

"THE DAYS ARE AT HAND"

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come; it will not tarry." – Habakkuk 2:3.

GOD'S PLAN OF THE AGES is the vision seen by the Prophet Habakkuk, who was told to write it and to "make it plain upon tables, that every one may read it fluently" (Leeser's translation); that in the end the vision should "speak and not lie;" though it would seem to tarry, yet it would not tarry. It would seem to all that the great Plan of God was long delayed. The groaning creation would think the Heavenly Father was very slack. Many would be inclined to lose their faith in respect to the Seed of Abraham, and to think that God had forgotten the promise which He had made to Abraham. We know that disappointments have come to God's people along this line. The Jews were disappointed in their expectations. Christians in this Laodicean period were disappointed at first, not clearly understanding what to expect.

During the early persecutions of the Church, it was believed that those who suffered would soon enter into glory. They thought the Kingdom was near. Some of the disappointed ones continued to wait and hope and pray. Others organized the great Papal System, and declared that the Church should have her glory *now*, that the Kingdom of Messiah was here, and that the representatives of Messiah should sit upon a throne and personate Messiah and bring the kingdoms of the world into subjection. They were evidently led to this by Messiah's not coming at the time expected, and they thought that they must bring about a fulfilment of the Scriptures which foretold His Coming and Reign.

TIME FEATURES UNPOPULAR

This has brought serious disaster in many respects; it has made all Christendom "drunk." (Rev. 17:2.) Many, even today, are in bewilderment. Some, getting out of that darkness, have stumbled into other errors. The majority have lost all faith in prophecy. God foreknew all these things and foretold them, and they will not interfere with the Divine Program. Just as the *wrong impression* that our Lord was born in Nazareth was a reflection upon Him, so that many would not accept Him as the long promised Messiah, so these have said, Can any good thing come out of the prophecies, or anything relating to the Second Coming of Messiah? These people who proclaim His Second Advent are laboring under a hallucination! Are not the things written in the prophecies merely fanciful dreams of men – of the rebuilding of Zion and the restitution of Jerusalem?

Thus they scoff. They are inclined to feel an opposition to everything in the Scriptures regarding the return of our Lord to accomplish His foretold work. The Lord tells us that although the vision may seem to tarry, yet we are to exercise faith, because in the end it *will speak*; it will *make* itself *heard*, and *will not lie*. It will then be seen to be the Truth. The Divine Plan of the Ages is to be made plain upon tables. It will be made so very plain to us that he who runs may read. He who is asleep may not read; he who is drunken with the wine of false doctrine may not read; he who is standing in the way of sinners may not read. But he who runs may read, if his heart be teachable and pure.

"REST IN THE LORD"

This vision is to be made clear at *the appointed time*. We may not read the *time* features with the same absolute certainty as *doctrinal* features; for time is not so definitely stated in the Scriptures as are the basic doctrines. We are still walking by faith and not by sight. We are, however, not faithless and unbelieving, but faithful and waiting. If later it should be demonstrated that the

Church is not glorified by October, 1914, we shall try to feel content with whatever the Lord's will may be. We believe that very many who are running the race for the prize will be able to thank God for the chronology, even if it should prove not accurate to the year, or even out of the way several years. We believe that the chronology is a blessing. If it should wake us a few *minutes* earlier or a few *hours* earlier in the Morning than we would otherwise have waked, *well and good!* It is those who are *awake* who get the *blessing*.

If 1915 should go by without the passage of the Church, without the Time of Trouble, etc., it would seem to some to be a great calamity. It would not be so with ourself. We shall be as glad as any one if we shall all experience our change from earthly to spirit conditions before 1915, and THIS IS OUR EXPECTATION; but if this should not be the Lord's will, then it would not be our will. If in the Lord's providence the time should come *twenty-five years later*, then that would be our will. This would not change the fact that the Son of God was sent by the Father, and that the Son is the Redeemer of our race; that He died for our sins; that He is selecting the Church for His Bride; and that the next thing now in order is the establishment of the glorious Kingdom at the hands of this great Mediator, who during His Mediatorial Reign will bless all the families of the earth. These facts remain the same. The difference would be merely that of a few years in the time of the establishment of the Kingdom.

If October, 1915, should pass, and we should find ourselves still here and matters going on very much as they are at present, and the world apparently making progress in the way of settling disputes, and there were no time of trouble in sight, and the nominal Church were not yet **[R5374 : page 5]** federated, etc., we would say that evidently we have been out somewhere in our reckoning. In that event we would look over the prophecies further, to see if we could find an error. And then we would think, Have we been expecting the wrong

thing at the right time? The Lord's will *might* permit this. Our expectation as a Church is that our change is near. Nothing of Restitution blessings can come to the world until after the Church has been glorified.

Another thing to be considered, should our hopes not be so soon realized as we expect, would be as to whether we were surely of the elect class. But we are not worrying ourself at all. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." There are no people in the world so blessed as those who have the Truth and are serving the Truth. There is plenty of work to do.

UNREST ON EVERY SIDE

The remainder of mankind are dissatisfied – not only the nominal Church, the professedly godly, but all others also. They are disappointed in all they undertake to do. There is failure on every hand. Not long since we were speaking to a business man, and our conversation turned to religious matters. He is a very fine man; whether a Christian or not we do not know. We find that there are a great many pleasant and very honorable people who are not Christians at all. This man, speaking of the Churches, said, "It is a sad thing – the condition of the Churches. I am particularly interested in the Methodist denomination. Some time ago our Church had a fortunate sale of their property, and they purchased a new site and built a fine church. And they think now that if there are *sixty* who attend service there it is a good congregation. And it is the same elsewhere. People are all going pleasure-mad. Every one wants to go on some pleasure excursion – to the beach, or what not. No one seems to care for religion now." This man voiced the general spirit of disappointment. But a better Day is near.

In San Francisco, a year or more ago, at a Sunday School Convention, one speaker gave quite a long address on getting the children into the Church. He said that the whole Church institution was likely to be foundered. He said that every member brought into

any of the Churches had cost six hundred and fifty dollars. Then he proceeded to tell how many workers were employed, and yet they were bringing only these comparatively few into the Church.

And we know that the great majority of those who *are* brought in would not think of calling themselves saints, or of professing consecration at all. This gentleman seemed to think that there is not much in the Gospel for a *mature* mind. He said that the way to do was to train a child up for the church, and then he could not get away from it. Yet the statistics show that out of the thousands in Sunday Schools only a very small number ever go into the church.

SORROW AT MAGNITUDE OF OUR WORK

Some say they are sorry that our sermons are being printed in the newspapers all over this country, Great Britain, etc.; and that our seats are free, and that no collections are taken. One minister said, "By and by people will think it is a *crime* to take up a collection, and then where shall we be? Pastor Russell is bringing us all into disrepute." Another thing they say is, "When those doctrines are preached, they influence the best ones that we have."

So we have every reason to feel that it is wonderful, very wonderful, that when we are comparatively so few, and with so comparatively small an amount of money used, we have so great privileges and opportunities in the Lord's service. In EVERYBODY'S PAPER was given, more than two years ago, the report of the American Tract Society, and next to it was given the report of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. The former showed "excess of assets over liabilities, \$851,092.53." The latter showed no assets in excess of liabilities. The reports show that the one without excess of assets is putting out vastly more literature than the other. We think this goes to show that we have miracles in our day. **[R5375 : page 5]**

A FAMINE – BUT NOT FOR BREAD

When we were in Boston some time ago, an Editor of a Boston religious journal said to us on the Monday following our discourse, "I was at your meeting yesterday; I saw that immense congregation. I looked it all over and said to myself, What is it that brings these people here? I remembered that there were seaside attractions, parks – everything to induce people to stay away. Yet on that warm summer afternoon there were four thousand present at the meeting, and two thousand turned away. We have many ministers in Boston, good choirs, and everything to attract; but these ministers at this time of the year have only forty or fifty at their services. How is it that so many came out to *your* meeting, and sat there for *two hours*?"

We replied that it seems to us that we are seeing the fulfilment of the prophecy: "There shall be a famine in the land, not a famine for bread nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the Word of the Lord." (Amos 8:11,12.) We further remarked that the people have been feeding on very unsatisfactory nourishment, and that they are not satisfied with the chaff they have been receiving, and that they do not go to the churches for the reason that they do not believe in the eternal torment doctrine – the preachers do not believe it, and nobody believes it, except a comparatively small number, and that number is constantly diminishing.

We reminded him that these people, instead of hearing of eternal torment, now have offered them suggestions from the colleges to the effect that their forefathers were monkeys; that there are large interrogation points in the minds of the people; that they are hungry to know the Truth. We told him that we believe this accounts for the large number present to hear us, that they were hearing something more rational, something more Biblical, than they had heard before. So we have everything for which to be thankful.

"OUR DELIVERANCE DRAWETH NIGH"

So far as we have been able to see up to the present time, the failure of a full development of matters in 1915, or before, would imply that all the chronological arrangements, as we have them, are wrong – our view of the Harvest and all. And we have *no reason* to believe that these are wrong. We remember that we are not infallible, and that our judgment is not infallible; but the wonderful inventions of today, and the light that is dawning in every direction, as well as the universal unrest, seem in corroboration of the chronology – that we are in the dawning of the New Age. But just how far along we are we do not *positively know*. We are waiting for the Sun of Righteousness to appear.

The fact that the Vision is now *speaking*, and is made plain upon tables, is very convincing. We believe truly that "the days are at hand, and the effect [matter or thing (as spoken)] of every vision." – Ezek. 12:21-23.

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