

PRESENT DANGER.

"Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments."

The day of the Lord, in the beginning of which we are now living, is everywhere throughout the Scriptures referred to as a time of special trouble – beginning first on the Church. But why should it begin with the Church? or rather, why should not the Church be entirely exempt from it? Let us look first to see what is the cause of the trouble, and the question may be readily answered.

The day of the Lord is the day when Jesus takes to himself his kingly power. The first work of the new king is the binding of Satan, the present "prince of this world," for "how can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? then he will spoil his house" (Matt. 12:29); and "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8.) Satan's reign has been one of terror under cover of the darkness (ignorance) of this world. But the present domination of evil is to end, and the prince of darkness (Satan) is to be bound. The kingdom of Christ is to bring joy and peace, and the nations shall walk in the light of it. (Rev. 21:24.)

As the light of truth increases darkness (ignorance) must flee away, and Satan to that extent must lose his power. Light – truth, will be the chain which will bind evil in the coming age under the reign of Christ. And when the knowledge of the Lord fills the whole earth as the waters cover the sea, then Satan will be completely bound. Now, it will be clearly seen that the Church – those walking by the light of the lamp of truth – are the first to escape from the kingdom of darkness. Over them Satan first begins to lose his power, and he here discovers that the binding influence is at work. Since our Lord

and King has come, the light of truth has been shining as never before. [R431 : page 4]

It is not a supposable case that Satan will give up his dominion without a struggle, and this terrible struggle between light and darkness, truth and error, is now going on specially in the Church. Every new truth is confronted by some seemingly plausible error, and every old truth is assailed and unsettled in the minds of those not fully equipped for the fearful contest. Lukewarm and merely nominal Christians are little troubled about these things, and as long as they sleep on, ignoring the light that has come into the world, Satan can afford to let them alone.

One of the devices of the adversary now, so closely resembles his policy in Eden, that if God's children will note it, they can but indignantly repulse his audacity. He first presented a temptation to Eve, attempted to prove the advantages of partaking of the forbidden fruit; reasoned that God was unjust in depriving them of it, etc. Eve replied, "God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." But Satan said, "Ye shall not surely die." The act of disobedience in eating that fruit was sufficient to accomplish the work of death. Obedience was the rock on which they stood in harmony with God, having the promise of everlasting life, but they left the rock and thus lost life and all claim to it.

Death to all eternity, was the result of that act had not deliverance been provided through a Redeemer, who became man's substitute in death, thus ransoming him from the power of the grave. Faith in the efficacy of our ransom price – the precious blood of Christ – is now the only means of access to God's favor, the only sure foundation, the rock on which we may now stand. Those who come to a full knowledge of the truth in this age, may now be justified and at peace with God, standing on this rock by faith. All the world shall

in the next age come to the knowledge of the truth, and can find favor with God only through acknowledging and resting on the merit of the Redeemer. And now Satan is again at work seeking by every means in his power to undermine and unsettle this foundation of our faith, trying to show that we need no Redeemer, and that he who claimed to be our Redeemer was a sinful man even as we; that his life was a forfeited life coming down from Adam through Joseph, instead of a new creation, perfect, from God his Father. Ah! but we reply, "God hath said," "There is no name given under heaven, or among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus." "In him was no sin," and we are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Oh, says the adversary, that is not to be taken literally; those are only figurative expressions, and do not mean what they appear to. If you were only spiritually minded you would see that they mean the very opposite. Here is a sly appeal to the old pride which we had covenanted to crucify. Again, we reply, but God hath said, that if those who were once enlightened count the blood of **[R431 : page 5]** the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy (common) thing, such draw back unto perdition (destruction), there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins (Heb. 10:26-29) – such shall surely die. No, says the deceiver, ye shall not surely die, and then he quotes a text where it does not belong, saying, "God will have all men to be saved." This is true of the Adamic death – "God will have all men to be saved" from the first or Adamic death, and then to be brought "to a knowledge of the truth;" and after that, if they sin wilfully, etc., they die a second time, and there remaineth for such no more a sacrifice for sins. The ransom given was for Adamic sin, and releases only from the death which came by Adam. There is no ransom given and no redemption promised from the "Second death," which is the punishment for wilful sin after justification and enlightenment.

The world is not thus enlightened yet, only God's children are. We, are already reckoned of God as having passed from death unto life, since justified by faith in the precious blood of Christ. And not only so, but being thus justified, and having presented ourselves as living sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, we have access into this grace wherein we stand as "new creatures." Thus all our hope will be seen to depend entirely on our acceptance of Jesus as our Redeemer, Ransom, Substitute, his payment of our penalty. And, therefore, to all the dear household of faith we would say, Beware of the deceiver! This is his old battle-plan, and all should be able to recognize it. He still claims that the wages of sin is not death – "Ye shall not surely die." And be assured that if this policy does not accomplish your overthrow, some other device will be tried.

Let not the storm of his wrath sweep you off the Rock; keep your building on this foundation, and continue to build with the gold and silver and precious stones of truth. Most of those in the nominal Church have been building on this rock, but the material they have used was mainly the wood, hay and stubble of men's traditions. But the trial of this day shall try every man's work of what sort it is. The storms, and the floods, and the winds, and the hail shall beat upon your house, and the fiery trial shall prove all. "Who shall be able to stand?" All on the rock shall stand, though any whose building is of wood, hay and stubble shall suffer loss, and they shall be saved, yet so as by fire. Remember, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12.)

"Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor once at ease sit down;
The work of faith will not be done,
Till thou hast gained thy crown."

Since our sins were laid upon Jesus, and we by faith accepted him as our Redeemer, his righteousness has been laid upon us. Yes, his righteousness is our glorious dress. "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments."

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