

THE
GOSPEL MAGAZINE

AND

PROTESTANT BEACON.

“COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE, SAITH YOUR GOD.”

“ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE.”

“JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER, WHOM TO
KNOW IS LIFE ETERNAL.”

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PREFACE.

BELOVED READERS,—As year succeeds year, and as we draw near to the end of all things, we have reason to believe that matters in general will assume an increasingly solemn aspect. This we may most clearly infer from the plain testimony of the Word of the ever-living God. Hence, the believer has no ground for dismay, as he contemplates the fulfilment of holy Scripture, come trial in whatsoever form it may.

We have warrant for this, if we consider the words of the blessed Master Himself, for, after He had declared that “there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; *men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth*: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken,” He most graciously and lovingly added, “And when these things begin to come to pass, THEN LOOK UP, AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS; FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH.” Moreover, our most blessed Lord had just previously stated, in the face of these impending judgments, that “*there shall not an hair of your head perish.*”

This testimony was strictly in accordance with that of the Holy Ghost by the prophet Isaiah: “Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him.”

Now, this is equally the word of the living God, and serves to prove that vastly-important distinction between the righteous and the wicked.

Further, it ratifies and confirms that momentous declaration: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Now, we maintain that this vast distinction between the righteous and the wicked, or the called and the uncalled, is evidenced from the moment the quickening, separating, life-giving power of the Holy Ghost is realized by the one class, whilst the other is left in nature’s darkness and heathenism. The one people are “reconciled to God by the death of His Son;” the other remain in “enmity against God, are not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” And as each party sow they reap.

We read, moreover, of the former class, with respect to seed-time: “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

So much for the seed-time; and we here venture to state the forcible application of our blessed Lord’s words in a time of personal perplexity as to adverse teaching, and when at a loss to know what was one’s real duty under such circumstances. At this juncture came the words most forcibly: “Let both grow together until the harvest; and, in the time of harvest, I will say [mark this, reader, ‘I will say’] to the *reapers* [not to the *sowers* nor the *waterers*, much less to those who would attempt to *weed*], Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn.”

Whilst this state of things is most solemn, showing to what extent profession and mere assumption may be carried, even to the time of harvest, we cannot express the quieting, pacifying effect upon our own mind personally of the application of the passage we have quoted, proving at once that one should seek to be found at the post of duty oneself, and leave all other considerations to the Lord Himself, without attempting to interfere with His rightful prerogative, which is to "separate the precious from the vile."

This, as we learn most emphatically from sundry parts of the sacred Word, is reserved for the time of harvest.

Of the ripening of the fruits of the earth, and of the rapid approach of harvest, we think there can be no reasonable doubt.

We have already named one sign or token: "Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."

Here is another sign, presenting a totally-different phase: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Mark, reader, another token of the last days: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. iv. 1—3).

Further, the Apostle Paul, in the third chapter of his second Epistle to Timothy, says: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."

Again, the present condition of even the professing Church is most clearly delineated in the third chapter of the Revelation: "And unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

The Scriptures which we have quoted undoubtedly foreshow the condition of Christendom—yea, of the world at large—at the present time. The famines and pestilences, wars and rumours of wars, declared as indicating that the end was drawing near, have by no means been wanting. On the contrary, what has been the state of the world at large, during the last quarter of a century, but one continuous scene of excitement, coupled with calamities and disasters of the most lamentable kind?

Men have challenged the authority, if not the very existence, of the Most High. His Word they have maligned and His wisdom repudiated. At the same time, the voice of His providence has confirmed that of His Word in the most marked and unmistakable manner.

Sad, however, as is the infidelity of the age, the form of godliness without the power, and the assumption upon the part of puerile men of a power and an authority which belong to God alone, is, if possible, more lamentable, and will prove both more deceptive and destructive. It is "the blind leading the blind, until [if divine grace prevent not] both must fall into the ditch" of everlasting perdition.

Judicial blindness has verily befallen such. In direct opposition to the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus, and His guidance and teaching, there is the grossest corruption and perversion of His plainly-revealed Word. FAITH is set aside. The *senses* are wrought upon. The tawdry and the tinsel are introduced into the so-called worship of God, as though these were essential elements in the service of the great Jehovah, and as though acceptable in the sight of Him who saith, "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them."

If the Most High spoke thus of observances and ceremonies of His own divine appointment, when He discovered that there was a resting in the *sign* and the *symbol* to the neglect of the *Substance* and the *Reality*, what must be His indignation, and what eventually be His wrath, when the type has given place to the Antitype? and the "*shadow*" has vanished through "*the good things*" having come? The "priest standing daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins," has given place to "This Man [this God-man Mediator] who, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, [has] sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool"?

What, we ask, will be Jehovah's righteous indignation, when He enters into judgment with those who, in the face of the absolute accomplishment of the Mediatorial work of the Great High Priest, have presumptuously assumed the character of "priests," under the pretext of supplementing or perpetuating a work already as finished and complete as the Omnipotent could render it? If, at the last great day, He shall say, "But those Mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me," what will become of those hapless deceived and deceiving ones who have presumptuously arrogated to themselves an office and a prerogative which belong to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and to Himself alone? Oh, in spite of the pleading of such, in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" will He not, according to His own foreshowing, say to such, "I never knew you; *depart from Me, ye that work iniquity*"?

Finally, dear brethren, notwithstanding the gloomy aspect of the times in which we live, regard them in whatsoever light we may, whether ecclesiastically, commercially, or politically, may we not, as the professed sons and daughters of the Most High, rejoice in the great and glorious "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity"?

Nothing has arisen, nor ever can arise, to interfere with, or militate against, that "covenant which is ordered in all things and sure."

It is as true to-day as when declared more than two thousand years ago: "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" Yea, He still "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will," and ever will do so.

Dark and forbidding as may be the present aspect of the world, and of Christendom especially, can it be more so than when literal Israel was in captivity in Egypt or Babylon? And yet we read, with regard to the one condition, that "it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, *even the selfsame day it came to pass*, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Moreover, was not the Lord equally true to His word, in regard to Israel's second captivity, "That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place"?

Further, were the Lord's words plainer or more emphatic in reference to Israel of old, than with respect to all that should come to pass in the latter days? Were the prophecies of Christ's *first* coming plainer than those of His *second* coming? Has He come *once*? will He not with equal certainty *come again*?

As far as time has gone, has there not been a literal fulfilment of all that the Lord has spoken? Has He been frustrated in His purposes, or foiled in His plans? Has He forgotten His promises or forfeited His word? Verily not!

Is Jehovah less interested in the *future* than He has been in the *past*? Has He less at stake *now* than *aforetime*? Is there not a concentration of the wisdom and skill of the builder as he draws near to the completion of his work and the accomplishment of his design? Shall not that great and glorious truth be verified with respect to the heavenly temple which Jehovah is rearing for His own eternal occupancy: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it"? Yea, "He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."

Was it not declared of Jehovah Jesus, seven hundred years before His incarnation, that He "should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied"? And did not the dear Redeemer Himself testify, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me"?

Reader, come what may—let the darkness become yet more dense, and things assume even a still more gloomy aspect—the good will and pleasure of the Most High shall be accomplished. The immutable purposes of the great Jehovah shall come to pass. His "I wills" and "they shalls" shall suffer no defeat. All must be verified. Yea, adored be His ever great and glorious name—

" His purposes shall ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet shall be the flower.

" Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own Interpreter,
And He will make it plain."