

1 Timothy 3:1-5 (Alfred Henry Burton) 184688

Christian's Library: Volume 7, Last Days., The (3:1-5)

WILL the reader open the Bible and glance for a few moments at 2 Timothy 3:1-5? We are there told in plain unmistakable language the signs or characteristics of the last days. "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, unholly, 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."

Most of the evils enumerated above have always characterized man in his unregenerate state. In Romans 1:18-32, the same things are said of the heathen — the dark, ignorant, idol-worshippers, who are without God and without hope in the world.

The deeply solemn and dreadful fact in these last days is that all these evils are enacted under a form of godliness. Now look around on Christendom to-day, and let me ask you, reader, are we not living in the midst of these very evils set forth so vividly in the verses just quoted? In a religious form people of to-day are

Concerts, musical services, bazaars, popular lectures, and even theatrical performances in many cases take the place of preaching the Word of God; and the prayer-meeting is often left out altogether. Many of those who profess Christ, instead of meeting together as believers did of old to enjoy in sweet fellowship His things, are taken up perhaps with a social gathering, when the order of the day is to sing the world's songs and pass the time in amusement with scarce a thought of the One who suffered the untold agonies of Calvary to save them from the very things they so eagerly seek after.

Reader, if you have not yet come as a poor hell-deserving sinner to Christ, let me warn you to come now; delay not a moment, for

The time is near when the One who now waits in long-suffering mercy, not willing that any should perish, will come to execute "the day of vengeance of our God" (Isa. 61:2).

Yes, God's greatest gift — the giving of His only begotten Son — has been willfully rejected by this evil world. That precious blood — which is able to cleanse from all sin the vilest that comes to Him — is being treated like the One who shed it, despised and rejected, and in its place is substituted doctrines and commandments of men, something that will please the natural depraved taste of people in their sins; something that will tend to lull into false peace the troubled conscience, or otherwise, the devil's lie of "peace, peace, when there is no peace," for "when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them," for "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in them that believe," &c. (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

Now perhaps, dear reader, you have believed on the Lord Jesus, and know for certain that your sins are gone forever, and that you will not come into judgment, but you are distressed and grieved with the things you see and hear in the sect or system to which you belong. The apostle's words to Timothy concerning the above evils hold good to-day, and they are — "from such turn away." The believer is to have no fellowship with these things, but "let everyone that nameth the name Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," but, "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:14-18). If you see, according to the Word of God, that these things are wrong, then the first thing for you to do is to "come out," and His promise to those who thus separate themselves is, "I will receive you." Yes, dear fellow-believer, the Lord Almighty pledges Himself with all the loving tender care of a father to undertake the keeping and providing of His children in their many trying and needy circumstances while passing through this hostile world — to those who in simple faith stand aloof from its deadly allurements. "If God be for us who can be against us?" (Read Romans 8:31-39.) Let the god and prince of this world muster his forces and combine all his power against the believer thus standing, and he cannot in any way harm him. So long as it pleases the Father to keep His beloved children here for a testimony to the Lord Jesus, all the power and rage of men or devils cannot remove them.

But oh, my reader, if still unsaved, once more I say, be warned in time, for "he that despised Moses' law died without mercy... of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:28).

"Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37). God grant, dear reader, you may be ready. J. S.