

The Danger of Erosion

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According to Paul, Satan has a vast collection of devices by which to deceive and defeat God's children (2 Corinthians 2:11). One of his methods is to avoid the open, frontal assault against the church, preferring the slow steady erosion of her strength and fortifications. Although it takes much longer, the damage from erosion can be just as destructive as a fierce attack against her gates. Time and patience are things of which Satan has an abundant supply. Just as the steady wind or the steady flow of water will wear away the adamant stone, so the strategy of erosion can destroy a person's faith, a congregation, or even the brotherhood.

The regular neglect of doctrinal instruction and failure to warn against error will, in time, erode faith and convictions. Love for Christ, His Church, and His Word can fade away over time. Tolerance for false teachers and for teaching contrary to Christ can become commonplace. The steady chipping away of fundamental truths of the faith will, in time, lead to complete apostasy. Hence we see men who once stood on solid scriptural ground now weak and compromising in their defense of God's truth.

In the never-ending conflict between the children of light and darkness, we see the effects of this strategy. Close one door and, if left unguarded, Satan enters another. Expose one lie, and he simply develops another. Defeat and discredit one of his agents, and he will send another. Satan never gives up; he never admits or accepts defeat. On the other hand, most Christians seem inclined to expect a quick solution, an immediate victory. They will defy the false teacher and fight the good fight of faith for a few months or years, but all the while they are longing for peace and tranquility, for slumber and rest. They find it easy to close their eyes and shut their ears to the sound of trumpets and drums of war. Some find it much easier to imagine victory is already won; that Satan is vanquished; that the problem is laid to rest. Such an attitude is fatal. Solomon said it plainly, "A little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travaileth..." (Proverbs 6:9-10).

Those who are familiar with the history of our spiritual warfare know that the said danger is true and real. The story of the Book of Judges shows the never-ending efforts of Satan to gain the victory over God's people. Hostile neighbors enslaved them. Strong leaders-judges-led the Hebrews in driving the enemy away, but the next generation forgot God and oppression again overtook them. The first challenge to the unity of the church was the legalism of some of the Jewish converts. From that day to present, every generation has had to deal with legalism. In the early days of the 4th century, Arius championed those who questioned the equality of Jesus with God the Father. Today, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the liberal Protestants carry on the heresy of Arius. Satan never gives up. A century ago, our fathers fought and defeated those who wanted instrumental music in the worship of the church. At mid-century, they again successfully engaged the leaders of the Christian Church. In the waning years of the 20th century to the present, promoters of the same error have again arisen in our midst. We must either fight and defeat them again or see the faith of our brethren on this subject undermined and perverted. We must not be ignorant nor non-responsive to Satan's weapons of "erosion."