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SIXTY SOLEMN PROOFS

FROM SCRIPTURE

THAT INSTEAD OF THE PROFESSING CHURCH

GETTING BETTER

 *IT WILL CONTINUE, AND EVEN INCREASE,*
IN EVIL, UNTIL THE

LORD JESUS CHRIST COMES AGAIN.

BEFORE entering on these proofs, we would for a moment point the reader to the various dispensations which have already run their course, and as each one has invariably continued and ended in increased evil, is it not reasonable to infer that our dispensation will go on and end similarly, for we have not the least hint at any exception to this rule in the word of God; on the contrary, ours is but the anti-type of its previous and various types, and will therefore be found, as they have been, in antagonism with God, especially towards and at the end of the dispensation. How did the Adamic period end? How did the antediluvian age go on and end? How the Noahic, the patriarchal, the legal, or that under the law of Moses? and how the first coming of Christ, in such love, meekness, and mercy? All these dispensations we know continued and ended in universal and fearful apostacy and wickedness, and ours will do the same, as I shall now, I trust, simply prove from the New Testament.

I.

If that which is called the Church is improving and will continue to improve as people and even Christians continually tell us, how is it that the truth of God declares exactly the opposite? "Let the tares grow together" with the wheat in the world "UNTIL THE HARVEST." The tares,

we are told, represent the children of Satan, and these are to grow and consequently increase, and instead of being converted or made better, they are to be bound in bundles and burned at the end of this dispensation. Matt. xiii. 25—44.

II.

When the net is drawn to shore at the TIME OF THE END, does it present (in the way of figure) a multitude, all knowing the Lord, "from the least to the greatest" of them, as it ought to do and would have done were things to go on and improve by the religious efforts of men? Instead of such a result, we see the wicked or unconverted *there*, who, instead of being changed, are cast into the lake of fire. Matt. xiii. 47—52.

III.

In the invitation to the marriage of the king's son, one would have thought that none would be found there but the rightly and really qualified ones, and if the true wedding garment or gospel had been received by *all*, then all would have remained at the wedding; but what do we find? "WHEN THE KING CAME IN to see the guests" he sees a mixture—a man not having "on a wedding garment," and this man is not converted, but cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Here then we have, up to the time of the "*king's coming*," a daring, hypocritical class of men, with a false garment of their own forming, found with a high profession until the eye of Christ at His coming detects it. Matt. xxii. 1—14.

IV.

During the present period while our Lord is seated at the right hand of the Father, it is that we are told the gospel will convert the world, and therefore evil will gradually decrease until all the enemies of Christ become His friends. Were this the case, He would, of course, have no foes, but all friends, at His second coming. Diametrically opposed to this, however, are his own words cited from Psalm cx.: "Sit thou on my right hand until I make *thine enemies thy footstool*." His enemies, therefore, continue till the end. Matt. xxii. 41—45.

V.

The gross, blind, mercenary, and murderous state of Jerusalem caused the Lord to weep over her and to use

the most touching language towards her; but the deaf adder remained and yet remains uncharmed, and what is more, will *continue unaltered* until Christ personally appears again. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not.*" In the next two verses we have the sentence of utter desolation pronounced upon them, *and this to continue until they should see Him* a second time. "Behold your house is left unto you desolate." "FOR I SAY UNTO YOU, ye shall not see me *till* ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." All the time, therefore, of His absence they would remain in misery, for there was to be no blessing until they saw Him and could say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Here again we have the fullest proof of evil and wretchedness continuing up to the time of the appearing of Christ. Matt. xxiii. 37—49.

VI.

The three questions, "When shall these things be? what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age or world?" put by the disciples to the Saviour, were eminently calculated to elicit the tidings (were it true) that the gospel would gradually go forward and convert all the nations, before the end of the world or age, for in answering these questions the history of the whole period, at least in its great outlines, would necessarily be brought forward by our Lord. What do we find then in His reply? Not only that no such evangelization or conversion would take place, but on the contrary, the most appalling manifestations of sin, of Satan, and of sorrow, and no cessation of these horrors until the end. "Ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: nation shall rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom: there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and hate one another. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world FOR A WITNESS unto all nations: observe this, *for a witness*—it is not said,

to convert all nations, but for a witness *to the nations*, and THEN shall the end come." Is not this a fearful epitome, from the Lord's own lips, of the increasing evils that would occur both in the Church and in the world, until the Lord Himself should come in power and great glory and put an end to it? Matt. xxiv. 1—31.

VII.

We are next introduced to the days of Noah, as characterizing and developing the days of the Son of man. What sort of days were Noah's? Did *spiritual* improvement and advancement mark that period? Nay, alas! it was getting on in the world, eating and drinking, building and planting, they were thinking of, while the message or truth of God was set at nought, and the flood came and swept them all away. And THUS SHALL IT BE in the day when the "Son of man shall be revealed." Where, then, is the period that so many promise us, even a time when the gospel is to convert all mankind? Matt. xxiv. 37—39.

VIII.

What a picture of Christendom we have in "*that evil servant*." This person has the name, position, and privileges of a servant; but like Christendom, or the *mere* professor, he has but a name to live, while he is dead to Christ. The language of his heart is, "my Lord delayeth his coming," and he begins to eat and drink with the drunken. This man is but the representative of a large class, which, as we see, CONTINUES until these dread words are heard, "The Lord of that servant *will come* in a day when he looketh not for him, . . . and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Does this look as if things were to be better? Matt. xxiv. 48—51.

IX.

In the case of the five foolish virgins, we have another clear proof of the melancholy state of things up to, and at, the Lord's return. Here you have *religiousness*—a more than ordinary kind of outward profession—they are called "virgins," but *foolish* ones, they have lamps, and it would seem a sort of *dry wick* or cotton which they light and trim, and go out with to meet the bridegroom; but unlike

the wise virgins, (and it would appear that only in these three things were they unlike them,) they are foolish; they have no oil vessel and no oil. Ah! it is an awful state to be destitute of the new nature, or oil vessel of God; to be without the Holy Spirit—for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His—and, lastly, to be like the *fool* that says in his heart, there is no God. Such were these foolish virgins, who, evidently, represent the religious character of things both *before* and *at* the coming of Christ. Matt. xxv. 1—14.

X.

The subject of the “talents” presents us with another proof that instead of all being converted or having in the world a universal reign of righteousness introduced by the instrumentality of man, carelessness and contrariety to God would continue and abound. The party who receives the one talent, turns round on his master, and calls him a hard, “austere man,” reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not strawed. But has he not received a talent as a present from his master? Is this being hard, or gathering where he had not strawed, or reaping where he had not sown? Here we have the lie of Satan and of the human heart. And this is precisely where the *nominal Church is*. It has received gifts, but only to hide and trample on them. This man had trodden under foot the love of his master, and then turns and tells him a terrible lie. He is, therefore, as professors will be who remain unconverted, cast into outer darkness. Matt. xxv. 24—30.

XI.

What a fearful picture of man's state at the *close of this day of grace*, have we in the great session of the Son of God, when He sits “on the throne of His glory.” Observe, this is not what is called the general judgment. The dead, whether believers or unbelievers, are not named here; this is, therefore, a very different thing to the last judgment which we have in Rev. xx. The living, and not the dead, are those we have here; in other words, the nations or Gentiles. “When the Son of man,” we read, “shall come in his glory, and shall sit on the throne of his glory, before him shall be gathered *all nations*.” The prevalent idea is that through missionary endeavours, and the like, we are to have all the nations converted. But

this solemn scene is an entire contradiction to such a thought. "He shall *separate* them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Those on the left hand had no heart for Christ, although they had heard His messengers, and had seen Him in their persons, hungry, homeless, thirsty, naked, sick, and in prison. To all such, therefore, he says, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. xxv. 31—46. A dreadful proof that all were not converted.

XII.

What a delusion must men be under when they imagine that things are getting better, and will arrive at little less than a state of perfection before the return of Christ. Lot's day is given us as the pattern of things before the Son of man is revealed. What sort of day was Lot's? Were the Sodomites worshipping God, or even thinking of the dreadful doom that so soon awaited them? And think what these people were capable and guilty of. "But the *same* day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. *Even thus shall it be* in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke xvii. 28—30.

XIII.

We have two very peculiar instances of the discriminating judgment of God on his enemies, *in the end of this dispensation*. "I tell you in *that* night there shall be two men in one bed, the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left." But why should they in so marked a manner, be taken and destroyed, if all are to be by and by converted? Luke xvii. 34—37.

XIV.

Already have we seen how wickedly the "evil servant" acted in the absence of his master; here we have the shocking conduct of the citizens, who, instead of receiving the Saviour, send "a message after him, saying, we will not have this man to reign over us." And this conduct, be it remembered, *continues all the time that the one who represents the Lord is away*, and consequently, on His return He says, "But those mine enemies that would not that I

should reign over them, bring hither and slay before me." Luke xix. 14—27.

XV.

The wretched and ruinous state of Jerusalem, and consequently the Jews, is another proof that our dispensation continues to manifest a dark shade of iniquity throughout, instead of any improvement or alteration for the better. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until—man works out a millennium?—nay, but "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled," namely, their domineering wicked course, which lasts until *the stone* cut out without hands, *destroys* the image, as the 2nd and 7th chapters of Daniel prove. Luke xxi. 21—24.

XVI.

The way in which the Lord Jesus said "the world" would treat and hate His people tells us very plainly what the world was, is, and will be, (for the world is never said to change or be changed,) judgment only, and not conversion therefore awaits the world, as it is written, John xii. 31, "Now is the *judgment* of this world." Thus, then, is it shown that "*all* that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, *is not* of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof," and is never altered or converted. John xv. 18, 19.

XVII.

So fearfully true is the foregoing, that our blessed Lord in His last prayer says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee!" and therefore it is that we have these awful words, "*I pray not* for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine." Who in the face of such facts as these should be found contending that the gospel will make the "world" to "know the Lord from the least to the greatest?" John xvii. 9, 14, 25.

XVIII.

The 15th of the Acts again very clearly establishes the fact that the world will not be converted. For if the visit of God in the gospel is rejected by the multitude, as the visit of His Son in love was previously rejected, then, of course, the world, or the multitude, continues in rebellion and sin. "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did

visit the Gentiles, *to take out of them* a people for his name." Mark this scripture: it does not say that the visit would convert them all, but only "TAKE OUT OF THEM a people for his name." And then it is written, "*After this I will return,*" &c. Acts xv. 13—17.

XIX.

In the 20th of Acts, we have a prophecy of the Apostle Paul's, on the subject we are now considering. This prophecy embraces two spheres—the world and the Church. From the world he says, "grievous wolves shall enter in among you;" and of the Church he declares, "of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." What a fearful "*succession*" this is, instead of the rule, love, and care of the apostles. Yet such is the succession spoken of by Paul, and now plainly perceivable abroad in the professing Church. Our blessed Lord names these two parties in the 15th of John, and He names even a third—the hireling—and says that all three would come. And have they not come? And as to their continuance and increasing iniquity, we shall find it abundantly established when we come to consider the epistles of Peter, Jude, and John. We hear and read of "*apostolic succession*," but the word of our God declares that after the apostles, wolves, thieves, and hirelings, would follow, instead of a succession of such men. Acts xx. 28—31.

XX.

The condition of every creature (margin) as groaning and travailing in the bondage of corruption is very unlike the state "the whole creation" was in at first, and very unlike the state it will be in when the Lord Jesus shall "reign with all His saints." But *until* that event or "*the manifestation* of the sons of God," the creature—the whole creation—is represented as but a slave in bondage, groaning and writhing in agony. Surely, then, it must be extreme blindness, and fearful infatuation, to talk of things getting better, when the truth of God declares in express terms, as here, the very opposite. Rom. viii. 18—23

XXI.

Has the professing Church continued in the goodness of God? Has she continued in the unity, in the grace, in the love, in the order, in the spiritual power and unction

which marked her first steps, as recorded in the Acts and the epistles? Viewed as a whole, few, I think, will have the hardihood to say she has; and if she has not, then what is told us as regards her state? Is it that she will be gradually brought back by the outpouring of the Spirit? Nay; but just the opposite. "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity, but toward thee goodness, *if thou continue* in his goodness; otherwise *thou also shalt be cut off*." This is the end of Christendom, instead of improvement. Rom. xi. 22.

XXII.

Suppose that the world improves, and it certainly will outwardly, that is in the way of education, science, commerce, and, it may be, in various worldly reforms, can this be considered, in a spiritual point of view, as becoming more like Christ or possessing more of His gospel? The opposite I should say will be found to be the fact, for while all these great things may take place, and consequently great and intellectual men introduced to maintain them, it is written that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty, and base things, and despised things, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence." Now if man continues to make a choice—and this is what he is doing and will continue to do—diametrically opposite to God's choice, does not this prove that the very improvements of men, because not in God's way, are only the greater and more destructive evils. 1 Cor. i. 21—29.

XXIII.

Some of the Corinthians were indulging in evil and malicious thoughts, even judging the Apostle Paul as a false apostle. Censuring this state of things, he says, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment (or day, margin) . . . but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, *until the Lord come*, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." In this place again we see that "*the hidden things of darkness*" con-

tinue unaltered until the Lord comes to deal with them in righteous judgment. 1 Cor. iv. 3—5.

XXIV.

Judging and destroying evil at the end is not only the work of Christ, but also of the children of God, for when Christ appears, we shall appear with Him, and as He is to "rule the nations with a rod of iron," to the faithful in Thyatira it is said, "To him that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. As the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces." But the idea of the nations being all converted contradicts this. 1 Cor. vi. 2.

XXV.

In the instructions given to the Corinthians to come out and be separate from the gross evils surrounding them, have we any, even the most remote thought conveyed, that at some future period the extension and influence of the gospel would be so felt that these warnings would be no longer needed? And mark here, that should the gospel at any time convert the world, then this and all such Scriptures would have no place or force whatever, inasmuch as there would be no evil to come out from. As the apostle then, says nothing about the gospel converting all, at any time, I conclude that the evil *remains and consequently grows to the end*. 2 Cor. vi. 14—18.

XXVI.

"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise *from* the dead." The unconverted are all morally dead—dead in trespasses and sins, and those who have made a profession without the inward possession of the gospel are said to be "twice dead." In this case again the exhortation of the apostle would be entirely useless if the dead are all to be made alive by the instrumentality of the gospel, but forasmuch as the truth of God remains the same to the end, we clearly see that moral and *double death also* REMAIN. Eph. v. 14.

XXVII.

"Put on the whole armour of God" is an exhortation founded on the fact that we have to wrestle against Satan and all his legions, and therefore the *whole* and not merely a part of God's armour is needed: but when Satan is bound

and put into the bottomless pit, (Rev. xx. 2, 3,) we shall not need the armour. Now as this does not take place until Christ and all His saints come, (comp. Rev. xix. and xx.) it is plain that the whole armour is needed until that period, and consequently that Satan and his emissaries CONTINUE IN FULL FORCE, and therefore no change for the better can take place in this dispensation. Eph. vi. 11—17.

XXVIII.

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” Here we have the condition of things in the day when Paul wrote to the Philippians. Look at the professing church of the present hour, and will any candid person deny that the same, and even worse, things are going on there now? And inasmuch as we have seen and proved that the tares grow on until the harvest, we say again, that these *evils* will *continue* and *increase until that period*. Phil. iii. 18—20.

XXIX.

Not only will men not receive the truth, and thus become really better, but they are represented as becoming so filled with themselves, their ease, and their comforts, that sudden destruction, at the termination of this gospel day, overtakes them at the very moment they are *saying*, “*peace and safety*.” 1 Thess. v. 2, 3.

XXX.

The two actions recorded as occurring at the revelation of the Lord Jesus are very distinct and reveal to us the state of the true and the state of the false church on that momentous occasion. Rest, eternal rest, is given to the tried and troubled, but real, Church of the living God; while vengeance, in flaming fire, falls upon those who know not God and have not obeyed His gospel. This, alas! is the end of the world-church. 2 Thess. i. 5—11.

XXXI.

We now come to one of those portions which, if there had not been another in all the Scriptures, would have been sufficient, or ought to have been, to dispel the false dream that spiritual things would get better. The Thes-

salonians, through great sorrow and sufferings, and by the false teaching of deceivers, were made to think that "the day of the Lord," or the judgment of Christ, had set in amongst them. This then was the time to tell them—if any such period could be expected—that gradually things would get better, and that a great revival, by missionary exertions, &c., would bring about a universal reign of righteousness and peace. Does He speak thus, as assuredly He would have done if such an event had been expected? His language is quite the opposite. "Let no man *deceive* you for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first"—an apostacy. It is therefore an apostacy, according to the spirit of God's word, that is to come, and not a reign of righteousness, until the day of the Lord clears the evil away. 2 Thess. ii. 1—3.

XXXII.

The apostacy or "falling away from the truth continues until the "man of sin" is produced, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, "sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Such is the height of blasphemy and wickedness to which man is to arrive. So proud, however, and blind are men, that instead of believing this, they are filled with the thought of making a millennium for themselves, before the Lord Himself comes to do it. 2 Thess. ii. 4, 8.

XXXIII.

But we have another feature attaching to our dispensation, more fatal and fearful than any we have yet considered. It will be asked, What can this be? The Holy Ghost Himself supplies the awful answer. "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. ii. 3—13.

XXXIV.

Paul's language to Timothy respecting the "*latter times*" is very simple, solemn, and explicit. One would suppose that nothing could more palpably contradict the present notions of men than it does. The "*latter times*," if we are to take the general idea that is now

abroad, will furnish us with faith and faithfulness beyond all that preceded it; but what does the apostle say? "Now the Spirit speaketh *expressly*"—mark this, expressly—"that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." Who then can now say that we shall get better as we proceed onwards? 1 Tim. iv. 1.

XXXV.

But not only will there be a departure from the faith or gospel of God, but men will launch out into open and flagrant abominations, "giving heed," says the apostle, "to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils: speaking lies in hypocrisy: having their conscience seared with a hot iron," &c. Such are the features of the "*latter times*." 1 Tim. iv. 1—4.

XXXVI.

Perhaps the most prominent feature of our day is that of a desire to be rich. Commerce and a rapid run for gold seem to outstrip everything else. Such a state of things is spoken of by the Spirit of God thus:—"But they that *will be* rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." This, I believe, is a true picture of the period we are in, and shall be in, even unto the end. 1 Tim. vi. 9.

XXXVII.

If, in the very days of the apostles, Paul could say, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me," what are we to expect in our "last" days? Is it that the truth, love, and grace of God shall so shine that we shall retain and convert all, although Paul, an inspired apostle, was obliged to say, "All have forsaken me?" 2 Tim. i. 15.

XXXVIII.

"The great house," where there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also vessels of an *inflammable* nature—wood and earth—is a fearful phase of the professing mass. Now, so vile are these evil vessels considered by God, that the apostle says, "if a man, therefore, purge himself from *these*, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." But if these vile vessels are to be turned by man into God's real children, then the exhortation to be separate from them would be superfluous, and in

fact false; it is plain, therefore, that no change for the better is to take place. 2 Tim. ii. 20—22.

XXXIX.

The passages we are now about to consider exhibit the character of our dispensation—at least the end of it, which shows the height of the evil we are to arrive at—in a more diabolical light than any we have yet dwelt on. Here we see some of the worst Pagan or heathen iniquities perpetrated under the form of Christianity. “This know, also, that in the **LAST DAYS** perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good. Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. *Having a form of godliness*, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” The man must be blind indeed, who reads such a passage as this, and still believes that things in the nominal church will get better. 2 Tim. iii. 1—6.

XL.

One would have thought that nothing could exceed in blackness and darkness the evils we have just looked at; but we have here—only a few verses lower down—these remarkable words, “But evil men and seducers shall wax *worse and worse*, deceiving, and being deceived.” If the apostle had heard with his own ears the general language on this point, in our day, he could not have answered it more explicitly and strongly. 2 Tim. iii. 13.

XLI.

We have some other features of a very bad character spoken of in this epistle, which the apostle notices as coming at a *future day*. “For the time *will come* when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” If this is not an exact outline of many things even now occurring, in that which calls itself the Church, I know not what is; and oh! “if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” O, professing Church, how little art thou aware to what thou art fast hastening. 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

XLII.

In the Epistle to Titus, we have a class of men noticed, as indulging in monstrous evil, teaching error for "filthy lucre," telling lies, and introducing "Jewish fables and commandments of men that turn from the truth." Is not the professing Church, taken as a whole, full of such abominations at this present moment? No one with the truth of God and the glory of Christ in view, can deny it. If this, then, be the state we are now in, and if we are told—as already referred to—that "evil men shall wax worse and worse," what, I ask, is to be the end of all this? Titus i. 10—16.

XLIII.

The 10th chapter of Hebrews speaks of those whose daring and wickedness reach to an enormous height, even to tread "under foot the Son of God," and to count His blood "an unholy thing," and it is added, "hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." These individuals are viewed as continuing unto the end; for the vengeance in the next verse, denounced upon all such, will only be manifested at the appearing of Christ, as it is written, "taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . When he shall come to be glorified in his saints." Heb. x. 29, 30.

XLIV.

James speaks of *wars and fightings*, of lusts and passions, of killing and fighting, and of adulterous friendship with the world. Take Christendom, or what is called the Church, and judge if all these evils are not going on there at this present hour; and while we have not the least intimation here that anything will get better, the next chapter informs us that these monstrous things remain until "the coming of the Lord" puts an end to all the wickedness and misery of man. James iv. 1, 5.

XLV.

The *rich* men, who, from their position, should have been the kind care-takers of the poor, not only showed no kindness to them, but the very hire of the latter, who reaped down the fields of the rich, was kept back from them by fraud, and their cries, therefore, had reached "the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." The rich men—and is not this a day for making great strides to be rich?—are called on

to howl and weep for the miseries that should come upon them, and at what time?—the “LAST DAYS.” “Ye have heaped up treasure for the *last days*.” James v. 1—8.

XLVI.

Peter brings before us a class of persons rioting and revelling in the vilest excesses. He speaks of a time when we all “walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries,” and then adds, “Wherein *they* think it strange that *ye* run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to him *that is ready to judge the quick and the dead*.” Mark here, how these iniquitous people are *not altered before the Judge appears*, but will have to give an account to Him who comes to punish such persons. 1 Pet. iv. 3—5.

XLVII.

Speaking of the trials and scourgings of believers, the apostle says, “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what *shall the end be of them that OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL of God?* And if the righteous scarcely be saved, *where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* But if we are to take the statements of many nowadays, there will be neither the sinner nor the ungodly left, for *all*, they say, are to be converted. Reader, are we to believe the truth of God or the mere thoughts of man? 1 Peter iv. 17, 18.

XLVIII.

We have now brought before us a most dreadful picture of the day that would succeed the one in which Peter lived. He says, There *shall* be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and shall bring upon themselves swift destruction, &c. &c. He then speaks of the fate of the fallen angels and the destruction of Sodom and the antediluvians to show the dreadful doom that awaited them. The continuance, therefore, of such individuals, *even to the end*, is thus clearly established, for two of the judgments alluded to here are elsewhere spoken of as pre-figuring the judgment of the Son of man. 2 Peter ii. 1—7.

XLIX.

To make the above yet more plain, the Holy Ghost, by Peter, goes on to speak of numberless features of wicked-

ness attaching to those monstrous people, whom He can only compare to "natural brute beasts," and in the midst of this most awful, but faithful, delineation he says, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to *reserve* the unjust *unto the day of judgment to be punished.*" This is plain enough as to the continuance and growth of evil. 2 Peter ii. 7—22.

L.

But before we leave the Epistles of Peter, we may look at another feature of the iniquity which is to go on and close up our dispensation. Paul's "last days" give us "perilous times," and now Peter's "last days" are found equally full of daring wickedness. "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour; knowing this first, that there shall come in the LAST DAYS scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" &c. 2 Peter iii. 2—4.

LI.

The Apostle John takes up this subject and characterizes the period we are in, and more especially the close of it, as marked not by the presence of universal blessing or the growth of the gospel, but quite the reverse. He says, "Little children, it is *the last time*: and as ye have heard that"—a time is coming when all will be converted by the preaching of the gospel?—no, but, "as ye have heard that ANTICHRIST SHALL COME, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time." Now if John knew or believed—and were such an event to occur he would have both known and believed it as God's inspired servant—that men would gradually get better and better until they would all "know the Lord," would he not have spoken of it? for in this place he speaks of the future, even up to the time of the coming of Antichrist. 1 John ii. 18.

LII.

Instead of the truth spreading and gaining ground, we have it here clearly revealed that error and false doctrine would spread and gain ground. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, *because* MANY false prophets are gone out into the world.

. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard *that it should come*; and even now already is it in the world." 1 John iv. 1—6.

LIII.

In his second epistle, the apostle John introduces this subject again, and such a sense has he of the dreadful and satanic character of these doctrines, that he says to the "elect lady," to whom he writes, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, *receive him not into your house*, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." Here, also, we have the fact that "*many* deceivers are entered into the world," &c. And, observe, there is not a word about these deceivers becoming at some future time, a converted class of persons, but (as in his first epistle he shows) remain until they are headed up by Antichrist himself, and are all destroyed by the appearing of Christ. 2 John 7—12.

LIV.

If we had not had another scripture or epistle besides this of Jude's, yet this of itself would be enough to establish all that we have said and proved respecting the continuance and increase of evil and iniquity. The terms used by this inspired man to brand and make bare the fearful apostacy of our dispensation, are exceedingly strong—nothing, in fact, can exceed the extraordinary force of his language. It shows what his own heart felt when he uses such language as the following: "For there are certain men crept in unawares ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the *only* Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Likewise also, these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. . . . But these speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging

waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. And now, reader, mark well, that all this goes on and continues up to the time of the end, for it is written of these persons, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of THESE, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among *them* of all their ungodly deeds," &c. Can anything, then, be plainer than that evil goes on and reaches to such a height, that the Lord Himself must come, and all His saints, to judge and destroy it? Read Jude's epistle.

LV.

Look at the state of the nations at the coming of Christ. Do they hail His second advent with delight, as they would most surely do if they were all converted? Nay, it is of *wailing* we read, and not of hailing with joy the "Lamb that was slain." "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and *every eye shall see him*, and they also which pierced him: and ALL KINDREDS OF THE EARTH SHALL WAIL because of him." Rev. i. 7.

LVI.

The history of the seven churches of Asia Minor, giving, as it does, a seven-fold feature of the professing Church from the beginning to the end, might be supposed to allude to, or speak of, the spread of the gospel, for the conversion of the world; but although we have here the history of the whole Church, in its most prominent features or outlines, there is not a hint nor a word to lead to the thought that things would improve. On the contrary, each succeeding church, with one exception, gives us an increasingly evil picture of Christendom, until the last or seventh sums up with these startling and humbling words, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, *I will spue thee out of my mouth.*" It is really singular that with testimony and truth so plain and palpable as the above, any one can be found contending that the church-world will improve. Read Rev. ii. and iii.

LVII.

The sixth chapter of this book gives us the opening of

six of the seven seals. What do we find as the result of these six sore judgments? Is it that men, under such dreadful circumstances, get better or become converted? No, alas! "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and *who shall be able to stand?*" Could such language as this be used if all are to be converted by and by? Rev. vi. 12—17.

LVIII.

What does the waving mass or multitude, tossing restlessly to and fro like the waves of the sea, send up out of it? Is it the glad tidings of the gospel or the converting operations of the Holy Ghost? Oh no! Instead of anything gracious or good coming from such a source, we have the perfection of all that is iniquitous and blasphemous rising out of it, and such will be the alienation of the heart of man from God, that instead of worshipping Jehovah, it is this most diabolical and Satanic power he will worship. And this is it to which men, with all their boasted improvements, are so fast approaching. "And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. . . . And they worshipped *the dragon* which gave power unto the beast: and THEY WORSHIPPED THE BEAST, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? . . . And *all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him*, whose names are not written in the book of life. . . . IF ANY MAN HAVE EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR." Rev. xiii. 1—10.

LIX.

In the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th chapters of Revelation we have our subject very fully developed. In the 16th chapter we see the seven last vials or plagues, in which are filled up the wrath of God. (cap. xv. 1.) And under the infliction of the fourth, fifth, and seventh plagues we have a display of man more hideous and revolting than anything we have yet beheld. Instead of owning and rightly

feeling the heavy judgments and chastisements of God, he, in his impenetrable hardness, only blasphemes His name, and observe, this is done under God's *last plagues* or *judgments* upon man in this dispensation. Is it possible for language to depict the growth of evil more clearly than you find it here? In this place we see that not only the gospel, but the heavy chastisements of God failed to produce real repentance or conversion, and not only so, but developed the most devilish hatred to Him it is possible to conceive. The 17th chapter puts before us the ecclesiastical or religious system, under the title of "Babylon," and also the civil or state power, under the title of "the beast," and both these powers, that is to say, man in his church capacity and in his worldly capacity, are found *in the end in open rebellion* against God and His Christ. Of the religious or ecclesiastical system it is therefore said, "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate *the whore* and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh *and burn her with fire.*" And of the beast, or civil, or worldly power it is written, "And the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and *goeth into perdition.*" Such is the end of all man's inventions and improvements of every kind connected with the world and the so-called church. The 18th chapter gives us a minute description of the various materials of which Babylon—professed Christianity—is composed, and while we see that religion is the *chief* feature in this system—for she even trades in the bodies and *souls* of men—yet her great commercial and social characteristics are very fully established. Her fearful end, however, is again and again brought before us here, as if the Holy Spirit would take the greatest possible pains to teach men the awful issue of her ways and her doings: "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord that judgeth her." And now in the 19th chapter we have the terrible end of the kings, and captains, and mighty men, who in their lives opposed and hated the truth, and *in that state remained* until, as we see here, they are made a supper for the fowls of the air to feed upon. The beast, too, and the false prophet, being the great leaders in iniquity of the Church and the world, are cast alive into the lake of fire. If these things have

not a voice that says evil shall continue and grow until *in this way* it is disposed of, nothing will reach the ear of man. Read Rev. xvi., xvii., xviii., and xix.

LX.

In the last chapter of Revelation, where we see the thrice repeated words "*I come quickly*," we have, as it were, a last look at the character and condition of man at THAT TIME. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." This proves that the mixture of tares and wheat was kept on in the world until the Lord Himself returned: for the next verse (12) says, "And, behold, I come quickly." But we have another parting word as to the state of the world at *that day*. "For *without* are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." (ver. 15.) Is not this a full proof of the growth of evil, and of its existence at the end of this dispensation? and therefore it is only deceiving people to say that things will get better, or that the gospel will convert the world. Rev. xxii.

We have now seen that in the Gospels, in the Acts, in the Epistles, and in the Apocalypse, that is, throughout the whole of the New Testament, the same sad truth of the increase of evil unto the end is unfolded. The first book declares it and the last book declares it. The same thing is true of the Old Testament; the *first* book declares it, for we have the people of God *in Egypt*, in the end of Genesis, instead of in Eden, as we see them in the beginning. The *last* book—Malachi—is filled with the melancholy tale of the *repeated* apostacy of the Jews. Israel, in the first chapter of Malachi, denies the love of God, despises His name, offers polluted bread upon His altar, and snuffs at His worship, and says it is only a "weariness." And in the last chapter we have these words, "For behold the day COMETH that shall burn as an oven; and *all the proud*, yea, and *all that do wickedly*, shall be stubble. And the day that *cometh* shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun

of righteousness arise with healing in his wings And *ye shall tread down the wicked*; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." Growth and increase of evil then are seen everywhere, and in no instance, either in the Old or New Testament are we taught anything else. Wherever we look, from beginning to end, departure from the truth marks the history of man; and not only departure from the truth, but also the introduction of the vilest inventions, as systems of religion, whereby to satisfy the cravings of a guilty conscience: and this is equally true, both of the Pagan, the Jew, and the nominal Christian. The religious history of Christendom, with few exceptions, from the fourth to the fifteenth century, would shock the feelings of any merely moral or upright man; and since the latter date, or the Reformation, has Protestantism improved? Within the last thirty years we have seen, even in England, the introduction of many glaring heresies, which it is needless to name, as they are well known. All these heresies are now in full force, and from what we read, hear, and see, they are growing and increasing fast. But I need not name these things, as the numerous scriptures that have been cited prove beyond doubt that such is to be the onward course and the end of this dispensation, and we should bow to the truth of God. It may be said that taking such ground as this is calculated to prevent and paralyze the efforts of Christians in preaching the gospel and doing good. The opposite to this is clearly the truth. If I know and believe that things are getting and will get worse and worse in the professing Church, should not this stimulate me to go forward with increased energy, that as a servant or instrument of God, I might, through His grace, be instrumental in preserving His people from the accumulating pollutions of the religious world? And as the unconverted are becoming more and more hardened, I ought to be *increasingly* roused to the need of preaching the gospel more frequently and earnestly than ever.

And now, one word to those who are yet in their sins, *having only "a name to live while they are dead."* Should this tract fall into your hands, my poor fellow-sinner, the truths contained in it ought to make you tremble, for you are the person these awful truths speak of, and allude to more than any other. You, at present, form a part of

“the mystery of iniquity,” that will go on and end in utter destruction; and unless, therefore, you are brought out of the wretched and ruined state you are now in, eternal misery will be yours. How am I to be delivered? you will ask. It is not by *anything you can do* that such a change can be effected. *Your* morality, *your* prayers, *your* repentance, *your* frames or feelings, *your* good resolutions, *your* piety or religiousness, *your* ordinances, forms or ceremonies, cannot produce the change, nor even help to do so; but on the contrary, by looking to such exercises, and depending more or less upon them, they invariably hinder the reception of the gospel. If there be a deception more than any other ruining souls, it is that of dependence on outward religiousness and morality. What, then, you may still ask, is to be done? ALL IS DONE, and was *completed and finished* eighteen hundred years ago, for the greatest sinner’s *entire* salvation; and therefore to think of doing anything now for forgiveness, is to make Christ a liar, and to insult Him to His face. If I finish and complete a thing, a man could not grieve or insult me more than to pretend that he must add something to it. Moreover, if the thing the man adds to my work is only an adulterated, spurious matter, as all our best doings are,—even filthy rags,—this only adds insult to insult. Be warned, then, dear reader; look not to *anything in or of yourself*; for in this way it is, more than in any other, that Satan deceives souls. The Lord Jesus says, “Look *unto me*, and be ye saved.” Come *unto me*, and I will give you rest; or, as it is put in another form, “BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST and thou shalt be saved.” And why? Because, as we have said before, He has done and finished all that was needed, even in the holy eyes of God the Father, for our pardon and peace; and to prove this, God has raised Him, and set Him at His own right hand, in the highest heavens.

J. D.

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