

## "ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?"

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### THE FUTURE—SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS

AS SEEN BY A CONGREGATIONAL MINISTER

Rev. Dr. C. I. Scofield, pastor of a large Congregational church in Texas, recently preached a sermon on unfulfilled prophecies as interpreted by the signs of the times. He said:

I am to speak to you tonight upon unfulfilled prophecy as interpreting the signs of the times. As pertinent to that theme, I ask you to look with me at the passage found in Luke 12:54-56: "And he said also to the people, when ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites! Ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?"

As a matter of fact, the ancient people of God did not discern the time of their visitation, the presence of their long expected Messiah, simply and only because they did not study the signs of their own times in the light of the prophets. From Genesis to Malachi the spirit of prophecy had been painting, broadly at first, but stroke upon stroke in ever fuller detail, the portrait of a coming one. His biography, to change the figure, was written beforehand.

In due time he came, and prophecy began to be changed into history. For three years he filled the earth and air with the very marks of identity which the prophetic portrait required. To this day the absolutely unanswerable proof of the messiahship of Jesus is the unvarying literalness of his fulfillment of the prophecies. The prophets and the evangelists answer to each other as the printed page answers to the type, as the photograph answers to the negative. And these predictions, be it remembered, were so minute and specific as to exclude the possibility of imposture. It is open to any man to say, "I am the Christ;" but it is not possible for any man to arrange his ancestry for two thousand years before his birth, and then to be born at a precise time, in a particular village, of a virgin mother.

Looking back upon all this, we marvel that the men of Christ's own time did not hit upon the simple expedient of testing his pretensions by the prophetic Scriptures. More than

once he challenged the test, but they remained to the end discerners of the sky and of the earth, but absolutely blind to the tremendous portents of their time.

But is it not possible, at least, that we are equally blind to evident signs? We have the prophetic word "made more sure," says Peter, who calls it a "light shining in a dark place," and warns us that we do well to take heed to it. But are we walking in that light? Rather, is it not true that the prophetic Scriptures are precisely the portions of the sacred book least studied? Of this we may be sure: there is nothing occurring which has not been foreseen and foretold, and of this, too, that the things foretold will surely come to pass. Is it not possible, therefore, that our Lord is saying of us: "How is it that ye do not discern this time?"

Let us proceed after this manner: First, let us look at the prophecies which describe the closing events of this dispensation and usher in the next. Second, let us look about us to see if our sky holds any portent of those things.

The first great word of prophecy, solemn, repeated, emphatic, is that this age ends in catastrophe.

"In the last days perilous times shall come. 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. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." (Luke 21:25-27) "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the presence of the Son of Man be. For, as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the presence of the Son of Man be." (Matt. 24:37-39) "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they

shall not escape." And then, referring to the abundant prophetic testimony in our hands, the apostle adds, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."—1 Thess. 5:3, 4.

It is useless to multiply references when all are to the same purport. The notion that we are to pass, by the peaceful evolutionary processes of a broadening culture, by the achievements of discovery and inventions and by the universal acceptance of the gospel, into the golden age of millennial blessedness is, in the light of prophecy, the baseless fabric of a dream. True, the prophet's vision takes in that day; but it lies beyond the awful chasm of blood and tears and despair which yawns between. Toward that chasm this age is hastening with accelerated speed: this age ends in catastrophe.

So much for the broad and obvious prophetic testimony which he who runs may read. Now the book of the Revelation (and to some extent Second Thesalonians) takes up these prophecies of the end time, and enters into the detail of them. By this we know not merely that the end is calamitous and catastrophic, but also of what elements the calamitous catastrophe is made up. Observe, I do not say that the Revelation tells us what precedes the catastrophe, but of what the catastrophe itself consists.

And first it is war, and war such as this world has never seen, war colossal, universal and desperate. "Peace shall be taken from the earth." Not only organized combat of nation against nation, but the murderous passions of men shall be unchained, and "they shall kill each other." The natural results of such a condition are depicted as following: famine, consequent upon unsown fields, and then pestilence.

And second, this awful condition is to be followed by bloody anarchy—the overthrow of all settled government.

Now, it is evident that if we are indeed near the end of this age, some unmistakable signs of these coming horrors must be discoverable. Wars on the apocalyptic scale require long years of preparation. In primitive conditions, tribe springs to arms against tribe; but we are not living in primitive conditions. If, therefore, we find the nations of the earth steadily reducing their armaments, selling off their war material, sending regiments back to the forge and the plow, and dismantling fortresses, we may be sure, not indeed that the prophecies will fail, but that they will not reach their fulfillment in our time.

Similarly, anarchy in any universal sense is not the product of an hour. The conservative instincts are too strong, love of home and property and security too deep-seated. Men may, as they have, overturn a government; but it is only to establish another which they prefer. But anarchy, pure and simple, is not a spontaneous possibility. If, therefore, we find men everywhere growing in love of order and veneration for law; if we find lynchings and riots becoming infrequent, and discontent with the settled order disappearing, we may be sure that the end of the age is far removed from us. We may go on with our buying and selling, confident that our accumulations will represent some fleeting value for yet a few transitory years.

Nor need we be specially apprehensive if, upon a survey of the times, we find but a nation or two here and there in readiness for war; or a few anarchic socialists noisily venting their theories. But what are the facts—facts so conspicuous, so obtrusive, so inconsistent, that all the world feels itself under the shadow of impending calamity?

Take the war shadow first. Have armaments been decreasing? On the contrary, Europe, the east, everything within the sphere anciently ruled by Rome (which is the especial sphere of prophetic testimony), is filled as never before with armed men. All the nations, with feverish haste, are increasing their armaments. Practically bankrupt, they are hoarding gold and piling up material of war, though perfectly aware that the strain is simply insupportable for any long continued period; and they are doing it because they all feel that a tremendous crisis is at hand.

Within two years Bismarck and Gladstone, the most experienced and sagacious of living statesmen, have said that the situation does not admit of a peaceful solution, that the world is hastening toward the war of wars, the outcome of which no man can predict. This is also the expressed opinion of that singular

man whose only position is that of Paris correspondent of the *London Times*, but whose wisdom, judgment and prudence are such that he is consulted by every cabinet and trusted by every sovereign—De Blowitz. And all are agreed that the war, when it comes, must involve the earth.

Eleven millions of men are armed and drilled and ready to drench the prophetic earth in seas of blood. The Emperor William has said to his friend, Poultney Bigelow: "We live over a volcano. No man can predict the moment of the eruption. So intense is the strain that a riot the other day between French and Italian workmen at Aigues-Mortes—a mere riot—came near to precipitating the awful conflict."

So much for the war sign of the end. What of the anarchic portent? We all know that now for the first time in the history of the world is there a socialist propaganda. Socialism is a fad with dreaming doctrines, a desperate purpose with millions of the proletariat of Russia, France, Germany, England, Italy.

From the philosophic socialism of Bellamy and the idealists to the anarchic socialism of Spies, Schwab and Neebe may seem a far cry. How long in 1790-93 did it take France to traverse the distance from Rousseau and Diderot to Robespierre? Yes, my hearers, the anarchy sign blazes in our heavens alongside the baleful war sign. But there is more. Two groups among the sons of men are especially in the eye of prophecy—the Christian church and ancient Israel. What, let us ask, is the prophetic picture of the end of the church age? The answer is in large characters, and none need miss it. The church age ends in increasing apostasy, lukewarmness, and worldliness on the part of the many; of intense activity, zeal and devotedness on the part of the few.

What now are the signs? Look into our churches. The world has come into the church and the church has gone into the world, until the frontier is effaced. Moral and honorable men of the world point the finger of scorn at the life of the average professor of religion. But in all our churches are the faithful few who do the praying, the giving, the home and foreign mission work; and these have never been excelled in any age in zeal, piety and consecration. Verily, this sign, too, of the catastrophe is here.

What of Israel? As all Bible students know, the great burden of the unfulfilled prophecy concerning the Jew is his restoration to his own land. This does not mean that every Jew must return, but only that the nation must be reconstituted upon its own soil. Is there any sign of this? Every reader of the newspapers has his answer ready. In a word, there are more Jews in Palestine now than returned under Ezra and Zerubbabel to reconstitute the nation after the Babylonian captivity. More have returned in the last ten years than within any like period since the destruction of Jerusalem—more in the last three years than in the previous thirty. The great bulk of the Jewish people are in Russia, where now they are undergoing persecutions so infamous as to move to indignation and grief every generous soul. Moved with pity, Baron Hirsch is seeking to deport his suffering brethren to South America; but the Russian Jews themselves moved by undying faith in the prophets, have organized the great Choveir Lion association to promote the colonization of Palestine. This will succeed; the other, in large measure, will fail.

And so, my friends, looking through the vision of the prophets on to the end-time for conditions, and then sweeping our own sky for signs, we find the four great portents—preparation for universal war, universal anarchy, a worldly church and regathering Israel lifting themselves up into a significance which the world dimly apprehends, but which we, who are not of the night that that day should overtake us as a thief, know means that the end is just upon us. How glorious that this lamp of prophecy not only casts its rays into the awful abyss upon the brink of which the age hangs poised, but also lights up the fair Millennial shore just beyond, where the nations of the redeemed shall walk in light and peace under Messiah's rule, with restored Israel the manifestation of his earthly glory. And even beyond that golden age we are permitted to see the new heavens and the new earth—eternity.

## ECHOES FROM THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

A GLIMPSE AT THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE OF INDIA

[Continued from our last.]

### HAPPY HINDOO MARRIAGES

"Happiness is not to be confounded with palatial dwellings, gorgeously fitted with soft seats and yielding sofas, with magnificent costumes, with gay balls or giddy dancing parties, nor with noisy revelries or drinking bouts and card tables; and

as often, if not oftener, in that distant lotus land, as in your own beloved land of liberty, you will come across a young and blooming wife in the first flush of impetuous youth who, when suddenly smitten with the death of the lord of her life, at once takes to the pure and spotless garb of a poor widow,

and with devout resignation awaits for the call from above to pass into the land which knows no parting or separation. But these are cases of those who are capable of thought and feeling. What sentiment of devoted love can you expect from a girl of twelve or fourteen whose ideas are so simple and artless and whose mind still lingers at skipping and doll-making? What sense and reason is there in expecting her to remain in that condition of forced, artificial, lie-long widowhood? Oh, the lot of such child-widows! How shall I depict their mental misery and sufferings? Language fails and imagination is baffled at the task. Cruel fate—if there be any such power—has already reduced them to the condition of widows, and the heartless, pitiless customs of the country barbarously shave them of their beautiful hair, divest them of every ornament or adornment, confine them to loneliness and seclusion—nay, teach people to hate and avoid them as objects indicating something supremely ominous and inauspicious. Like bats and owls, on all occasions of mirth and merriment they must confine themselves to their dark cells and close chambers. The unfortunate Hindoo widow is often the drudge in the family; every worry and all work that no one in the family will ever do is heaped on her head; and yet the terrible mother-in-law will almost four times in the hour visit her with cutting taunts and sweeping curses. No wonder that these poor forlorn and persecuted widows often drown themselves in an adjoining pool or a well, or make a quietus to their life by draining the poison cup. After this I need hardly say that the much needed reform in this matter is the introduction of widow marriages.

#### SOME HINDOO REFORMERS

"The Hindoo social reformer seeks to introduce the practice of allowing such widows to marry again. As long ago as fifty years one of our great pundits, the late pundit V. S. of Bombay, raised this question and fought it out in central and northern India with the orthodox Brahmans. The same work, and in a similar spirit, was carried out in Bengal and Northern India, by the late Ishwar Ch. V. Sagar of Calcutta, who died only two years ago. These two brave souls were the Luther and Knox of India. Their cause has been espoused by many others, and until today perhaps about two hundred widow marriages have been celebrated in India. The orthodox Hindoos as yet have not begun to entertain this branch of reform with any degree of favor, and so any one who marries a widow is put under a social ban. He is excommunicated; that is, no one would dine with him, or entertain any idea of intermarriage with his children or descendants. In spite of these difficulties the cause of widow marriage is daily gaining strength both in opinion and adherence.

"The position of woman. A great many reforms in the Hindoo social and domestic life cannot be effected until and unless the question as to what position does a woman occupy with reference to man is solved and settled. Is she to be recognized as man's superior, his equal, or his inferior? The entire problem of Hindoo reform hinges on the position that people in India will eventually ascribe to their women. The question of her position is yet a vexed question in such advanced countries as England and Scotland. Here in your own country of the States you have, I presume to think, given her a superior place in what you call the social circle and a place of full equality in the paths and provinces of ordinary life. Thus my American sisters are free to compete with man in the race for life. Both enjoy the same, or nearly the same, rights and privileges. In India it is entirely different. The Hindoo law-givers were all men, and, whatever others may say about them, I must say that in this one particular respect, viz., that of giving woman her own place in society, they were very partial and short-sighted men. They have given her quite a secondary place. In Indian dramas, poems and romances you may in many places find woman spoken of as the 'goddess' of the house and the 'deity of the palace,' but that is no more than a poet's conceit, and indicates a state of things that long, long ago used to be rather than at present is.

#### WOMEN'S BATTLE FROM BIRTH

"For every such passage you will find the other passages in which the readers are treated with terse dissertations and scattering lampoons on the so-called innate dark character of women. The entire thought of the country one finds saturated with this idea. The Hindoo hails the birth of a son with noisy demonstrations of joy and feasting; that of a female child as the advent of something that he would most gladly avoid if he could. The bias begins here at her very birth. Whatever may be the rationale of this state of things, no part of the programme of Hindoo social reform can ever be successfully carried out until woman is recognized as man's equal, his companion and co-worker in every part of life; not his handmaid, a tool or an instrument in his hand, a puppet or a plaything,

fit only for the hours of amusement and recreation. To me the work of social reform in India means a full recognition of woman's position. The education and enlightenment of women, granting to them liberty and freedom to move about freely, to think and act for themselves, liberating them from the prisons of long-locked zenana, extending to them the same rights and privileges, are some of the grandest problems of Hindoo social reform. All these depend on the solution of the above mentioned problem of the position of woman in India.

#### EDUCATION OF THE MASSES

"The masses of the common people in India are very ignorant and quite uneducated. The farmer, the laborer, the workman and the artisan do not know how to read or write. They are not able to sign their own names. They do not understand their own rights. They are custom bound and priest-ridden. From times past the priestly class has been the keeper and the custodian of the temple of knowledge, and they have sedulously kept the lower class in ignorance and intellectual slavery. Social reform does not mean the education and elevation of the upper few only: it means inspiring the whole country, men and women, high and low, from every creed and class, with right motives to live and act. The work classes need to be taught in many cases the very rudiments of knowledge. Night schools for them and day schools for their children are badly wanted.

#### FAILURE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

"Government is doing much; but how much can you expect from government, especially when that government is a foreign one, and therefore has every time to think of maintaining itself and keeping its prestige among foreign people? It is here that the active benevolence of such free people as yourselves is needed. In educating our masses and in extending enlightenment to our women you can do much. Every year you are lavishing—I shall not say wasting—mints of money on your so-called foreign missions and missionaries sent out, as you think, to carry the Bible and its salvation to the 'heathen Hindoo,' and thus to save him! Aye, to save him! Your poor peasants, your earnest women and your generous millionaires raise millions of dollars every year to be spent on foreign missions. Little, how little do you ever dream that your money is expended in spreading abroad nothing but Christian dogmatism and Christian bigotry. Christian pride and Christian exclusiveness. I entreat you to expend at least one-tenth of all this vast fortune on sending out to our country unsectarian, broad-learned missionaries that will spend their efforts and energies in educating our women, our men and our masses. Educate! Educate them first, and they will understand Christ much better than they would do by being 'converted' to the narrow creeds of canting Christendom.

"The difficulties of social reformers in India are manifold. Their work is most arduous. The work of engrafting on the rising Hindoo mind the ideals of a material civilization, such as yours, without taking in its agnostic or atheistic tendencies, is a task peculiarly difficult to accomplish. Reforms based on utilitarian and purely secular principles can never take a permanent hold on the mind of a race that has been essentially spiritual in all its career and history. Those who have tried to do so have failed. The Brahma-Somaj, or the church of Indian Theism, has always advocated the cause of reform, and has always been the pioneer in every reform movement. In laying the foundations of a new and reformed society the Brahma-Somaj has established every reform as a fundamental principle which must be accepted before any one can consistently belong to its organization.

"Acting on the model of ancient Hindoo society, we have so proceeded that our social institutions may secure our religious principles, while those principles regulate and establish every reform on a safe and permanent footing.

#### PLAN OF BRAHMO-SOMAJ

"Social reform merely as such has no vitality in our land. It may influence here and there an individual; it cannot rear a society or sway a community. Recognizing this secret, the religion of the Brahma-Somaj has from its very birth been the foremost to proclaim a crusade against every social evil in our country. The ruthless, heartless practice of suttee, or the burning of Hindoo widows on the funeral pile of their husbands, was abolished through the instrumentality of the great Raja Ram Rohan Roy. His successors have all been earnest social reformers as much as religious reformers. In the heart of Brahma-Somaj you find no caste, no image worship. We have abolished early marriage, and helped the cause of widow marriage. We have promoted intermarriage; we fought for and obtained a law from the British government to legalize marriage between the representatives of any castes and any creeds. The Brahmans have been great educationists. They have started schools and colleges, societies and seminaries, not

only for young men, but for girls and young women. In the Brahma community you will find hundreds of young ladies who combine in their education the acquirements of the east and the west: oriental reserve and modesty with occidental culture and refinement. Many of our ladies have taken degrees in arts and sciences in Indian universities. The religion of the Brahma-Somaj is essentially a religion of life—the living and life-giving religion of love to God and love to man. Its corner-stones are the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man and the sisterhood of woman. We upheld reform in religion and religion in reform. While we advocate that every religion needs to be reformed, we also most firmly hold that every reform, in order that it may be a living and lasting power, needs to be based on religion.

These are the lines of our work: we have been working out the most intricate problems of Hindoo social reform on these lines. We know our work is hard, but at the same time we know that the Almighty God, the father of nations, will not forsake us; only we must be faithful to his guiding spirit. And now, my brethren and sisters in America, God has made you a free people. Liberty, equality and fraternity are the guiding words that you have pinned on your banner of progress and advancement. In the name of that liberty of thought and action, for the sake of which your noble forefathers forsook their ancestral homes in far-off Europe, in the name of that equality of peace and position which you so much prize and which you so nobly exemplify in all your social and national institutions, I entreat you, my beloved American brothers and sisters, to grant us your blessings and good wishes, to give us your earnest advice and active co-operation in the realization of the social, political and religious aspirations of young India. God has given you a mission. Even now he is enacting, his holy will through these events, and extend to young India through your instrumentality, most marvelous events. Read the right hand of holy fellowship and universal brotherhood."

Would that America, with all its advantages of the gospel, were able to give the needed help; but no, in common with all "Christendom," she has fallen short of her privileges, and is unable to save India from the ditch toward which she herself is blindly drifting. But, thank God! help is coming, and that right speedily, in the glorious establishment of the kingdom of God over all the earth; and our blessed Christ, the Prince of Peace, shall himself "speak peace unto the heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."—Zech. 9:10.

**A HEATHEN POEM**

[The following lines, from a recent journal of Madras, India, show what some of the best Hindoo minds are thinking at the present time]:

"Weary are we of empty creeds,  
Of deafening calls to fruitless deeds;  
Weary of priests who cannot pray,  
Of guides who show no man the way;  
Weary of rites wise men condemn,  
Of worship linked with lust and shame;  
Weary of custom, blind, enthroned,  
Of conscience trampled, God disowned;  
Weary of men in sections cleft,  
And Hindoo life of love bereft,  
Woman debased, no more a queen,  
Nor knowing what she once hath been;  
Weary of babbling about birth,  
And of the mockery men call mirth;  
Weary of life not understood,  
A battle, not a brotherhood;  
Weary of *Kali yuga* years,  
Freighted with chaos, darkness, fears;  
Life is an ill, the sea of births is wide,  
And we are *weary*; who shall be our guide?"

**THE MURDER OF ABEL**

I QUAR., LESSON III., JAN. 21, GEN. 4:3-13.

*Golden Text*—"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."—Heb. 11:4.

VERSES 3-5. Coupled with the first promise of deliverance from sin and death through the seed of the woman, was the typical foreshadowing of the great sacrifice of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," when God substituted the garments of skin, which required the sacrifice of life, for the fig-leaf garments of Adam and Eve. Whether more plainly told them or not, we know that the idea of typical sacrifices for sin was received, and offerings were made at certain intervals of time—probably yearly, as subsequently commanded under the Jewish dispensation, and also as indicated by the sacrifices of Cain and Abel—Cain's offerings being of the fruit of the ground, a part of his harvest, and Abel's a firstling or yearling of his flock.

The offering of Abel was, according to the divine institution a sacrifice of life, and therefore a true type of the promised redemptive sacrifice, while Cain's offering was not. Hence the offering of Abel was acceptable to God, while that of Cain was rejected.

VERSES 6-7. "And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou angry? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin croucheth at the door, and unto thee is its desire; but thou canst rule over it."

VERSE 8 shows that Cain disregarded the counsel received and allowed his anger to burn unchecked. He failed to resist the enemy Sin, here figuratively represented as a devouring beast and it gained control of him and drove him, first to unkind words, and finally to murder.

VERSE 9. One sin leads to another unless promptly acknowledged. Here the sin of murder was followed by those of lying and insolence. "I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?"

VERSES 10-12. The blood of Abel cried for vengeance upon the murderer. That is, justice insists that he who takes the

life of another, thereby forfeits his own right to live.

VERSE 13. When Cain began to realize the deep remorse of a guilty conscience, in his agony of mind he cried out, "My punishment is greater than I can bear;" and in connection with the unbearable load he mentions regretfully the hiding from him of Jehovah's face, showing thus an appreciation of God's favor to which he would fain return. This evidence of penitence was quickly responded to by the Lord, who graciously set a mark upon Cain, that no one finding him should slay him, declaring that any such transgressor should receive sevenfold punishment. Thus the Lord guards the penitent. A bruised reed he will not break, and smoking flax he will not quench. (Isa. 42:3) If there be even a slight disposition to penitence, he fosters and cherishes it. This merciful course with Cain foreshadowed God's similar course with the whole guilty world: when his chastisements shall have brought them to repentance, then his arm will be extended for their recovery.

The *Golden Text* shows that it was not by custom nor by accident that Abel chose his sacrifice, but by *faith*. Evidently he had been seeking the mind of the Lord, and had found it; and thus was enabled to offer acceptably. So with God's children now: it is to those who exercise faith, and who seek and knock, that the mind of the Lord is revealed, and they can see that nothing short of the great sacrifice, our Redeemer's life, could be acceptable before God.

The Apostle, in speaking of Christ, institutes a comparison (Heb. 12:24) which seems to imply that Abel was in some degree a type of Christ; in that he offered an acceptable sacrifice, and was slain therefor. But while Abel's death called for *vengeance*, Christ's life was sacrificed *for us* and calls instead for *mercy*, not only upon those who slew him (Luke 23:34), but also upon the whole world. Not only was he slain *by men*, but he was slain *for men*; and by his stripes all may be healed who will penitently and sincerely come unto the Father by him.

**GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH**

I QUAR., LESSON IV., JAN. 28, GEN. 9:8-17.

*Golden Text*—"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth."—Gen. 9:13

With the deluge the Apostle Peter says the first world, the first heavens and earth, passed away—i. e., that dispensation, that order of things came to an end. (2 Pet. 2:5) That was

the dispensation in which the angels were permitted to mingle with men, assume the human form for that purpose, the object being to influence and help mankind to retrieve their great loss by the fall. This, God knew they could not do; but in his wisdom he permitted the endeavor, foreseeing the ultimate utility of such an experiment.

The immediate result was the corruption of some of the angels (Jude 6, 7), who, leaving their first estate, took to themselves wives of the daughters of men; and by these mixed marriages a mongrel race of "giants" was produced, who, having the unimpaired vitality of their fathers and the human nature of their mothers were indeed "mighty men of renown"—"giants" in both physical and intellectual strength, especially as compared with the fallen and rapidly degenerating human race.—Jude 6, 7; Gen. 6:2, 4.

The account of the deluge is not merely a Bible narrative, but is corroborated by the traditions of all races of the human family except the black race. It is found in India, China, Japan, Persia, among the native Indians of America and the natives of the Pacific Islands. What are known as the *Deluge Tablets* were found not long since among the ruins of the great stone library of Nineveh. The accounts given by these harmonize in many respects with the Scriptural account.

The extreme wickedness of these men and of the world in general, as described by the inspired writer, seems indicative of almost total depravity—"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that EVERY imagination of the thoughts of his heart was ONLY EVIL, CONTINUALLY." (Gen. 6:5) So God determined to wipe them all from the face of the earth, saving Noah, who "was perfect in his generations," and his family; that is, he was not of the mixed race, but was of pure Adamic stock; and his heart was right before God.

With Noah, after the flood, God again established his covenant, as he had done with Adam at the beginning, giving to him dominion over the earth, as he had done with Adam. (Gen. 9:1-12) And here again, as at the beginning, he indicates the true nature of the marriage relation—a union of one man and one woman as husband and wife, which order began

to be violated very early in the world's downward history.—Gen. 4:19.

The rainbow in the clouds was given as a sign of God's covenant with man, that the earth should never again be destroyed by a flood of waters. So ended the first dispensation, or the first world, the heavens and earth that then were, as Peter describes it (2 Pet. 3:6); and so began the second dispensation, "this present evil world" (2 Pet. 3:7, Gal. 1:4) the heavens and earth which now are, which are soon to pass away with a great noise, which are to be burned up with the fire of God's jealousy, and whose elements are to melt with fervent heat; for, like that first great dispensation, it also has become corrupt. (2 Pet. 3:10-12; Zeph. 1:18) And when this present evil world will have thus passed away, then the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, shall appear.—2 Pet. 3:13.

In this destruction of worlds it will be seen, as the Prophet also declares (Ecc. 1:4; Psa. 104:5; 119:90), that "the earth abideth forever." The same physical earth remains, and is the scene of all these great revolutionary changes, which so completely destroy the preceding order of things as to justify the mention of them under the significant symbols of a new heaven and a new earth. See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. I, Chap. 4.

While the present world—this present order of things—is also doomed to pass away, and will be replaced by another new dispensation, the new heavens and earth, God's promise of which the bow in the clouds was a pledge, will be kept: he will never again destroy the world with a flood of waters; but it is written that all the earth shall be consumed with fire: not a literal fire, but the fire of God's jealousy (Zeph. 3:8)—a symbolic fire, a great calamity, which will completely destroy the present order of things, civil, social and religious.

## BEGINNING OF THE HEBREW NATION

I. QUAR., LESSON V., FEB. 4, GEN. 12:1-9.

*Golden Text*—"I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing."—Gen. 12:2.

VERSE 1. The Lord had commanded Abraham to leave his native land, etc., while he was yet in Haran (verse 4); and later, when his father was dead, and when he arrived in the land of Canaan, God showed him the land and gave him the title to it for himself and his seed after him for an everlasting possession. (Verse 7; 17:8) Thus we have a very important point in chronology established, viz., the date of the Abrahamic covenant. See MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., pages 44-47.

VERSES 2, 3. In partial fulfillment of this promise the nation of Israel has indeed become a great nation—a nation unique in its separation from other nations, and in its peculiar history under the divine guidance. And the promises and threatenings of verse 3 will in due time be dealt out to those who bless and to those who oppress her.

The blessing of all the families of the earth through Abraham and his seed—which seed is Christ, Head and body, as the Apostle Paul explains (Gal. 3:16, 29)—is a promise which few Christians have duly considered. All the families of the

earth must certainly include the families that have died, as well as the families that are living. And it points forward therefore, to the grand millennial reign of Christ, when, according to his Word, all that are in their graves will hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth.—John 5:25, 28.

Nor is God's dealing with this nation yet ended; for the gifts and callings of God are not things to be repented of or changed. In God's due time, after the full completion and glorification of the elect Gospel church, the mercy of the Lord shall again turn toward the seed of Jacob. And so all of fleshly Israel shall be saved from present blindness, as it is written, "There shall come out of Zion the deliverer [the Gospel church, the spiritual seed of Abraham—Gal. 3:29], and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob;" for this is God's covenant with them.—Rom. 11:25-33.

The remaining verses of the lesson show that Abraham obediently followed the Lord's direction, walking by faith in his promise. Thus his acts attested his faith, and his faith, thus attested, was acceptable to God, whereby he became "the father of the faithful."

## A SAVIOR AND A GREAT ONE!

A ghastly sight shows in the shivering air  
On Calvary's brow:  
The Saviour of mankind, in love, hangs there;  
While followers bow  
The head low on the breast and sadly sigh,  
"How can he be Messiah—if he die?"

A jeering mob surrounds the cursed knoll  
And mocks the Lord;  
Yet to his lips comes from his stricken soul  
The precious word—  
"Father forgive; they know not what they do—"  
E'er o'er his face creeps dissolution's hue.

"'Tis finished," rings in triumph through the sky;  
He bows his head.  
And, while the querying soldiers mark the cry,  
The Lord is dead.  
All anguish past, his triumph doth begin,  
The world is saved, a death blow dealt to sin

A Sabbath's journey from the city gate,  
With sorrow shod,  
Two sad disciples bear their sorry weight  
To their abode.  
The Christ appears, while holden are their eyes,  
And doth expound wherefor Messiah dies.

Emmaus reached, the Lord would further go  
They gently chide—  
"Thou hast beguiled our weary tears, and so  
With us abide."  
He brake their bread—then vanished from their sight.  
Their hearts did burn with holy joy that night.

The tale is old, but ever sweetly new.  
Why Jesus died,  
The nail prints, doubting one, he shows to you,  
And in his side  
A spear thrust gapes—a passage rent apart.  
For easy access to your Saviour's heart.

It was for you, my brother, that he shed  
His life so free.  
For you, for me, he bowed his godlike head  
On Calvary's tree;  
That, trusting in the merit of his name,  
We might be saved from sorrow, sin and shame

The past sufficeth, surely, to have spent  
In sinful deeds  
Come, join our band; and be our toot-taps bent  
Where Jesus leads  
So in his righteousness serenely dressed  
We'll meet him face to face among the blest

H. HARDIE