

MUST WE ABANDON HOPE OF A GOLDEN AGE?

MISS Frances E. Willard, deceased, highly esteemed for her works in the cause of temperance and morality, is accredited with an epigrammatic statement which is generally supposed to contain an essence of wisdom amounting almost to inspiration, as follows: –

"ONLY THE GOLDEN RULE CAN BRING THE GOLDEN AGE."

Were we sure that Miss Willard was inspired, or, were we sure that in this sentence she had gathered up the spirit and essence of divine revelation on this subject, we would in either case lose all the hope we now entertain for the glorious future.

It is over eighteen centuries since our Master promulgated the Golden Rule; and his disciples and followers for all these centuries have preached it. His words have been translated into every language under heaven, and yet, at this moment, how extremely few there are of the world's population of fifteen hundred millions who practice this rule! Nay, how few there are even of our Master's professed followers who make any pretense at governing their actions, their words and their thoughts by this Golden Rule! Let the answer come from every quarter, – from the nations of Christendom, from the business men and manufacturers, from the mechanics and laborers, from the home circles, where selfishness mars everything, and, finally, from the Churches professedly advocating the Golden Rule. How much we see of slander, anger, malice, hatred, selfishness, meanness; how little we see of any effort to control these in the lives of professed Christians; and how little reason we have, therefore, to suppose that the rule is observed in their hearts.

And yet, if Miss Willard were a true prophetess, or if she voiced the testimony of the Bible prophets, the only hope of a Golden Age lies in man's acceptance of this Golden Rule which has met with such

slight acceptance for more than eighteen centuries. Must we abandon hope of a glorious Golden Age? Can there be no Millennium until all mankind, or a majority at least, shall have voluntarily accepted the Golden Rule, and brought their hearts and lives into conformity therewith? If so, the Millennial dawn will never come. Reason and logic can reach no other conclusion than this. Must we give up hope?

No, we will not give up hope, for *we have "a more sure word of prophecy,"* to which "we do well to take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn." (2 Pet. 1:19.) We are still in the dark place; sin and selfishness still abound; the Golden Rule does not control; we see no evidence of a general acceptance of it: but the more sure word of prophecy foretold this very condition, foretold that the present would be a dark time, and foretold that a glorious dawn would come. We do well indeed to take heed to the prophetic testimony respecting what great light will usher in the Golden Age.

So far from telling us that the Golden Age will come by the adoption of the Golden Rule among the inhabitants of the earth, the more sure word of prophecy tells us to the contrary, that the Golden Rule will come more and more into disrepute; and that the rule of selfishness and sin will abound; and that the result thereof will be a total wreck of present institutions, in a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation (Dan. 12:1): a time of anarchy, brought on by the neglect of the Golden Rule; a time in which "every man's hand shall be against his neighbor; and there shall be no peace to him that goeth out nor to him that cometh in." – Zech. 8:10. This same sure word of prophecy leaves us not to grope on in doubt and fear, but assures us that beyond **[R2314 : page 167]** the coming trouble Immanuel shall reign – that he will set up his Kingdom upon the ruins of the present selfish institutions and systems which will then be ground **[R2314 : page 168]** to powder and become "as the chaff of the summer threshing-floors." (Dan. 2:35.) It informs us that Immanuel will establish his Kingdom by means of this time of trouble, and indeed that the trouble itself will be his judgment against sin and

selfishness, against the neglect of the Golden Rule which he laid down, and that he will break in pieces and consume all these present institutions, and establish in the earth a kingdom of righteousness, whose law will be the law of Love – the Golden Rule.

In harmony with this is the testimony of the more sure word of prophecy that, "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth [producing the great time of trouble], the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. 26:9.) They will learn the inexpediency of sin and selfishness, and that thereafter under divine direction, under the rule of the Heavenly Kingdom (Christ and his Church, in spiritual power and glory), no other laws or rules than the Golden Rule shall be permitted; and under its glorious administration, the prophetic testimony is, "the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, as the waters cover the great deep;" – so that it shall no longer be necessary to say one to the other, "Know thou the Lord!" because all shall know him, from the least to the greatest. – Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:11.

This is the glorious day, foretold by Moses and by the Apostle Peter, when the great Prophet, Priest and King, – the Christ, – shall rule the world in righteousness, and execute justice in the earth; when he shall lift up also the poor and the needy, and him that hath no helper, and lay justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet, and bless all the families of the earth with the knowledge of the Lord and with opportunity, if they will, to come into harmony with him and to obtain the gift of God, eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord: while all who reject the grace of God and the New Covenant shall be destroyed from among the people, in the second death. – Acts 3:22,23.

Let all those who desire the truth, and who desire to have its sanctifying influence upon their hearts and lives, give the less heed to earthly prophets and wise men and women, however good they may be, and give the more earnest heed to the "more sure word of prophecy;

whereunto they do well that they take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn."

Neither logically nor Scripturally is there ground for hope of the Golden Age except in the institution of the Kingdom of Christ, for which he taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Not only is this Kingdom the *world's* hope, but it is also the Christian's hope: he hopes to become a joint-heir with his Redeemer in that Kingdom. And, "he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." – 1 John 3:3.

Let us therefore change the statement, and tell to the whole world the "gospel of the Kingdom," the truth, that – ***ONLY THE REIGN OF CHRIST CAN BRING THE GOLDEN AGE.***
