**“Uncertain Trumpetings” The Signs of the Times, 7, 39.**

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There is nothing that can work so much injury to any cause, as the inconsiderate zeal of its professed friends. Its enemies may circulate false reports, and misrepresent it, but these can injure only for a time; but when the professed friends of a cause misrepresent it, no matter how zealous they may be, the result cannot fail to be damaging. Especially is this true with respect to Bible truths. A great responsibility rests upon those who take upon themselves the task of teaching the people. Earnestness and zeal are commendable, but care should be taken that the zeal be “according to knowledge.” {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.1}

The apostle Paul, in seeking to impress upon the Corinthians the necessity of clearness in all their attempts to teach, said: “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” This was written with direct reference to those who spoke in an unknown tongue, which could not edify the hearers; but it may with equal propriety be applied to those who teach that which is manifestly inconsistent. {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.2}

No cause has suffered more from “uncertain sounds” than the Advent cause. Many professed believers in it seem to spend their time as did the ancient Athenians, “either to tell, or to hear some new thing.” They have repeatedly set the time for the Lord to come, and have projected vague and indefinite theories in regard to the prophecies, till with many the word “Adventist” is a synonym for “visionary fanatic.” {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.3}

In a late number of the *World’s Crisis*, there appeared a novel exposition of the prophecy in Revelation 14:18, and 16:8, 9. These texts read: “And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.” Revelation 14:18. “And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.” Revelation 16:8, 9. {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.4}

In reference to these texts, the writer says:- {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.5}

“The important question of this subject is, Has this angel of fire commenced to do his work as foretold in the Scriptures. We answer, There is much proof that he has. It is a fact that just such fires as the prophets predicted should come as special judgments in the last days, are rapidly increasing. It is known everywhere that incendiary fires are alarmingly on the increase. One writer has described this as being terrific in some parts of Russia, where the incendiaries torche lights up the heavens nearly every night.” {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.6}

Besides this, he cites the recent destructive fires in Michigan and Canada, as proof that the angel referred to in text, has begun his work. The veriest tyro could not have made a more fanciful exposition. The sixteenth chapter of Revelation is devoted to an account of the seven last plagues. The plague referred to by the article in question is the fourth. If that is in process of fulfillment, then the first three must be in the past. Is this so? We read: “And the first angel went and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast.” “And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.” “And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.” Surely these plagues are not of so trivial a nature that they can be poured out and no one be conscious of it, for we read that “in them is filled up the wrath of God.” {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.7}

Again, these fires have destroyed the lives and property of all classes, good and bad; but when the plagues are poured out, only the wicked suffer, while the righteous are unscathed. “Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” Psalm 91:8-10. {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.8}

But the writer adds:- {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.9}

“This plague of fire comes while the men upon whom it falls are in probation, for they were charged with the sin of not repenting, which would be no sin if these plagues had not been designed to cause them to repent.” {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.10}

The fact that in these plagues “is filled up the wrath of God,” Revelation 15:1, proves this. Sinners can repent and find pardon only while there is mercy, but when the wrath of God is “poured out with mixture,” there is no mercy. Men may not repent for two reasons. One is because they *will not*, which is the case with those who do not repent at the present time. The other is because they *cannot*, which will be the case of those who suffer under the seven last plagues. Of Esau we read that “he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears;” and in Proverbs 1:24-28 we are told that this at the last, shall actually be the case of those who persist in violating the commands of God. {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.11}

But the theory in question is so absurd that in itself it does not merit so much consideration. And in this lies its only danger. People are becoming so used to such vagaries, that many will reject sound expositions of prophecy, without any consideration. {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.12}

We firmly believe that the “day of the Lord is near, and hasteth greatly.” We do not pretend to know how near it is, but believe that it is so near that we have no time to waste in idle speculation. We believe that the following command should be fulfilled by the people of this generation. “Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand.” Joel 2:1; but we do not believe that false alarms will make the inhabitants of the land tremble, but that they will have the opposite effect. {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.13}

The coming judgments of God are of too serious a nature to allow of childish trifling. The words of prophecy which warn of their near approach are of awful solemnity, and are wonderfully clear and consistent. See Habakkuk 2:2. That false teachers and false expositors should arise, is not to be wondered at; but no one need be misled by these, if he will but remember that “God is not the author of confusion.” {SITI October 27, 1881, p. 464.14}