

"It is Time to Seek the Lord"

HOSEA 10:12

Frank E. Allen, D.D.

The World Situation

At the beginning of this year the world seems to be sitting on a powder keg. That Communism would have spread so widely and become so powerful, few would have believed a few years ago or even a year ago.

The Cause

Why has this anti-religious, anti-capitalistic system which we call Communism spread so fast and so far? In reality it is not communism, it is tyranny disguised by the name Communism.

I. Reasons for its Growth

The leaders of Communism have yielded to the temptation offered by Satan to Jesus when he offered Him the kingdoms of the world with the attractive promise that he would give Him all of them if He would fall down and worship him. They have sought power and have gotten the control of many of the kingdoms of the world. Satan has deceived many leaders of nations and enticed

them to become tyrants in former years by offering them kingdoms and power. To read much of the history of Greece and Rome is to read the history of one tyrant after another. We all know the history of recent tyrants who have fallen, as the Kaiser, Hitler and Mussolini. They yielded to the temptation which Jesus rejected. Today the leaders in Russia and several other countries are biting on the same hook which Satan dangled before the tyrants of old.

Masses Deceived

Communism grows not only because many leaders have been deceived but because masses of men have been deceived by its propaganda fostered by Satan, the father of lies. Communist leaders are notably untruthful, not only in giving out false propaganda, but they have used every conceivable means to keep their followers from learning the truth about the world. They deny them news and radio reports, and personal contacts with the free world.

Reaction to Oppression

This system has grown and continues to grow because of a reaction to other totalitarian organizations which have been oppressive. In Russia, the great center of Communism, there was a reaction to the totalitarian power and persecution of the Czar and the hierarchy of

the Greek Catholic church. The Czar was regarded as the political head of the church. The religion of this church was corrupt, formal and inconsistent, and it was a bitter persecutor of multitudes. Under the Czars thousands were exiled to Siberia where they languished and died long before the Communists came into power in Russia. The Soviet so-called "liberators" proposed to make all men free and equal, abolish the wealth of great landlords and the extensive holdings of the Greek church.

In Eastern European countries, as Poland, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Austria, it is a reaction against the totalitarianism of the Roman Catholic church. Recently we asked a minister from Poland if Communism was not a reaction against the wealthy landlords. He replied that the largest landholdings were the property of the Roman Catholic church. This is largely true in other Catholic countries of Europe.

Reaction to Heathenism

This system has also grown because of a reaction to heathenism, its ignorance and resultant poverty. Communism promises more land for the peasant, better wages for the workman, less graft from the government, and better conditions for all. A Chinese gentleman, who was in this country studying agriculture,

spoke at one of our clubs about two years ago. He represented the Chinese people as welcoming the growth of Communism as over against the regime of the Kuomintang government. He insisted that where Communism had taken control of China at that time freedom of religion had been allowed and the people generally were being benefited. Now that Communism has gotten a firm hold of China, conditions have changed, the food of some areas was taken to Russia leaving the people in a starving condition, Christians are being persecuted and the bitter rule of the totalitarian has been clamped down upon them.

Reaction to Greed

Communism has appealed to the masses as a reaction against greed and the opulence of the exceedingly rich. In most of the eastern countries there have been some who have been fabulously wealthy while the masses have been pitifully poor. Among the common people there is naturally a dislike for such contrasts. Communism has promised to seize the wealth of the rich and so divide it that all will have plenty. Those who espouse Communism expect to be lifted from a state of poverty over night to a condition which enables them to live on Easy Street. The full dinner pail has been in all ages one of the greatest appeals

of the politician. Sometimes such promises have been made honestly, but more often with the purpose of gaining power. What the Communist leaders have sought is power, and when they have gained the controlling power they become more oppressive than those who have gone before. At first they do not speak out declaring their real aim as did Rehoboam of old, but later they show that whereas the bourgeoisie have chastized them with whips they will chastize them with scorpions.

Not All Deceived

Not all of the people are deceived by Communism in Communist-controlled lands. Reports which seem to be accurate indicate that the great majority are not in sympathy with the Communist regime in Russia and the same is true of China. A vast number fled before the North Korean and Chinese Communist armies indicating that they would rather risk freezing and starvation than remain under the Communists in North Korea. Many guerrilla bands are fighting Communism in China, and as the oppression increases the number of such bands increases.

II. Sins of the World

In the providence of God Communism seems to be allowed to threaten the world because of the sins of the world.

This includes our nation, therefore it is the duty of Christians to point out our guilt and plead for nation-wide repentance.

Sins of Our Nation

Any earnest Christian who is willing to open his eyes cannot but see sin on every hand. If we consider the moral law as summed up in the Ten Commandments we can readily see how these are broken and our nation is guilty in the sight of God.

First Commandment

Great numbers of our people, perhaps the majority, will not own God as their Lord. God pronounces judgment upon a nation that forgets Him. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. 9:17).

Our nation, as an organized unit or moral person, receives its existence and authority from God, and should acknowledge in its charter or fundamental law the Author of its being and Source of its authority. "The kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations" (Ps. 22:28). "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Is. 60:12). "Jesus Christ—the Prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5). "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve

the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Ps. 2:10-12). To kiss the Son is equivalent to saying, give homage to Him, love, acknowledge and honor Him; if kings or nations refuse to do this He will be angry and cause them to perish.

Second Commandment

There are those in our land who set up images, bow down to them and actually worship them, thus breaking the Second Commandment, God distinctly forbids the making of any image or the likeness of anything in heaven or in earth for the purpose of worship. Among the great sins of our nation are the worship of money, of pleasure, of beauty and of fame.

Third Commandment

There are multitudes in our land who dishonor God's name. Profanity is heard on the streets, in homes, among children, among workmen, and on every hand in the armed services. God declares most distinctly that He will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Fourth Commandment

God commands that the Sabbath be kept as a holy day, yet all across the

nation men pay little attention to it in observing it as a day of rest, worship and devout meditation. Men and women are playing, traveling, drinking, carousing on the Sabbath more than on other days, forgetting God's command, the welfare of their souls and the good of the land. The slaughter on our highways is greater than on other days except on special holidays. God punished nations of old for breaking this command and we may well believe that He will punish them again.

Fifth Commandment

The Fifth Commandment requires the giving of honor to superiors, which includes not only parents, but those in civil and ecclesiastical authority. Ask our school teachers and they will tell you that there is less and less respect for authority in the youth of our land. God promises a blessing of long life to those who keep this commandment, and the opposite must be true for those who break it.

Sixth Commandment

God commands, "Thou shalt not kill." One cannot read the papers or listen to reports on the radio without being shocked at the number of murders and suicides day after day. Men seem to regard life very lightly. Jesus points out the fact that the man who hates his

neighbor without cause is guilty of breaking this commandment. How small are the excuses which arouse hatred of man to man and nation against nation, which lead to violence. It is reliably reported that there were 35,000 deaths last year caused by automobile accidents and a large proportion of these are due to drunkenness. Drink is a great killer and our nation is responsible for licensing this death-dealing monster in our midst.

Seventh Commandment

Another command of God is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." That this command is often violated is brought out in frequent divorce cases, the great number of illegitimate children and the prevalence of venereal disease. The breaking of this command is evidently very common both in civilian and military life. After the Moabitish women had enticed the men of Israel to break this commandment, God allowed a plague to break out which destroyed 24,000 before it was stayed (Num. 25).

Eighth and Ninth Commandments

God forbids stealing and lying, but how many men are there today who can be trusted to stand by their word of promise without a written contract? Even with a contract it is often difficult to force them to stand true to their word.

Tenth Commandment

From the actions of men it is easy to see that vast numbers covet that which is not theirs. The civil courts are kept busy with cases in which one man covets another's property. The divorce courts are kept busy with cases in which one man covets another's wife. Wars are frequent because one nation covets another's territory.

The Word of God

The Word of God is given as a rule for individual, social and national life. This Word, the Bible, should be read and studied by us as individuals in our homes and in our schools. It was declared long ago that it was the source of Britian's enlightenment and civilization, and it is equally our source of freedom and progress. Yet godless men have persuaded some of our states to rule the Bible out of our school by law and some of our courts to declare that even the reading of the Bible in our schools is unconstitutional, leaving multitudes of our children to grow up without the knowledge of God, of the moral law, or a correct conception of sin and evil, and thus to become delinquents and ultimately criminals. Very few have been condemned by our criminal courts who had a sound Christian training in their youth.

While we as a nation continue to break God's law can we claim His promises and blessings except we repent?

III. Sins of the Church

Many, even among professed followers of Christ, are inviting the judgments of God by their manner of life. There is much indifference to spiritual growth and worship. A recent published statement declares that 1000 rural churches are being closed every year; that only 28 per cent of the people of our nation attend church, and that there are \$750 spent on worldly pleasures for each .50 cents spent on religion. How few professed Christians read the Bible with any degree of frequency, and how many do not read it at all! There are some churches in which the Bible is not read during the entire service and no Scripture text is quoted. How few seem seriously interested in spiritual things!

Stewardship Viewed Lightly

The members of the church at large place little importance upon the stewardship of life, nor do they, as a rule, take seriously their duty as stewards of the means which God has given them. Many who spend money lavishly on games, shows and luxuries act greatly embarrassed when asked to give for charity or for the church. If in these days of plen-

tiful money the members of the church throughout the nation were to give a tithe of their net income, there would be overflowing treasuries in the various departments of the church. There would be abundance to carry forward her mission work at home and abroad, her charitable work, her social work and her varied functions.

Neglecting God's Word

Many who have the Bible do not use it. Many who use it make a wrong use of it, denying portions of it and giving unreasonable interpretations to much of it. How different is this spirit from that of the Psalmist who said: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.—How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Ps. 119:97, 103).

Worldly Use of the Sabbath

Great numbers, even in the church, make the Lord's day merely one of pleasure. Worldly pleasures tend to creep in more and more and rob men of the blessings of the Sabbath. The Sunday paper attracts them more than the worship in the church. A recent oft-repeated advertisement on the radio represents the son, the daughter and the mother pleading with the father for the Sunday paper and the father yielding

and ordering it for the family. The automobile takes them far from the church and the movies draw them to the theaters. Hundreds of attractions entice men on the Sabbath and keep them from rest, meditation and true worship. God has promised, "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words," that He will bless the individuals, the church and the nation, "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Is. 58:13,14).

What Shall We Do?

What then should we do in this critical hour? The United Nations are now involved in a war with strong Communist forces, and our people and leaders fear another world war which, if it develops on a large scale, threatens to be the worst in history. Not only is Russia guilty, and her satellite nations with her also guilty; but we as a nation are guilty of breaking God's laws, and even the church at large has grown worldly and guilty in God's sight.

IV. A Call to Repent

We should repent with a true and contrite spirit. We should humble our-

selves before God, pray earnestly to Him and trust Him. He is the Lord of hosts and able and mighty to save. It is not enough to say, "I will utter a prayer to God," unless there is true faith, genuine repentance and a firm resolve to turn from sin. God warned Israel through Isaiah that unless they repented and turned from their sins they might pray with uplifted hands but He would not hear (Is. 1:4-20). God has promised that if there is war or if there are plagues in the land, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14). We cannot place all the blame on greedy capitalists, corrupt politicians, and individual or international gangsters, for sins of all kinds have prevailed our land.

God is Judge

We are warned against becoming indifferent and unmindful of a judgment as men did in the days of Noah. We should not become careless because our Lord delays His coming, and, as many do, become cruel, "eat and drink with the drunken." Christ will come in a day when these look not for Him and in an hour of which they are not aware, and

will appoint them their portion with the hypocrites where "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 24: 36-51).

Jesus affirmed that those men of Galilee whom Pilate slew, or those men on whom the tower of Siloam fell were not sinners above all others: "but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:1-5). The time to repent is now, before the judgments of God fall on the world in terrible severity. When Jonah was sent to call the King and the people of Ninevah to repent and they repented sincerely, God heard and saved the city.

God has allowed terrible judgments to fall on the world within the memory of most of us. The First World War cost millions of lives and billions of property. That war was followed by one of the most wide-spread and terrible plagues that ever devastated the world, sweeping men and women to death by the thousands in the East and the West. It was not long until there was a great depression which cost multitudes the loss of their property, their livelihood and great anxiety. That was soon followed by World War II which was more devastating than the first. And yet with all this there was no general repentance, rather

an increase in the volume and depth of sin.

Another War

Now another great war seems to hang over us, yet politicians and military leaders talk only of arms, armies, munitions of war and united armies to resist the enemy. They seem scarcely to recognize that God has power over the nations; that they are in His hand as the dust of the balance (Is. 40:15), and so far as they speak of divine power it is in an indifferent and formal manner. They seem to forget that the sins of intoxicating drink, immorality, profanity, Sabbath breaking, skepticism and atheism are widely prevalent; that such sins are an offence to God and merit His judgments. As Isaiah and Jeremiah in the days of Israel's apostacy, as Abraham Lincoln in the days of threatened disaster during the Civil War, they should call our nation—yes all the United Nations—to repentance and reformation under the mighty hand of God.

If our nation is to stand as a bulwark against the rising tide of Communism and receive power from on high she must have clean hands. There are many who think that because we have repudiated Communism we are not guilty of any significant sin. We have pointed out some of our sins, not to bring an accu-

sation against our nation, but to show our people and our leaders that we are guilty of breaking all the commands of the decalogue, and the only way to gain favor with God is to repent and turn from our sins.

Sons in War

There are many who are deeply concerned now, whose sons or husbands are in the war in Korea, and it seems possible that soon sons from almost every home will be in the armed forces and it may be in a deadly war. "When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing" (Deut. 23:9).

Time to Pray

A frightened worldly man approached a missionary friend on a ship in the Pacific, in the midst of a terrible storm when the passengers and crew feared disaster, asking him to hold a service and lead them in prayer. The missionary told the man that he was too sick to lead in a formal prayer, but that the time to pray was before the storm arose. A formal prayer inspired by fear does not reach the throne of God, but "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Time to Repent

The time for the people to repent and seek God in Noah's day was before the Flood. The time of our nation and the world to repent is NOW, before God's judgments sweep over the world. God has promised that if nations repent of evil, He will repent of the evil that He thought to do to them (Jer. 18:7,8). "It is time" NOW, "to seek the Lord."

For copies of this leaflet send to Frank E. Allen, Hopkinton, Iowa. Five cents per copy plus postage.
