

A Falling Away

Speaking of the Man of Sin and his doings, Paul writes that that day shall not come, “*except there come a falling away first.*” There is then to be a general sinking from the true faith, and the substitution of human conceits, philosophies, and “science falsely so-called,” in the place of the divine verities, eating away the substance of true religion, and dissolving its hold on the hearts and minds of men.

Such a terrible deceit could not be unless all society were first thoroughly corrupted. And so it will be. The Apostle says: “Know this, 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;”—times “when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables.” (2 Tim. 3:1-6; 4:3, 4.)

Among the active causes of all this we are forewarned of a certain boastful and blatant scientism and naturalism which does not hesitate dogmatically to negate in the doctrines of faith, and likewise of a demonic spiritualism, which denies that Jesus Christ has come, or is to come, in any literal sense, and sets up quite other revelations as the hope and dependence of the world.

In so many words, it is affirmed “there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying [as a matter of doctrine and science], Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation;” and furthermore, “that in the latter times some [certain men] shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits *and teachings of demons*, speaking lies and hypocrisy, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.” (2 Pet. 3:3, 4; 1 Tim. 4:1-3.)

As a necessary concomitant and result, we are further told of a perturbed, restless, and disabled condition in political affairs, a weakening of the laws, an unmanageableness of things of state and social order, making all the old formulae and codes of none effect, and engulfing the whole world in a quagmire of confusion, from which there is no retreat, and whence the only prospect is of worst disaster ahead.

The Saviour assures us that as before the flood “the earth was corrupt before God, and was filled with violence,” justice and law having been supplanted by the base will of the corrupt multitude, so it shall be when the present world nears its end. (Matt. 24:37-39.)

Besides, it is a time when the patience of God is about wearied out with the perverseness and inventions of the wicked,—when judgment has commenced,—when the One who hinders the revelation of the Man of Sin is taken away,—when the Holy Ghost, so long grieved and insulted, begins to withdraw from the world then approaching its doom,—when the holiest and best of earth's population, is taken away, caught up to the heavenly pavilion,—when the very candlestick of sacred illumination is removed, when they that love not the truth are given over, judicially blinded, and allowed a loose rein to believe lies and hasten their own damnation,—when the doors of the abyss are unlocked, and the powers of perdition are given wider liberties,—and when Satan is angered to the intensest degree, because he knows that “he hath but a short time.”

And in this crisis and condition of things, when evil is ready to bloom forth in final maturity, and every form of it is confluent, and all that impeded it has well-nigh disappeared, the great embodiment of Hell's subtlety and deceit begins his ministry. The world, having rejected the Evangel of God, is therefore ripe and ready for the Gospel of the Devil, and his great Apostle comes.

(The Apocalypse: A Series of Special Lectures on the Revelation of Jesus Christ... Vol. II, Tenth Edition by J. A. Seiss, New York: Charles C. Cook, 1909, 438-441, Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)