

## **"IT HASTETH GREATLY."**

In the October number (1879) of the WATCH TOWER in the article headed "The Day of the Lord" – and in the November number in article headed "Babylon is Fallen," we gave expression to our view of the "time of trouble" and endeavored to prove scripturally that it began with the church and would first result in the complete overthrow of the nominal church, Protestant and Catholic, by infidelity and spiritualism, and afterward, it would reach and overthrow national governments. Many were inclined to make light of our statements, etc., and expressed themselves as believing that the trouble upon the nations was the only thing to be looked for by us. Our views then expressed are confirmed in us daily, and we are more than ever convinced of their truth; that around us in the nominal church, "a thousand shall fall at (our) side and ten thousand at (our) right hand;" that Infidelity's "arrows" and spiritualism's "pestilence," will for a short time sweep through the church – "and who shall be able to stand?" – "They who have made the most High their habitation and who have His truth for their shield and buckler." Psa. 91.

We clip the following extracts to show our readers that the storm has already begun, and that others are noticing the fulfillment who never noticed the prophecies: –

An anonymous writer in the North American Review affirms that the thinking minds of to-day are "drifting away from the religious belief and dogmatic theology of the past," and that "the wave of skepticism affects the orthodox church itself." He says: "The great body of orthodox religious doctrines known as systematic theology... is about to go to wreck with the mythology of Greece and

the belief in witchcraft." He also marks "the temporizing attitude of theology towards such modern doctrines as evolution."

Says Rev. Dr. Kittredge (Congregationalist) of Chicago: "It matters not in what direction you look, sin is on the increase, but the church is losing ground in her conflict with sin; she has almost ceased to be felt as a power. If a majority of our church organizations were to-day to become extinct, the world would hardly know it.

– World's Crisis.

Professor Von Oosterzee, the well-known evangelical teacher of Holland, said recently that a wave of infidelity is steadily advancing over Protestant Europe which the most favored country will not escape. "They have had it in Germany, and now we have it in Holland. They are beginning to get it in Scotland. In twenty years they will have it to the full, and all their theology will not save them."

– Messiah's Herald.

The Christian Advocate (New York) writes: "The Congregationalist has received answers from twenty-nine ministers, to a circular sent out making inquiry as to the observance of Sabbath in New England. All testify to degeneracy and deplore results. Desecration has increased, and morality also decreases. Religion is losing its authority and the state of the community is becoming worse."

The N.Y. Herald quotes the veteran editor of the Observer as saying: "A great spiritual drought is prevailing, such as has not been known in the present century. We do not remember the time," says Dr. Prime, "when revivals of religion were so few and far between; when so few accessions to the churches were reported, and when the church seemed so much in danger of receding before the world." "A somber but true picture," says the Herald.

Rev. Dr. Cuyler in the Evangelist, in a mournful article, asserts that Presbyterianism is on the decline; in 1875 there were 70,500 members added to the churches; in 1877 there were 63,700 added; but in 1878 there were only 53,000 additions, while in 1879 only 49,000 were added – the real increase being only 7,000 and perhaps not even that. What is true of the Presbyterian, is true, he says, of all the other evangelical bodies.

– Montreal Witness.

Rev. Dr. B. F. Campbell, of East Boston, in a lecture on "The Dangers of the Republic," said: "The world as a whole is undoubtedly growing more intelligent, but not moral. Moral power is on the decline in New England. The pendulum of religious belief has swung away from the rigid orthodoxy of Puritan times, has already passed the center, and is on its way to a heartless Nihilism."

– East Boston Advocate.

Rev. Henry Morgan says: "The cause of Boston's religious decline is Liberalism. It has broken down the Sabbath; paralyzed the arm of the law; opened Sunday theaters, concerts, excursions; emptied the churches; killed the public conscience; sown the seeds of distrust; sown to the wind, and we are now reaping the whirlwind."

– Boston Herald.

The Church Union quotes a circular issued by most of the ministers of Baltimore, which urges all to prayer, and speaks of the forces of evil, general corruption, Sabbath-breaking, the thickening snares for the young, and adds: "The growing skepticism, as well as the intensely secular spirit of the age, are enough to awaken apprehension for our institutions and for the social fabric itself."

– Bible Banner.

What is true of Christians in general is true of us who hold some advanced light on God's word and plan, viz: "Every man's work shall be tried of what sort it is."

Should we expect to be exempted from the fire (trial) that is to try all? No, rather if we have the most advanced light we should expect to be the first and most severely tried. And we have been; and are now being, so tried.

Your faith could not perhaps be tried by the same errors of infidelity, etc. Your knowledge of the plan of the ages and the work of restitution of all things renders powerless the arrows of infidelity, as also your knowledge of the condition of the dead protects you against the pestilence of "spiritualism." But for all this God is not without means of proving and sifting us. Our trial, which we hope is now almost over, has arisen mainly from the teachings scattered amongst us by some who walked with us and with whom we took sweet council together, who, denying the redemption and forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, have claimed it as possible for every man to pay his own penalty and climb his way up, and win for himself eternal life. Thus denying that the Lord bought them, thus seeming to fulfill to some extent, 2 Pet. 2:1, and thus have brought upon themselves by laying aside Christ's robe of righteousness – the wedding garment – and appearing in their own "filthy rags," the destruction of their light.

"Light is sown for the righteous," but "there are none righteous, no not one," except as covered by Christ's righteousness as with a garment. "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered." Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness. These are the righteous for whom light was sown in God's word. Should we wonder if these brethren who have thus laid aside the imputed righteousness of Christ should be deprived of the

light which was intended only for "the path of the just," – those justified by faith in the ransom, and not by their own works.

Such has been the result; these who once rejoiced in the light of "The sure word of Prophecy" which shows us the presence of our Lord as the "Bridegroom," "Reaper" and "King," that proves to us that the "times of restitution of all things began in 1874," and that consequently "the heavens" which were to receive Him until that time, now no longer receive him, but that He is present, and that soon when the separation of wheat and tares is complete, "we shall be changed to His glorious likeness and see Him as He is. All, all this light they have lost, and have now reached the condition of outer-darkness, the condition of darkness on the subject of the Lord's presence [R126 : page 3] that the world and a worldly church have always occupied. The parable says "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," meaning, we suppose, that such shall go through the time of trouble upon the world.

With pain and sorrow we part company, but rejoice to know that many who followed them in a measure and were sorely tried are now able to discern between light and "outer darkness." "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they no doubt would have continued with us; but they went out from us that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us." But "you have an anointing from the Holy one. You all know it." (1 Jno. 2:19-20.) The Holy Spirit has revealed to us through the word the presence of the Bridegroom and we heard his voice and opened the door of faith and He came in to us and supped with us, and caused us to sit down to meat (truth), and himself has been our teacher and served us, (Rev. 3:20, Luke 12:37). And our faith does not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power and word of God. (1 Cor. 2:5.) And still beloved, there may be other trials for you.

"Think not the victory won,

Nor lay thine armor down,  
Thine arduous work will not be done  
Till thou hast gained thy crown."  
"Oh, watch and fight and pray,  
The battle ne'er give o'er;  
Renew it boldly every day,  
And help Divine implore."

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