

## IN OUR DAY.

**"Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." – Acts 13:40,41; Isa. 29:14; Hab. 1:5.**

This prophecy was one of sufficient importance to be recorded by two of the Lord's prophets, Isaiah and Habakkuk; and from the Apostle Paul's reference to it in speaking to the people of his day, which was the end or harvest of the Jewish age, we see that it had an application to that peculiar time. And since that age with its harvest and all its peculiar circumstances was, as we have seen (MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., Chapter vii.), a type of the Gospel age and its harvest, we recognize this prophecy, as well as the other prophetic features of the context, as having a yet fuller and more special application to the present time – the harvest period of the Gospel age.

It is true to-day, as it was in the harvest of the Jewish age, that there are many despisers of the truth – especially of the truth due and now coming to light in this, our day. But, nevertheless, the Lord's great work goes steadily forward: he is doing "his work, his strange work, and bringing to pass his act, his strange act." (Isa. 28:21,22.) It is indeed a strange work to those unacquainted with the Lord's plan, which sets aside all human theories and plans, and pursues a course in direct opposition to them all. The world looks on and beholds this work of the Lord, and with fear and trembling as to the final outcome they regard its wonderful progress. And not only the world, but the vast majority of his professed followers, too, who have not been living on such intimate terms with the Lord as to be led into a clear knowledge of his wonderful purposes, regard the future with

fearful forebodings, and his present "strange work" as an innovation rather than as a preliminary preparation for the glorious reign of the Prince of peace; for they wist not that this is "the day of his preparation" spoken of by the Prophet (Nahum 2:3), for the setting up of Christ's kingdom.

Before that kingdom can be fully established in the earth, all power and authority, of whatever sort it be, which belongs to this present [R1487 : page 8] order of things, must pass away. As a consequence of this preparation for Christ's kingdom, which is now nigh, even at the door (See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., *The Time is at Hand*), we behold the shaking of the nations and the trembling of the very foundations of the whole structure of human society as at present organized unwittingly under Satan, "the prince of this world." The great crisis of this world's affairs has not yet been reached, but the preparations for that crisis are progressing steadily both in civil and in ecclesiastical circles. And if we would be among those who are truly wise we will apply, not only our heads, but also our hearts, unto the instruction of the [R1488 : page 8] "sure word of prophecy that shineth as a light in a dark place until the day dawn;" for it is written (Dan. 12:10) that "none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise [not according to the wisdom of this world, which shall perish (Isa. 29:14), but with the wisdom of meekness which confesses human ignorance and relies solely upon the wisdom which cometh from above: they] shall understand."

Those who thus rely upon God, and are simple hearted enough to take him at his Word, view his present work in the light of his glorious plan: they see light in his light: they realize the necessity for the great scourge of trouble which shall shatter all human ambition and pride and humble the nations in the dust. They see, too, the deformities of human theories and the fallacy of human arguments and the futility of all human schemes for the uplifting and blessing of the world, as they view them in contrast

with the divine plan of the ages which God is working out. (See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. I.) In consequence of this superior vantage ground from which, as children of God, we are permitted to view "the work, the strange work" of our day, we are not at all surprised to see all systems of men tottering to their final overthrow; nor are we dismayed as we are brought to realize that their utter destruction is sure.

But what do we see, as from God's standpoint we look out over "his work, his strange work," in this our day? We see, first of all, that which interests us most, viz., that the Lord is gathering together his saints and separating them as wheat from the tares – as loyal, devoted children of God from a great multitude of mere professors. (Psa. 50:5.) We see that such are being wonderfully led by a path which hitherto they knew not, enabling them to comprehend the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God as manifested in his wonderful plan of the ages.

Secondly, we see the binding together of the various companies of tares into great denominational bundles and labeled with various sectarian names. (Matt. 13:30.) Thirdly, we see the present heavens (the ruling religious powers of the world – viz., Roman Catholicism and Protestantism) beginning to roll together as a scroll. (Isa. 34:4.) That is, each is retaining its own distinctive features, yet both are coming closer together in mutual recognition, sympathy and co-operation – rolling together just as a scroll does, from the two ends. Any one at all familiar with the trend of thought in ecclesiastical circles to-day will mark this rolling together of the heavens. Protestantism is very solicitous, for instance, for Roman Catholic cooperation on the subject of Sunday legislation and various other proposed reforms, and to this end is constantly courting the favor of Rome. Presbyterians are anxious to expunge from their creed that clause which recognizes the Papacy as the "Man of Sin;" Methodists speak of it as a "great Christian camp," and Protestants of every name and

order are doing homage to what they are pleased to call the mother church, all unconscious apparently of the fact that the Lord calls it a harlot church and the mother of harlots. (Rev. 17:1-5.) Union! is the watchword to-day throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, so called. In union is strength, they say; and strength to brave the coming storm, of which they all feel apprehensive, is what they all feel the need of. Singly and alone they realize that they are unprepared to meet the great time of trouble of which the Prophet Daniel declares that it shall be "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." (Dan. 12:1.) And consequently they are all willing to make any compromise necessary to secure what they call Christian unity. They **[R1488 : page 9]** want so-called Christianity to make an imposing appearance before the world in numerical strength. And Papists are none the less anxious than Protestants, though, seeing the anxiety of Protestants, they prefer rather to stand back and be courted than to take the initiative in this movement. But they are quite willing for policy's sake to speak now of the Protestant heretics as their "separated brethren," and Catholic priests are quite willing to sit side by side on the platform with Protestant clergymen in religious gatherings.

In no particular instance is this disposition of the heavens to roll together more manifest than in the proposed religious congresses which are to convene in Chicago during the season of the great International Exposition. There it is proposed to gather together for religious conference and co-operation, not only the representatives of all the creeds of Christendom, but of heathendom as well; and many are the religious enthusiasts who seem disposed to persuade even the heathen that they are Christians if in any degree they manifest the Christ spirit, which they define simply as a disposition of love to God and love to man.

In seeking a basis of union it is also clearly observable that Christians of every name and order are willing, for the sake of what they call Christian Unity, to drop out of their creed the only true foundation of Christianity, viz., the doctrine of the ransom. Such are some of the indications of the rolling together of the ecclesiastical heavens, or ruling religious powers.

Fourthly, we see the elements of the earth – civil society – getting ready for the final conflagration when, it is said, "the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (2 Pet. 3:10-12) – the heat of human passion and wrath. We see the angry nations armed to the teeth and impoverishing their treasuries to equip themselves for the emergencies of the near future, while statesmen and politicians everywhere view the situation in civil affairs as extremely precarious, and are put to their wits' ends to devise ways and means for the protection of civil government against the dangers that threaten it from the growing dissatisfaction among the masses of the people. This was very manifest in the policy of Prince Bismarck of Germany in his course with reference to the church of Rome, when, a few years ago, he sought to rid Germany of Popish influence; but finding subsequently the necessity of that influence for the preservation of civil authority in Germany, he retraced his steps from considerations of mere political policy.

We see, further, that men in every condition of life are banding together to resist others of opposing sentiments, so that the appearance of the world to-day is that of a great battle-field where mighty hosts of contending parties are definitely mustering their forces and preparing for a desperate conflict. Such has been the condition of things for a few years past, and the perfecting and equipping of these organizations will be the work of a few more years; and then will follow the world's crisis – a crisis in which all the powers of light and darkness will struggle for the ascendancy; and the result will at first seem to be disaster and

utter ruin, until above the wreckage of all human law and order the power and authority of the Prince of Peace begin to be recognized.

Such is the outlook of our day as viewed in the light of the holy apostles and prophets; but the conservative Phariseism of to-day shakes the cautious head and says, Nay, it is not so; we cannot be on the eve of a new dispensation and of a revolution so stupendous, involving the whole present social structure, both civil and religious; for Lo, "all things continue as they were from the beginning." (2 Pet. 3:4.) And in their zeal to bolster up the tottering structures of priestcraft and statecraft, whose interests are so closely allied, they array themselves in bitter opposition to the present great work of the Lord and the promulgation of the truth concerning his plans and purposes. And as the heralds of the divine purpose spread abroad these tidings, and the great work of the Lord in this our day is shown to be along the exact lines of his revealed purposes and for the utter destruction of the present order of things, the opposition increases and both the truth and its advocates are despised and rejected. And, strange to say, many of God's children are among the despisers, having partaken of the spirit of this world and become lukewarm and [R1488 : page 10] indifferent to God's truth, while they have sought out many incongruous theories and devices of their own and consecrated their lives to these human purposes.

It is to such that the words of our text are addressed – "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon *you* which is spoken in the prophets." What is that? It is spiritual blindness and darkness; "For the wisdom of [even] their wise men [even the honored and learned doctors of divinity, the leaders and representatives of nominal Christianity] shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." "The priest and the prophet [the leaders and teachers] have erred through strong drink [being intoxicated with the spirit of the world]: they are swallowed up

of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment," and hence cannot discern the wonderful plan and work of the Lord in this our day. – Isa. 29:14; 28:7.

Greatly to be dreaded indeed is this spiritual blindness which shuts out from view the glorious vision of God's wonderful plan of the ages and the work of the Lord – his "strange work" – in this our day, and its glorious outcome when his wrath is overpast. Such despisers of the truth, however highly they may be esteemed among men, must fail to enter into the reward of the faithful overcomers of this age, who are to live and reign with Christ a thousand years. – Rev. 3:21; 20:6.

Let us, then, beware of that spirit which despises the instruction of the Lord, and when in his providence some human instrumentality [R1489 : page 10] is raised up in God's own time and way to declare the divine plan and work, let us rejoice and be glad. No human instrumentality has anything in this matter whereof to boast: the work is the Lord's, and the highest honor that any man can claim is to be his mouth-piece, his messenger. The prophecies concerning present truth were all securely closed up and sealed until this time of the end (Dan. 12:9), and no wisdom or learning could break those seals until God's due time had come. Let us, therefore, as we now behold the work and plan of the Lord, "lift up our heads and rejoice," remembering, as the Psalmist expresses it, that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not *we* fear though the earth [society as at present organized] be removed, and though the mountains [kingdoms] be carried into the midst of the sea [though they be engulfed in a sea of lawlessness and anarchy]; though the waters thereof [the ungovernable masses of humanity] roar and be troubled, [as we see them now and shall see them much more so, and] though the mountains [kingdoms] shake

[with fear and dread and with an uncertain stability] with the swellings thereof." – Psa. 46:1-3.

With joy we have seen the light of truth breaking, and with joy it is our privilege to view every prophetic fulfilment, whether it be in the advancement of the truth, or in the cumulation and culmination of the troubles of this evil day; for every step of the Lord's great work brings us nearer the glorious outcome of everlasting peace not many days hence.

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