

The Approaching Crisis

The image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many As would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. Revelation 13:15

A great crisis awaits the people of God. Very soon our nation will attempt to enforce upon all, the observance of the first day of the week as a sacred day. In doing this, they will not scruple to compel men against the voice of their own conscience to observe the day the nation declares to be the Sabbath. In view of this, there must be, among God's Commandment-keeping people, more spirituality and a deeper consecration to God, and a zeal in His work that has never yet been reached, to hold aloft the banner of God's truth. The law of God, the only standard of righteousness, must be prized in proportion as the professed Christian world manifest contempt for it.

The law of God should be loved and prized by God's true people now, more than ever before. There is the most urgent necessity of enforcing the words of Christ upon the mind and heart of every believer, both men and women, youth and children: "Search the Scriptures." Examine your bibles, as you have never done before. Unless you arise to a higher, holier attitude in your religious life, you will not be ready for the appearing of our Lord. There are many who are not purifying their souls by obeying the truth. As great light has been given them, God expects proportionate zeal, devotion, and faithfulness upon the part of His people. But there will be proportionate darkness, unbelief, and blindness as the truth is not appreciated and acted upon.

The Lord will not remove from His people every occasion to doubt; but He will give sufficient light and evidence to encourage faith and confidence; and if they walk as Christ, the light of the world, leads the way, they will not step aside into the paths of doubt and unbelief. When declension and danger threaten the church, there will be more praying, more fasting, by the faithful few, and the Lord will answer the prayers offered to Him in sincerity, and at the same time He will come forth as an avenger because of the guiltiness of the evil-workers. He will be a protector; for He will "avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them."

It will appear as though Satan is triumphant, and that truth is overborne with falsehood and error; because the people over whom God has spread His shield, and the country which has been an asylum to the conscience-oppressed lovers of God and the defenders of His truth, are placed in desperate jeopardy through its oppressive legislation. Should our nation abjure the principles of Protestantism, to give countenance and sanction to the Sunday law, they will in this act join hands with popery; for it will be nothing else than giving life to the tyranny which has been eagerly waiting and watching its opportunity to spring into active despotism. And now, as this evil is on the point of realization, it is the business of all believers in the Bible to arouse.

For years many have sat in calm expectation of this event, and they will not be working out the purposes of God if they comfort themselves with the thought that what is to come will come, and anything that they may do will not prevent it. They should not settle down in an easy, comfortable indolence, thinking that God will shelter His own people in the day of this calamity. This is the time for action, not for indolence and spiritual stupor. Satan is preparing his forces with a power from beneath, and all heaven is in busy activity, ready to work in the interests of those who are awake to the condition of things, and, like faithful

sentinels, are doing all they can to arouse the people to avert, if possible, the threatened evil.

If our people continue in the listless attitude in which they have been, God cannot pour upon them His Spirit. They are unprepared to co-operate with Him. They do not realize the threatened danger, and are not awake to the situation. They should feel now as never before their need of vigilance and well-concerted action.

The following quotation from Testimony, No. 32, pages 208-210, which was published in 1885, shows that our people have not been left without warnings as to the duties and dangers of the times:

"God has revealed what is to take place in the last days, that his people may be prepared to stand against the tempest of opposition and wrath. Those who have been warned of the events before them are not to sit in calm expectation of the coming storm, comforting themselves that the Lord will shelter his faithful ones in the day of trouble. We are to be as men waiting for their Lord, not in idle expectancy, but in earnest work, with unwavering faith. It is no time now to allow our minds to be engrossed with things of minor importance. While men are sleeping, Satan is actively arranging matters so that the Lord's people may not have mercy or justice. The Sunday movement is now making its way in darkness. The leaders are concealing the true issue, and many who unite in the movement do not themselves see whither the under-current is tending. Its professions are mild, and apparently Christian; but when it shall speak, it will reveal the spirit of the dragon. It is our duty to do all in our power to avert the threatened danger. We should endeavor to disarm prejudice by placing ourselves in a proper light before the people. We should bring before them the real question at issue, thus interposing the most effectual protest against measures to restrict liberty of conscience. We should search the Scriptures, and be able to give the reason for our faith. Says the prophet, "The wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

Those who have access to God through Christ have important work before them. Now is the time to lay hold of the arm of our strength. The prayer of David should be the prayer of pastors and laymen: "It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law." Let the servants of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar, crying, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." God has always wrought for his people in their greatest extremity, when there seemed the least hope that ruin could be averted. The designs of wicked men, the enemies of the church, are subject to his power and overruling providence. He can move upon the hearts of statesmen; the wrath of the turbulent and disaffected, the haters of God, of his truth and his people, can be turned aside, even as the rivers of water are turned, if he orders it thus. Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence. He who marshals the stars in order in the heavens, whose word controls the waves of the great deep--the same infinite Creator will work in behalf of his people if they call upon him in faith. He will restrain the forces of darkness, until the warning is given to the world, and all who will heed it are prepared for the conflict. "The wrath of man shall praise Thee," says the psalmist; "the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain." God means that testing truth shall be brought to the front, and become a subject of examination and discussion, even if it is through the contempt placed upon it. The minds of the people must be agitated. Every controversy, every reproach, every slander, will be God's means of provoking inquiry, and awakening minds that otherwise would slumber.

Thus it has been in the past history of God's people. For refusing to worship the great golden image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up, the three Hebrews were cast into the fiery

furnace. But God preserved his servants in the midst of the flames, and the attempt to enforce idolatry resulted in bringing the knowledge of the true God before the assembled princes and great men of the vast kingdom of Babylon. So it was when the decree went forth forbidding prayer to any god save the king. As Daniel, according to his custom, made his supplications three times a day to the God of heaven, the attention of the princes and rulers was called to his case. He had an opportunity to speak for himself, to show who is the true God, and to present the reason why he alone should receive worship, and the duty of rendering him praise and homage. And the deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions was another evidence that the Being whom he worshiped was the true and living God.

So the imprisonment of Paul brought the gospel before kings, princes, and rulers, who otherwise would not have had this light. The efforts made to retard the progress of truth will serve to extend it. The excellence of truth is more clearly seen from every successive point from which it may be viewed. Error requires disguise and concealment. It clothes itself in angel robes, and every manifestation of its real character lessens its chance of success.

The people whom God has made the depositaries of his law are not to permit their light to be hidden. The truth must be proclaimed in the dark places of the earth. Obstacles must be met and surmounted. A great work is to be done, and this work has been intrusted to those who know the truth. They should make mighty intercession with God for help now. The love of Christ must be diffused in their own hearts. The Spirit of Christ must be poured out upon them, and they must be making ready to stand in the judgment. While they are consecrating themselves to God, a convincing power will attend their efforts to present the truth to others, and its light will find access to many hearts. We must sleep no longer on Satan's enchanted ground, but call into requisition all our resources, and avail ourselves of every facility with which Providence has furnished us. The last warning is to be proclaimed "before many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings;" and the promise is given, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Through fraud and falsehood Satan is now using those who claim to be Christians to divorce the world from God's mercy. They are working in blindness. They do not see that if a Protestant government sacrifices the principles that have made them a free, independent nation, and through legislation brings into the Constitution, principles that will propagate papal falsehood and papal delusion, they are plunging into the Roman horrors of the Dark Ages. But this need not be, just at this point of time, if the church is aroused to her duty and her work. A vast responsibility is devolving upon men and women of prayer throughout the land, to petition that God may sweep back this cloud of evil, and give a few more years of grace to work for the Master.

The peculiar work of the third angel has not been seen in its importance. God meant that his people should be far in advance of what they are today. But now, when the time has come for them to spring into action, they have the getting ready to do. When Satan made his advances, it was high time for the watchmen on the walls of Zion to arouse and counteract his efforts to obtain the advantage. It is not in the order of God that light has been kept from our people--the very present truth which they needed for this time. Not all of our ministers who are giving the third angel's message, really understand what constitutes that message. The National Reform movement has been regarded by some as of so little importance that they have not thought it necessary to give much attention to it, and have even felt that in so doing, they would be giving time to questions distinct from the third angel's message. May the Lord forgive our brethren for thus interpreting the very message for this time. The third angel's message comprehends more than many suppose. What interpretation do they give to the passage which says an angel descended from

heaven, and the earth was lightened with his glory? This is not a time when we can be excused for inactivity. If this work, which was so essential, had been taken up by our ministers, there would be today a far different state of things in all our churches.

Some in the church will prove to be false brethren; their faith, their love, their patience, their constancy will be tested and tried; and if they are not rooted and grounded in the truth, if they are not filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and the praise of God, they will become offended at reproofs and warnings, will not humble their souls before God, and will go back and walk no more with those who love the truth. The people need to be aroused in regard to the dangers of the present time. The watchmen are asleep. We are years behind. Let the chief watchmen feel the urgent necessity of taking heed to themselves, lest they lose the opportunities given to them to see the dangers. Let them blow the trumpet, not in a general way, but so that it may give a certain sound, that other watchmen upon the walls of Zion may hear, and in their turn send forth the warning note.

Perils now threaten the people of God; and what will they do? Can we not assist in lifting the standard, and in calling to the front those who have a regard for their religious rights and privileges? God calls us to awake; for the end is near. The prophecies that show us the closing scenes of earth's history, are fast fulfilling. The time is fast approaching when we shall be made to feel the hand of oppression, because we demand our religious rights. Shall we then dishonor God by keeping silent, when his holy commandments are being trampled under foot?

We have been looking many years for a Sunday law to be enacted in our land; and now that the movement is right upon us, we ask, What are our people going to do in the matter? Do you realize that the night will soon come, when no man can work? Have you that intensity of zeal, that piety and devotion, which will enable you to stand when opposition is brought upon you? If God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when we shall be brought before councils, and every position of truth which we hold will be severely criticized. The time that we are now allowing to go to waste should be devoted to the charge God has given us, of preparing for the approaching crisis. Much time should be spent in prayer, that our garments of character may be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

We should especially seek God for grace and power to be given his people now. God lives; and we do not believe that the time has fully come when he would have our liberties restricted. The prophet saw "four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." Another angel ascending from the east, cried to them, saying, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." This points out the work we now have to do, which is to cry to God for the angels to hold the four winds until missionaries shall be sent to all parts of the world, and shall have proclaimed the warning against disobeying the law of Jehovah. But every conceivable thing that the enemy can bring against the people of God, to hinder them in their work, will be employed. The Lord, on the other hand, bids all to be awake and to watch; for it was while men slept, that the enemy sowed tares. Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, 12-11-88.