

## The Wreck of Faith

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TEXT—When the son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?—Luke 18:8.

These words have been interpreted as meaning that when Jesus Christ returns to this world that he will find no faith. They have been interpreted as being simply an inquiry, because of the teachings of the Bible and present world conditions as to faith at that time. In either case we have a wreck in view, whether real or imaginary.

Faith may be understood as the body of Christian truth given once for all in the first century, embracing the fundamentals of our Christian system—the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures, the deity of Christ, the lost state of man by nature, the only hope of recovery by the atonement of Christ on the cross, etc. This may be considered from the standpoint of the church in its visible form or that of the individual, personal interest in the subject being emphasized with reference to the latter rather than with the former. The aspect of the former, because it determines the aspect of the latter, shall have fuller treatment.

Faith has had a varied experience. For some three centuries it was held with comparative fidelity. Then the clouds of paganism and lust for embracing Christianity as an element of political life began to gather. For some centuries there was great darkness. In the period of the Crusades there were flickering lights. Then darkness came over Christian thought until the days of Huss in Bohemia and Wickliffe in England. Persecution in Bohemia and indifference in England soon brought another season of darkness, until in Germany, under Martin Luther, the light arose that has shone for four hundred years, and accounts for what we have of the true faith today.

Is the faith of the church, as such, a wreck today? Do we find all sails set and drawing, bound confidently for a distant port? Or do we see that church hesitating, staggering in the midst of changing teachings as to fundamentals like the ship with contrary winds and laboring hard to avoid the rocks on which it may be a total wreck?

Is it not true that some denominations of Christians while still clinging to orthodox creeds have abandoned the creeds in their teachings? Faithful men in some denominations are now crying to their brethren to suppress many of the church publications as they are distinctly infidel in their teachings. Is it not true that many hungry souls go to church and come away hungry because they have not heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

How about the individual? Not long ago a young man, who was a graduate of one of America's greatest universities and was finishing his second year in an orthodox theological seminary, said to the writer that he had lost his faith, had no confidence in the Bible, did not accept the deity of Jesus Christ, and was thoroughly unhappy. This is an extreme case, but the writer has had many young people of liberal education give substantially the same testimony.

What is the somewhat remote reason for this situation as to religious teaching? We must go to the land of Martin Luther. The work of corrupting the Bible had progressed until nearly all German universities and theological schools had repudiated the faith of Luther, although clinging to his name. Learned men said certain results had been attained and these results discredited the Bible. With amazing rapidity this conclusion took hold in England and Scotland and our own country. Destructive biblical criticism and Darwinian evolution swept over nearly all our great universities and our Bible was in the scrap heap. Those of us who have watched the trend of German theological teaching have observed a tremendous advance since the days of Schleiermacher, Baur and Hoffman to the days of Kuenen, Graf and Cornill. It was bad enough with the former, worse with the latter and the final plunge was made by men like Nietzsche, who utterly ignored the Bible and defied God himself. Is it any wonder that Germany is suffering today, and is it much less wonder that the Saxon world is suffering likewise? When will men learn wisdom?

For the individual, especially respecting young people, the old-fashioned religion must come back. The old religious home must be restored. How many professedly religious homes are religious wrecks!

Back to God! Back to Jesus Christ! To thus get back we must get back to the Bible. Thank God it is being published as never before and the demand for it is beyond the supply. Thank God for this fact as to the hunger of the people for truth.

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W. T. KINNAIRD,  
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3rd December, 1918

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