

**VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.
"IN THE LAST DAYS PERILOUS TIMES."**

"This know, also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." – 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

CLAIMING, as we do, that we are now living in the closing days of the Gospel age, it is quite proper that we should look about us to see whether or not present conditions correspond to the Apostle's inspired description of what must be expected in the last days of this age. We are not to understand this description to relate to the barbarous or half-civilized peoples of the end of the age, but to be a description of the condition of "Christendom." The Apostle explicitly states that he refers to those who have a form of godliness – professedly Christians, – for, since the Jewish age ended, the only godly form that the Scriptures could recognize is Christianity. We see, then, that the foregoing delineation represents "Christendom" in the close of this age.

The Apostle does not say that this description will apply to the saints in the end of this age: quite to the contrary, the implication is that the saints should "turn away" or separate themselves from all who thus have merely the form of piety. (Vs. 5.) Nor are we to expect that the world, possessed of this spirit, will recognize its own likeness in the Apostle's words. Upon this, as upon other subjects, we are rather to expect that, as the Prophet declares, "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." (Dan. 12:10.) The merely formalistic Christian, whose highest ideal of duty is to abstain from secular employment on one day of the week, and to go to church, is

not to be expected to recognize his own likeness, and to note its deformities and inconsistencies: to do these things would imply such a reformation of sentiment as would transfer him from the lists of churchianity to the smaller list of true Christianity.

We should not be understood as saying, or even implying, that the world is growing worse in every respect day by day. We recognize as a fact that the world in many respects is in better condition than it has ever been before. The civilized nations to-day are better equipped with hospitals, orphanages, asylums, etc., than ever before. All these are very directly traceable to the influence of Christianity, and are neither to be despised nor ignored. We confess with great appreciation and admiration that the spirit of our Master has, during the past eighteen hundred years, so impressed itself upon the world of mankind that the barbarities of olden time would no longer be endured, the sensibilities of civilized man having reached a degree of development which insists upon provision being made for the indigent and helpless; and we are very glad of all these things.

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that mixed with all of these benevolences is a considerable measure of selfishness – they are not all monuments of pure disinterested benevolence. True, benevolence has had to do with the founding of many of them, but as a rule those recently instituted, and much of the support for all of them, is drawn from the tax-payer through political channels, and the party-spoils system has much to do with their maintenance – all feeding at such public cribs being expected to render more or less of party service. However, whether or not these institutions supported at public expense be considered as **[R2459 : page 100]** partially the outgrowth of selfishness, the fact must be conceded that public sentiment favors them, and hence it must be conceded that the principles laid down by the great Teacher eighteen centuries ago have made a favorable impression upon civilized peoples.

But the question before us is not on this point – whether or not Christianity has made any impression upon the world: the question is, What is the real status of those professing to be Christians, now, in the end of this age? We answer that, while benevolences inculcated in the gospel of Christ have appealed to the better sentiments of mankind, and have resulted in a general uplift of social conditions throughout so-called Christendom, yet this uplift of the world of mankind has reacted in some respects against Christianity; for in making Christianity popular it has induced multitudes to nominally adopt Christianity and a form of godliness without appreciating the genuine article or experiencing a true conversion of heart. Hence the necessity of separating the "wheat" from the "tares," the suitable fish from the unsuitable ones in the Gospel net, now that the Gospel age is closing. – Matt. 13:24-30,36-43,47-50.

If we ask ourselves the question, What is the peculiar characteristic of our day? almost every intelligent person could answer, *Selfishness*. And this is the very item which the Apostle puts first in his descriptive list: "Men shall be lovers of their own selves." We do not mean to say that people are more miserly than heretofore; on the contrary, there is probably less of this evil; the tendency is rather to extravagance: but it is an extravagance born of "love of their own selves," love of dress, love of show, love of honor and position. All who come in contact with present-day business, realize that more than ever before it is a battle; not so much a battle for bread as a battle for wealth and luxuries. True, business to-day is in some respects done along more honorable lines and on a more honest basis than every before, yet these are not so much signs of a greater honesty on the part of merchants, for they are almost compulsory; because business competition has materially cut down profits, and the enlarging of business much beyond the personal oversight of the proprietors has almost compelled one-price arrangements. But all persons associated with commercial business and manufacturing can attest that the growth of business intelligence, the formation of trusts and

combinations, etc., have given selfishness great power to injure and even to destroy financially whatever may resist it.

Covetousness is another of the charges. It is a mistake to think of this quality as applicable only to the wealthy. It is just as possible for the man with one dollar to be covetous as for the millionaire. Covetousness is an inordinate desire, whether for wealth or luxuries or what-not. Elsewhere the Apostle designates covetousness as idolatry, which gives us the thought of false worship. (Col. 3:5.) It is not wrong for us to seek, in a reasonable, moderate way, for the necessities and the comforts of life for ourselves and those depending upon us; nor would it be wrong to avail ourselves of the opportunities of securing wealth, if the same came to us in a reasonable and honorable manner, not in conflict with our consecration to the Lord. But wherever the *love* of money or honor or luxuries becomes the ruling passion in those who are professedly God's people it has usurped God's place, – such are idolaters. In other words, the covetous person is a mammon-worshiper, and as such should realize that he has abandoned the proper worship of God; and our Lord declared, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." – Matt. 6:24.

Boasting is the third charge which the Apostle brings against nominal Christianity of "the last days." Is it not true? Was there ever a time when people were so boastful as to-day? Boastfulness is the opposite of meekness and humility; boasting accompanies pride, which the Lord declares he resists, showing his favors to the humble. – James 4:6.

Pride is the fourth charge, and, thinking of our fellow-creatures as generously as possible, we cannot deny that the pride of our day is very great, and continually increasing. In some it is the pride of wealth, in others a sectarian pride, in others a family pride, in still others a personal pride. Looking into the future, as revealed in the Lord's Word, and seeing the time of trouble toward which Christendom is hastening,

we are reminded of the statement, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." – Prov. 16:18.

Blasphemy is the fifth charge: but this does not necessarily imply that the professed Christians of the present day would be profane swearers more than others of times past. The word "blasphemy" here we understand to be used in its broad sense of slander, and the slandering or blasphemy may either be against God, or against fellow-creatures. As a matter of fact, we find both abounding to-day amongst Christian people. God's character is blasphemed by attributing to him evil deeds, evil motives and evil purposes toward the masses of mankind. Never, more than at present, have nominal Christians been inclined to charge the Almighty with the authorship of the evils that are in the world and which cause the groaning of creation. In times past they were willing to acknowledge that these evils had come in the line of justice because of sin; now many self-complacently claim that God's dealings are wholly unjust, and that the unfavorable [R2460 : page 101] conditions of the present time are all chargeable to him, and are injustices toward man. Moreover, the theories which prevail throughout Christendom respecting God's provision for the future (that it will be an eternity of torment – in literal flames, or, say some, "torments of conscience *which will be worse*") are blasphemies, slanders upon God's character and government. These are worse slanders than were held during the Dark Ages, when it was claimed, as Romanists still claim, that the vast majority went for a time only to "Purgatory," from which discipline and suffering they would ultimately be released.

Ours is also a day of slander or blasphemy one against another, on the part of those who have merely the *form* of godliness. Many who outwardly claim to be governed by the law of the New Covenant, Love, seem to have a morbid craving to speak evil one of another. This the Apostle elsewhere denominates the spirit of murder. (1 John 3:15.) This murderous, slanderous, or blasphemous tendency is manifest everywhere, in the home, in church-gatherings, and in private; those

who take no pleasure in speaking words of kindness, approval and love, hunger and thirst for opportunities to speak evil. Nor are they satisfied merely to give out their own evil surmisings, based upon their own perverted view of their fellows; they love such slandering and blasphemy so much that they are willing even to accept it at second-hand, and to retail it out repeatedly.

Disobedience to parents is the sixth charge. How very marked is this trait to-day! Not merely in the younger members of the family, who have not come to years of discretion, but also in those who have even made an outward profession of religion. False views of "liberty" and "rights" seem to disturb the minds even of children, and the divinely arranged family order seems to be entirely lost sight of with the vast majority.

Unthankfulness is the seventh charge. Thankfulness would seem to be one of the least costly of the graces: it implies the reception of favors, and is merely a proper acknowledgment of them. No one can be a true Christian and be unthankful. With the Apostle he will soliloquize, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7), and the first response of his heart must be gratitude, thankfulness. It is this thankfulness which leads on to service, and to sacrifice in the Lord's cause as a manifestation of gratitude. But with the merely nominal Christian thankfulness to God seems scarcely to be thought of. If he be prosperous, it is his ability or his "luck;" if not prosperous, it is the fault of some one else or his "bad luck." Divine providence scarcely enters his mind in connection with his affairs. This same unthankfulness extends manward, and not infrequently it will be found that one's worst enemies, perhaps indeed his only enemies, are those whom he has endeavored to serve – those in whose interest he has made sacrifices. They do not feel thankful; they do not wish to feel under any obligation of any kind; they fancy that the one who has done them a kindness will consider them under some obligation, and gradually they come to have enmitous and bitter feelings, instead of gratitude, thankfulness.

Unholiness is the eighth charge. The ordinary Christian professor will freely admit that he is unholy, not holy – not fully consecrated to the Lord. Many will admit that their only reason for maintaining even an outward semblance of Christianity is fear – fear of an eternity of torture; and some go so far as to admit that if it were not for fear of eternal torment they would indulge themselves in all manner of evil.

Without natural affection is the ninth charge. It is not the province of true Christianity to destroy the natural affections, but rather to deepen them and to lift them to a higher plane. It is therefore to be greatly regretted that there are to-day, apparently, evidences of the loss of family affection. In the days of the Apostle it was considered proper to exhort Christians to "love the brethren," but to-day this exhortation has comparatively little weight, because of the general loss of natural affection. Verily, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Truce-breaking is the tenth charge. The Greek word here used signifies not merely a breaker of a truce or agreement, but more especially an unwillingness to make a truce or to live in harmony, and to abandon hostilities. Combativeness seems to be considerably on the increase, and not only are people willing to have a fracas for slight cause, but controlled by this implacable disposition, they are less ready than of yore to drop the matter – to forgive and be forgiven. Their hearts not having the spirit of love, but the spirit of selfishness, are not peace-loving but contention-loving. Hence, instead of being "easy to be entreated," they are the reverse, implacable.

False accusers is the eleventh charge. This corresponds closely to the charge of blasphemy, but seems to signify a still more extreme step – a willingness to accuse falsely, knowing that the charges or accusations are false. This surely indicates a very evil condition of heart, and yet we are compelled to admit that it is a very prevalent condition to-day. Let a person of strong will, whose heart is not under control of grace, become your enemy, and following the custom of our

time he will probably not only misrepresent you in the matters of which he has knowledge or hearsay, but not infrequently he will deliberately concoct falsehoods. Such a course would not seem so strange on the part of the [R2460 : page 102] professedly worldly. It has always been so; the natural heart has always been full of evil, and ready to vilify when it considered itself provoked. The point of the Apostle's argument is that these conditions, so foreign to the spirit of Christ, the spirit of love, will prevail in the end of this age amongst those who profess his name and have a form of godliness.

Incontinency is the twelfth charge. This signifies, without self-control, led of passion, rash, impulsive. The Apostle's exhortation to the Church, as its proper condition, is expressed in the words, "Let your moderation be known unto all men" – your self-control. (Phil. 4:5.) Keep yourselves well in hand, subject and obedient to the will of God, as expressed in his Word. But to-day, and especially with the rising generation, self-control is little practiced. Some of this is chargeable to the spirit of the times in which we live, with its false conceptions of liberties and rights, and some of it is doubtless attributable to lax training under conditions of comparative worldly prosperity.

Fierceness is the thirteenth charge. This came forcibly to our attention a few days ago, as we noticed a headline of a dispatch from Manila, saying, "The Tenth Pennsylvania Regiment made a fierce charge upon the Filipinos, uttering their terrible yell. The enemy fled, terrified, in all directions." It used to be that the savages pounced upon the civilized, with fierce blood-curdling yells, but now it appears that the rising generation, representatives of Christendom from one of the most civilized states of the world can give so fierce a yell, and in every way manifest so much ferocity, as to strike terror to the uncivilized. Undoubtedly this fierceness explains much of the success of civilized men over the uncivilized in recent wars. Civilization, the handmaid of religion, has given intelligence and courage; but in those not having

the power of godliness it inspires ferocity instead of love, kindness, gentleness.

Despisers of those that are good is the fourteenth charge. We are to distinguish between goodness from the standpoint of the Apostle and the Lord's word in general, and goodness from the world's standpoint. The world wants a man good enough to be honest, temperate, trustworthy, and faithful as a servant or contractor; but the world despises the higher forms of goodness to which the Apostle refers. The nominal Christian despises the "saint," and tries to believe that his professions of full consecration to the Lord, and his desire to please the Lord in thought and word and deed, are simply hypocrisies, – because his own heart is not in sympathy with such a condition of consecration, with such ideals of goodness, and he does not desire to be in the presence of so high a standard. As our Lord described the matter, "Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light." – John 3:20.

Treachery is the fifteenth charge. Because the mainspring of the world's efforts in every direction is selfishness, therefore treachery is its inevitable adjunct. Love desires to be just; love may frequently approve of self-sacrifice in the interests of others; but selfishness disapproves of benevolences except where some self-interest attaches. Hence, the one who might be willing to make a contract to-day, and who selfishly might be willing to keep that contract so long as he believed that it would be to his own advantage to do so, would often be willing to break that contract so soon as selfishness indicated that it would be to his advantage to break it. Persons controlled by the selfish spirit here described can never be trusted. Could we think of God as being controlled by selfish motives we could not trust him, except so long as it would be to his interest to fulfill his promises. Only those controlled by the reverse spirit of love can be relied upon in times of extreme trial. This is set forth as one of the special features of the great time of trouble just before us: selfishness and distrust will become general and the motto will be, "Every man for himself." The prophetic declaration shows the loss of confidence, general treachery,

saying, There shall be no peace to him that goeth out nor to him that cometh in; for I have set every man's hand against his neighbor. – Zech. 8:10.

Headiness is the sixteenth charge. How forceful this word, as expressing self-will, impetuosity. Do [R2461 : page 102] we not see this quality everywhere amongst those who have the form of godliness, but who lack its power? And we believe that it, as well as these other evils, is steadily on the increase. The true Christian is not "heady;" on the contrary, his consecration to the Lord figuratively decapitated him; he lost his head, renounced his own will and self-rule, and submitted himself, as a *member of the body* of Christ, to the absolute control of Jesus, the Head of the Church. (Eph. 1:22,23.) Such, so long as they abide as members of the true body of Christ, cannot be heady, cannot be self-willed. It is this very self-will that first of all they reckoned dead, in order that they might have the mind or will of Christ. To revive the self-will would be to lose the mind of Christ. The true Christian therefore, in every affair of life, – in respect to its pleasures as well as in respect to its burdens and trials, – appeals to his Head for direction, to know how and what to do or say – yea, to have even the very thoughts of his mind in full conformity to the will of God in Christ.

The "heady" class are continually endeavoring to carry out their own wills, and do not submit themselves to the will of God. Their headiness continually brings them into difficulties, and yet, sometimes, with pride and boasting and love of their own selves and fierceness and false accusations, they endeavor to have their own [R2461 : page 103] heady way, and perhaps even claim, with forms of godliness, that such a course is under divine leading. How sadly such are deceived! "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." Wherever headiness prevails it is an evidence that such are "not holding the head" (Christ). If they have not already fallen utterly, their fall is certainly near unless they reform. – Col. 2:19; Rom. 8:9.

High-mindedness is the seventeenth charge. Self-conceit is naturally a virtue in the eyes of the class which the Apostle describes: and how naturally this quality of a large opinion of one's self and one's own talents, or of one's favor with God, or what-not, is linked with pride, boastfulness and self-love. There is no more dangerous form of high-mindedness or self-conceit than that which attacks the Christian, and seeks to make him think of himself more highly than he ought to think. Very many of the Lord's people have been ensnared along such lines, and stumbled into all the other evils of this category by first of all getting the impression that for some reason, or for no reason, the Lord had specially taken a fancy to them, and was giving them private lessons and information not vouchsafed to others of his consecrated ones. How appropriate the Apostle's caution along this line, "I say, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." (Rom. 12:3.) Not only is this quality of self-conceit one of the most dangerous to Christians, but also it is one of the most dangerous to the world, for probably more than one-half of the hopelessly insane have lost their reason along this line of self-conceit. All true Christians should be specially on their guard against this snare of the Adversary.

Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God is the eighteenth charge. It is natural for every human being to prefer to be pleased, to be happy, to have pleasure. It is not a sin to love things which minister to our pleasure in proper ways. To be a Christian does not mean to have no pleasure: but the Christian puts God higher than himself, loves God more than he loves himself, consecrates himself to God, and consequently desires to please God rather than to please himself. By such, any pleasure, no matter what, must be sacrificed if it come in conflict with his still higher pleasure and duty and covenant of service to the Lord. It is this that leads the true saints of God to sacrifice: the world being out of harmony with God and his will is out of harmony also with those who are in harmony with God. Hence, as our Lord says, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated

you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." – John 15:18,19.

The contest, then, comes between serving God and doing those things which would bring his approval, and serving self after the manner of the world, and doing those things which would bring its approval. The true Christian must invariably decide for the Lord, and thus he often crosses the will, the preferences, the prejudices or the superstitions of those with whom he comes in closest contact in the flesh, and it is in this that he is to be an "overcomer" of the world and its spirit; and by so doing he is to gain ultimately the approval, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joys of thy Lord." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." – Matt. 25:21; Rev. 3:21.

The class described by the Apostle, the mass of Christendom, in the present time are not fully consecrated to the Lord, but are lovers of pleasure *more* than lovers of God. In this sense of the word they are idolaters, rendering love and service to self above God, – covetous of the world's pleasures and honors and emoluments of various kinds. Is it difficult for us to see this very condition of things all about us, amongst those who have merely a form of godliness? No, it is not difficult; it is the confessed condition of the vast majority. Love of God above love of self is proved by our willingness to sacrifice self-loves in order to do those things which would meet the Lord's approval. ***Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*** is the nineteenth charge. It does not follow that this class, in so many words, denies that there is any power to godliness. Rather, we are to understand that their course in life denies or repudiates the power of God. Outwardly they have a religious form; they know that churchianity is popular; they wish to be known as identified with some denomination for decency's sake, and as an *entree* to good social and financial standing for themselves and their families. But that is about all the use they have for Christianity.

Their life as a whole denies the power of the gospel of Christ to control the heart and regulate, direct and guide the conduct.

"From such turn away." True Christians are to reprove the false Christians by turning away from them, and from their course or walk in life. Whoever has the spirit of Christ, the spirit of Love, and is seeking to cultivate its grace, and to walk according to its rule, will more and more find his path turning away from the path of churchianity and general worldliness. As they are guided by different spirits or dispositions, so they tend to different directions or effort, different loves, different sympathies, different experiences. The true sheep are to walk in the narrow way, led by the true [R2461 : page 104] Shepherd, who has gone before, and who calls us to follow him. This means that in this harvest-time in a most natural way a separation will be made between the "wheat" class and the "tare" class, just as our Lord's parable illustrated. Whoever walks in the Lord's way will receive the light that is due in this harvest-time, and be enlightened thereby and led in the footsteps of Jesus. Whoever walks in the evil way, described by the Apostle as the prevalent way in the end of this age, is following Satan's example. The separation of these classes must eventually be thorough and complete. Thus the Lord is by present truth and its spirit or influence calling to his people to separate themselves, to turn away from others who are not really his people, who have merely the form of godliness but not its power, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." – Rev. 18:4.

OUTSIDE CORROBORATIONS OF THE FOREGOING.

It would be difficult to imagine a more striking corroboration of these facts than is furnished by the recent proclamation of a Fast day by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire. We quote the paper entire, as set forth in the columns of *The Boston Herald*, without endorsing all of its provisions or recommendations, as follows: –

GOVERNOR ROLLINS' PROCLAMATION.

"Concord, N.H., April 6th, 1899.

"I hereby appoint Thursday, the 13th day of April, as Fast day.

"This custom was inaugurated at a time when all the people of our state placed their trust in the hands of a Supreme Being, and believed firmly in the efficacy of prayer. A goodly number of our people still hold this belief, I am happy to say, and will assemble, as their ancestors have for generations, to invoke the Deity. The decline of the Christian religion, particularly in our rural communities, is a marked feature of the times, and steps should be taken to remedy it.

"No matter what our belief may be in religious matters, every good citizen knows that when the restraining influences of religion are withdrawn from a community, its decay, moral, mental and financial, is swift and sure. To me this is one of the strongest evidences of the fundamental truth of Christianity.

"I suggest that, as far as possible, on Fast day union meetings be held, made up of all shades of belief, including all who are interested in the welfare of our state, and that in your prayers and other devotions, and in your mutual counsels, you remember and consider the problem of the condition of religion in the rural communities.

"There are towns where no church bell sends forth its solemn call from January to January; there are villages where children grow to manhood unchristened; there are communities where the dead are laid away without the benison of the name of Christ, and where **[R2462 : page 104]** marriages are solemnized only by justices of the peace.

"This is a matter worthy of your thoughtful consideration, citizens of New Hampshire. It does not augur well for the future. You can afford to devote one day in the year to your fellow-men – to work and thought and prayer for your children and your children's children."

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That the Governor of New Hampshire is not greatly overstating the situation is evidenced by the following clipping from the ***Boston Traveler*** of March 8th: –

"As surely as two and two are four the Boston police are incompetent to cope with the rogues, footpads and other outlaws infesting this city, and citizens fear to walk the streets after nightfall in consequence of the prevailing lawlessness. Crime has reached that stage that a citizen is not safe on the street or in his own home after the shadow of evening has taken possession of mother earth."

A very similar statement was recently made respecting lawlessness in St. Louis by one of its leading newspapers.

If we were in the midst of financial depression, and if thousands of "out-of-works" were tramping the country as a few years ago, such statements would excite much less surprise and be much less significant of a moral decline such as the Apostle prophetically indicates must now be expected. But on the contrary, we are in the very midst of "good times" – far better than can be reasonably expected to continue long. And with the spirit of selfishness described by the Apostle constantly increasing, we must expect that each succeeding financial depression will manifest increasing lawlessness until the final catastrophe of anarchy shall crumble present institutions and prepare the way for the reign of Immanuel.

OTHERS SEE IT. – JUDGE BURKE'S VIEW.

The Governor is not the only person whose eyes are open and who feels it his duty to "cry aloud and spare not." The Rev. Dr. Buckley, editor of the New York ***Christian Advocate***, the leading Methodist paper of the world, recently felt called upon to point out the decadence of Methodism. And still more recently at the session of the Rock River Methodist board of examinations the same subject came

up and was discussed very boldly by Prof. Small and subsequently by Judge E. W. Burke, the published report of whose speech follows: –

"SEES DARK SKIES.

"JUDGE BURKE'S PESSIMISTIC TALK BEFORE – METHODISTS. –
"SOCIAL DISTURBANCE AHEAD. "THE JURIST CONTINUES IN
THE STRAIN ADOPTED BY HIS PREDECESSORS AND GAINS
CONGRATULATIONS.

[R2462 : page 105]

"The keynote of the midyear session of the Rock River Methodist board of examination, now in session at the Englewood First Church, continues to be social and religious pessimism. Many of the papers read are directly on this subject, and the discussion of the rest generally works around to the same point.

"Tuesday Prof. Small led off in this direction, and yesterday Judge E. W. Burke, in a paper on 'The Church of the Twentieth Century, From a Layman's Standpoint,' went just as far. These sentiments are received by the large congregation of ministers and others who hear them, not only without protest, but with approval. Judge Burke could hardly leave the platform for the handshaking and congratulations that beset him.

"Judge Burke dwelt on the tyranny of capital, the terrible impending conflict between concentrated capital and labor, *the decadence of the Methodist Church*, as depicted by Rev. Dr. Buckley in the New York *Christian Advocate*, and the rumor that the wealthy laymen of the church were threatening to withhold their contributions unless they were granted equal representation in the general conference.

"Judge Burke spoke in part as follows: –

"The whole creation and all the manifestations of the spiritual, intellectual and even the physical forces are now in a transitional

period as never before. Even trade and methods of business that have been pursuing their customary ways for centuries are paralyzing individual effort and puzzling the lawmakers of the earth. Storm centers of labor and capital are gathering over against each other, threatening the very integrity of the industrial firmament of man. The late appearances of the hitherto unsuspected intellectual and physical forces but add Titans of unknown strength to the conflict toward which all the world is consciously or unconsciously rushing. He who observes and reflects on matters of church and state feels this condition in the very pulsing ether, the like of which history does not disclose.

[We do not know that Judge Burke has read the WATCH TOWER publications bearing on this subject, but thousands of thinking people are now awakening to the truth respecting the great "Day of Vengeance" which for twenty years we have been pointing out and seeking to bring to the attention of the Lord's people. The difficulty with many is, that, seeing these approaching troubles from the outside, they are losing confidence in divine providence, and their hearts are failing them for fear, as they look forward to those things coming upon the earth. (Matt. 24; Luke 21:26.) On the contrary, all who learned of the coming troubles from the Lord's Word, before there were outward evidences of them, are strengthened in their faith by every fresh development – for they by the same Word know the object of the troubles and the grand results they are outworking.]

"No human wisdom can say what mean the great and increasing aggregations of capital, now sufficient to buy kingdoms. If these shall be arrayed against the empty hands of labor, then shall mass collide with mass, and who can predict the end thereof? I see no commanding spirit of compromise in these approaching and threatening avalanches, which seem destined to involve the whole social system in universal ruin before the young men of this audience become three-score and ten years of age. So that the church, as it passes into the twentieth century, meets a perfect whirlwind of world forces which overwhelm the statesman, the philosopher and the historian, and drive them back

into the cave of Sinai, while the storms pass the bounds of known law and rush on to a fate that makes the thoughtful tremble.

[As heretofore pointed out,* these *giant trusts* of our day which threaten the liberties and the very existence of the individual laborer, correspond exactly to the giant men of renown of Noah's day, on whose account the flood came. And as those never arose from their watery graves to again harass mankind, so the Lord promises that these giants of the present day, falling in the great time of trouble impending, will never rise again. – Isa. 43:17.]

[*MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. IV., page 359.](#)

"DIFFICULTIES MUST COME.

"Now, my friends, after much reflection, I do not believe it is the specific mission of the church to adjust men to the new conditions of life and action, or, in a temporal sense, to safety them against the Atlantic storms of capital and labor. These storms will be terrific, but they must come. They are brewed in the selfishness of the human heart, and each succeeding one shall prove more destructive than its predecessor, until the prince of darkness is chained. I believe the new conditions which shall whirl us into the twentieth century, uncorrected by the gospel, shall forge unbreakable chains for the spirits, minds and bodies of men. I know there is a charm in the power of union and in the exhibition of strength, but, unless it is a union of strength uncemented with selfishness, it will crumble by whatsoever law it may have been formed.

"It may be true that the task-master in these modern days attempts to compel men to make brick without straw, not to punish men, but to save straw. Formerly it was oppression to gratify the passion for cruelty, while now it is oppression to gratify the passion for gold. Formerly the task-master was a human being with whip in hand, but now he stands with the inexorable forces of nature in his fist, against which no individual in his unaided strength seems able to stand. But

this modern task-master is destined to fall, and the David who shall slay this modern Goliath is the church of the twentieth century, not by matching force with force, but by using the weapons with which Christ has armed his followers.

[How true this statement, and yet how untrue as the Judge meant it! It will not be "Babylon," "Christendom," that will smite these giants and all sin and selfishness and deliver the world. No; the same Scriptures declare that "Babylon," mother and daughters, the entire family or system of Churchianity will go [R2462 : page 106] down in the general collapse. Yet it will be the Church – the true Church, – the Church glorified, that will smite, and deliver the groaning creation. Ah, how true! "There standeth one among you whom you know not!" The King of kings has come! We are even now in the *parousia* of the Son of Man! Soon the last members of his "elect" body, the Church, will be gathered to him – glorified and invisible to men, – and then he will begin the rule of the iron rod which shall break the world's vaunted institutions as potters' vessels. (Rev. 2:27.) He declares, I will "gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the *fire of my jealousy*. And *then* will I turn unto the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." (Zeph. 3:8,9.) This symbolic burning and breaking will be the new missionary [R2463 : page 106] method, by which the Church glorified will, in the early part of the twentieth century, under and with her glorious Head, "bring in everlasting righteousness." "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. 26:9.) Thus, "The glory [majesty] of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." – Isa. 40:5.]

"I deplore every worldly success of the church, whether it be the raising of \$20,000,000 with which to curse the twentieth century church, or the building of many church edifices every time the earth revolves, if this success shall in the least lead men to forget the springs

of true power in the church. We seem to be on times when the church may have money enough to convert the world: forbid that it be enough to convert the church to the world. The church should not want one dollar or money except it first be sanctified.

"MUST NOT BARGAIN WITH THE RICH.

"Why, recently I have noticed the threat from high sources that, unless the rich laymen of the Methodist Church are admitted in equal representation as delegates to the next general conference, they will withhold the \$20,000,000 which the ambition of the church seeks for the first years of the coming century. Now, much as I favor equal representation in that august lawmaking body, may it never be realized, and perish the money of the rich, in the language of Peter, if it be given, even impliedly, as the consideration price of place and power in the church, and not as the free-will offering of grateful hearts purchased by the blood of Christ. The church, for many reasons, cannot pay court to mere wealth or personal prestige. The poor do not understand the mission of the church when they demand that it feed them and bitterly rail because it does not. But they are half right when the church recognizes men in the least degree because they possess wealth. The great masses of the people stand yonder alienated from our churches because the wedge of gold is hidden with us. It does the church no good; it empties our pews; it frosts our air.

"One of the closest observers of church life in our land, and one who weighs his words, has written this month for his widely read editorial column that the moral tone of the church is unsatisfactory, and that many societies would be reduced to a few pious women, aged persons and unsophisticated youth if the discipline enforced in the primitive church, or in the earlier days of English and American Methodism, were applied; that many official members never participate actively in the aggressive spiritual work of the church; that this religious and moral condition bodes no good; that in eighty-seven cities in the United States Methodism is scarcely holding its own,

regardless of the increase of population and of the fact that so many accessions are received by letter from country churches. He further states that diverse superficial explanations are offered for this humiliating condition, but that whatever influence they may have, it is absolutely certain that, if the laity and clergy were living according to the teachings of the New Testament, it could not be so.

"When such an alarm as this is sounded with the hammer of facts, beware, not of the rocks or the sea, but of the dangers on board. But in this very alarm lies the hope of safety. It shows that thoughtful Christian men are looking deeply into the causes of the present condition and that they will be removed. This alarm is all the Lord wants, and in answer to prayer He will open the windows of heaven and pour unnumbered blessings on the church of the twentieth century."

It would appear, then, that the Judge after all sees that the church nominal of to-day is sadly unprepared for the great work he declares is absolutely necessary. He is prepared even to admit that, so far as Methodism is concerned, it is *less prepared* (so far as personal piety is concerned) than at the opening of the nineteenth century. The Judge *hopes* great things, if everybody can be awakened, and if all "tares" or nominal Christians (300,000,000) will but act as tho they were "wheat" or real Christians. We rejoice with the Judge in his own sincerity as witnessed by his words (and for aught we know by his acts also) and we commend to him a further study of the Word of God's grace which is able to make him wise respecting the divine plan for vanquishing all the foes of the groaning creation and delivering them also from the bondage of corruption. But let him lay off sectarian spectacles which magnify everything which glorifies sectarianism and minimize the grace of our God and the power of his might.

We will submit another testimony, from a high source, going to show that Methodism is far from prepared for the twentieth century work the Judge points out is *imperative*, – if the world would be

rescued from the calamity of having its civilization blotted out. Nor are Methodists proportionately in poorer spiritual condition than other sects, so far as we may be able to judge. It just happens that the witnesses at hand are [R2463 : page 107] all of that persuasion. There are undoubtedly many true, noble, warm hearts in this quarter of Babylon who feel pressed in spirit to overcome their sectarian pride and in the interest of vital godliness, to "Cry aloud and spare not."

This witness is *The Epworth Herald*, the leading journal among the Methodist "Young People;" it says:

"A CRISIS.

"Methodism is in a crucial place. A crisis has been reached. We need to run up the danger signal. There never has been a time in our eventful history when there was so great need for self-examination.

"Last year the whole denomination was startled by the smallness of our numerical increase. This year [1898] promises to show no better results. Revivals are less frequent and less fruitful. The doctrines which emphasize the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the certainty of an eternal hell, the necessity of repentance, the need of regeneration, and the far-reaching importance of a definite spiritual experience are not preached in many of our pulpits as faithfully as our fathers preached them. The demand for a less heroic gospel is widespread. Sinners can sit in our churches without feeling much discomfort. Formalism increases. The spirit of aggressiveness which so dominated our church for a hundred years begins to wane.

"Multitudes of our people have lost the marks which once distinguished us. They have adopted the social customs of the world. They patronize the theater. They have become familiar with the card-table. The sound of dancing echoes through their homes. Wealth is worshiped. Social position is accounted the principal thing. No wonder that the children of some of our most influential families are lost to Methodism. With their thoughtless and back-slidden parents

they are drawn into the whirlpool of social pleasure, and either drift out into a line of infidelity or attach themselves to some church where worldliness is no bar.

"Moreover, beneficence does not keep pace with our increasing wealth. The fact that it required two long years, filled with pitiful pleading, for our great church to raise a paltry missionary debt of \$186,000 is one of the saddest experiences of our denomination.

"This is not pessimism. It is fact. And the sooner we wake up to the peril of the situation the better for Methodism to-day and to-morrow. A CRISIS IS HERE. A crisis does not necessarily mean disaster. It will not if we will only see the danger and escape."

"AWAKE, O ZION,"

cries the Prophet. (Isa. 52:1.) He who sleeps now, not only neglects his duty to the "brethren," but puts himself in jeopardy – marks himself as deficient in the very spirit of love which the Lord declares all-essential in his estimation. We remind our readers again of the Call for Volunteers in our last issue. Many responses are already at hand, but our hope is that many more may share the privilege and blessing of this service.

INTROSPECTION NEXT IN ORDER.

Having satisfied ourselves respecting the fulfilment of the Apostle's charges against "Christendom" and having found his predictions fully corroborated by facts well witnessed to, the question arises, Can the Lord's truly consecrated people learn any further valuable lessons and what are they?

We have already noted that all such are to "turn away" from those who have merely the form of godliness. And we have seen that it is both our duty and privilege to aid any true "brethren" yet in Babylon to attain the light and liberty wherewith Christ makes free his true

followers. But let us not forget personal introspection – to *look within* our own hearts carefully and frequently to make doubly sure that the world's spirit of selfishness does not poison us as it poisonously manifests itself in others.

We are to remember always that we have the treasure of the new mind, the new spirit, in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7), and that these earthen vessels are continually surrounded by selfish tendencies and examples; and that consequently they must be kept well filled with the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love, that the evil spirit of selfishness does not in any of its many forms gain access.

If in our introspections we find traces of self-love, of covetous ambition, of a disposition to boast even of good things, or even a little pride – perhaps "spiritual pride," as some erroneously describe it, or even a slight [R2464 : page 107] tendency to slander (blaspheme), or the least tendency to disrespect parents, or any measure of ingratitude toward God or men (unthankfulness), or the slightest sympathy with false accusations, or any lack of moderation (incontinence), or any sympathy with fierce speeches or manners, or anything else than fervent love for all who are "good," or the slightest suggestion to betray a trust or a confidence, or the least tendency to self-will and self-consciousness, or any disposition to weigh our own wills or pleasure against the Lord's will, or the least tendency to mere formalism in worship, or the slightest evidence that the *power* of the truth is not in full control of our hearts and lives, it should arouse us to energetically seek help from on high and to put away the unclean thing which taints our sacrifices.

Nevertheless let no one feel discouraged even tho he should find *traces* of all these evils in his *flesh*: for as the Apostle declares, so we must all find, "In my flesh dwells no perfection." (Rom. 7:18.) We are however to expect no trace of these evils in our *hearts* – no sympathy, no cooperation with any of these evils. As enemies of the Lord, and our enemies because we are the Lord's in spirit and in truth, these evils are to be hunted and shunned to the best of our ability from every nook and corner of our beings. "Be ye holy that bear the vessels of the Lord's

house." As he who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all things. [R2464 : page 108]

FORSAKEN – BUT NOT FOREVER.

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment: but with age-lasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." – Isa. 54:7,8.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken?
Hear our first parents despairingly cry:
Had not the tempter their constancy shaken,
Would they have wandered in exile to die?
Why, since life's stream was defiled at its fountain,
Was it not dried, ere the flood ran so deep?
Why, lest iniquity grow to a mountain,
Should the first infant be cradled to weep?

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken?
Groaneth the slave as he curses his chain:
Stung by the lash, and his last loved one taken,
Doomed to a life of enslavement and pain.
Long has the despot his tyranny wielded,
Long robbed his fellow of freedom and home;
Long have the humble their hard earnings yielded,
Starving themselves to build turret or dome.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken?
Hear the fond mother in agony moan;
Babe on her bosom will presently waken,
Waken to find that dear guardian flown.
Merciful God! Who will care for the mourner?
Who'll guard the orphan from hunger and cold?
Who'll guide the feet of the youthful sojourner
Past haunts of vice to the Savior's pure fold?

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken?
Questions my spirit in sorrow's lone hour;
Terrors and anguish my doubtings awaken,
Doubts of our Father's compassion and power.
Louder the thunder-peals answer my wailing,
Darker the stormcloud casts o'er me its pall;
Friends cannot comfort, and demons are railing,
Heaven seems deaf to my piteous call.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken?
Echoes from Calvary scatter my gloom;
Veils have been rent, and death's prison-house shaken,
Answer I find at the dismantled tomb.
Know thou, O friend, saith the angel that lingers,
Jesus hath risen a lost world to save;
Holdeth the issues of life in his fingers,
Beareth the keys of a powerless grave.

God unto all men assurance has given,
Sworn by himself all his creatures to bless;
Soon will the bonds of corruption be riven,
Soon comes his Kingdom of righteousness.
After earth's night dawns a morning of gladness,
Rainbows of glory shall cover our tears;
Truth will deliver from error and madness,
Blessings will crown earth's Millennial years.

***"For as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be restored to life."
"Because creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of
corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." – 1 Cor.
15:22; Rom. 8:21; Acts 3:23.***

– G. M. BILLS.
