

## July 18

*In the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be traitors, heady,...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.* 2 Timothy 3:1,4

THE true Christian is not "heady;" on the contrary, his consecration to the Lord

R5413 "THE END OF THE AGE A PERILOUS TIME" *In the last days perilous times shall come; men shall be traitors, heady,...lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.*—2 Timothy 3:4...

It will be a time of great peril—peril to the Lord's people—peril for those who have started out to follow Christ...

The only ones who are on trial for life or death are those who have been released from the Adamic condemnation. To these the time described by St. Paul will be one of severe testing...

Some of God's people are becoming more and more immersed in the world. The spirit of the world surges all around them. With great difficulty could these come to realize that the whole world is astray in their ideas and ways. The tendency of all such is to have the mind of the world, even though they be spirit-begotten...

Even those who are living nearest to the Divine standard will be more or less imperiled through this spirit, unless they continue diligent in prayer and the study of God's Word. What we see going on about us seems natural to our minds. The way in which other people spend time and money is a temptation to the Lord's people which must be *steadfastly resisted*.

### A SUBTLE TEST

The Lord's people spend and are being spent in His service--by volunteer work, by attending meetings, by holding meetings and in various ways, according to opportunity. They are living separate from the world-- distinct lives, lives of consecration. The world now has an eight-hour day. The Lord's faithful people would, on the contrary, make theirs a sixteen-hour day."

(Pro 14:12 KJV) "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

R4583 "We are now in the time above all others when we may expect strong delusions, not only upon nominal Christendom, but upon those who have been specially favored with the light of Truth now shining."

figuratively decapitated him. He lost his head, renounced his own will and self-rule, and submitted himself as a *member of the body* of Christ, to the absolute control of Jesus, the Head...The true Christian, therefore, in every affair of life,--in respect to its pleasures as well as in respect to its burdens

R1319 "For men shall be lovers of their own selves [selfish], covetous, boasters, proud, evil-speakers, not of the same mind as were their forefathers [*i.e.*, devisers of new doctrines], unthankful, unkind, irreconcilable, false accusers, without self-control, not mild, not friendly to those that are good--traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God [*i.e.*, preferring their own will or pleasure to the will or pleasure of God]; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth."

It should be observed also that the word *men*, in *verse 2*, is emphatic in the Greek text, as shown in the *Emphatic Diaglott*, thus indicating that a particular class of men is here referred to, which, according to the description, can be none other than those mentioned in Acts 20:29,30, viz.: men "*of your own selves* [men of your own company, men whom you have hitherto regarded as members of the body of Christ, and who still claim to be such], who shall arise speaking perverse things [perverting the truth. But why, you ask, should any one who had once received the truth desire to pervert it? The Apostle answers that their object is] to draw away disciples after them."...

They claim, too, to be very earnest students of the Word of God; and so they are, but they never come to a knowledge of the truth. They are after something new, some new and peculiar "find" in the mine of God that will attract the wondering gaze of many curious disciples...

*Verses 6 and 8* describe, or rather illustrate, the *manner* in which the influence of such teachers will be brought to bear upon the Church... As here intimated, their policy is crafty, deceitful, sly, under pretensions of godliness, love of truth, and zeal for the truth. Their influence will be exerted somewhat after the *manner* of a vile class mentioned in *verse 6* who "creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins and led away by various inordinate desires." Not that such will be the actual immoral character of these teachers, but that

R2459 (From Harvest Truth Database V7.0 2013)

## "IN THE LAST DAYS PERILOUS TIMES"

*"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, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."*--2 Tim. 3:1-5

CLAIMING, as we do, that we are now living in the closing days of the Gospel age, it is quite proper that we should look about us to see whether or not present conditions correspond to the Apostle's inspired description of what must be expected in the last days of this age. We are not to understand this description to relate to the barbarous or half-civilized peoples of the end of the age, but to be a description of the condition of "Christendom." The Apostle explicitly states that he refers to those who have a form of godliness--professedly Christians,--for, since the Jewish age ended, the only godly form that the Scriptures could recognize is Christianity. We see, then, that the foregoing delineation represents "Christendom" in the close of this age.

and trials,--appeals to his Head for direction, to know how and what to do or say--yea, to have even the very thoughts of his mind in full conformity to the will of God in Christ. Z.'99-102 R2461:1

their policy will be similarly seductive."...

Just so it is to-day: the studied effort of false teachers--false brethren developing in the very midst of the Church--is to offset the truth by plausible forms of error, to unsettle confidence both in the truth and in all teachers of the truth, thus to lead away disciples after them and their theories. And in consequence of the allurements of these false teachers, and of the unfaithfulness of many to the love and service of the truth which they have received, a class in the midst of the Church will give much encouragement to the ambitions of these false brethren; "for," says the Apostle (2 Tim. 4:3,4), "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own desires [desires for something new] shall they gather to themselves teachers, having itching ears [for new and strange things]; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Nor will this class be only a small minority; for, in order that the faithful may not be discouraged when brought face to face with these things, they are forewarned (Psa. 91:7)"

(Eph 6:13 KJV) "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day..."

(Joh 8:31-32 KJV) "If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; (32) And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

R5508 "THE REWARD OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP... The reward of continued discipleship is, "Ye shall *know* the Truth"--not, Ye shall be "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth." (2 Timothy 3:7.) Here is the mistake many make; failing to continue in the Word of the Lord, they delve into various human philosophies, which ignore or pervert the Word of the Lord and set up opposing theories. To those who seek for Truth among these human theories, there is no promise that they shall ever find it, and they never do."

The Apostle does not say that this description will apply to the saints in the end of this age: quite to the contrary, the implication is that the saints should "turn away" or separate themselves from all who thus have merely the form of piety. (Vs. 5.) Nor are we to expect that the world, possessed of this spirit, will recognize its own likeness in the Apostle's words. Upon this, as upon other subjects, we are rather to expect that, as the Prophet declares, "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." (Dan. 12:10.) The merely formalistic Christian, whose highest ideal of duty is to abstain from secular employment on one day of the week, and to go to church, is not to be expected to recognize his own likeness, and to note its deformities and inconsistencies: to do these

things would imply such a reformation of sentiment as would transfer him from the lists of churchianity to the smaller list of true Christianity.

We should not be understood as saying, or even implying, that the world is growing worse in every respect day by day. We recognize as a fact that the world in many respects is in better condition than it has ever been before. The civilized nations to-day are better equipped with hospitals, orphanages, asylums, etc., than ever before. All these are very directly traceable to the influence of Christianity, and are neither to be despised nor ignored. We confess with great appreciation and admiration that the spirit of our Master has, during the past eighteen hundred years, so impressed itself upon the world of mankind that the barbarities of olden time would no longer be endured, the sensibilities of civilized man having reached a degree of development which insists upon provision being made for the indigent and helpless; and we are very glad of all these things.

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that mixed with all of these benevolences is a considerable measure of selfishness--they are not all monuments of pure disinterested benevolence. True, benevolence has had to do with the founding of many of them, but as a rule those recently instituted, and much of the support for all of them, is drawn from the tax-payer through political channels, and the party-spoils system has much to do with their maintenance--all feeding at such public cribs being expected to render more or less of party service. However, whether or not these institutions supported at public expense be considered as partially the outgrowth of selfishness, the fact must be conceded that public sentiment favors them, and hence it must be conceded that the principles laid down by the great Teacher eighteen centuries ago have made a favorable impression upon civilized peoples.

But the question before us is not on this point-- whether or not Christianity has made any impression upon the world: the question is, What is the real status of those professing to be Christians, now, in the end of this age? We answer that, while benevolences inculcated in the gospel of Christ have appealed to the better sentiments of mankind, and have resulted in a general uplift of social conditions throughout so-called Christendom, yet this uplift of the world of mankind has reacted in some respects against Christianity; for in making Christianity popular it has induced multitudes to nominally adopt Christianity and a form of godliness without appreciating the genuine article or experiencing a true conversion of heart. Hence the necessity of separating the "wheat" from the "tares," the suitable fish from the unsuitable ones in the Gospel net, now that the Gospel age is closing.-- Matt. 13:24-30,36-43,47-50.

If we ask ourselves the question, What is the peculiar characteristic of our day? almost every intelligent person could answer, *Selfishness*. And this is the very item which the Apostle puts first in his descriptive list: "Men shall be lovers of their own selves." We do not mean to say that people are more miserly than heretofore; on the contrary, there is probably less of this evil; the tendency is rather to extravagance: but it is an extravagance born of "love of their own selves," love of dress, love of show, love of honor and position. All who come in contact with present-day business, realize that more than ever before it is a battle; not so much a battle for bread as a battle for wealth and luxuries. True, business to-day is in some respects done along more honorable lines and on a more honest basis than every before, yet these are not so much signs of a greater honesty on the part of merchants, for they are almost compulsory; because business competition has materially cut down profits, and the enlarging of business much beyond the personal oversight of the proprietors has almost compelled one-price arrangements. But all persons associated with commercial business and manufacturing can attest that the growth of business intelligence, the formation of trusts and combinations, etc., have given selfishness great power to injure and even to destroy financially whatever may resist it.

*Covetousness* is another of the charges. It is a mistake to think of this quality as applicable only to the wealthy. It is just as possible for the man with one dollar to be covetous as for the millionaire. Covetousness is an inordinate desire, whether for wealth or luxuries or what-not. Elsewhere the Apostle designates covetousness as idolatry, which gives us the thought of false worship. (Col. 3:5.) It is not wrong for us to seek, in a reasonable, moderate way, for the necessities and the comforts of life for ourselves and those depending upon us; nor would it be wrong to avail ourselves of the opportunities of securing wealth, if the same came to us in a reasonable and honorable manner, not in conflict with our consecration to the Lord. But wherever the *love* of money or honor or luxuries becomes the ruling passion in those who are professedly God's people it has usurped God's place,-- such are idolaters. In other words, the covetous person

is a mammon-worshiper, and as such should realize that he has abandoned the proper worship of God; and our Lord declared, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." --Matt. 6:24.

*Boasting* is the third charge which the Apostle brings against nominal Christianity of "the last days." Is it not true? Was there ever a time when people were so boastful as to-day? Boastfulness is the opposite of meekness and humility; boasting accompanies pride, which the Lord declares he resists, showing his favors to the humble.--James 4:6.

*Pride* is the fourth charge, and, thinking of our fellow-creatures as generously as possible, we cannot deny that the pride of our day is very great, and continually increasing. In some it is the pride of wealth, in others a sectarian pride, in others a family pride, in still others a personal pride. Looking into the future, as revealed in the Lord's Word, and seeing the time of trouble toward which Christendom is hastening, we are reminded of the statement, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."--Prov. 16:18.

*Blasphemy* is the fifth charge: but this does not necessarily imply that the professed Christians of the present day would be profane swearers more than others of times past. The word "blasphemy" here we understand to be used in its broad sense of slander, and the slandering or blasphemy may either be against God, or against fellow-creatures. As a matter of fact, we find both abounding to-day amongst Christian people. God's character is blasphemed by attributing to him evil deeds, evil motives and evil purposes toward the masses of mankind. Never, more than at present, have nominal Christians been inclined to charge the Almighty with the authorship of the evils that are in the world and which cause the groaning of creation. In times past they were willing to acknowledge that these evils had come in the line of justice because of sin; now many self-complacently claim that God's dealings are wholly unjust, and that the unfavorable conditions of the present time are all chargeable to him, and are injustices toward man. Moreover, the theories which prevail throughout Christendom respecting God's provision for the future (that it will be an eternity of torment--in literal flames, or, say some, "torments of conscience *which will be worse*") are blasphemies, slanders upon God's character and government. These are worse slanders than were held during the Dark Ages, when it was claimed, as Romanists still claim, that the vast majority went for a time only to "Purgatory," from which discipline and suffering they would ultimately be released.

Ours is also a day of slander or blasphemy one against another, on the part of those who have merely the *form* of godliness. Many who outwardly claim to be governed by the law of the New Covenant, Love, seem to have a morbid craving to speak evil one of another. This the Apostle elsewhere denominates the spirit of murder. (1 John 3:15.) This murderous, slanderous, or blasphemous tendency is manifest everywhere, in the home, in church-gatherings, and in private; those who take no pleasure in speaking words of kindness, approval and love, hunger and thirst for opportunities to speak evil. Nor are they satisfied merely to give out their own evil surmisings, based upon their own perverted view of their fellows; they love such slandering and blasphemy so much that they are willing even to accept it at second-hand, and to retail it out repeatedly.

*Disobedience to parents* is the sixth charge. How very marked is this trait to-day! Not merely in the younger members of the family, who have not come to years of discretion, but also in those who have even made an outward profession of religion. False views of "liberty" and "rights" seem to disturb the minds even of children, and the divinely arranged family order seems to be entirely lost sight of with the vast majority.

*Unthankfulness* is the seventh charge. Thankfulness would seem to be one of the least costly of the graces: it implies the reception of favors, and is merely a proper acknowledgment of them. No one can be a true Christian and be unthankful. With the Apostle he will soliloquize, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7), and the first response of his heart must be gratitude, thankfulness. It is this thankfulness which leads on to service, and to sacrifice in the Lord's cause as a manifestation of gratitude. But with the merely nominal Christian thankfulness to God seems scarcely to be thought of. If he be prosperous, it is his ability or his "luck;" if not prosperous, it is the fault of some one else or his "bad luck." Divine providence scarcely enters his mind in connection with his affairs. This same unthankfulness extends manward, and not infrequently it will be found that one's worst enemies, perhaps indeed his only enemies, are those whom he has endeavored to serve--those in whose interest he has made sacrifices. They do not feel thankful; they do not wish to feel under any obligation of any kind; they fancy that the one who has done them a kindness will consider them under some obligation, and gradually they come to have enmitous and

bitter feelings, instead of gratitude, thankfulness.

*Unholiness* is the eighth charge. The ordinary Christian professor will freely admit that he is unholy, not holy--not fully consecrated to the Lord. Many will admit that their only reason for maintaining even an outward semblance of Christianity is fear--fear of an eternity of torture; and some go so far as to admit that if it were not for fear of eternal torment they would indulge themselves in all manner of evil.

*Without natural affection* is the ninth charge. It is not the province of true Christianity to destroy the natural affections, but rather to deepen them and to lift them to a higher plane. It is therefore to be greatly regretted that there are to-day, apparently, evidences of the loss of family affection. In the days of the Apostle it was considered proper to exhort Christians to "love the brethren," but to-day this exhortation has comparatively little weight, because of the general loss of natural affection. Verily, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

*Truce-breaking* is the tenth charge. The Greek word here used signifies not merely a breaker of a truce or agreement, but more especially an unwillingness to make a truce or to live in harmony, and to abandon hostilities. Combativeness seems to be considerably on the increase, and not only are people willing to have a fracas for slight cause, but controlled by this implacable disposition, they are less ready than of yore to drop the matter--to forgive and be forgiven. Their hearts not having the spirit of love, but the spirit of selfishness, are not peace-loving but contention-loving. Hence, instead of being "easy to be entreated," they are the reverse, implacable.

*False accusers* is the eleventh charge. This corresponds closely to the charge of blasphemy, but seems to signify a still more extreme step--a willingness to accuse falsely, knowing that the charges or accusations are false. This surely indicates a very evil condition of heart, and yet we are compelled to admit that it is a very prevalent condition to-day. Let a person of strong will, whose heart is not under control of grace, become your enemy, and following the custom of our time he will probably not only misrepresent you in the matters of which he has knowledge or hearsay, but not infrequently he will deliberately concoct falsehoods. Such a course would not seem so strange on the part of the professedly worldly. It has always been so; the natural heart has always been full of evil, and ready to vilify when it considered itself provoked. The point of the Apostle's argument is that these conditions, so foreign to the spirit of Christ, the spirit of love, will prevail in the end of this age amongst those who profess his name and have a form of godliness.

*Incontinency* is the twelfth charge. This signifies, without self-control, led of passion, rash, impulsive. The Apostle's exhortation to the Church, as its proper condition, is expressed in the words, "Let your moderation be known unto all men"--your self-control. (Phil. 4:5.) Keep yourselves well in hand, subject and obedient to the will of God, as expressed in his Word. But to-day, and especially with the rising generation, self-control is little practiced. Some of this is chargeable to the spirit of the times in which we live, with its false conceptions of liberties and rights, and some of it is doubtless attributable to lax training under conditions of comparative worldly prosperity.

*Fierceness* is the thirteenth charge. This came forcibly to our attention a few days ago, as we noticed a headline of a dispatch from Manila, saying, "The Tenth Pennsylvania Regiment made a fierce charge upon the Filipinos, uttering their terrible yell. The enemy fled, terrified, in all directions." It used to be that the savages pounced upon the civilized, with fierce blood-curdling yells, but now it appears that the rising generation, representatives of Christendom from one of the most civilized states of the world can give so fierce a yell, and in every way manifest so much ferocity, as to strike terror to the uncivilized. Undoubtedly this fierceness explains much of the success of civilized men over the uncivilized in recent wars. Civilization, the handmaid of religion, has given intelligence and courage; but in those not having the power of godliness it inspires ferocity instead of love, kindness, gentleness.

*Despisers of those that are good* is the fourteenth charge. We are to distinguish between goodness from the standpoint of the Apostle and the Lord's word in general, and goodness from the world's standpoint. The world wants a man good enough to be honest, temperate, trustworthy, and faithful as a servant or contractor; but the world despises the higher forms of goodness to which the Apostle refers. The nominal Christian despises the "saint," and tries to believe that his professions of full consecration to the Lord, and his desire to please the Lord in thought and word and deed, are simply hypocrisies,--because his own heart is not in sympathy with such a condition of consecration, with such ideals of goodness, and he does not desire to be in the presence of so high a standard. As our

Lord described the matter, "Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light."--John 3:20.

*Treachery* is the fifteenth charge. Because the mainspring of the world's efforts in every direction is selfishness, therefore treachery is its inevitable adjunct. Love desires to be just; love may frequently approve of self-sacrifice in the interests of others; but selfishness disapproves of benevolences except where some self-interest attaches. Hence, the one who might be willing to make a contract to-day, and who selfishly might be willing to keep that contract so long as he believed that it would be to his own advantage to do so, would often be willing to break that contract so soon as selfishness indicated that it would be to his advantage to break it. Persons controlled by the selfish spirit here described can never be trusted. Could we think of God as being controlled by selfish motives we could not trust him, except so long as it would be to his interest to fulfill his promises. Only those controlled by the reverse spirit of love can be relied upon in times of extreme trial. This is set forth as one of the special features of the great time of trouble just before us: selfishness and distrust will become general and the motto will be, "Every man for himself." The prophetic declaration shows the loss of confidence, general treachery, saying, There shall be no peace to him that goeth out nor to him that cometh in; for I have set every man's hand against his neighbor.--Zech. 8:10.

*Headiness* is the sixteenth charge. How forceful this word, as expressing self-will, impetuosity. Do we not see this quality everywhere amongst those who have the form of godliness, but who lack its power? And we believe that it, as well as these other evils, is steadily on the increase. <sup>(1)</sup>The true Christian is not "heady;" on the contrary, his consecration to the Lord figuratively decapitated him; he lost his head, renounced his own will and self-rule, and submitted himself, as a *member of the body of Christ*, to the absolute control of Jesus, the Head of the Church. (Eph. 1:22,23.) Such, so long as they abide as members of the true body of Christ, cannot be heady, cannot be self-willed. It is this very self-will that first of all they reckoned dead, in order that they might have the mind or will of Christ. To revive the self-will would be to lose the mind of Christ. The true Christian therefore, in every affair of life,--in respect to its pleasures as well as in respect to its burdens and trials,--appeals to his Head for direction, to know how and what to do or say-- yea, to have even the very thoughts of his mind in full conformity to the will of God in Christ.

The "heady" class are continually endeavoring to carry out their own wills, and do not submit themselves to the will of God. Their headiness continually brings them into difficulties, and yet, sometimes, with pride and boasting and love of their own selves and fierceness and false accusations, they endeavor to have their own heady way, and perhaps even claim, with forms of godliness, that such a course is under divine leading. How sadly such are deceived! "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." Wherever headiness prevails it is an evidence that such are "not holding the head" (Christ). If they have not already fallen utterly, their fall is certainly near unless they reform.--Col. 2:19; Rom. 8:9.

*High-mindedness* is the seventeenth charge. Self-conceit is naturally a virtue in the eyes of the class which the Apostle describes: and how naturally this quality of a large opinion of one's self and one's own talents, or of one's favor with God, or what-not, is linked with pride, boastfulness and self-love. There is no more dangerous form of high-mindedness or self-conceit than that which attacks the Christian, and seeks to make him think of himself more highly than he ought to think. Very many of the Lord's people have been ensnared along such lines, and stumbled into all the other evils of this category by first of all getting the impression that for some reason, or for no reason, the Lord had specially taken a fancy to them, and was giving them private lessons and information not vouchsafed to others of his consecrated ones. How appropriate the Apostle's caution along this line, "I say, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." (Rom. 12:3.) Not only is this quality of self-conceit one of the most dangerous to Christians, but also it is one of the most dangerous to the world, for probably more than one-half of the hopelessly insane have lost their reason along this line of self-conceit. All true Christians should be specially on their guard against this snare of the Adversary.

*Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God* is the eighteenth charge. It is natural for every human being to prefer to be pleased, to be happy, to have pleasure. It is not a sin to love things which minis-

<sup>(1)</sup> July 18 Manna, 2 Tim 3:4

ter to our pleasure in proper ways. To be a Christian does not mean to have no pleasure: but the Christian puts God higher than himself, loves God more than he loves himself, consecrates himself to God, and consequently desires to please God rather than to please himself. By such, any pleasure, no matter what, must be sacrificed if it come in conflict with his still higher pleasure and duty and covenant of service to the Lord. It is this that leads the true saints of God to sacrifice: the world being out of harmony with God and his will is out of harmony also with those who are in harmony with God. Hence, as our Lord says, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."--John 15:18,19.

The contest, then, comes between serving God and doing those things which would bring his approval, and serving self after the manner of the world, and doing those things which would bring its approval. The true Christian must invariably decide for the Lord, and thus he often crosses the will, the preferences, the prejudices or the superstitions of those with whom he comes in closest contact in the flesh, and it is in this that he is to be an "overcomer" of the world and its spirit; and by so doing he is to gain ultimately the approval, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joys of thy Lord." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne."--Matt. 25:21; Rev. 3:21.

The class described by the Apostle, the mass of Christendom, in the present time are not fully consecrated to the Lord, but are lovers of pleasure *more* than lovers of God. In this sense of the word they are idolaters, rendering love and service to self above God, -- covetous of the world's pleasures and honors and emoluments of various kinds. Is it difficult for us to see this very condition of things all about us, amongst those who have merely a form of godliness? No, it is not difficult; it is the confessed condition of the vast majority. Love of God above love of self is proved by our willingness to sacrifice self-loves in order to do those things which would meet the Lord's approval. *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof* is the nineteenth charge. It does not follow that this class, in so many words, denies that there is any power to godliness. Rather, we are to understand that their course in life denies or repudiates the power of God. Outwardly they have a religious form; they know that churchianity is popular; they wish to be known as identified with some denomination for decency's sake, and as an *entree* to good social and financial standing for themselves and their families. But that is about all the use they have for Christianity. Their life as a whole denies the power of the gospel of Christ to control the heart and regulate, direct and guide the conduct.

"From such turn away." True Christians are to reprove the false Christians by turning away from them, and from their course or walk in life. Whoever has the spirit of Christ, the spirit of Love, and is seeking to cultivate its grace, and to walk according to its rule, will more and more find his path turning away from the path of churchianity and general worldliness. As they are guided by different spirits or dispositions, so they tend to different directions or effort, different loves, different sympathies, different experiences. The true sheep are to walk in the narrow way, led by the true Shepherd, who has gone before, and who calls us to follow him. This means that in this harvest-time in a most natural way a separation will be made between the "wheat" class and the "tare" class, just as our Lord's parable illustrated. Whoever walks in the Lord's way will receive the light that is due in this harvest-time, and be enlightened thereby and led in the footsteps of Jesus. Whoever walks in the evil way, described by the Apostle as the prevalent way in the end of this age, is following Satan's example. The separation of these classes must eventually be thorough and complete. Thus the Lord is by present truth and its spirit or influence calling to his people to separate themselves, to turn away from others who are not really his people, who have merely the form of godliness but not its power, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."--Rev. 18:4.

#### OUTSIDE CORROBORATIONS OF THE FOREGOING...

[See R2461-R2464 for the voluminous newspaper quotes. The last quote and final part written by Pastor Russell is as follows:]

This witness is *The Epworth Herald*, the leading journal among the Methodist "Young People;" it says:

#### "A CRISIS"

"Methodism is in a crucial place. A crisis has been reached. We need to run up the danger signal. There never has been a time in our eventful history when there was so great need for self-examination.

"Last year the whole denomination was startled by the smallness of our numerical increase. This year [1898] promises to show no better results. Revivals are less frequent and less fruitful. The

doctrines which emphasize the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the certainty of an eternal hell, the necessity of repentance, the need of regeneration, and the far-reaching importance of a definite spiritual experience are not preached in many of our pulpits as faithfully as our fathers preached them. The demand for a less heroic gospel is widespread. Sinners can sit in our churches without feeling much discomfort. Formalism increases. The spirit of aggressiveness which so dominated our church for a hundred years begins to wane.

"Multitudes of our people have lost the marks which once distinguished us. They have adopted the social customs of the world. They patronize the theater. They have become familiar with the card-table. The sound of dancing echoes through their homes. Wealth is worshiped. Social position is accounted the principal thing. No wonder that the children of some of our most influential families are lost to Methodism. With their thoughtless and back-slidden parents they are drawn into the whirlpool of social pleasure, and either drift out into a line of infidelity or attach themselves to some church where worldliness is no bar.

"Moreover, beneficence does not keep pace with our increasing wealth. The fact that it required two long years, filled with pitiful pleading, for our great church to raise a paltry missionary debt of \$186,000 is one of the saddest experiences of our denomination.

"This is not pessimism. It is fact. And the sooner we wake up to the peril of the situation the better for Methodism to-day and tomorrow. A CRISIS IS HERE. A crisis does not necessarily mean disaster. It will not if we will only see the danger and escape."

#### "AWAKE, O ZION,"

cries the Prophet. (Isa. 52:1.) He who sleeps now, not only neglects his duty to the "brethren," but puts himself in jeopardy--marks himself as deficient in the very spirit of love which the Lord declares all-essential in his estimation. We remind our readers again of the Call for Volunteers in our last issue. Many responses are already at hand, but our hope is that many more may share the privilege and blessing of this service.

#### INTROSPECTION NEXT IN ORDER

Having satisfied ourselves respecting the fulfilment of the Apostle's charges against "Christendom" and having found his predictions fully corroborated by facts well witnessed to, the question arises, Can the Lord's truly consecrated people learn any further valuable lessons and what are they?

We have already noted that all such are to "turn away" from those who have merely the form of godliness. And we have seen that it is both our duty and privilege to aid any true "brethren" yet in Babylon to attain the light and liberty wherewith Christ makes free his true followers. But let us not forget personal introspection--to *look within* our own hearts carefully and frequently to make doubly sure that the world's spirit of selfishness does not poison us as it poisonously manifests itself in others.

We are to remember always that we have the treasure of the new mind, the new spirit, in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7), and that these earthen vessels are continually surrounded by selfish tendencies and examples; and that consequently they must be kept well filled with the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love, that the evil spirit of selfishness does not in any of its many forms gain access.

If in our introspections we find traces of self-love, of covetous ambition, of a disposition to boast even of good things, or even a little pride--perhaps "spiritual pride," as some erroneously describe it, or even a slight tendency to slander (blaspheme), or the least tendency to disrespect parents, or any measure of ingratitude toward God or men (unthankfulness), or the slightest sympathy with false accusations, or any lack of moderation (incontinence), or any sympathy with fierce speeches or manners, or anything else than fervent love for all who are "good," or the slightest suggestion to betray a trust or a confidence, or the least tendency to self-will and self-consciousness, or any disposition to weigh our own wills or pleasure against the Lord's will, or the least tendency to mere formalism in worship, or the slightest evidence that the *power* of the truth is not in full control of our hearts and lives, it should arouse us to energetically seek help from on high and to put away the unclean thing which taints our sacrifices.

Nevertheless let no one feel discouraged even tho he should find *traces* of all these evils in his *flesh*: for as the Apostle declares, so we must all find, "In my flesh dwells no perfection." (Rom. 7:18.) We are however to expect no trace of these evils in our *hearts*--no sympathy, no cooperation with any of these evils. As enemies of the Lord, and our enemies because we are the Lord's in spirit and in truth, these evils are to be hunted and shunned to the best of our ability from every nook and corner of our beings. "Be ye holy that bear the vessels of the Lord's house." As he who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all things.