THE DANGER OF ANTI-FUNDAMENTALISM

Another popular philosophy you will find in the average Christian bookstore today is the spirit of anti-fundamentalism. The popular authors rarely denounce the Roman Catholic Church or theological modernism, but they are very bold to denounce biblical fundamentalism.

Jerry Bridges, for example, in his misnamed book *Transforming Grace*, says that “legalism” is expecting faithful church attendance, worrying about the length of a man’s hair, preaching against worldliness, and setting up fences. He says that “legalists: “have cast iron opinions” and see things as black and white, as if this were a terrible thing!

Chuck Swindoll, in his popular book *The Grace Awakening*, claims that “grace” includes an absence

of “Bible bashing and dogmatism” and warns about strict fundamentalist ministries.

The average Christian bookstore is no friend of fundamentalist congregations.

4. THE DANGER OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

The average Christian bookstore today is filled with books by Pentecostals and Charismatics who promote their unscriptural doctrines.

Jack Hayford, for example, is a very popular author in evangelical circles, even though he teaches that one must begin to speak in “baby tongues” before you can speak in mature tongues, and he says that God spoke to him and told him not to judge the Roman Catholic Church. (See our article “Beware of Jack Hayford” at the Way of Life web site.)

5. THE DANGER OF THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH GROWTH PHILOSOPHY

The average Christian bookstore also features books by the popular church growth gurus such as Rick Warren of Saddleback Church and Bill Hybels of Willow Creek.

In his book *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren says: “I reject the idea that music styles can be judged as either ‘good’ or ‘bad.’ Churches need to admit that no particular style of music is ‘sacred.’”

In *The Purpose Driven Life*, Warren says: “God warns us over and over not to criticize, compare, or judge each other. ... Whenever I judge another believer, four things instantly happen: I lose fellowship with God, I expose my own pride, I set myself to be judged by God, and I harm the fellowship of the church” (p. 164). In this heretical statement Warren makes no distinction between judging hypocritically (which is forbidden in Matthew 7) or judging on the basis of personal preference in matters not taught in Scripture (which is forbidden in Romans 14) and judging on the basis of the Bible (which is required by God).

Hybels’ Willow Creek Association says that their preaching does not consist of “fire and brimstone” or “Bible thumping” but “just practical, witty messages.” Willow Creek uses rock music, has many women pastors, and supports false teachers such as Robert Schuller.

6. THE DANGER OF CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Many of the books lining the shelves of the average Christian bookstore promote the error of “Christian psychology.”

James Dobson’s books, for example, are very popular. Yet he admits that he has a large Roman Catholic audience and he refuses to warn about Rome’s heresies. Mother Teresa was praised in his *Clubhouse* magazine. He accepted an honorary degree from the Roman Catholic Franciscan University. And he has been featured on the cover of the Roman Catholic *New Covenant* magazine, which teaches that we should pray to Mary.

7. THE DANGER OF THE CONTEMPLATIVE MOVEMENT

The contemplative movement has spread within evangelicalism like wildfire over the past decade. It has its own evangelical gurus, such as Richard Foster, but its methods and principles come from Roman Catholic monasticism.

Some of the popular Catholic mystics you will find in many evangelical bookstores are Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Francis of Assisi, Ignatius of Loyola (founder of the Jesuits who were at the forefront of the violent papal counter-reformation), Thomas Aquinas, Bernard of Clairvaux, Madame Guyon, Henri Nouwen, Brother Lawrence, Thomas Ryan, Henri Nouwen, John Main, Peter Kreeft, John Michael Talbot, Basil Pennington, Thomas Keating, and Thomas Merton.

Some of the popular contemplative writers are as follows:

RICHARD FOSTER claims that through thought-less meditation one can “center” deep within oneself and “actually encounter the living Christ” and “be addressed by his voice” (Celebration of Discipline, p. 26). He even says that the meditation practitioner can enter “into a deep inner communion with the Father where you look at Him and He looks at you” (p. 27). Foster promotes a visualization practice where the individual leaves his body and goes “deep into outer space” into the very “presence of the eternal Creator” and there listens carefully and gets instruction directly from God (Celebration of Discipline, 1978 edition, pp. 27-28). Foster is a radical ecumenist whose vision is described like this: “I see a Catholic monk from the hills of Kentucky standing alongside a Baptist evangelist from the streets of Los Angeles and together offering up a sacrifice of praise. I see a people” (Streams of Living Water, 1998, p. 274).

KEN BLANCHARD encourages borrowing from pagan religions. He says, “Our folks get to hear words of wisdom from great prophets and spiritual leaders like Buddha, Mohammed ... Yogananda and the Dalai Lama” (foreword to What Would Buddha Do at Work? 2001). Blanchard has strong ties with the New Age and recommends many New Age books. For example, he wrote the foreword to the 2007 edition of Jim Ballard’s book Little Wave and Old Swell, which is inspired by Hindu guru Paramahansa Yogananda. This book is designed to teach children that God is all and man is one with God. In the foreword Blanchard makes the amazing statement: “Yogananda loved Jesus, and Jesus would have loved Yogananda.” I was a disciple of Yogananda before I was saved, and there is no doubt that he did NOT love the Jesus of the Bible!

ROBERT WEBBER called for a very radical ecumenism. He said: “A goal for evangelicals in the postmodern world is to accept diversity as a historical reality, but to seek unity in the midst of it. This perspective will allow us to see Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches as various forms of the one true church...” (Ancient-Future Faith, p. 85).

DALLAS WILLARD is confused about salvation itself. He said, “Why is it that we look upon salvation as a moment that began our religious life instead of the daily life we receive from God?” (The Spirit of the Disciplines). He believes that it is possible for someone in a pagan religion to be saved without personal faith in Christ Cutting Edge magazine, winter 2001,

<http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=14>).

THOMAS MERTON was a Catholic Trappist monk who intertwined pagan yogic practices with the contemplative practices of the Catholic “saints.” Merton not only studied Buddhism and Sufism (mystical Islam), he said, “I’m deeply impregnated with Sufism” (Rob Baker, Merton and Sufism, p. 109), and, “I see no contradiction between Buddhism and Christianity. ... I intend to become as good a Buddhist as I can” (David Steindl-Rast, “Recollection of Thomas Merton’s Last Days in the West,” Monastic Studies, 7:10, 1969). Merton also said: “Asia, Zen, Islam, etc., all these things come together in my life. It would be madness for me to attempt to create a monastic life for myself by excluding all these” (Baker, Merton and Sufism, p. 41).

BASIL PENNINGTON taught that man shares God’s divine nature. “We are united with everybody else in our human nature and in OUR SHARING OF A DIVINE NATURE, so we are never really alone, we have all this union and communion” (interview with Mary NurrieStearns, “Transforming Suffering,” 1991, Personal Transformation website, <http://www.personaltransformation.com/Pennington.html>). Pennington also said, “... the soul of the human family is the Holy Spirit” (Centered Living, p. 104).

THOMAS KEATING says” “Contemplative prayer is the opening of mind and heart, our whole being, to God, the Ultimate Mystery, BEYOND THOUGHTS, WORDS, AND EMOTIONS. It is a process of interior purification THAT LEADS, IF WE CONSENT, TO DIVINE UNION” (Keating interview with Kate Olson, “Centering Prayer as Divine Therapy,” Trinity News, Trinity Church in the City, New York City, volume 42, issue 4, 1995). Keating even recommends occultic Kundalini yoga.

HENRY NOUWEN said: “Today I personally believe that while Jesus came to open the door to God’s house, all human beings can walk through that door, whether they know about Jesus or not. Today I see it as my call to help every person claim his or her own way to God” (Sabbatical Journey, 1998, p. 51).

JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT says that Mary “intercedes to God on my behalf” and testifies that he has felt “the presence of Mary becoming important in my life” (Contemporary Christian Music Magazine, November 1984, p. 47). In his book Simplicity, he says: “I have found praying the Rosary to be one of the most powerful tools I possess in obtaining simple, childlike meditation on the life of Jesus Christ.”

8. THE DANGER OF MISCELLANEOUS OTHER HERESIES AND HERETICS

Consider the popular author C.S. LEWIS. He (1) Promoted ecumenism. (In the book Mere Christianity he said that Christianity is a large house with many different acceptable rooms, such as Catholicism, Protestantism, etc.) (2) He denied the substitutionary atonement of Christ. (3) He believed in theistic evolution. (5) He rejected the Bible as the infallible Word of God. (5) He denied the doctrine of an eternal fiery hell. (5) He believed in prayers for dead and confessed his sins to a priest. (6) He claimed that followers of pagan religions can be saved without faith in Jesus Christ: “There are people in other religions who are being led by God’s secret influence ... Many of the good Pagans long before Christ’s birth may have been in this position” (C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity,

HarperSanFrancisco edition, 2001, pp. 64, 208, 209).

Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* intertwines a few vague biblical themes with pagan mythology: nymphs, fauns (part man and part goat), dwarfs, centaurs (part man and part horse), Dryads (tree-women), and Naiads (well-women). All of these creatures are depicted as serving Aslan, the alleged Christ figure. Lewis presents the deeply heretical idea of good magic. He calls Aslan's power "Deep Magic" and Aslan's father's power as "Emperor's Magic." He introduces the pagan god Bacchus and his orgies as a desirable thing. He presents the myth of "Father Christmas." He teaches that Adam's first wife was not Eve but rather a woman named Lilith and that she was a witch.

Consider NORMAN VINCENT PEALE. He died in 1994 but his books are still popular. In an interview with Phil Donahue in 1984, Peale said: "It's not necessary to be born again. You have your way to God; I have mine" (Hugh Pyle, *Sword of the Lord*, Dec. 14, 1984). In an interview with *Modern Maturity* magazine, December-January 1975-76, Peale was asked if people are inherently good or bad. He replied: "They are inherently good--the bad reactions aren't basic. Every human being is a child of God and has more good in him than evil--but circumstances and associates can step up the bad and reduce the good. I've got great faith in the essential fairness and decency--you may say goodness--of the human being."

Consider ROBERT SCHULLER. In his book *Self Esteem* New Reformation Schuller says, "It is shallow and insulting to define sin as rebellion against God," and, "Positive Christianity does not hold to human depravity, but to human inability," and, "Hell is the loss of pride that follows separation from God," and "Jesus never called a person a sinner." (See the article "Evangelicals and Heretic Robert Schuller" at the Way of Life web site for documentation.)

Consider BRUCE WILKINSON. His *A Prayer of Jabez* has been turned into a marketing bonanza. There is a Prayer of Jabez for women and one for the overweight. There are Prayer of Jabez teddy bears, book markers, bracelets, Bible covers, posters, coins, and shawls. In this book Wilkinson said: "I want to teach you how to pray a daring prayer that God ALWAYS answers. It is brief--only one sentence with four parts--and tucked away in the Bible, but I believe it contains they key to a life of extraordinary favor with God. Thousands of believers who are applying its truths are seeing MIRACLES happen on a regular basis" (Preface).

Consider ROB BELL, author of *Velvet Elvis*. He claims that Jesus is already with people even in their false religions, thus "the issue isn't so much taking Jesus to people who don't have him, but going to a place and pointing out to the people there the creative, life-giving God who is already present in their midst" (*Velvet Elvis*, p. 88). Bell says that Christ has given believers the authority to come up with new interpretations of the Bible (*Velvet Elvis*, p. 50). He says the New Testament epistles "aren't first and foremost timeless truths" (p. 62) and claims that the apostles didn't "claim to have the absolute word from God" (p. 57).

Consider LESSLIE NEWBIGIN (1909-1998). He was a bishop in the very liberal Church of South India and was Associate General Secretary in the radically heretical World Council of Churches. In *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* Newbigin denied that the Bible is the verbally-plenarily inspired Word of God and said the 18th century defenders of the faith were in error when they taught that the Bible is

a set of timeless truths. Newbiggin falsely claimed that Jesus did not leave behind “a book, nor a creed, nor a system of thought, nor a rule of life” (p. 20). Newbiggin wrote, “All so-called facts are interpreted facts. . . What we see as facts depends on the theory we bring to the observation” (The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, p. 21). Newbiggin called the split between liberals and fundamentalists “tragic” (p. 24). He taught that there is the possibility of salvation apart from faith in Christ.

Consider BRENNAN MANNING. He is a Roman Catholic (a former priest) who denies the substitutionary atonement of Christ, believes Christ is in all men, and mocks the Bible-only position. He says: “I am deeply distressed by what I only can call in our Christian culture the idolatry of the Scriptures. For many Christians, the Bible is not a pointer to God but God himself. In a word-- bibliolatry ... I develop a nasty rash around people who speak as if mere scrutiny of its pages will reveal precisely how God thinks and precisely what God wants” (The Signature of Jesus). Bible believers don't worship the Bible, but they do accept it for what it claims to be, the very Word of God, and they know therefore that they will find on its pages precisely how God thinks!

Consider TONY CAMPOLO. He believes in evolution and rejects the inerrant inspiration of Scripture. He says that that “sees in each of us a divine nature” (Partly Right, p. 118). On The Charlie Rose Show Campolo said: “I am not convinced that Jesus only lives in Christians” (Calvary Contender, October 1, 1999), and when asked by Bill Moyers on MSNBC in 1996 whether evangelicals should try to convert Jews he replied: “I not about to make judgments about my Jewish brothers and my Muslim brothers and sisters.” Campolo hates dispensationalism and rejects the doctrine of Christ's imminent return. He calls it “a weird little form of fundamentalism.” Speaking at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's annual meeting in June 2003, Campolo said: “That whole sense of the rapture, which may occur at any moment, is used as a device to oppose engagement with the principalities, the powers, the political and economic structures of our age” (“Opposition to women preachers evidence of demonic influence,” Baptist Press, June 27, 2003). Campolo believes that homosexuals are born that way.

Consider DONALD MILLER, author of Blue Like Jazz. His popular book is a harsh rant against traditional evangelical Christianity and he frequently takes shots at doctrinal dogmatism. In discussing his involvement in church in his youth he writes, “I wished I could have subscribed to aspects of Christianity but not the whole thing” (p. 30). He says, “In order to believe Christianity, you either had to reduce enormous theological absurdities [i.e., Garden of Eden, universal flood] into children's stories or ignore them” (p. 31). He wanted to believe the gospel “free from the clasp of fairy tale” (p. 35). He says it is wrong to have “rules and laws and principles to judge each other against” (p. 215).

Consider ERWIN MCMANUS, author of The Barbarian Way. Erwin McManus calls upon Christians to live “the barbarian way” in contrast to the traditional Bible path, which he describes as “civilized.” He says those on the barbarian way “have little patience for institutions” and do not focus on “requirements” (p. 6). He says faith should not be restrained and domesticated (p. 10). Those who follow the barbarian way “are not required or expected to keep in step” and “there is no forced conformity” (p. 71). He says that those who are on the barbarian way follow Christ's voice but this voice is not necessarily found in the Bible (p. 84).

Consider G.K. CHESTERTON (1874-1936). This Roman Catholic writer continues to have a large

influence. He accepted theistic evolution (Orthodoxy, p. 30). A 2001 edition of his book *Orthodoxy* has an introduction by Philip Yancy that explains Chesterton's attraction for this generation. Yancy says, "Chesterton seemed to sense instinctively that a stern prophet will rarely break through to a society full of religion's 'cultured despisers'; he preferred the role of jester. ... In a time when culture and faith have drifted even further apart, we could use his brilliance, his entertaining style, and above all his generous and joyful spirit. When society becomes polarized, as ours has, it is as if the two sides stand across a great divide and shout at each other. Chesterton had another approach: He walked to the center of a swinging bridge, roared a challenge to any single combat warrior, and then made both sides laugh aloud" (Orthodoxy, Image Books, 2001, p. xix). The fact that this is not the type of "prophet" or the type of defense of the faith that we see in Scripture doesn't bother the emerging church one iota.

Consider BRIAN MCLAREN. His book *A New Kind of Christian* won a Christianity Today Award of Merit, but it is filled with heresy. It is about an evangelical pastor who has a crisis of faith and submits himself to the guidance of a liberal Episcopalian who leads him into "Postmodern Christianity." The book teaches that the Bible is not the infallible Word of God and that all doctrines and theologies are non-absolute, that we need to approach the Bible "on less defined terms" (p. 56). It teaches that the Bible alone should not be the authority, but that the Bible should only be one of the authorities, that others include tradition, reason, exemplary people and institutions one has come to trust, and spiritual experience (pp. 54, 55). It teaches that it is wrong and Pharisaical to look upon the Bible as "God's encyclopedia, God's rule book, God's answer book" (p. 52).

CONCLUSION

We could give many more examples of dangers in Christian bookstores, but this should be sufficient for the wise. We must remember that the last days are characterized by apostasy, not revival, that God warns His people to test everything by the Scriptures, and that spiritual error is clothed in the appearance of truth and righteousness.

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13).

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

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