

CHAPTER TWO

THE MONSTROUS APOSTASY

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there come a falling away (apostasy) first"

- II Thessalonians 2:3.

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many"

- Matthew 24:11.

"These evils are destined to be propagated from generation to generation, waxing worse and worse"

- Dr. Asahel Nettleton,
1854 edition of *The Life and Labours of Asahel Nettleton*.

One hundred and fifty years ago a wicked deception began, which grew in magnitude until it short-circuited revival and caused conversions to become a rare thing among evangelicals. Today we live in the burned out aftermath, our churches either liberal, charismatic, or dead, our people claiming to be born again while missing church, divorcing, dancing, committing fornication and aborting their babies. An increasing number of pastors commit adultery, while our youth go wild.

The monstrous apostasy surrounding us is a direct result of a theological transition which took place in the nineteenth century: a shift from conversion to decisionism. This book is about that change, and what we can do about it.

The stories given in this book are scrupulously true to the facts. They are given without the slightest embellishment. I say that at the beginning, because this first account seems too incredible to be true. But it is. I have known the man in this story for many years. This is exactly what happened.

A "Saved" Bank Robber

Like so many others I have talked to across the years, he had a vague

uneasiness regarding his salvation. Nothing definite, nothing he could put his finger on, just a vague uneasiness. He told me that he had been saved years ago, but he couldn't say much about it. He had gone to a meeting with some friends. An invitation was given. He went forward. He made no mention at all of his sins, the Blood of Jesus or forgiveness. His whole testimony centered around the "decision" that he made years before.

He said that he had led a Christian group in high school. He had then become a Sunday School teacher in a Baptist church and later a deacon. He went through a divorce. Then he lost most of his money and his life fell apart. The thought went through his mind that he should rob a bank. He got out his old pistol. He planned it all carefully and walked into the bank and at gunpoint took all the money the teller could give him. The police caught him and he spent several months in prison.

I asked him, "What would have happened if the rapture had come while you were holding the gun on that teller in the bank?" He stared at me with a sober face. Several seconds passed before he said, "The gun would have fallen to the floor and I would have been raptured."

I was never able to get him to move past a vague uneasiness to a place where he could see that the decision that he made years before was not a real conversion. The story of the man who thought that his pistol would fall to the ground and he would be raptured while robbing a bank illustrates what is wrong with so much of evangelicalism in our country. Yet many would say that this man was converted and would indeed have been raptured. Such is the sad state of religion in our time.

I knew this man as a dear friend from my childhood, when I first began attending church. I have loved him with all my heart. It tears me apart to see him go on clinging to a false hope, without a real conversion to give us hope of meeting together in Heaven some day. Many others have had a similar experience, which has inoculated them against real salvation. Oh God, save this man, and many others like him. Send a revival to sweep away the refuge of lies!

Did It Start With Jimmy Carter?

According to a recent Gallup poll, "Seventy-four percent of American adults eighteen and older say they have made a 'commitment' to Jesus Christ."¹ Yet our nation is morally and spiritually bankrupt. Speaking at a Bible conference I attended not long ago, one famous Baptist preacher said in my hearing, "Ever since President Carter, most people say they have been born

