

## **"THE DAY OF THE LORD."**

(CONTINUED.)

We now come to the consideration of the Church's condition during this period of trouble. We have seen that "great and terrible" things are coming upon the world – overturning of all governments, law and order – utter wreck of society. Will the Church go through this "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation?"

The answer, to be understood, must recognize two classes of Christians as being IN THE CHURCH now and during the gospel age, viz., the very few entirely consecrated ones who have "the same mind which was also in Christ Jesus," i.e., a mind or desire to do only the Father's will; those in whom his word abides so that they "bring forth much fruit" – "meekness, patience, Godlikeness, brotherly-kindness, charity," etc. – Gal. 5:22. These are the "little flock," "the sanctified in Christ Jesus, who have their fruit unto holiness." This small part of the living church will be found watching, and are told that, if they do so, they will "escape all those things coming on the world." We understand that the escape is effected by their being "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:17); yet that their taking will be unseen by the world.

While the few "escape," the majority of professing Christians, sincere, earnest, zealous, in their way, though they be, are yet, on their own profession, not entirely consecrated, and do not wish to be. They are willing to take the Lord as a partner, and defer a little to his wishes in their acts of life. The partnership is composed of Christ, the world, and SELF; and these three modify the life and bring it to a "luke-warm" condition. But to cast out the world and to debase self so that the only controlling power is Christ, is to break up all partnership, and brings to

the condition Paul expresses: "For me to live is Christ," because Christ reigns supreme.

This class will be overtaken by the "day of the Lord" unprepared. Because, "overcharged with the world, self, and the cares of this life," they are not watching, and are therefore taken "unawares," and as in a "snare" (see Luke 21:34,35), "and they shall not escape." This class, sometimes called "carnal-minded, babes in Christ," are blessed in this great trouble; for, though the love of Christ does not constrain them to entire consecration because of the great strength of the world and self, yet, when put into this "furnace" of trouble, the miserable dross will be eliminated, their eyes relieved of worldly blindness and anointed with truth that they may truly see; their garments, too, which have become so torn that "the shame of their nakedness appears;" and, spotted by the flesh and soiled by contact with the world, these, with much anguish and pain, shall, during this "day of wrath, wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb," and "the Lamb in the throne shall feed them."

When Christ is enthroned, has "taken his great power," and commenced his reign as earth's new King, these judgments of the "great day of wrath" are the first acts, the first evidences to the world that the "Kingdom of Heaven," composed of Christ Jesus and his overcoming Church, above referred to, has been established or "set up." When thus enthroned, the Bride (the "little flock") is with him. Who? "They that are with him are called and chosen and faithful," and "In righteousness he doth judge and make war. Jesus promised "To him that overcometh I will give to sit with me in my throne," – "I will give him power over the nations."

David shows the position of the saints or overcomers to be with Christ in POWER, Ps. 149:79: "This honor have all his saints to execute the judgments written."

It is then, while the "little flock," the "Bride," the "overcoming church," is thus enthroned with Jesus, and while she is inflicting the judgments written, and while the other class of Christians in the Church, the carnal-minded ones, left in the world are "washing their robes," that the Lamb feeds them with truth, and leads them (some quickly, others more slowly) unto living fountains of water, bringing, finally, as many as will be led to the heavenly condition, beyond all tears, pain and sorrow, receiving them into his eternal home; and so we see them (Rev. 7:14) "clothed in white robes and palms in their hands;" and we are told "These are they that came out [R36 : page 1] of" (gr., after or through) "the great tribulation, and have washed their robes," etc.; "Therefore are they before the throne and serve God in his temple."

High honor to be a servant in God's temple; but not so great as to be "the temple" itself. Glorious position before the throne; but not so highly exalted as the "Bride" in the throne. Grand to be overcomers of the world, and to carry a palm in hand, even by coming through "the great tribulation;" but not so grand as to be accounted worthy to escape and to be crowned a conqueror by the King of kings.

"The King's daughter ("the Lamb's wife") is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold; she is brought unto the King in [white] raiment of needlework;" and who will say that her garments are not more grand than those of "the virgins, her companions, who follow her," though they also be clothed in "robes washed white" – though they also be brought before the King with gladness and rejoicing? (Ps. 45:13.)

But though the "little flock" escape the great tribulation coming on the world, there is another tribulation coming also in "the day of the Lord." It comes before the translation of the overcomers, and is a furnace into which the Church, wheat (true and false, whether advanced Christians or babes in Christ) and tares (hypocrites) – all go

into this trial. Of this Paul says, "The fire will try every man's work of what sort it is."

Every believer in Christ is represented as a builder putting up, from the materials furnished in God's word, a "holy faith and holy life," all assistance and direction being furnished through the Spirit.

Some are building with gold, silver and precious stones – truth; others with hay, wood and stubble – errors; – both build on the rock – Christ Jesus; both have a foundation in the rock. The tares (hypocrites) know not the rock, and build on the sand. In this illustration by Paul, the two classes of Christians are distinctly seen: the little flock, who have built wisely of truths, the fire of that day does not affect – they receive the reward promised to overcomers; those whose building is burned lose the high calling (the bride's position) though "they themselves be saved yet as by fire." (1 Cor. 3:11-15.)

The same trial of the Church is shown in Ps. 91. We understand the trial to come through the rise of infidelity, which will so shake and shatter all religious beliefs, as to expose the multitudinous errors and burn them (errors, "wood, hay, stubble") up, leaving as the representatives of Christianity those who hold the truth ("gold, silver," etc.), the "little flock" who, we believe, will shortly after be translated.

This psalm vividly describes, under the symbols of "pestilence, snares, terrors, arrows," etc., the enemy which assaults the Church.

Infidelity is already as a pestilence, a miasm abroad throughout the world. It is in the store-room, the street-car, on the railroad, in the newspapers, in the Sunday-schools and in the churches. Everywhere, as a pestilence, it goes suiting itself to the various surroundings. It is in the street outspoken, in the paper a joke or a side-cut at Christianity, in the Sunday-school and pulpit it is toned down, yet none the less **[R36 : page 2]** powerful, as it suggests that it is not best to think of the seeming incongruities of Jonah and the great fish, or Sampson, or

Joshua and the sun. Another form of this pestilence is lack of faith and trust in the promises of God. The promises are quoted in prayer, etc., yet a fulfilment is seldom expected. The doctrines and traditions of men are sought and accepted more readily than the word of God. There is a form of Godliness without the power. It is really unbelief. ("When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?")

Yes, infidelity is systematically and rapidly undermining the confidence of the most enlightened, in sacred things, and its power and influence are increased by the fact that so very many of the doctrines which it assails are really false – "wood, hay and stubble." But as one doctrine after another which, once they hold sacred torn to shreds, they begin to doubt all, and are in danger of throwing away truths as well, so great is their disgust.

Some will be taken as in a "snare." All who are not watching and who have not the light of God's word upon the pathway in which they tread, will be ensnared by the strong arguments and deep-laid plans of error. It is only the faith-full and trusting that shall be unharmed, those who can say "He is my refuge and fortress, my God, in Him will I trust."

They only will stand "the arrows." (The wicked shoot out arrows, even wicked words.) The scoffs and derision which will attach to all who will then claim to bear the name of Christ, will be too much for many. It will pierce and wound them and cause them to retire, unless they have for a shield and buckler God's truth (vs. 4.) Only a clear and harmonious understanding of God's word (the truth) will enable us to withstand the various and powerful attacks of this time.

The apostle foresaw this time and warns us of "the evil day," (Eph. 6:11-12.) "Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil," for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, &c." "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that

ye may be able to withstand in that evil day." It is a day more for defence than aggressive warfare – withstanding.

Paul describes the whole armor; have you taken it? Are you wearing it now? Unless you have it on you are not prepared for the "evil day" into which we are now entering. Some have one part of this armor and some another. Few have it all. There are few who can not add to their defensive preparation. Some christians have caught the end of the girdle of truth, wrapped it about them and started with the sword (the word) to attack the powers of darkness. These are they, who have only the intellectual, and not the experimental, knowledge of the word of truth. Stop, brother, put on the whole armor. You will need the helmet of salvation (the acceptance of Christ's atoning work), the breast plate of righteousness, (experimental religion), and a shield of faith and trust, else you may be pierced by many an arrow. And do not neglect to have "your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" – meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, love, lest you soon become weary in the rugged way. Others put on the breast-plate and helmet and shield, but lack the girdle and sword. They feel prepared for every thing and spend all their time polishing and admiring their armor. These are they who accept of the salvation offered by our Lord and rejoice in it, but who have little or no intellectual knowledge or understanding of the matter. They believe, but scarcely know what or why. They see no necessity for anything but a thread of truth for a girdle, and therefore do not seek to grow in knowledge of the truth. The sword, the word of God, they know little about; it is heavy; they cannot handle it easily – they see little use for it. They used it a little to assist in putting on their breast-plate, but since that it lies idle. Stop, brother, sister, that armor might do you good under some circumstances, but it will not do in this "evil day." The battle will weary you, and you will faint in the way if you have not the girdle of truth (a sustaining strength derived from an understanding of the word) to brace and strengthen you. You may have never so large a shield of faith and other armor, but

you cannot do without the sword (the word.) The enemy will attack you and take away your shield and other armor unless you have the sword to defend them.

Yes, friends, we need the whole armor if we would stand. If you have it complete – head and heart religion – then you will be of those described as being "able to quench all the fiery darts, arrows of the wicked." "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." (Psa. 91:7.) Though thousands of christians, and ones in whom you had rested much confidence, fall at your side, yet, so armed with the panoply of God, nothing can compel you to doubt the presence and power of our Lord.

Even now many begin to fall. Already errors are beginning to raise their heads and taunt with "bitter words" the truth. Errors, which if it were possible, would deceive and ensnare the very elect.

Think not that you will not be shaken, that your faith – shield – will not need to be defended. "The fire of that day shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

"Who shall be able to stand?"

"My soul be on thy guard,  
Ten thousand foes arise;  
The hosts of sin are pressing hard,  
To draw thee from the prize."

This fall of christianity, religious influence and restraint, and the rise of infidelity, prepares the way and is the door by which the trouble upon the world (which quickly follows this upon the church) is introduced. They both are parts of the trouble of "the great day of God."

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