

STUDY III

THE NECESSITY AND JUSTICE OF THE DAY OF VENGEANCE

Upon this Generation, Type and Antitype--The Great Tribulation a Legitimate Effect from Preceding Causes--The Responsibilities of "Christendom," and Her Attitude Toward Them--Of Civil Authorities, of Religious Leaders, of the Various Ranks of the Masses of Men in Civilized Lands--The Relationship of the Heathen Nations to Christendom and to the Trouble--The Judgment of God--"Vengeance is Mine: I will Repay, Saith the Lord."

"Verily, I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." *Matt. 23:34-36; Luke 11:50,51*

TO THOSE unaccustomed to weighing principles from the standpoint of an exact moral philosophy it may seem strange that a subsequent generation of humanity should suffer the penalty of the accumulated crimes of several preceding generations; yet, since such is the expressed judgment of God, who cannot err, we should expect mature consideration to make manifest the justice of his decision. In the above words, our Lord declared that thus it should be with the generation of fleshly Israel whom he addressed in the end of the typical Jewish Age. Upon them should come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, who was slain between the temple and the altar. *Matt. 23:35*

That was a terrible prophecy, but it fell upon heedless and unbelieving ears; and, true to the letter, it had its fulfilment

about thirty-seven years later, when civil strife and hostile invaders accomplished the fearful recompense. Of that time we read that the inhabitants of Judea were divided by jealousies into many warring factions, and that

mutual mistrust reached its highest development. Friends were alienated, families were broken up, and every man suspected his brother. Theft, impostures and assassinations were rife, and no man's life was secure. Even the temple was not a place of safety. The chief priest was slain while performing public worship. Then, driven to desperation by the massacre of their brethren in Caesarea, and apparently appointed everywhere else for slaughter, the whole nation united in revolt. Judea was thus brought into open rebellion against Rome, and in defiance against the whole civilized world.

Vespasian and Titus were sent to punish them, and terrible was their overthrow. One after another of their cities was swept away, until at last Titus laid siege to Jerusalem. In the spring of A.D. 70, when the city was crowded with the multitudes who came up to the feast of the Passover, he drew up his legions before her walls, and the imprisoned inhabitants shortly became the prey of famine and the sword of the invaders and civil strife. When any managed to creep out of the city they were crucified by the Romans; and so dreadful was the famine that parents killed and ate their own children. The number that perished is stated by Josephus to have been over a million, and the city and temple were reduced to ashes.

Such were the facts in fulfilment of the above prophecy upon rebellious fleshly Israel in the end of their age of special favor as God's chosen people. And now, in the end of this Gospel age, according to the broader significance of the prophecy, is to come the parallel of that trouble upon nominal

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spiritual Israel, which, in its widest sense, is Christendom -- "a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation," and hence in some sense even more terrible than that upon Judea and Jerusalem. We can scarcely imagine a trouble more severe than that above described, except in the sense of being more general and widespread, and more destructive, as the machinery of modern warfare signally suggests. Instead of being confined to one nation or province, its sweep will be over the whole world, especially the civilized world, Christendom, Babylon.

We may therefore regard that visitation of wrath upon fleshly Israel as a foreshadowing of the greater indignation and wrath to be poured upon Christendom in the end of this age. Those who in their haste incline to view this course of the Almighty toward this generation as unjust have only

failed to comprehend that perfect law of retribution, which surely, though often slowly, works out its inevitable results. The justice, yea, the necessity and the philosophy of it, are very manifest to the thoughtful and reverent, who, instead of being inclined to accuse God of injustice, apply their hearts to the instruction of his Word.

The Great Tribulation a Legitimate Effect from Preceding Causes

We stand today in a period which is the culmination of ages of experience which should be, and is, in some respects, greatly to the world's profit; especially to that part of the world which has been favored, directly and indirectly, with the light of divine truth--Christendom, Babylon--whose responsibility for this stewardship of advantage is consequently very great. God holds men accountable, not only for what they know, but for what they might know if they would apply their hearts unto instruction--for the lessons

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which experience (their own and others') is designed to teach; and if men fail to heed the lessons of experience, or wilfully neglect or spurn its precepts, they must suffer the consequences.

Before so-called Christendom lies the open history of all past time, as well as the divinely inspired revelation. And what lessons they contain!--lessons of experience, of wisdom, of knowledge, of grace, and of warning. By giving heed to the experiences of preceding generations along the various lines of human industry, political economy, etc., the world has made very commendable progress in material things. Many of the comforts and conveniences of our present civilization have come to us largely from applying the lessons observed in the experiences of past generations. The art of printing has brought these lessons within the range of every man. The present generation in this one point alone has much advantage every way: all the accumulated wisdom and experience of the past are added to its own. But the great moral lessons which men ought also to have been studying and learning have been very generally disregarded, even when they have been emphatically forced upon public attention. History is full of such lessons

to thoughtful minds inclined to righteousness; and men of the present day have more such lessons than those of any previous generation. Thoughtful minds have, from time to time, noted and called attention to this fact. Thus, Professor Fisher, in prefacing his account of the rise, progress and fall of empires, truly says: "That there is a reign of law in the succession of human events, is a conviction warranted by observed facts. Events do not spring into being disjoined from antecedents leading to them. They are perceived to be the natural issues of the times that have gone before. Preceding events have foreshadowed them."

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This is indeed true: the law of cause and effect is nowhere more prominently marked than on the pages of history. According to this law, which is God's law, the seeds of past sowing must of necessity germinate, develop and bring forth fruitage; and a harvest at some time is therefore inevitable. In Vol. II, we have shown that the harvest time of the Gospel age is already come; that it began in 1874, when the presence of the Lord of the harvest was due; and that, while a great harvest work has been in progress ever since that date, we are now fast nearing the latter end of the harvest period, when the burning of the tares and the gathering and treading of the fully ripe clusters of the "*vine of the earth*" (the matured fruits of the false vine--"Babylon") are due.
Rev. 14:18-20

The Responsibilities of Christendom and Her Attitude Toward Them

Babylon, Christendom, has had a long probation of power, and has had many opportunities both to learn and to practice righteousness, as well as many warnings of a coming judgment. All through this Gospel age she has had in her midst the saints of God--devoted, self-sacrificing, Christlike men and women--"The salt of the earth." She has heard the message of salvation from their lips, seen the principles of truth and righteousness exemplified in their lives, and heard them reason of righteousness and of judgment to come. But she has disregarded these living epistles of God; and not only so, but her so-called Christian nations, in their greed for gain, have brought reproach upon the name of Christ among the heathen, following the Christian

missionary with the accursed rum traffic and other "civilized" evils; and in her midst and by her authority the true embryo kingdom of heaven (composed only of the saints,

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whose names are written in heaven) has suffered violence. She has hated them and persecuted them even unto death, so that thousands of them all along the centuries have, by her decrees, sealed their testimony with their blood. Like their Master, they were hated without a cause; they were rejected as the offscouring of the earth for righteousness' sake; and their light was again and again quenched that the preferred darkness might reign with its opportunities to work iniquity. Oh how dark is this record of Christendom! The mother system is "drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus"; and she and her daughters, still blind, are ready still to persecute and behead (*Rev. 20:4*), though in a more refined manner, all who are loyal to God and his truth, and who venture, however kindly, to point out to them plainly the Word of the Lord which reproves them.

The civil powers of Christendom have been warned frequently when again and again empires and kingdoms have fallen with the weight of their own corruption. And even today, if the powers that be would harken, they might hear a last warning of God's inspired prophet, saying, "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little...Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves [in opposition], and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us." But their resistance shall avail nothing; for, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then [since they persistently neglect to heed his warnings] shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."

Psalm 2:10-12,1-5

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Again, as represented by the simple and now widely known principles of his holy law, "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty [of those in authority]; he judgeth among the gods [the rulers, saying], How long will ye judge

unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy; deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked." (*Psa. 82:1-4*) That the import and expediency of this counsel are, by the exigencies of the present times, being forced upon the attention of those in authority, the daily press is a constant witness; and numerous are the warning voices of thoughtful men who see the danger of the general neglect of this advice. Even men of the world, who scan the future only from the standpoint of expediency, perceive the necessity for the pursuance of the course advised by the prophets.

The late Emperor William of Germany saw this, as is indicated by the following from the Berlin correspondent of the *Observatore Romano* (1880):

"When the Emperor William received the news of the last horrible attempt upon the life of the Czar he became very serious, and after remaining silent for some minutes he said, with melancholy accent, but with a certain energy, 'If we do not change the direction of our policy, if we do not think seriously of giving sound instruction to youth, if we do not give the first place to religion, if we only pretend to govern by expedients from day to day, our thrones will be overturned and society will become a prey to the most terrible events. We have no more time to lose, and it will be a great misfortune if all the governments do not come to an accord in this salutary work of repression.'"

In a book widely circulated in Germany, entitled *Reform or Revolution*, its author, Herr von Massow, who is neither a Socialist nor a Radical, but a Conservative, and President of the Central Committee for Labor Colonies, accuses his countrymen

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of "ostrich politics," of imitating that bird's proverbial habit of hiding its head in the sand in the belief that it becomes invisible when it cannot see. Von Massow writes:

"We may ignore facts, but we cannot alter them. There is no doubt that we are on the eve of a revolution. All who have eyes to see and ears to hear must admit this. Only a society submerged in egoism, self-satisfaction and the hunt for pleasure can deny it; only such a society will continue to dance on the volcano, will refuse to see the *Mene-Tekel*, and continue to believe in the power of bayonets.

"The great majority of the educated have no idea of the magnitude of the hatred which is brewing among the lower orders. The Social-Democratic Party is regarded as any

other political party; yet this party does not care about political rights, does not care for administrative reform or new laws. This party is based upon the wish of the lower classes to enjoy life, a wish to taste pleasures of which those who never owned a hundred-mark bill have an altogether distorted conception...Order will, of course, soon be restored [after the Socialist regime]; but what a state the country will be in! There will be countless cripples, widows and orphans; public and private banks will have been robbed; railroads, telegraphs, roads, bridges, residences, factories, monuments--everything will be demolished, and neither the Union, nor the States, nor the towns and parishes will be able to find the millions which it would cost to repair even a fraction of what is destroyed. It is almost incredible that nothing is done to ward off the danger. Charity is not what is needed but warm hearts, willing to show some regard for the lower classes. Love, all-embracing love, will overcome much of the hatred that is brewing. Many may be lost to such an extent that nothing will bring them back; but there are also millions who may still be won for law and order, if proof is given that it is possible for them to obtain a livelihood worthy of a human being; that they need not, as is the case just now, be worse off than the animals which are, at least, stabled and fed."

The writer proceeds at length to open the eyes of the people of Berlin to the danger in which they live. "The Berliners,"

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he says, "imagine themselves secure in the protection of the Guards, some 60,000 strong. A vain hope! During the Autumn, when the time-expired men leave their regiments, and before the new recruits have come, the garrison is scarcely 7,000 strong. An insurrection led by some dissatisfied former officer could soon find 100,000 and even 160,000 workmen to take part. All these men have served in the army, and are as well trained as their opponents, and understand the necessity of discipline. Telegraph and telephone wires would be cut; railroads damaged to prevent the arrival of re-enforcements; officers hurrying to their posts would be intercepted. The revolutionists could blow up the barracks and shoot down the Emperor, the Ministers, generals, officials--every one wearing a uniform--ere a single troop of cavalry or a battery of artillery could come to their assistance."

But do those in authority heed the warnings and the solemn lessons of this hour? No: as the Prophet foretold of

them-- "They know not, neither will they understand: they walk on in darkness [until] all the foundations of the earth [the foundations of society--the hitherto established principles of law and order] are moved"--terribly shaken--shaken that they may be removed. *Heb. 12:27; Psa. 82:5; Isa. 2:19*

The late Emperor of Germany was quite heedless of the expressed fears of his grandfather, just quoted. Years ago, in presenting Prince Bismarck with a magnificent sword sheathed in a golden scabbard, the Emperor said:

"Before the eyes of these troops I come to present your Serene Highness with my gift. I could find no better present than a sword, the noblest weapon of the Germans, a symbol of that instrument which your Highness, in the service of my grandfather, helped to forge, to sharpen, and also to wield--a symbol of that great building-time during which the mortar was blood and iron--a remedy which never fails, and which in the hands of Kings and Princes will, in case of need, also preserve unity in the interior of the Fatherland, even as, when applied outside the country, it led to internal union."

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The London *Spectator* commenting on this expression says:

"That is surely a most alarming, as well as astounding, statement. There are two explanations of it current in Germany --one that it is directed against the claim of any German State to secede from the Empire, and the other, that it announces the decision of the Emperor and his confederates to deal with Socialists and Anarchists, if necessary, through military force. In either case the announcement was unnecessary and indiscreet. Nobody doubts that the German Empire, which was, in fact, built by the sword at Langensalza, as well as in the war with France, would decree the military occupation of any seceding State; but to threaten any party, even the Socialists, with martial law, while it is trying to win through the ballot, is, in fact, to suspend the Constitution in favor of a state of siege. We do not suppose that the Emperor intended anything of the kind, but it seems clear that he has been brooding over the situation; that he feels the resistance of the Socialists, and that his conclusion is--'Well, well, I have still the sword, and that is a remedy that never fails.' Many a King has come to that conclusion before him, but few have been so far left to themselves as to deem it wise on such a subject to think aloud. It is a threat, let us explain it as we will; and wise

monarchs do not threaten until the hour has arrived to strike, still less do they threaten military violence as the remedy even for internal grievances. 'The sword a remedy' for internal ills 'which never fails!' As well say the surgeon's knife is a remedy for fever which never fails. Prince Schwartzburg, a Tory of Tories, with an irresistible army at his back, tried that remedy under more favorable circumstances, and his conclusion after long experience was embodied in the wisest of all political good sayings, which the German Emperor would do well to consider--'You can do anything with bayonets--except sit on them.'

"What could a Roman Emperor have said that was stronger than 'the sword is the remedy that never fails'?" There is the essence of tyranny in a sentence of that kind; and if the Emperor really uttered it after consideration, it is not a leader that Germany has in him, but an absolute ruler

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of the type which all modern history shows us to be worn out. It may turn out, of course, that the Emperor spoke hastily, under the influence of that emotion, half-poetic, half-arising from an exaggerated sense of his own personality, which he has often previously betrayed; but if his speech is to be accepted in the light of a manifesto to his people, all that can be said is, 'What a pity; what a source of hopefulness has passed away!'"

The declaration of the present Czar of Russia, that he would uphold autocracy as ardently as did his father, was another indication of failure to heed the solemn warnings of his auspicious hour and of the Word of God. And mark how it was received by the people of his dominion, despite all the official energy exercised there to muzzle free speech. A manifesto was issued by the People's Rights Party of Russia, and circulated throughout the empire.

The manifesto was in the form of a letter to the Czar, and was remarkable for plain and forcible language. After censuring him for his assertion of his absolutism it declared:

"The most advanced zemstvos asked only for the harmony of Czar and people, free speech, and the supremacy of law over the arbitrariness of the executive. You were deceived and frightened by the representations of courtiers and bureaucrats. Society will understand perfectly that it was the bureaucracy, which jealously guards its own omnipotence, that spoke through you. The bureaucracy, beginning with the Council of Ministers and ending with the lowest country constable, hates any development, social or

individual, and actively prevents the monarch's free intercourse with representatives of his people, except as they come in gala dress, presenting congratulations, icons, and offerings.

"Your speech proved that any attempt to speak out before the throne, even in the most loyal form, about the crying needs of the country, meets only a rough and abrupt rebuff. Society expected from you encouragement and help, but heard only a reminder of your omnipotence, giving the impression of utter estrangement of Czar from

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people. You yourself have killed your own popularity, and have alienated all that part of society which is peacefully struggling forward. Some individuals are jubilant over your speech, but you will soon discover their impotence.

"In another section of society your speech caused a feeling of injury and depression, which, however, the best social forces will soon overcome, before proceeding to the peaceful but obstinate and deliberate struggle necessary to liberty. In another section your words will stimulate the readiness to struggle against the present hateful state of things with any means. You were the first to begin the struggle. Ere long it will proceed."

Thus all the nations of "Christendom" are heedlessly stumbling on in the long-preferred darkness. Even this fair land of boasted liberty, in many respects so richly favored above all other nations, is no exception; and it, too, has had many warnings. Note the almost prophetic words of its martyr President, Abraham Lincoln, written shortly before his assassination, to a friend in Illinois. He wrote:

"Yes, we may all congratulate ourselves that this cruel war is nearing its close. It has cost a vast amount of treasure and blood. The best blood of the flower of American youth has been freely offered upon our country's altar that the nation might live. It has been a trying hour indeed for the Republic. But I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. As a result of the war, corporations have been enthroned, an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money-power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all the wealth is aggregated in a few hands, and the Republic is destroyed. I feel at this moment more anxiety for the safety of my country than ever before, even in the midst of war."

And again in the year 1896, Representative Hatch of Missouri, in a speech before Congress in financial and social matters, is reported in the public press to have said:

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"Mark what I say! If the inexorable law of cause and effect has not been expunged from the statute book of the Almighty, unless a halt is called very soon, you may expect to see the horrors of the French Revolution put on the American stage with all the modern improvements, and that within the next decade. Nor am I alone. That gentleman, Astor, who went to England some time ago, bought him a place on the island and became a British subject, saw what is coming as plainly as I do, so he took time by the forelock and skipped out when there was not such a rush for staterooms as there will be after a while. He knew very well that if things would keep on as you and I have seen them for some time past the time was not far off when there would be such a crowd of his class of people hurrying aboard every outgoing steamer he might be shoved off the gangplank."

The Hon. H. R. Herbert, Secretary of the U. S. Navy, in a speech at Cleveland, O., April 30, 1896, used the following language in a very moderate speech to business men:

"We are entering upon an era of vast enterprises that threaten to occupy to the exclusion of others all the ordinary avenues of human progress. The optimist may tell you that this is to be for the betterment of the conditions of human life, that large enterprises are to cheapen products, cheapen transportation. The mammoth store in which you can get everything you want, and get it cheap, is everywhere appearing. Industrial plants with millions of capital behind them are rapidly taking possession of the field once occupied by smaller enterprises of the same character.

"Human wit seems unable to devise, without dangerously curtailing the natural liberty of the citizen, any plan for the prevention of these monopolies, and the effect is the accumulation of vast wealth by the few, the narrowing of the opportunities of the many, and the breeding of discontent. Hence conflicts between labor and capital are to be of greater significance in the future than in the past.

"There are thoughtful men who predict that out of the antagonisms between capital and labor is to come a conflict that will be fatal to the republican government among us, a conflict that will result first in anarchy and bloodshed and

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then in monarchy under some bold leader who shall be able by military power to bring order out of chaos.

"Sometimes we are pointed to Socialism as the logical outcome of the present condition. The first experiments in this direction, it is said, are to be made in the cities, the employers, with unlimited means at their command, and the employees, with little opportunity for advancement, except by the ballot, are to contend with each other, class against class, for the control of municipal governments. This is one of the perils of the future...It was once supposed that the American farmer would forever stand as an immovable bulwark, but a change has come over the spirit of many of our farmers."

The ecclesiastical powers of Christendom have also had line upon line and precept upon precept. They have been warned by the providential dealings of God with his people in the past, and by occasional reformers. Yet few, very few, can read the handwriting on the wall, and they are powerless to overcome, or even to stay, the popular current.

Rev. T. De Witt Talmage seemed to see and understand to some extent; for, in a timely discourse, he said:

"Unless the Church of Jesus Christ rises up and proves herself the friend of the people as the friend of God, and in sympathy with the great masses, who with their families at their backs are fighting this battle for bread, the church, as at present organized, will become a defunct institution, and Christ will go down again to the beach and invite plain, honest fishermen to come into an apostleship of righteousness --manward and Godward. The time has come when all classes of people shall have equal rights in the great struggle to get a livelihood."

And yet this man, with a stewardship of talent and influence which but few possess, did not seem in haste to follow his expressed convictions as to the duties of influential Christians in the hour of peril.

The warnings go forth, and convictions of duty and privilege fasten upon many minds; but, alas! all is of no

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avail; they go unheeded. Great power has been, and to some extent still is, in the hands of ecclesiastics; but, in the name of Christ and his gospel, it has been, and still is, selfishly used and abused. "Honor one of another," "chief seats in the synagogues," and "to be called Rabbi," "Doctor,

Reverend, etc., and seeking gain, each "from his own quarter [or denomination]" (*John 5:44; Matt. 23:6-12; Isa. 56:11*), and "the fear of man which bringeth a snare"-- these hinder some even of God's true servants from faithfulness, while apparently many of the under-shepherds never had any interest in the Lord's flock except to secure the golden fleece.

While we gladly acknowledge that many educated cultivated, refined and pious gentlemen are, and have been, included among the clergy in all the various denominations of the nominal Church, which all through the age has included both wheat and tares (*Matt. 13:30*), we are forced to admit that many who belong to the "tare" class have found their way into pulpits as well as into the pews. Indeed the temptations to pride and vainglory, and in many cases to ease and affluence, presented to talented young men aspiring to the pulpit, have been such as to guarantee that it must be so, and that to a large extent. Of all the professions, the Christian ministry has afforded the quickest and easiest route to fame, ease and general temporal prosperity, and often to wealth. The profession of law requires a lifetime of intellectual energy and business effort, and brings its weight of pressing care. The same may be said of the profession of medicine. And if men rise to wealth and distinction in these professions, it is not merely because they have quick wits and ready tongues, but because they have honestly won distinction by close and constant mental application and laborious effort. On the other hand, in the clerical profession, a refined, pleasant demeanor, moderate ability to

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address a public assembly twice a week on some theme taken from the Bible, together with a moderate education and good moral character, secure to any young man entering the profession, the respect and reverence of his community, a comfortable salary and a quiet, undisturbed and easy life.

If he have superior talent, the people, who are admirers of oratory, soon discover it, and before long he is called to a more lucrative charge; and, almost before he knows it, he has become famous among men, who rarely stop to question whether his piety--his faith, humility and godliness-- have kept pace in development with his intellectual and oratorical progress. In fact, if the latter be the case, he is less acceptable, especially to wealthy congregations, which, probably more frequently than very poor ones, are composed

mostly of "tares." If his piety indeed survive the pressure of these circumstances, he will, too often for the good of his reputation, be obliged to run counter to the dispositions and prejudices of his hearers, and he will shortly find himself unpopular and undesired. These circumstances have thus brought into the pulpit a very large proportion of what the Scriptures designate "hireling shepherds." *Isa. 56:11; Ezek. 34:2-16; John 10:11-14*

The responsibility of those who have undertaken the gospel ministry in the name of Christ is very great. They stand very prominently before the people as the representatives of Christ--as special exponents of his spirit, and expounders of his truth. And, as a class, they have had advantages above other men for coming to a knowledge of the truth, and freely declaring it. They have been relieved from the burdens of toil and care in earning a livelihood which fetter other men, and, with their temporal wants supplied, have been granted time, quiet leisure, special education, and numerous helps of association, etc., for this very purpose.

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Here, on the one hand, have been these great opportunities for pious zeal and devoted self-sacrifice for the cause of truth and righteousness; and, on the other, great temptations, either to indolent ease, or to ambition for fame, wealth or power. Alas! the vast majority of the clergy have evidently succumbed to the temptations, rather than embraced and used the opportunities, of their positions; and, as a result, they are today "blind leaders of the blind," and together they and their flocks are fast stumbling into the ditch of skepticism. They have hidden the truth (because it is unpopular), advanced error (because it is popular) and taught for doctrine the precepts of men (because paid to do so). They have, in effect, and sometimes in so many words, said to the people, "Believe what we tell you on our authority," instead of directing them to "prove all things" by the divinely inspired words of the apostles and prophets, and "hold fast" only "that which is good." For long centuries the clergy of the Church of Rome kept the Word of God buried in dead languages, and would not permit its translation into the vernacular tongues, lest the people might search the Scriptures and thus prove the vanity of her pretensions. In the course of time a few godly reformers arose from the midst of her corruption, rescued the Bible from oblivion and brought it forth to the people; and a great protestant movement--protesting against the false doctrines

and evil practices of the Church of Rome--was the result.

But ere long Protestantism also became corrupt, and her clergy began to formulate creeds to which they have taught the people to look as the epitomized doctrines of the Bible, and of paramount importance. They have baptized and catechised them in infancy, before they had learned to think; then, as they grew to adult years, they have lulled them to sleep, and given them to understand that their safe

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course in religious matters is to commit all questions of doctrine to them, and to follow their instructions, intimating that they alone had the education, etc., necessary to the comprehension of divine truth, and that they, therefore, should be considered *authorities* in all such matters without further appeal to God's Word. And when any presumed to question this assumed authority and think differently, they were regarded as heretics and schismatics. The most learned and prominent among them have written massive volumes of what they term Systematic Theology, all of which, like the Talmud among the Jews, is calculated to a large extent to make void the Word of God, and to teach for doctrine the precepts of men (*Matt. 15:6; Isa. 29:13*); and others of the learned and prominent have accepted honorable and lucrative professorships in Theological Seminaries, established, ostensibly, to train young men for the Christian ministry, but in fact to inculcate the ideas of the so-called "Systematic Theology" of their several schools--to fetter free thought and honest reverent investigation of the sacred Scriptures with a view to simple faith in their teachings, regardless of human traditions. In this way generation after generation of the "clergy" has pressed along the beaten track of traditional error. And only occasionally has one been sufficiently awake and loyal to the truth to discover error and cry out for reform. It has been so much easier to drift with the popular current, especially when great men led the way.

Thus the power and superior advantages of the clergy as a class have been misused, although in their ranks there have been (and still are) some earnest, devout souls who verily thought they were doing God service in upholding the false systems into which they had been led, and by whose errors they also had been in a great measure blinded.

While these reflections will doubtless seem offensive to

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many of the clergy, especially to the proud and self-seeking, we have no fear that their candid presentation will give any offense to any of the meek, who, if they recognize the truth, will be blessed by a humble confession of the same and a full determination to walk in the light of God as it shines from his Word, regardless of human traditions. We rejoice to say that thus far during the harvest period we have come to know a few clergymen of this class, who, when the harvest truth dawned upon them, forsook the error and pursued and served the truth. But the majority of the clergy, alas! are not of the meek class, and again we are obliged to realize the force of the Master's words--"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" whether those riches be of reputation, fame, learning, money, or even common ease.

The common people need not be surprised, therefore, that the clergy of Christendom, as a class, are blind to the truths due in this time of harvest, just as the recognized teachers and leaders in the end of the typical Jewish age were blind and opposed to the truths due in that harvest. Their blindness is indeed a *recompense* for their misused talents and opportunities, and therefore light and truth cannot be expected from that quarter. In the end of the Jewish age the religious leaders significantly suggested to the people the inquiry, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" (*John 7:48*) and in accepting their suggestion and blindly submitting to their leadings, some missed their privilege, and failed to enter into the blessings of the new dispensation. So it will be with a similar class in these last days of the Gospel dispensation: those who blindly follow the leading of the clergy will fall with them into the ditch of skepticism; and only those who faithfully walk with God, partaking of his spirit, and humbly relying upon all the testimonies of his precious Word, shall be able

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to discern and discard the "stubble" of error which has long been mixed with the truth, and boldly to stand fast in the faith of the gospel and in loyalty of heart to God, while the masses drift off in the popular current toward infidelity in its various forms--Evolution, Higher Criticism, Theosophy, Christian Science, Spiritism, or other theories denying the necessity and merit of the great Calvary sacrifice. But those who successfully stand in this "evil day" (*Eph. 6:13*) will,

in so doing, prove the metal of their Christian character; for so strong will be the current against them, that only true Christian devotion to God, zeal, courage and fortitude will be able to endure to the end. These oncoming waves of infidelity will surely carry all others before them. It is written, "A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee, because thou hast said, The Lord is my protection, and the most High hast thou made thy refuge...He that dwelleth in the secret place [of consecration, communion and fellowship] of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty ...He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." *Psalm 91*

Individual Christians cannot shirk their personal responsibility, placing it upon pastors and teachers, nor upon councils and creeds. It is by the Word of the Lord that we are judged (*John 12:48-50; Rev. 20:12*), and not by the opinions or precedents of our fellowmen in any capacity. Therefore all should imitate the noble Bereans who "searched the Scriptures daily" to see if the things taught them were true. (*Acts 17:11*) It is our duty as Christians individually to prove all things we accept, and to hold fast that which is good. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." *Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21; Isa. 8:20*

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The same principle holds good in temporal, as well as in spiritual things. While the various ships of state are drifting onward to destruction, those who see the breakers ahead, while they cannot alter the course of events in general, can, to some extent at least, seize present opportunities wisely to regulate their own conduct in view of the inevitable catastrophe; they can make ready the lifeboats and the life preservers, so that when the ships of state are wrecked in the surging sea of anarchy, they may keep their heads above the waves and find a rest beyond. In other words, the wise policy, to say nothing of principle, in these days is to deal justly, generously and kindly with our fellowmen in every rank and condition of life; for the great trouble will spring from the intense wrath of the angry nations--from the dissatisfaction and indignation of the enlightened masses of the people against the more fortunate, aristocratic and ruling classes. The subjects of dissatisfaction are at present being widely discussed; and now, before the storm of wrath

bursts, is the time for individuals to make known their principles, not only by their words, but by their conduct in all their relations with their fellowmen. Now is the time to study and apply the principles of the golden rule; to learn to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to act accordingly. If men were wise enough to consider what, in the very near future, must be the outcome of the present course of things, they would do this from policy, if not from principle.

In the coming trouble it is but reasonable to presume that, even in the midst of the wildest confusion, there will be discriminations in favor of such as have shown themselves just, generous and kind; and extreme wrath against those who have practiced and defended oppression. It was so in the midst of the horrors of the French Revolution; and that it will be so again, is intimated by the counsel of the Word of the Lord, which says, "Seek righteousness, seek

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meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." "Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." (*Zeph. 2:3; Psa. 34:14-16*) These words of wisdom and warning are to the world in general. As for the "saints," the "little flock," the "overcomers," they are promised that they shall be accounted worthy to *escape* all those things coming upon the world. *Luke 21:36*

The Relationship of the Heathen Nations to Christendom and to the Great Tribulation

While the fierce anger of the Lord is to be visited upon the nations of Christendom specially, because they have sinned against much light and privilege, the Scriptures clearly show that the heathen nations have not been without responsibility, and shall not go unpunished. For many generations and through many centuries they have taken pleasure in unrighteousness. Their fathers in ages past forgot God, because they did not like to hold his righteous authority in remembrance: they loved darkness rather than light, and wilfully pursued the folly of their own imaginations; and their descendants have steadily walked on in the

same downward course, even to the present day.

Concerning the responsibility of these nations, the Apostle Paul (*Rom. 1:18-32*) tells us very plainly what is the mind of the Lord, saying, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of those men who, through injustice suppress the truth; because the knowledge of God is apparent among them, for God hath shewed it unto them. For his invisible things,

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even his eternal power and deity, since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived by the things that are made; so that [having this light of nature--i.e., the testimony of nature as to the existence, power and goodness of God, and of conscience indicating what is right and what is wrong] they are without excuse [in pursuing an evil course of life]; because though they knew God [to some extent at least]; they did not glorify or thank him as God, but became vain in their reasonings, and their perverse heart was darkened [as the natural result of such a course]. Assuming to be wise men, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image-likeness of corruptible man, and of birds, and of quadrupeds, and of reptiles. Therefore God gave them over, through the lusts of their hearts for impurity, to dishonor their bodies among themselves; who exchanged the truth concerning God for a false religion, and revered and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is worthy of praise forever. Amen!

"On this account God delivered them over to infamous passions [i.e., God did not strive with or endeavor to reclaim them, but let them alone to pursue their chosen evil course and to learn from experience its bitter fruits]... And as they did not choose to retain the knowledge of God, God gave them over to a worthless mind, to do improper things, abounding in every iniquity; in wickedness, in covetousness, in malignity; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, bad habits; secret slanderers, revilers, haters of God, insolent, proud, boasters, devisers of evil things, disobedient to parents, obstinate, covenant breakers, destitute of natural affection, without pity; who, though they know the ordinance of God [that those who practice such things are worthy of death], not only are doing them, but even are approving those who practice them."

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While, as here shown, the heathen nations long ago suppressed what truth was known in the early ages of the world concerning God and his righteousness, and preferred darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil, and out of their evil and vain imaginations invented false religions which justified their evil ways; and while succeeding generations have endorsed and justified the evil course of their forefathers by subscribing to their doctrines and walking in their footprints, thus also assuming the accumulation of their guilt and condemnation, on the very same principle that the present nations of Christendom also assume the obligations of their preceding generations, yet the heathen nations have not been wholly oblivious to the fact that a great light has come into the world through Jesus Christ. Even previous to the coming of Christ the wonderful God of Israel was known among many heathen nations through his dealings with that people; and all through the Gospel age the saints of God have been bearing the good news abroad.

Here and there a few individuals have heeded the truth, but the nations have disregarded it generally, and walked on in darkness. Therefore "the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations." (*Isa. 34:2*) The heathen nations are now, without the gospel and its advantages, judged unworthy of a continued lease of power; while the so-called Christian nations, with the gospel light and privileges of which they have not walked worthy, are also, by its standard of truth and righteousness, judged unworthy of continued power.

Thus every mouth is stopped, and all the world stands guilty before God. Of all the nations "there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good; no, not one."

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The justice of God in punishing all nations is manifest; and while the heathen nations will receive the just reward of their doings, let not the greater responsibility of Christendom be forgotten; for if the Jews had "much advantage every way" over the Gentile nations, chiefly in that unto them were committed the oracles of God (*Rom. 3:1,2*), what shall we say of the nations of Christendom, with their still greater advantages of both the Law and the Gospel? Yet it is true today of Christendom, as it was then of the

Jewish nation, that the name of God is blasphemed among the heathen through them. (*Rom. 2:24*) Note, for instance, the imposition of the liquor and opium traffics upon the heathen nations, by the greed of the Christian nations for gold.

A reliable witness, who speaks from the personal knowledge wrote, some time ago, to the *New York Voice* as follows:

"According to my own observations on the Congo and the West Coast [Africa], the statement of many missionaries and others, drink is doing more harm to the natives than the slave trade now or in past times. That carries off people, destroys villages; this not only slays by the thousands, but debauches and ruins body and soul, whole tribes, and leaves them to become the parents of degenerate creatures born in their own debauched image...All the workmen are given a big drink of rum every day at noon, and forced to take at least two bottles of gin as pay for work every Saturday night; at many of the factories, when a one, two or three years' contract expires, they are forced to take a barrel of rum or some cases or demijohns of gin to carry home with them. Native traders are forced to take casks of liquor in exchange for native produce, even when they remonstrate, and, gaining no redress, pour the liquor into the river; traders saying, 'The niggers must take rum, we cannot make money enough to satisfy the firm at home by selling them salt or cloth.' Towns are roaring pandemoniums every

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Sunday from drink. There are villages where every man, woman and child is stupid drunk, and thus former religious services are broken up. Chiefs say sadly to missionaries, 'Why did not you Godmen come before the drink did? The drink has eaten out my people's heads and hardened their hearts: they cannot understand, they do not care for anything good.'"

It is even said that some of the heathen are holding up the Christian's Bible before them, and saying, "Your practices do not correspond with the teachings of your sacred book." A Brahmin is said to have written a missionary, "We are finding you out. You are not as good as your Book. If your people were only as good as your Book, you would conquer India in five years." *See Ezek. 22:4.*

Truly, if the men of Nineveh and the queen of the south shall rise up in judgment against the generation of Israel which the Lord directly addressed (*Matt. 12:41,42*), then Israel and every previous generation, and the heathen

nations shall rise up against this generation of Christendom; for where much has been given much will be required. *Luke 12:48*

But, dropping the morally retributive aspect of the question, we see how, in the very nature of the case, the heathen nations must suffer in the fall of Christendom, Babylon. Through the influences of the Word of God, direct and indirect, the Christian nations have made great advancements in civilization and material prosperity in every line, so that in wealth, comfort, intellectual development, education, civil government, in science, art, manufacture, commerce and every branch of human industry, they are far in advance of the heathen nations which have not been so favored with the civilizing influences of the oracles of God, but which, on the contrary, have experienced a steady decline, so that today they exhibit only the wrecks of their former

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prosperity. Compare for example, the Greece of today with ancient Greece, which was once the seat of learning and affluence. Mark, too, the present ruins of the glory of ancient Egypt, once the chief nation of the whole earth.

In consequence of the decline of the heathen nations and the civilization and prosperity of the Christian nations, the former are all more or less indebted to the latter for many advantages received--for the benefits of commerce, of international communication and a consequent enlargement of ideas, etc. Then, too, the march of progress in recent years has linked all the nations in various common interests, which, if seriously unsettled in one or more of the nations soon affect all. Hence when Babylon, Christendom, goes down suddenly, the effects will be most serious upon all the more or less dependent nations, which, in the symbolic language of Revelation are therefore represented as greatly bewailing the fall of that great city Babylon. *Rev. 18:9-19*

But not alone in Babylon's fall will the heathen nations suffer; for the swelling waves of social and political commotion will quickly spread and involve and engulf them all; and thus the whole earth will be swept with the besom of destruction, and the haughtiness of man will be brought low; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord." (*Rom. 12:19; Deut. 32:35*) And the judgment of the Lord upon both Christendom and Heathendom will be on the strictest lines of equity.

The Coming Storm

"Oh! sad is my heart for the storm that is coming;
Like eagles the scud sweepeth in from the sea;
The gull seeketh shelter, the pine trees are sighing,
And all giveth note of the tempest to be.

"A spell hath been whispered from cave or from ocean,
The shepherds are sleeping, the sentinels dumb,
The flocks all scattered on moorland and mountain,
And no one believes that the Master is come.

"He has come, but whom doth he find their watch keeping?
Oh! where--in his *presence*--is faith the world o'er?
The rich, every sense in soft luxury steeping;
The poor scarce repelling the wolf from the door.

"O man, and O maiden, drop trifling and pleasure!
O hark! while I tell of the sorrow to be.

* * *

As well might I plead in the path of yon glacier,
Or cry out a warning to wave of the sea!"