

THE PRESENT TRUTH

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Don't Forget—This Was For Our Generation

On one occasion, when in New York City, I was in the night season called upon to behold buildings rising story after story toward heaven. These buildings were warranted to be fireproof, and they were erected to glorify the owners and builders. Higher and still higher these buildings rose, and in them the most costly material was used. Those to whom these buildings belonged were not asking themselves: "How can we best glorify God?" The Lord was not in their thoughts.

I thought: "Oh, that those who are thus investing their means could see their course as God sees it! They are piling up magnificent buildings, but how foolish in the sight of the Ruler of the universe is their planning and devising. They are not studying with all the powers of heart and mind how they may glorify God. They have lost sight of this, the first duty of man."

As these lofty buildings went up, the owners rejoiced with ambitious pride that they had money to use in gratifying self and provoking the envy of their neighbors. Much of the money that they thus invested had been obtained through exaction, through grinding down the poor. They forgot that in heaven an account of every business transaction is kept; every unjust deal, every fraudulent act, is there recorded. The time is coming when in their fraud and insolence men will reach a point that the Lord will not permit them to pass, and they will learn that there is a limit to the forbearance of Jehovah.

The scene that next passed before me was an alarm of fire. Men looked at the lofty and supposedly fire-proof buildings and said: "They are perfectly safe." But these buildings were consumed as if made of pitch. The fire engines could do nothing to stay the destruction. The firemen were unable to operate the engines.

I am instructed that when the Lord's time comes, should no change have taken place in the hearts of proud, ambitious human beings, men will find that the hand that had been strong to save will be strong to destroy. No earthly power can stay the hand of God. No material can be used in the erection of buildings that will preserve them from destruction when God's appointed time comes to send retribution on men for their disregard of His law and for their selfish ambition.

There are not many, even among educators and statesmen, who comprehend the causes that underlie the present state of society. Those who hold the reins of government are not able to solve the problem of moral corruption, poverty, pauperism, and increasing crime. They are struggling in vain to place business operations on a more secure basis. If men would give more heed to the teaching of God's word, they would find a solution of the problems that perplex them.

The Scriptures describe the condition of the world just before Christ's second coming. Of the men who by robbery and extortion are amassing great riches, it is written: "Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you." James 5:3-6.

But who reads the warnings given by the fast-fulfilling signs of the times? What impression is made upon worldlings? What change is seen in their attitude? No more than was seen in the attitude of the inhabitants of the Noachian world. Absorbed in worldly business and pleasure, the antediluvians "knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away." Matthew 24:39. They had heaven-sent warnings, but they refused to listen. And today the world, utterly regardless of the warning voice of God, is hurrying on to eternal ruin.

The world is stirred with the spirit of war. The prophecy of the eleventh chapter of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place. "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. . . . Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate. . . . The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth." Isaiah 24:1-8. because joy is withered away from the sons of men." Joel 1:15-18, 12.

"I am pained at my very heart; . . . I cannot hold my peace, because thou has heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled." Jeremiah 4:19, 20. "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down." Verses 23-26. "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jeremiah 30:7.

Not all in this world have taken sides with the enemy against God. Not all have become disloyal. There are a faithful few who are true to God; for John writes: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12. Soon the battle will be waged fiercely between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. Soon everything that can be shaken will be shaken, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain.

Satan is a diligent Bible student. He knows that his time is short, and he seeks at every point to counterwork the work of the Lord upon this earth. It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who shall be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a repetition of the persecutions of the past are blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By means of the angels there will be constant communication between heaven and earth. And Satan, surrounded by evil angels, and claiming to be God, will work miracles of all kinds, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. God's people will not find their safety in working miracles, for Satan will counterfeit the miracles that will be wrought. God's tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Exodus 31:12-18. They are to take their stand on the living word: "It is written." This is the only foundation upon which they can stand securely. Those who have broken their covenant with God will in that day be without God and without hope.

The worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the fourth commandment, since this is the sign of God's creative power and the witness to His claim upon man's reverence and homage. The wicked will be distinguished by their efforts to tear down the Creator's memorial and to exalt the institution of Rome. In the issue of the conflict all Christendom will be divided into two great classes, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark. Although church and state will unite their power to compel all, "both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," to receive the mark of the beast, yet the people of God will not receive it. Revelation 13:16. The prophet of Patmos beholds "them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God," and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Revelation 15:2.

Fearful tests and trials await the people of God. The spirit of war is stirring the nations from one end of the earth to the other. But in the midst of the time of trouble that is coming,--a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation,--God's chosen people will stand unmoved. Satan and his host cannot destroy them, for angels that excel in strength will protect them.

God's word to His people is: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters." "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 2 Corinthians 6: 17, 18; 1 Peter 2:9. God's people are to be distinguished as a people who serve Him fully, wholeheartedly, taking no honor to themselves, and remembering that by a most solemn covenant they have bound themselves to serve the Lord and Him only.

"The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: everyone that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." Exodus 31:12-17. {Testimonies Volume 9 Pg. 11-15}

Satan trembled as he viewed his work. He was alone in meditation upon the past, the present, and his future plans. His mighty frame shook as with a tempest. An angel from heaven was passing. He called him and entreated an interview with Christ. This was granted him. He then related to the Son of God that he repented of his rebellion and wished again the favor of God. He was willing to take the place God had previously assigned him, and be under His wise command. Christ wept at Satan's woe but told him, as the mind of God, that he could never be received into heaven. Heaven must not be placed in jeopardy. All heaven would be marred should he be received back, for sin and rebellion originated with him. The seeds of rebellion were still within him. He had, in his rebellion, no occasion for his course, and he had hopelessly ruined not only himself but the host of angels also, who would then have been happy in heaven had he remained steadfast. The law of God could condemn but could not pardon.

He repented not of his rebellion because he saw the goodness of God which he had abused. It was not possible that his love for God had so increased since his fall that it would lead to cheerful submission and happy obedience to His law which had been despised. The wretchedness he realized in losing the sweet light of heaven, and the sense of guilt which forced itself upon him, and the disappointment he experienced himself in not finding his expectation realized, were the cause of his grief. To be commander out of heaven was vastly different from being thus honored in heaven. The loss he had sustained of all the privileges of heaven seemed too much to be borne. He wished to regain these.

This great change of position had not increased his love for God, nor for His wise and just law. When Satan became fully convinced that there was no possibility of his being reinstated in the favor of God, he manifested his malice with increased hatred and fiery vehemence.

God knew that such determined rebellion would not remain inactive. Satan would invent means to annoy the heavenly angels and show contempt for His authority. As he could not gain admission within the gates of heaven, he would wait just at the entrance, to taunt the angels and seek contention with them as they went in and out. He would seek to destroy the happiness of Adam and Eve. He would endeavor to incite them to rebellion, knowing that this would cause grief in heaven. {Story of Redemption Pg. 26- 27}