

anti-Christ. Paul's man of sin to come as a sign of the final appearing of Christ. The fulfillment of the age. The anti-Christ is the sign of the last hour.

But we are now living in an age that has the characteristics of the last hour. Men are now in our midst, they have the qualities of the anti-Christ, they are deadly enemies of Christ and his cause. They are set against everything that is Christian. The appearance of these certainly says this is the last hour.

John may have thought the last hour was near at hand. He may have thought that these anti-Christ was the fulfillment as the predictions of Jesus and of Paul. But his language here would hardly justify the statement that he thought the final manifestation of either evil or Christ was at hand. He did not think his age had the characteristics of the last hour. Perhaps those who have more discernment have been able to see everyday since these same characteristics. The forces of sin and righteousness and conflict will be until the end. As Christianity makes progress in its conflict with evil, sin will probably also progress.

The greater the manifestation of truth and righteousness, the more intent will be the development of sin and evil.

Now this may be born out in the church. For in your church you may follow the illustrations here, you may study

Secret Weapon

A New England housewife says she knows how the Communists could wipe us out without firing a single rocket.
Just poison the glue on all trading stamps.

"THE CHRISTIAN AND THE ANTI-CHRIST"

I JOHN 2:18 - 20

INTRODUCTION:

Here is a warning to his readers against the world and giving assurance of victory over it for the man who does the will of God. There (never) was a more difficult time for us to fight the good fight of faith, perhaps, than today.

A Welsh preacher expounded this idea of the denial of Christ in a very unique way. He stated that it would be very costly. That the foolish man had said in his heart, there is no God. Now as he explained that text, he went on to tell then about what would be wasted and he set the mood for the loss of faith. AND HE began to remove from the pulpit, one by one, the things that had lost their meaning and value.

He first hid away the Bible. And he talked about the treasured passages. He recalled his associations with conversions, crisis, with sick bed, with marriage, with death.

He removed next the hymn book. He talked about how it had helped us in worship, how we could praise God. And the wonderful poetry and music in it.

He put away the pulpit cushion. Then he recalled the great sermon that had helped direct lives. A long line of Christian testimony.

He then moved the flowers. And with them he said, they shed the nature of God's love.

Then he moved the pulpit chairs, with the memory of the children saying, that they had remembered seeing these chairs and old man full of wisdom had looked upon them. And these chairs had been the place of faith and prayer.

Finally, he stepped down the pulpit stairs taking with himself the years of patience as he stumbled on the steps. And he said, this is how God disapproves. Slowly leaving the pulpit bare and empty, he walked on up to the church door.

He turned the latch, he whispered in astonished silence, do you want them back. And 3,000 voices shouted "yes", "yes".

Returning, he replaced everything, quietly, impressively without a word. He layed the Bible again upon the cushion. He opened it and he read "comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, sayeth your God."

I believe this is something of John's argument. He says the denial of Jesus is easy. Men start off because they think it is smart. Some because it is self inflating. And he continues to show them that this leads to horrible results.

I. The Last Hour - Verse 18.

He will deal with these false teachers that are connected with the Christian community but have withdrew from it. He knows the dangers of teaching false prophets. He re-enforces his warning by appealing to these readers as little children. He suggests in a fatherly way that they will listen to him and hope they will not follow those. The forces were already at work. The time that he is talking about here is the last hour. They are facing a crisis, in Christian history, it is a serious crisis and he assures by this that something must be done. He predicts that the future belongs to God. Now our great need of the moment is, a last hour for the spirit. To take hold of people because skepticism has even gotten into the Christian pulpit. The latter days constituted the season of conflict and suffering which were essential to victory. Every season of such conflict and suffering is in the eyes of John a last hour. Christian history had already recorded many such. And you remember that Paul had predicted the advent of false teachers in his farewell address to the elders at Ephesus.

Now many anti-Christ have already appeared. Hence, it is a last hour. He does not use this to define the term last hour. It is not "the" last hour but "a" last hour. He is saying this to his little children. You are expecting the

John says to deny that a single one of those who went out belonged to the Christian company. Not a one of them he says belonged to us. Their going out should show that they were all reprobatas. In Verse 22 and 23 he tells about how they denied Jesus as Christ. That is to be Anti-Christ. Denying the very claim of Jesus upon which the whole Christian faith is based, to deny this is to contradict all he needed for. It is to oppose all that God in Christ intended.

Unwillingly pay the price for this, many deny the logic of their own denial. They reject the miracles, the high standards of Jesus, the redemption, and if Jesus was wrong

The Foolishness of the Thing Preached

In 1908 a book was published in France entitled, *Le Folie de Jesus*, "The Frenzy of Jesus." In it the author declared that in nineteenth century Europe Jesus would have been put under restraint as a megalomaniac afflicted with mystical hallucinations of a kind well known to clinical medicine. Undoubtedly the twentieth century would find him

The wisdom of the world does not always see wisdom in the workings of God.

One of the most surprising things about the public ministry of Jesus is the fact that well-trained, experienced and respected religious leaders misjudged him so completely.

Is it possible that religious leaders of today including the 50,000 Baptist leaders who receive this magazine could likewise be so myopic and nutheaded as these first century leaders.

Our ways are not always his ways. This should prompt us to be truly humble, and open minded to fuller revelations of his way and will for our somewhat into this matter in new phrases. In Verse 22. For

the life of any other church; when there are periods of great spiritual blessing or when there are times of un-lift and people seem to get blessed then the Devil through his movement works harder. And he intensifies his opposition to the light. Now Jesus said, if he had not come to teach the people of his day would not have had sin as John 15:22 says Paul wrote that the mystery of lawlessness was already at work in his day but was being restrained. 2 Thessalonians 2:7. Does he mean that the end of the world and the second appearing of Christ was at hand. Certainly early Christians lived in this expectancy. Does he mean the last period in the world's history. Having its beginning in Christ will close now with the second coming.

Evil certainly must be put back. And it must be restrained here. It is, however, breaking out on all hands.

II. The Anti-Christ - Verses 19, 22, 23.

This maybe be summed up under deception and denial.

Now these anti-Christ can be either a substitute for Christ or an opponent of Christ. The reason for the difficulties of this age is the presence of Anti-Christ. The opponents of truth. There are many of these John declares that in his day, many of these have started out as a professed friend of Christ. Later they demonstrated their insincerity by

Dr. B. H. Carroll once said, "When you see a star fall, you can know it is not a star." John seems to deny that a single one of those who went out belonged to the Christian company. Not a one of them he says belonged to us. Their going out should show that they were all reprobates. In Verse 22 and 23 he tells about how they denied Jesus as Christ. That is to be Anti-Christ. Denying the very claim of Jesus upon which the whole Christian faith is based, to deny this is to contradict all he stood for. It is to oppose all that God in Christ intended. Unwilling to pay the price for this, many deny the logic of their own denial. They reject the miracles, the high standards of Jesus, the redemption, and if Jesus was wrong about who he was — he is wrong about everything else. He is just a deceiver. It makes little difference if we cannot in any way trust him in his own estimate of himself, his testimony of those who knew him, all who have followed him have been misled. There is involved in such denial a certain self revelation of a most unwelcome kind. Difficulty of belief is one thing. The final surrender of belief, a lack of spiritual certainty. There went out from us but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would have continued. The apostle goes somewhat into this matter in new phrases. In Verse 22, For

the life of any other church, when there are periods of great spiritual blessing or when there are times of up-lift and people seem to get blessed, then the Devil through his movement works harder. And he intensifies his opposition to the light. Now Jesus said, if he had not come to teach the people of his day would not have had sin as John 15:22 says Paul wrote that the mystery of lawlessness was already at work in his day but was being restrained. 2 Thessalonians 2:7. Does he mean that the end of the world and the second appearing of Christ was at hand. Certainly early Christians lived in this expectancy. Does he mean the last period in the world's history. Having its beginning in Christ will close now with the second coming. Evil certainly must be put back. And it must be restrained here. It is, however, breaking out on all hands. II. The Anti-Christ - Verses 19, 22, 23. This maybe be mixed up under deception and denial. Now these anti-Christ can wear either a substitute for Christ or an opponent of Christ. One reason for the difficulty of this age is the presence of Anti-Christ. The opponents of truth. There are many of these John declares that in his day, many of these have started out as a professed friend of Christ. Later they demonstrated their insincerity by

forfeiting the true fellowship of believers. Some denied the Christ who they once professed to follow.

Others perverted the truth about him while continuing to call themselves Christians. You remember Paul called these previous wolves. Perhaps nothing has harmed the cause of Christ more down through the years than those who have converted Christianity. They have become stumbling blocks.

The word anti-Christ means one who takes the place of Christ. He opposes Christ to the force of opposition in the name of Christ he offers a salvation that is essentially different, and he is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Now this fits the gnostic. Even now he says many anti-Christ have come. That is the heresy is at hand.

We are here faced with the question of demonology. Does the apostle mean to teach that unregenerated humanity, serving the Devil, may become anti-Christ, are these spirits doctrines of demon. I Timothy 4:1. It was a common thing at the time of Jesus that even writers among the missionaries in China have reported. Those who were demon possessed.

The Jews expected an adversary of the Messiah to appear just before the advent of the Messiah, itself. They doubt-

less base this on Ezekiel 38:39, Daniel 7:23. Now this idea

has passed over into Christian eschatology which is an expectation of manifestation of evil and opposition to God.

During the second return of Christ, Jesus warned the disciples concerning the days of struggle, suffering, and false Christ, and false prophets, etc.

Paul writes about falling away. A man of sin that must be revealed before the coming of the Lord Jesus could take place. The man of sin would be a horn of perdition. He would oppose and exalt himself against all that is called God's.

These anti-Christ had formerly been connected with the Christian company. But they had gone out from it. So as John indicates, they went out of their own accord. Though they were externally connected with the Christian community or church, they did not belong to it. It was an outward, formal, not a vital and inward connection. They had the form of Godliness but denied the power thereof.

They were fruitless branches. There was no life because there was no vital union with the vine.

Now John's rule is "if they had been of us, they would have continued with us." Now he seemed to think that one who deserts the way of Christ never had the spirit of life in his soul. In another place he wrote, "if ye abide in my word then ye are truly my disciple. The cause is evident, that one discipleship is not genuine. It is evident that one does not belong to the Christian fold when he falls away with the goats.

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the truth What is the truth, which the Holy Spirit reveals to the believer in the crisis. Jesus said he was the truth and it means that they know Jesus Christ. And that when we come to him, we possess this truth, even the truth about Christ.

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In the third place, they abide in the Son. Verse 24. Now Jesus was true man and true God. And without exception, we discover here that they were abiding in Him. That he meets the wants of his little children. Let the original Christian message have away in their lives. If they do that, they will have both the son and the Father. The message does not change -- neither must they change. They must abide; they must continue in the same gospel message. Let them be steady and persistent as the message. A changeable wish wacky people do not adorn an unchangeable gospel. And this is one of the hard lessons for some Christians and even some churches to learn. They think that there is always something different, something modern, some change, some new idea that they ought to be putting into their church or into their life and forget that the gospel is one of the unchangeable things in this world. If the reality in this crisis, let that abide in you, do not be attracted be said to new theories. Hold on to the Christ, preach by the apostles; the old gospel is the true gospel. Let this find dwelling in your heart and let no one be able to

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John has just spoken of lies. Now he passes now to liars. And he says, who is the liar except the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. One who makes this denial is the chief liar, the one who denies Jesus as the Son of God is denying the fundamental fact of Christianity. The fact on which everything else depends. There is a negative translation on this, the boss liar not only denies that Jesus is the Christ he positively affirms that he is not. The big lie which brings ruin and destroys hope is the denial that Jesus is the Son of God, one sent to save from ruin. This is a denial of the Father and the Son. Now the trouble maker of that day were the modern intellectuals who deny that stoning work of Jesus. The reason these moderns are ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth is that they reject the person who is the truth.

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In Verse 23, with John to say that Jesus is the Christ means more than to say that he was the Old Testament Messiah. To John, Jesus is the eternal son of God, become flesh to reveal God and save man. John is insisting on the incarnation -- the anti-Christ were denying this doctrine, which John regarded as fundamental. And John renounces the one who makes this denial, there can be no understanding. And John insists that the one who denies the son denies the father also. Everyone with exception, who denies the son, does not

even know the Father, he says. And the principle holds true. The only way that men can know God as Father is in Jesus, as the Son of God. If Jesus Christ is not the only begotten son of God, Son of God that is in a peculiar and exclusive way, then there is no final or dependable revelation of God. It is folly for a man to talk about the fatherhood of God and then deny the sonship of Jesus Christ. Jesus was true man and true God. But if in Christ Jesus, the true God did not take man's nature, then Christianity is only one more of the vain search of man for God. And this search leaves him empty handed, in the dark, praying to God who is way out there in the distance.

III. The Anointed Ones - Verse 20, 21, 24, 27, 28, 25.

20 - First, he calls them little children in Verse 20, or rather we pick up Verse 18 and 20. And you have an anointing from the Holy One. Putting you in a special position. He is getting these Christians over against these Anti-Christ. His little children have something that the Anti-Christ do not have. Not only do they have this experience but all of them know that they have it. Ye know all things. John certainly says everywhere that all Christians can know that they belong to Christ. That they know and have in-sight into the truth.

This anointing comes from the Holy One. This phrase may refer to God, more probably it refers to Christ, and that Christ had his true friends in every age. They have received Holy Spirit from him. They are possessors of this.

Now Jesus is spoken of in the New Testament as the Holy One. He was anointed at his baptism by the Holy Spirit. Now the same Christ who was anointed by the spirit, sent forth the spirit on his people and after his ascension. And they have received this anointing. The word anoint that cannot really be expressed in English, but these Christians received Christ. And one who does not have this, is not a Christian. He may be externally attached to the church but he is not vitally united, to Christ.

21 (Second) the anointed ones know truth. Verse 21. Now, he is not writing that his readers are ignorant of Christian truth. But rather he says, he is writing in the knowledge of his confidence. He knows that his anointing from the Holy One. The Anti-Christ lie that is being spread abroad is not of the truth, and is therefore dangerous. And it is dangerous because it concerns little children. He knows that those who have this anointing of the Holy One will not be deceived by these Anti-Christ. The character of these Anti-Christ and the character of their teachings stir him up to warn his readers against the movement of this enemy. They have

of into light and life, he may be leading them into darkness and death.

Now the apostle does not at this time dwell at length on the false teachers. He turns to his readers who are true Christians and he is concerned with them, the anointed of God. He speaks to the Christian that he will receive the message abiding in him. The message is the gospel of the son of God who revealed the Father.

Christianity is both a message and an experience, a doctrine and a life. Some men would lay all the emphasis on the doctrine. But Christianity is something that will leave men with power to live as Christ would have them to live and also to have this inner experience and anointing. No one thinks that any kind of theology will satisfy them. But John says as to you the anointing you received, you abide in him. The difference between the Christian and the Anti-Christ is wrapped up in that statement. The Anti-Christ has deserted the Christian cause. Those who have received the anointing have not. They abide in Christ, they hold to him. This change that took place in them is no temporary matter nor will it leave them or be forgotten. It is something that abides.

These believers have no need for a teacher. But he does not mean to say that all teaching for Christians is useless.

lead you astray, from it.

The gospel message is to abide in them, it is to be an inner transforming power. The power of the gospel is the power of the Christ of the gospel. The one they had heard from the beginning, the one the apostle urges to let abide within them was one in which Jesus was presented as the eternal son of God, made flesh, revealed to them. And in receiving that message, men received the Son of God and the Father. To accept the lie of the Anti-Christ was to accept neither the Father nor the Son.

Now he brings out in different ways and the inwardness of the Christian experience. The Christian message is to abide in those who believe. The Son and the Father are to abide in them. They have an anointing that gives them an insight so that they can distinguish the gospel message from an Anti-Christian lie. But John does not mean to identify Christianity just on objective things or either that which is in us. But this message is one that had been preached, it had a definite content. And it was to be identified with Jesus Christ, himself, he was the message.

Rev. Ireland told a story about visiting an aged woman who took in washing. And one day he was visiting her cottage she wiped her hands on her apron, and they were seated. And he talked awhile and he asked her if she would be willing to

I talked with a Southern Baptist boy from
Scott, Georgia at the 80th Evacuation Hospital.
He had taken a sniper's bullet in the abdomen
and the hip and was just off the operating
table waiting to be air evacuated to the States
in a matter of hours.

"What did you ask the Lord when you were
out there?" I asked.

"To give me courage," he replied.

"Didn't you ask to come out safely?" I
queried.

"Yes, but God knows best, I guess."

He continued, "But we're right here! We're
trying to help these people to be free. They
have never known anything else but war and
persecution for twenty years. And I think God
is going to help us win. I'm glad I've been
here to have a part."

I met with General Westmoreland and had a
prayer with him in his office. "A Viet Nam
we are seeing America's youth in its finest
hour. These are great boys and men." He told
me. "This war is different than any other we
have ever known. It is not just destructive
warfare. We are here identifying with the
people, helping them to find a new life and
hope and new future." *Westmoreland*

I was tremendously impressed by the
dedication and the conviction of the men who

call her hope in Christ Jesus for the millions that an out-
 standing scientist has owned. Her chin quivered, I know I am
 poor she responded. "But my hope is not for sale." Now false
 instructors may have great intellectual understanding but
 their hearts have not felt the quickening power which has come
 into yours through faith. None of us can ever hope to say
 that we know all that there is to know about divine revelation
 but it needs to be emphasized that the ministry of teaching
 should be guarded. Those who believe in the Bible should do
 all that they can to see to it that in the schools, churches,
 that it is all Christ centered. For this is precious for
 Christian people. And this teaching cannot be questionable.
 If we have anything else to substitute, it will never satisfy.
 No body else knows God's will from our lives as Christ. Now
 intellect has captured many souls and it has sought to
 spiritualize out of the way all the vital existence of the
 hope which we have in Jesus Christ.
 (Fifth) we'll never be ashamed. Verse 28. I come now to
 this last and final verse which says that the crisis will
 come to an end. And the end will not be a victory for the
 deniers of Christ. It will be a victory for those who exult
 in his name.
 Every eye shall see Him. He comes in triumph, he comes
 to restore the kingdom.

It says they will not be ashamed before Him at his coming.
 He gladly endures, that is he will not shrink away from Him
 in shame, when he comes. Is that not a glorious picture. It
 implies of course that the Christ deniers will shrink away
 in shame at his coming. They will slip away from the lips of
 kings, and the lord of lords. The crisis is upon us. It is
 here. We cannot dodge it.
 Now the real question is not whether those who trifled
 with new doctrine and take lightly old obligations can face
 their former friends, but whether in the end they can out-
 face the Lord, or be ashamed from him at his coming. John
 goes over and over again about the truth of the Christian
 and the Anti-Christ. John wants his hearers to get the true
 impression of these false teachers. In order to get the
 false impression he points it out, in a different way. He
 says now these things have I written concerning those who
 led you astray. These false Anti-Christ, those who have
 deserted the company, and he describes them as led astray
 those who will listen to them. They cause to error those who
 receive their message. They are blind leading the blind.
 Under taking to teach other men the way, especially moral
 and spiritual truth is a serious thing. And when a man does
 this, he ought to be sure that he has the truth, that he is
 not leading men astray. Otherwise, he is leading men instead

Rather this anointing, the spirit gives the believer in right into Christian truth. A man may be taught the truth but he cannot be given the ability to see it. Here is a tremendous analogy that the Christian will respond to the truth of the Holy Spirit. John says that this anointing is true. And that the spirit of the Anti-Christ is false, over against this teaching.

He here gives the admonition that is certainly follow for he says the tina (he uses for little children) that denotes a kinship or affection, the best love that abide in Him.

Pastor W. Douglas Hudgins of the First Baptist Church Jackson, Miss. writes us of what may be a record for length of membership in one church and in one Sunday School.

At the time of her death a short time ago Mrs. Minnie Fuller Daniels, age 96, had been a member continuously in the Jackson church for 83 years and a member of its Sunday School for 50 years.

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