

WE WILL BE JUDGED HEAVILY IF WE IGNORE THE URGENCY OF THIS MATTER

We Must Warn the World about the Coming National Sunday Law

CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT SPIRIT OF PROPHECY COUNSEL

IN THIS ISSUE: Two Spirit of Prophecy articles: Review, December 24, 1889 / 5 Testimonies, 714-717

December 24, 1889 An Address in Regard to the Sunday Movement - "Dear Brethren and Sisters: I have been much burdened in regard to movements that are now in progress for the enforcement of Sunday observance. It has been shown to me that Satan has been working earnestly to carry out his designs to restrict religious liberty. Plans of serious import to the people of God are advancing in an underhand manner among the clergymen of various denominations, and the object of this secret maneuvering is to win popular favor for the enforcement of Sunday sacredness. If the people can be led to favor a Sunday law, then the clergy intend to exert their united influence to obtain a religious amendment to the Constitution, and compel the nation to keep Sunday.

"There are many who, if they understood the spirit and the result of religious legislation, would not do anything to forward in the least the movement for Sunday enforcement. But while Satan has been making a success of his plans, the people of God have failed at their post. God had an earnest work for them to do; for the honor of His law and the religious liberty of the people are at stake. God would have us see and realize the weakness and depravity of men, and put our entire trust in Him; 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.'

"There are many who are at ease, who are, as it were, asleep. They say, 'If prophecy has foretold the enforcement of Sunday observance, the law will surely be enacted;' and having come to this conclusion, they sit down in calm expectation of the event, comforting themselves with the thought that God will protect His people in the day of trouble. But God will not save us if we make no effort to do the work He has committed to our charge. We must be found faithfully guard-

ing the outposts, watching as vigilant soldiers, lest Satan shall gain an advantage which it is our duty to prevent. We should diligently study the Word of God, and pray in faith that God will restrain the powers of darkness; for as yet the message has gone to comparatively few, and the world is to be lightened with its glory. **The present truth—the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus—has not yet been sounded as it must be.** There are many almost within the shadow of our own doors, for whose salvation no personal effort has ever been made. We are not prepared for the time when our work must close. We must take a firm stand that we will not reverence the first day of the week as the Sabbath, for it is not the day that was blessed and sanctified by Jehovah. And in reverencing Sunday we should place ourselves on the side of the great deceiver. **The controversy for the Sabbath will open the subject to the people, and an opportunity will be given that the claims of the genuine Sabbath may be presented.** Blindness, disloyalty to God, so prevails that His law is made void, but the psalmist says of such a condition, 'It is time for Thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void Thy law.'

"It is time for God's people to work as never before, because of the increase of wickedness. The God-fearing, commandment-keeping people should be diligent, not only in prayer, but in action; and this will bring the truth before those who have never heard it. The world is overborne with falsehood and iniquity, and those whom God has made the depositories of His law, and of the pure religion of Jesus, must be determined to let their light shine. **If they do nothing to disabuse the minds of the people, and through ignorance of the truth our legislatures should abjure the principles of Protestantism, and give countenance and support to the Roman fallacy, the spurious sabbath, God will hold His people who have had great light, responsible for their lack of diligence and faithfulness.** But if the subject of religious legislation is judiciously and intelligently laid before the people,

and they see that through Sunday enforcement the Roman apostasy would be re-enacted by the Christian world, and that the tyranny of past ages would be repeated, then whatever comes, we shall have done our duty.

“The man of sin thinks to change times and laws. He is exalting himself above God, in trying to compel the conscience. **But God’s people should work with persevering energy to let their light shine upon the people in regard to the law, and thus to withstand the enemies of God and His truth.** When the law of God has been made void, and apostasy becomes a national sin, the Lord will work in behalf of His people. Their extremity will be His opportunity. He will manifest His power in behalf of His church.

“My brethren, you must have Jesus enthroned within, and self must die. We must be baptized with the Holy Spirit, and then we shall not sit down, saying unconcernedly, ‘What is to be, will be; prophecy must be fulfilled.’ O awake, I pray you, awake! for you bear the most sacred responsibilities. As faithful watchmen, you should see the sword coming, and give the warning, that men and women may not pursue a course through ignorance that they would avoid if they knew the truth. The Lord has enlightened us in regard to what is coming upon the earth, that we may enlighten others, and we shall not be held guiltless if we are content to sit at ease, with folded hands, and quibble over matters of minor importance. **The minds of many have been engrossed with contentions, and they have rejected the light given through the Testimonies, because it did not agree with their own opinions.**

“God does not force any man into His service. Every soul must decide for himself whether or not he will fall on the Rock and be broken. Heaven has been amazed to see the spiritual stupidity that has prevailed. You need individually to open your proud hearts to the Spirit of God. You need to have your intellectual ability sanctified to the service of God. The transforming power of God must be upon you, that your minds may be renewed by the Holy Spirit, that you may have the mind that was in Christ.

“**If the watchmen sleep under an opiate of Satan’s and do not recognize the voice of the true Shepherd, and do not take up the warning, I tell you in the fear of God, they will be charged with the blood of souls.** The watchmen must be wide awake, men who will not slumber at their post of duty, day nor night. They must give the trumpet a certain sound, that the people may shun the evil and choose the good. **Stupidity and careless indifference cannot be excused. On every side of us there are breakers and hidden rocks which**

will dash our bark [ship] in pieces, and leave us helpless wrecks, unless we make God our refuge and help. Every soul should now be distrustful of self. Our own ways, our own plans and ideas, may not be such as God can approve. We must keep the way of the Lord to do His will, making Him our counselor, and then in faith work away from self.

“**Light must come to the people through agents whom God shall choose, who will give the note of warning, that none may be in ignorance of the purposes of God or the devices of Satan. At the great heart of the work, Satan will use his hellish arts to the utmost. He will seek in every possible way to interpose himself between the people and God, and shut away the light that God would have come to His children. It is his design to keep them in ignorance of what shall come upon the earth.** All should be prepared to hear the signal trumpet of the watchman, and be ready to pass the word along the walls of Zion, that the people may prepare themselves for the conflict. **The people must not be left to stumble their way along in darkness, not knowing what is before them, and unprepared for the great issues that are coming. There is a work to be done for this time in fitting a people to stand in the day of trouble, and all must act their part in this work.** They must be clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and be so fortified by the truth, that the delusions of Satan shall not be accepted by them as genuine manifestations of the power of God.

“**Years have been lost, but will you now awake? Will those in responsible positions take in the situation or will they, by their indifference and inactivity, say to the people, ‘Peace and safety’? May God help every one to come up to the help of the Lord now. The watchmen have been asleep, but may God grant that they may not sleep the sleep of death.** Let all who are standing upon the walls of Zion give the trumpet a certain sound. It is a solemn time for God’s people, but if they stand close by the bleeding side of Jesus, He will be their defense. **He will open ways that the message of light may come to great men, to authors, and lawmakers. They will have opportunities of which you do not dream, and some of them will boldly advocate the claims of God’s downtrodden law.**

“Instead of increased power as we enter the perils of the last days, weakness, dissension, and strife for supremacy, are apparent. But if we had a connection with the God of heaven, we should be mighty in Him, and yet we would walk with all lowliness of mind, having self hid in Jesus. But now both spiritual and natural feebleness and death are depriving us of workers. God alone, by His Holy Spirit,

1 can arouse us from the slumber of death. There is
4 now need of earnest working men and women who
2 will seek for the salvation of souls; for Satan as a
6 powerful general has taken the field, and in this
last remnant of time he is working through all conceivable methods to close the door against light that God would have come to His people. **He is sweeping the whole world into his ranks, and the few who are faithful to God's requirements are the only ones who can ever withstand him, and even these he is trying to overcome.** Much upon these things has been shown to me, but I can only present a few ideas to you. Go to God for yourselves, pray for divine enlightenment, that you may know that you do know what is truth, that when the wonderful miracle-working power of Satan shall be displayed, and the enemy shall come as an angel of light, you may distinguish between the genuine work of God and the imitative work of the powers of darkness. Ministers may do a great work for God if Jesus abides in the heart by faith. 'Without Me,' says Christ, 'ye can do nothing.' I would that I had the power to present before you your sacred, solemn responsibility.

"It is now too late in the day for men to please and glorify themselves. Ministers of God, it is too late to be contending for the supremacy. The solemn time has come when ministers should be weeping between the porch and the altar, crying, 'Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach.' It is a day when instead of lifting up their souls in self-sufficiency, ministers and people should be confessing their sins before God and one another. The law of God is made void; and, even among those who advocate its binding claims, are some who break its sacred precepts. **The Bible will be opened from house to house, and men and women will find access to these homes, and minds will be opened to receive the Word of God; and when the crisis comes, many will be prepared to make right decisions even in the face of the formidable difficulties that will be brought about through the deceptive miracles of Satan.** Although these will confess the truth and become workers with Christ at the eleventh hour, they will receive equal wages with those who have wrought through the whole day. There will be an army of steadfast believers who will stand as firm as a rock through the last test. **But where in that army are those who have been standard-bearers? Where are those whose voices have sounded in proclaiming the truth to the sinning? Some of them are not there. We look for them; but, in the time of shaking, they have been unable to stand and have passed over to the enemy's ranks.**

"Brethren and sisters, the Lord wants to impart to us increased light. He desires that we shall have distinct revealings of His glory; that ministers and people shall become strong in His strength. When the angel was about to unfold to Daniel the intensely interesting prophecies to be recorded for us who are to witness their fulfillment, the angel said, 'Be strong, yea, be strong.' We are to receive the very same glory that was revealed to Daniel, because it is for God's people in these last days, that they may give the trumpet a certain sound. God help us to work unitedly, and as we never have worked before, is my prayer. **There is need now of faithful Calebs, whose voices will be heard in clear, ringing notes, saying of the immortal inheritance, 'Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able.'** We need now the courage of God's faithful servant of old; not one wavering, uncertain note should come from the watchers' trumpets. They must be true to the sacred, solemn work that has been intrusted to them, and lead the flock of God in right pathways."—*Review, December 24, 1889.*

[This companion article, on the same subject and written at about the same time, is most of a chapter in 5 Testimonies (pp. 714-717). Special note: "The National Reform Movement," mentioned below, was the name of the small ecumenical movement urging Congress to enact a National Sunday Law in the late 1880s. It was solely Protestant and quite small, compared to the political strength of the immense religious organizations now poised to push for enactment of a similar law: Catholic Campaign for America and Christian Churches Together—which alone includes nearly all of the Protestant denominations and the Orthodox churches,—plus the combined might of the Roman Catholic Church!]

"If our people continue in the listless attitude in which they have been, God cannot pour upon them His Spirit. They are unprepared to co-operate with Him. They are not awake to the situation and do not realize the threatened danger. They should feel now, as never before, their need of vigilance and concerted action.

"The peculiar work of the third angel has not been seen in its importance. God meant that His people should be far in advance of the position which they occupy today. But now, when the time has come for them to spring into action, they have the preparation to make. When the National Reformers began to urge measures to restrict religious

liberty, our leading men should have been alive to the situation and should have labored earnestly to counteract these efforts. **It is not in the order of God that light has been kept from our people—the very present truth which they needed for this time. Not all our ministers who are giving the third angel's message really understand what constitutes that message. The National Reform movement has been regarded by some as of so little importance that they have not thought it necessary to give much attention to it and have even felt that in so doing they would be giving time to questions distinct from the third angel's message.** May the Lord forgive our brethren for thus interpreting the very message for this time.

“The people need to be aroused in regard to the dangers of the present time. The watchmen are asleep. We are years behind. Let the chief watchmen feel the urgent necessity of taking heed to themselves, lest they lose the opportunities given them to see the dangers.

“If the leading men in our conferences do not now accept the message sent them by God, and fall into line for action, the churches will suffer great loss. When the watchman, seeing the sword coming, gives the trumpet a certain sound, the people along the line will echo the warning and all will have opportunity to make ready for the conflict. **But too often the leader has stood hesitating, seeming to say: ‘Let us not be in too great haste. There may be a mistake. We must be careful not to raise a false alarm.’ The very hesitancy and uncertainty on his part is crying: ‘Peace and safety.’ Do not get excited. Be not alarmed. There is a great deal more made of this religious amendment question than is demanded. This agitation will all die down.’ Thus he virtually denies the message sent from God, and the warning which was designed to stir the churches fails to do its work. The trumpet of the watchman gives no certain sound, and the people do not prepare for the battle. Let the watchman beware lest, through his hesitancy and delay, souls shall be left to perish and their blood shall be required at his hand.**

“We have been looking many years for a Sunday law to be enacted in our land; and, now that the movement is right upon us, we ask: Will our people do their duty in the matter? Can we not assist in lifting the standard and in calling to the front those who have a regard for their religious rights and privileges? **The time is fast approach-**

ing when those who choose to obey God rather than man will be made to feel the hand of oppression. Shall we then dishonor God by keeping silent while His holy commandments are trodden underfoot?

“While the Protestant world is by her attitude making concessions to Rome, let us arouse to comprehend the situation and view the contest before us in its true bearings. Let the watchmen now lift up their voice and give the message which is present truth for this time. Let us show the people where we are in prophetic history and seek to arouse the spirit of true Protestantism, awaking the world to a sense of the value of the privileges of religious liberty so long enjoyed.

“God calls upon us to awake, for the end is near. **Every passing hour is one of activity in the heavenly courts, to make ready a people upon the earth to act a part in the great scenes that are soon to open upon us. These passing moments, that seem of so little value to us, are weighty with eternal interests. They are molding the destiny of souls for everlasting life or eternal death. The words we utter today in the ears of the people, the works we are doing, the spirit of the message we are bearing, will be a savor of life unto life or of death unto death.**

“My brethren, do you realize that your own salvation, as well as the destiny of other souls, depends upon the preparation you now make for the trial before us? Have you that intensity of zeal, that piety and devotion, which will enable you to stand when opposition shall be brought against you? If God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when you will be brought before councils, and every position of truth which you hold will be severely criticized. **The time that so many are now allowing to go to waste should be devoted to the charge that God has given us of preparing for the approaching crisis.**

“The law of God should be loved and honored by His true people now more than ever before. There is the most imperative necessity of urging the injunction of Christ upon the minds and hearts of all believers, men and women, youth and children: ‘Search the Scriptures.’ Study your Bible as you have never studied it before. Unless you arise to a higher, holier state in your religious life, you will not be ready for the appearing of our Lord.”—*5 Testimonies, 714-717.*