

## **SIGNS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE KING**

**"But who may abide the Day of His Coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap." – Malachi 3:2.**

THE words of the Prophet given in our text refer to the close of the present Gospel Age. It is the same Day prophesied by the Apostle Paul when he declared, "The fire of that Day shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (1 Corinthians 3:13.) It is the Day of which the Apostle Peter wrote so graphically when he said that in that great Day of the Lord the heavens should be on fire and the elements should melt with fervent heat, and that the earth and all the works therein should be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10.) It is the Day of which the Prophet Zephaniah spoke when he said that in the great Day of the Lord all the earth should be devoured with the fire of God's jealousy. (Zephaniah 3:8.) Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many of the faithful Prophets of God prophesied of this Day. The Prophet Daniel was instructed by the angel of the Lord that in that Day there should be a "Time of Trouble such as never was since there was a nation." (Daniel 12:1.) Our Lord Jesus Himself verified this prophecy, and added that never afterwards should there be such a time. – Matthew 24:21,22.

The Scriptures call this Day "the Day of the Lord," "the Day of Jehovah," "the Day of God," "the Day of Christ," "the Day of Vengeance," "that great and notable Day," etc. It is the Day in which the Old Order is to perish and the glorious New Order is to be ushered in. In foretelling this Day, both the Prophets and the Apostles speak of the class which will *stand* in this Day when all others shall fall. St. Paul says that everything which can be shaken down will be; and that only the Kingdom which will then be set up, and which cannot be shaken, will remain. (Hebrews 12:25-29.) The present order of

society – the nominal church systems, financial institutions, political institutions – *all* – will go down.

During the Gospel Age many who have not been Christians have associated themselves with the Church. The civilized world of today call themselves "Christians," in contradistinction to the nations which they call "heathen," though from the Scriptural standpoint they are all heathen – Gentiles. Among all these various nations we find many religions, whose devotees claim that they have consecrated themselves to God. But the touch-stone by which these claims may be tested is the Word of God. See Galatians 1:6-9. To the true Church of Christ alone will God give the Messianic Kingdom. Some who really have Christ and His work of sacrifice as their foundation will be saved, but at the expense of all their works, their character-structure, which the "fire" of this Day will consume. The tare class in the nominal churches will be bundled and "burned," not as *individuals*, but as *professed Christians*; that is to say, their professions will be seen to be without foundation. They will come to see how grossly in error they were – how far removed from the Truth.

### **"SAVED AS THROUGH FIRE"**

The ones who are upon the Rock Christ Jesus, the only true Foundation, are those who have accepted Jesus as their Ransom-sacrifice, and have consecrated themselves wholly to God through Him. All these, "have been called in one hope of their calling." (Ephesians 4:4.) Many of these will fail to make their calling and election sure and will suffer great loss. They did not build properly upon this Foundation, Christ, a structure of gold, silver and precious stones of Truth and of whole-hearted loyalty to the Lord. They will suffer the loss of the Kingdom, and through much tribulation will take a lower place, *before* the Throne – not rulers, but honorable servants of the ruling class. All who have been begotten of the Holy Spirit must, as we have shown elsewhere, either be born upon the spirit plane or lose life altogether. Those who prove wholly faithful

will be born Divine beings. Those not wholly faithful, and who miss the great "prize," though not denying the Lord that bought them, will be born spirit beings of a lower order.

The tribulations which characterize the end of this Age will thoroughly awaken these careless ones. Certain special tribulations, we understand, have come to those who were of this class all through the Age. But apparently a larger number of these are living now, at the close of the Age; and these must go through "the great tribulation," and must wash their soiled robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:9-17.) They will have a blessed portion after their purification, but far less glorious than that to which they were called.

The Apostle Paul in his writings lays special emphasis upon the fundamental importance of correct doctrinal teaching. It made no difference whether Paul or Apollos or even an angel from Heaven taught anything, it must be in harmony with the foundation doctrines which had been given them by the Lord. (Galatians 1:6-12.) He assured the Church that what he had taught them was from God; and that even if an angel should bring them another Gospel, it would be a proof that such angel had deflected from loyalty to the Lord. That Jesus Christ died to secure the Redemption-price for Adam and his race is the foundation doctrine of the Church, which was received from **[R5916 : page 196]** Jesus Himself and from His faithful mouthpieces and which was shown in the Divinely given types of the Law. Whoever taught this fundamental truth faithfully was a real help to the people of God. Yet even such a teacher might help them to build, even on this *proper foundation*, a faith and character structure which would not stand the tests of the great Day of the Lord; for the fire of that Day would surely prove the nature of this structure. Consequently, both teacher and pupil would suffer loss and be saved only "as through fire."

## INVULNERABILITY OF THE TRUTH

This prophecy of our text is still in process of fulfilment. The "refiner's fire" is even now doing its work, and thousands and tens of thousands are falling all about us. The Prophet's query is very pertinent at this time. We see that the false teachings which have come down during these many centuries since the Apostles fell asleep have made humanity incapable of reasoning correctly on religious subjects. In the past we have had our own experiences along this line. Whenever anything religious was mentioned we seemed to lose our common sense. Now we have lost our fear of the dread penalty of *using* our *reason*. We have come back to the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles, and we find them grand and beautiful.

Those who have been teaching errors will soon be ashamed (Isaiah 66:5), while the fire of this Day will only *manifest* the *Truth* to *all*. No power, no tongue, no pen, can successfully contradict the Truth, the great Divine Plan of the Ages. It is strong before its enemies and before all who make assaults upon it, and ere long the folly of its foes shall be made known to the whole world. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENCE OF THE KING

The coming of the King to possess His Kingdom will mean a personal as well as a national and a church examination, judgment and treatment. It will mean, when the Kingdom is fully inaugurated, the suppression of vice in a manner and to a degree never attempted by any earthly reformer. There will be no license to do evil in any form. The only liberty granted will be liberty to *do right*. It is no wonder that so few experience joy at the proclamation of the return of earth's rightful King to reign. To many it will mean the loss of their present advantages over their fellowmen. To many it will mean the prohibition and cutting off of sins now indulged in and enjoyed.

Nevertheless, both the King and the Kingdom are not only *coming, but* are *here*; and the present troubles and shakings in church and state, and the general awakening of the people are the results of influences emanating from that King and Kingdom. Though men know it not, it is the smiting of the Kingdom of God that is even now preparing for the wreck of all the kingdoms of the earth, that the way may be opened for the establishment of righteousness in the world, that men's hearts may be humbled and prepared for the righteous Government which is to take control of earth. Worldly men cannot [R5917 : page 196] realize this; for this Kingdom cometh not with outward observation – with outward show and display. Therefore they cannot say, "Lo, here," or "Lo, there."

In spite of the awful war now raging, growing fiercer and more deadly every day, these continue to hope for peace, trying to convince themselves and others that the trouble must soon be brought to an end, and that matters will then go on as formerly. They blind themselves to the true conditions and refuse to believe that God has determined to permit this trouble to spread and involve the entire world and to bring about the utter overthrow of the Present Order of things. Selfishness, pride and love of money have closed their eyes. We give here an extract from a poem written some years ago by a Christian minister, which forcefully describes present conditions and the judgment of God which is now to be visited upon the world for their lasting good:

"Woe to the Age when gold is god, and law a solemn jest,  
That helps the boldly vile to crush the noblest and the best!  
When Mammon o'er cheap millions flings his gilded harness strong,  
And drives them tame beneath his lash down broad highways of wrong;  
While Truth's shrill clarion down the sky peals faintly o'er the rout,  
And dust and fumes of earth and sin shut Heaven's blest sunlight out!  
Then look for lightning! – God's red bolts must cleave the stifling gloom,

In righteous wrath to purge the world in Sodom's fearful doom!"

But we are thankful that while the judgments of a righteous God against sin must come at this time, yet the ultimate results will be glorious, when the world will come forth chastened, subdued, purified by the awful baptism of fire and blood; when they shall come to see that sin, selfishness and corruption have wrought their legitimate outcome. Then mankind will be ready to cry to the Lord and to long for His deliverance, and He will be entreated of them and will lift them up and bless them.

But the coming of the King means much trouble and the general overturning of the kingdoms of this world which, while professing to be kingdoms of God, are really under the control of the "prince of this world," Satan, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (John 14:30; 16:11; Ephesians 2:2.) It means the shaking of society in a manner and to an extent never before known, and so thoroughly that another shaking will never be necessary. (Hebrews 12:26,27.) It means the breaking in pieces of the empires and governments of the world as a potter's vessel. It means the passing away of the present ecclesiastical "heavens," and the fall of many of its bright "stars." At present the sunlight of the true Gospel, and the moonlight of the Law with its types and shadows, are obscured by the thick clouds of worldly wisdom. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, the moon into blood." – Joel 2:30,31.

While many would rejoice to see society relieved of many of its selfish, life-sapping ulcers, they seem to realize that so just and impartial a Judge as the Lord Himself might cut off certain long-cherished sins to which they desire to cling; they fear to have their personal selfishness touched. And their fears are well-founded. He will bring to light all the hidden things of darkness, and correct and suppress private as well as public sin and selfishness. He will expose depths of corruption never before realized. He will make "Justice the

line and righteousness the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." (R.V.) He will "bring down them that dwell on High, the lofty city [Babylon] He layeth low, . . . even to the dust." He will bring down them who have "made lies their refuge." – Isaiah 28:15,17,18; 26:5,6.

### **LIFT UP TRUTH'S GLORIOUS BANNER!**

It is written that the Day of the Lord would come as a thief and a snare upon the whole world, and that only God's fully consecrated Church would be in the light and not be taken unawares. Many of the consecrated have been deceived by looking for the Heavenly King to come again in the flesh. They forgot that the only reason for His coming in the flesh at His First Advent was "for **[R5917 : page 197]** the suffering of death" as man's corresponding-price; and that now He is highly exalted, a glorious spirit Being. "He was put to death in flesh, but made alive in spirit." (1 Peter 3:18.) They forgot that the Apostle Paul also said, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him [so] no more." (2 Corinthians 5:16.) The true children of God are coming more and more to see *how* the Master comes at His Second Advent, and are not expecting to see Him in the flesh and with their natural eyes.

We who know that the King of Glory and His blessed Kingdom are the only remedy for the wrongs and woes of man should be pointing the groaning creation to this Kingdom, rather than to the poultices of their own contriving which can do no real good. Tell them the meaning of present world-wide conditions, and how, beyond the troubles now overspreading the world, will come the glorious Times of Restitution foretold by all the holy Prophets since the world began. Tell them that the death of Jesus was the Redemption-price for the entire race of Adam, and that His return is for the purpose not only of delivering His Church, but to bind Satan and set free all His captives, including all who are in the graves,

giving *all who will* an opportunity to come into the liberty of sons of God, under the terms of the New Covenant, soon to be established.

