

Towards The Dawn Of Better Times

could there be any mistake in identifying this present one as the last and most stirring of all?

THE SILVER SIDE OF THE CLOUD

What a good thing the Scriptural picture of “the last days” is not all gloomy! Associated with the end of time is a great revival of true spiritual religion which shall out-Pentecost Pentecost for splendor and power.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, said God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh: and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit.” Acts 2: 17-20. When God pours His Spirit upon men in a faithless generation mighty deeds always follow. In this case God attests this new reformation by mighty signs from heaven: “And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath.” That this reappearance of Pentecostal power, that this return to a demonstration of -the miraculous is part of God’s great plan to seek to save men by a supreme final appeal is provable in several ways.

Firstly, it is to transpire “before that great and notable day of the Lord come.” Acts 2: 20. See also Joel. 2:31. As a further chronological link, some of these same physical wonders are mentioned in the Book of Revelation, followed immediately by the appearance of Christ, who intervenes to save the world from itself. Revelation 6: 12, 13.

THE NEW PATHWAY TO PENTECOST

Secondly, multitudes of men are to turn from the empty dissatisfactions of this world to call upon the living God: “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Acts 2: 21. See also Joel 2: 32. Peter, it is true, applied this statement to what he saw in his day at Pentecost, but that was the notable beginning of the gospel dispensation, and this the dynamic ending. One was the “former rain” and the other “the latter rain.” Joel 2: 23. The first rain prepared the way for a grand beginning; the latter rain of God’s Spirit will ripen the earth for the final harvest of sincere souls which, Jesus said, is at “the end of the world.” Matthew 13: 37-39.

Perhaps the most wonderful picture of the world’s harvest is that in which the Great Harvester is seen coming to reap the harvest of the earth. Revelation 14: 14, 15. Immediately preceding that scene are statements indicating. (1) A world-wide proclamation of the old gospel which saves men’s souls; (2) a frank and universal warning, through this reformation preaching, that the end of the age is at hand. (3) Distinguishing signs by which men anxious to serve the living God may be recognized in a disobedient age, and (4) a short, tense, final struggle between the forces of righteousness and the hosts of iniquity.

THE WHOLE GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE WORLD

“This gospel of the kingdom,” it was called by Jesus. Obviously, this refers to news of the coming kingdom, the new world order and its ruler. It is to “be preached in all the world for a witness, unto all nations.” Matthew 24: 14.

If we could list in full, the philanthropic, humanitarian, and evangelistic organizations that have arisen in the past century or so, we should have the strongest evidence of the suddenness and of the extent of these movements. Here is a partial list:-

- 1799 Religious Tract Society, London, organized.
- 1804 British and Foreign Bible Society organized.
- 1806 Dublin Bible Society began.
- 1808 First American Bible Society (Philadelphia).
- 1808 London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews.
- 1809 Edinburgh Bible Society formed.
- 1813 Wesleyan Missionary Society formed.
- 1816 American Bible Society started.
- 1817 Baptist Missionary Society started.
- 1821 Gospel of Matthew first embossed for the blind by Sir Charles Lowther.
- 1824 Formation of Royal National Lifeboat Institution.
- 1825 National Bible Society of Scotland formed.
- 1825 Church of Scotland Mission Board instituted.
- 1831 Trinitarian Bible Society started.

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- 1834 Braille type invented for the blind.
- 1836 First Training Institution for lady nurses opened.
- 1838 Abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire.
- 1840 Wesleyan Calvinistic Methodist Missionary Society formed.
- 1840 Elizabeth Fry's Nurses' Training Institution in England.
- 1840 First complete Bible for the blind.
- 1841 Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society formed.
- 1843 Primitive Methodist Mission started.
- 1847 Moon's type for blind invented.
- 1847 Presbyterian Church of England Missions began.
- 1848 First Government Lifeboat Station in U.S.A.
- 1862 China Inland Mission formed.
- 1865 Friends' Foreign Missions Association started.
- 1880 Church of England Zenana Missionary Society formed.
- 1880 Central African Mission of English Universities started.

Within a few years the two largest Bible societies, the British and Foreign, and the American, were annually distributing not less than ten million copies of the whole or part of the Scriptures. Just as the Reformation of the sixteenth century could never have done its work without the Bible in the hands of the people, so in these last times the greater reformation must come through the message of the Old Book.

No generation of men has fully understood the whole of the Bible. Truth is not static. It grows as God's Spirit reveals more and more to successive generations of truth-seekers. Consequently the last generation of God's saints on earth should possess a fuller measure of Biblical truth than any other.

NEW LIGHT FROM HEAVEN

We must be ready to accept new truth if God sends it to us, just as the people in the times of Luther and Calvin had to make decisions to accept new light or lose their souls in error.

In later years the descendants of the Reformers stopped in their tracks and made but little or no progress toward the new light God- was sending them. The Pilgrim Fathers bemoaned this fact in the seventeenth century as they sailed from Leyden, for in his farewell sermon, Pastor Robinson "took occasion miserably to bewail the state and condition of the Reformed churches, who were come to a period in religion, and would go no farther than the instruments of their Reformation."

He then compares the Lutherans and Calvinists with their respective leaders: "They stick where he left them: a misery much to be lamented."

Of Luther and Calvin he said: "And were they now living. They would be as ready and willing to embrace further light, as that they had received."-Ed. Winslow's account of Robinson's last sermon, in "Hypocrisy Unmasked," page 97.

The institutional religion of our time has, despite some noble exceptions, become so formal and conservative that its spiritual power is departed. The instruments of the new reformation could scarcely be any of the great world religions as we now know them. What the world now needs is a revitalizing spiritual revival in such heaven-sent power that it shall sweep through the earth-like

A NEW MESSAGE TO MAN.

In the early part of the nineteenth century men in various countries arose and, on the strength of their studies of prophetic Scripture, began proclaiming the doctrine of the second advent of Jesus Christ with power. In old England we had our original and distinguished Edward Irving preaching powerfully the reformatory Scriptural doctrine of the pre-millennial second advent, as well as other stalwarts such as Henry Drummond, and Way. In Germany there arose men like Wolff and Kelber, in America Krupp, McGregor, Davis, and Miller. These men, and others like them quite unknown to each other, began the proclamation of the imminent return of Jesus and associated doctrines, with stirring results. Today there has arisen from this a world-encircling movement which promulgates in practically every known tongue the new message of the Old Book which is destined to go to "all the world for a witness to all nations," before "the end" shall come.

Could a loving God do less than warn a judgment-bound world of the imminence of such a catastrophic event as the second advent? "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He reveals His secret