

Is the World to be Converted Before Christ Comes

The common opinion is, that the Gospel is to be preached in all the world until the whole world is converted, then will follow the Millennium, after which Christ will come back and there will be a "General Resurrection" and a "General Judgment," and the earth will be destroyed by fire, time will cease and eternity begin. Is this the "Program" of the Scriptures?

After nearly 1900 years of Gospel preaching are the churches of Christ throughout the world multiplying with great rapidity? Are the congregations in the churches increasing in numbers and taxing the seating capacity of the churches to accommodate them? Are the churches in downtown and congested districts stronger and more crowded and influential than ever? Are the professing followers of Christ more consecrated, spiritual, and benevolent than ever before? Are Christian men and women taking their religion into their business and social affairs as never before? Are our young men and women forsaking the world in large numbers and giving themselves to the ministry and missionary work? Are the treasuries of the missionary societies burdened with an oversupply of funds? Have our churches no difficulty in meeting their financial needs? Have the cities, towns and countries of the world, where the Gospel has been preached for centuries, become thoroughly Christianized, so that today worldliness and sin is largely unknown in them? Is it a fact that the children of Christian parents naturally and willingly accept the Gospel so that Christianity is growing as rapidly as the birthrate in Christian families? Is Christianity so influencing business, commercial and manufacturing enterprises, that business is now being conducted on Christian principles? Are the combinations of capital and labor run on the basis of the "Golden Rule," and in the "Spirit of Christ"? Are the nations of the earth beating their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks? Are they dismantling their navies and diminishing the size of their armies? Have cities and towns ceased building jails, prisons, penitentiaries and houses of correction? Is there no further use for officers of the law and courts of Justice? Is the government of our towns and cities and nations more free from misrule than ever before? Is the law more honored, and are there fewer divorces and more purity of life in the 20th century than in the 19th?

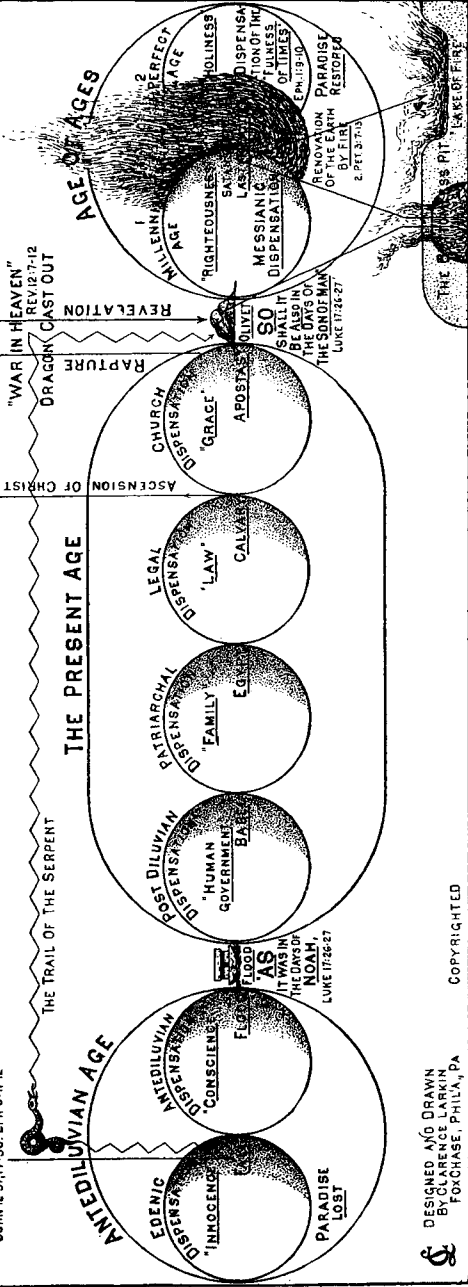
To ask these questions is to answer them. Is the Gospel then a failure, or have we misinterpreted its mission? There are three lines of argument we may follow in seeking our answer.

I. The "HISTORICAL" Argument.

The history of the world, as outlined in the Scriptures, has consisted up to the present Dispensation, of five Dispensations, all marked as the Rev. A. T. Pierson, D.D., so clearly outlined, by seven features essentially the same—"First, an advance in fullness and

THE FAILURE OF MAN

SATAN DEPOSED
BECOMES THE "PRINCE"
OF THE "AIR"
"POWERS OF THE AIR"
JOHN 12:31, 14:30. EPH 6:11-12



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clearness of revelation; then gradual spiritual declension; then conformity to the world ending with amalgamation with the world; then a gigantic civilization brilliant but Godless; then parallel development of evil and good; then an **Apostasy**, and finally a **Catastrophe**." These five Dispensations were—(1) The Edenic, that of "**Innocence**." It ended in the "**FALL OF MAN**." (2) The Ante-Diluvian, that of "**Conscience**." It ended in the "**FLOOD**." (3) The Post-Diluvian, that of "**Human Government**." It ended in the "**Confusion of Tongues**" at "**Babel**." (4) The Patriarchal, that of the "**Family**." It ended in slavery for Israel in **EGYPT**. (5) The Legal, that of "**Law**." It ended in the "**CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST**" and the scattering over the world of the Jewish people. See the Chart, "The Failure of Man," page 58. Now how is this Dispensation of "**Grace**" in which we are living to end? Is it to end differently from those that preceded it? For our answer we must turn from History to Prophecy.

II. The "**BIBLICAL**" Argument.

For the sake of brevity and to avoid repetition we will limit our argument to the words of Christ Himself. For further proof read the Chapter on "The Signs of the Times," page 65. In Matt. 13:1-52 we have a "Parabolic" prophetic description of the character of this Dispensation. In the Parable of "**The Sower**" we find that only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the seed sown got in, grew up, and brought forth fruit, and of that $\frac{1}{4}$ only a small part brought forth a 100 fold. In the Parable of the "**Wheat and Tares**" we find that the Wheat and the Tares are to grow **side by side** until the Harvest, which is the end of this Dispensation, and that they will ripen into fullness, each **after his own kind**, until the angel reapers shall gather out the Tares, preparatory to burning them after the Wheat has been safely gathered into the "Heavenly Barn." In the Parable of the "**Mustard Tree**" we see how the visible church is sought as a "roosting place" by the "birds of the air," the emissaries of Satan (Matt. 13:4, 19), who lodge in its branches, not so much for shelter as to befoul the tree. These are the "False Teachers" of II Pet. 2:1-2, which are so evident in our day. In the Parable of the "**Leaven**" we see the spread of "Evil Doctrine" in the sphere of the Christian Church. Leaven in the Scriptures is a type of evil. It cannot be a type of the Gospel, for the Gospel does not spread of itself, while Leaven does. And as the Leaven is to permeate and contaminate the whole mass of meal, it is clear that "Evil Doctrine" will prevail in the Church in the closing days of this Dispensation. Passing over the 5th and 6th Parables that refer to Israel, the "Hid Treasure," and the Church, the "Pearl," we come to the Parable of the "**Dragnet**." From this Parable we see that at the close of this Dispensation, instead of the whole "**sea of humanity**" being in the Gospel net, only a small proportion will be caught, and of them not all **are good**, for the good fish are gathered into vessels, and the bad are cast away." From these Parables we see that the world is not to be converted before Christ returns. For a full explanation of these Parables see my book on "Dispensational Truth."

In His "Olivet Discourse" (Matt. 24: 1-31), delivered by Jesus on the Tuesday night before His Crucifixion, in answer to the Disciples' question—"And what shall be the '**SIGN**' of Thy Coming, and of the end of the **world** (Age)"—Jesus said—

"Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars . . . nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the **BEGINNING OF SORROWS**. . . Many 'False Prophets' shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because **iniquity shall abound**, the love of many shall **WAX COLD**. . . Then shall be great '**Tribulation**,' such as was not since the beginning of the world . . . and except those days should be shortened, there should be no flesh **SAVED**: but for the elect's (Jews) sake those days shall be shortened."

That Jesus did not here refer to the "Tribulation" that befell the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 is clear, for He adds— "**IMMEDIATELY** after the '**Tribulation of those days** shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers (Evil Powers) of the heavens shall be shaken. (None of these things happened at the Destruction of Jerusalem): and **THEN** shall appear the '**SIGN** (a cloud) **OF THE SON OF MAN**' in heaven (the atmospheric heavens): and **THEN** shall all the 'Tribes of the Earth' **MOURN**, and they shall see the 'Son of Man' coming in the clouds of heaven with **POWER** and **GREAT GLORY**."

These words reveal the fact that when Jesus comes back, it will be **IMMEDIATELY** after a period of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes and a season of "Great Tribulation," that if it is not shortened will destroy **all flesh**, and that when He comes back, instead of being received joyfully, the "Tribes of the Earth" shall **MOURN**, men's hearts failing for **FEAR** (Luke 21: 25-27), all Kindreds (nations) of the earth shall **WAIL** because of Him (Rev. 1:7), and the kings of the earth, and the **great men**, and the **rich men**, and the **chief captains**, and the **mighty men**, and every **bondman** and every **free man**, shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and say to the mountains and rocks—"FALL ON US, AND HIDE US FROM THE FACE OF HIM THAT SITTETH ON THE THRONE, AND FROM THE "WRATH OF THE LAMB:" FOR THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH IS COME; AND WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND? Rev. 6: 15-17.

What an awful time is here revealed. It is not a picture of a Gospel converted world gladly welcoming the return of its Lord, but of a panic stricken world seeking to escape from His presence, when He shall be revealed in "**FLAMING FIRE**" taking **VENGEANCE** on them that **know not God** (the Heathen), and that **obey not the "Gospel of Christ"** (the Wicked). II Thess. 1:7-10. Truly Christ will not find "**THE FAITH**," covering the earth, when He returns. Luke 18: 8.

III. The "WORLD" Argument.

One of the objections to the Pre-Millennial Return of Christ is that it cannot be squared with the belief in the "**Continuance of History.**" But it will no more interfere with the "Continuance of History" than the First Coming of Christ did. The world moved on then just as it did before, and so it will after His Second Coming. The "Second Coming" will be but an "**episode**" or "**event**" in history. Another objection is, that it is not **scientific**. That it nullifies the "**Evolutionary Development**" of Christianity, and is a confession that the "**Spiritual Forces**" of God are unable to save the world, and that God will have to resort to "**Miraculous Militarism,**" and send the "**Armies of Heaven,**" under the leadership of Christ, to save Himself from defeat. Rev. 19:11-21.

All that is needed to answer these objections is to compare the boasted civilization of today with that of 100 years ago, to see that the civilization of today has degenerated. The nations today are like "**wild beasts**" preying upon each other, as foretold by Daniel. Dan. 7:1-28. The boasted genius of today is engaged not so much in constructive work, as in the invention of destructive instruments of war. Men and women and nations have become brutalized, and appear to be but "**veneered barbarians.**" The "**Blood Poison**" of **SIN**, no longer hidden in some internal organ of the "Body Politic," is now revealed on the surface, and is seen in the lawlessness of the world. As just before the Flood, the earth is filled with "**corruption**" and "**violence**" (Gen. 6:11-12), as Jesus said it would be, when He said—

"**AS** it was in the '**Days of Noah,**' **SO** shall it be **ALSO** in the '**Days of the Son of Man.**'" Luke 17:26.

A comparison of those "Noah Days" with the present will indicate that we are living in the last days of this Dispensation.



NOAH DAYS

The prominent characteristics of the days shortly before the Flood were—

1. A tendency to worship God simply as a "**Creator,**" and not as "**JEHOVAH,**" requiring **Atonement for sin.** For illustration the offerings of Cain and Abel. Gen. 4:3-8. So today men make light of a "**BLOOD Atonement.**"

2. A rapid advance in **Civilization** and in the **"Arts"** and **"Sciences"** that led to ease and luxury. Gen. 4:19-22. This is true of today when we consider all the modern inventions that tend to comfort and travel and the transmission of news.

3. There was a union of the **"Holy Line"** of Seth and the **"Wicked Line"** of Cain, so that at the time of the Flood there were only 8 persons fit to be saved in the Ark. Gen. 7:7, 13. So today there is an **"Unholy Alliance"** between the Church and the World.

4. A vast increase and **"Congestion of Population"** in the cities. Gen. 4:16-17; 6:1. This tended to all kinds of wickedness and corruption. Gen. 6:5, 11-12. This is true of our great cities today, they are **hotbeds of crime**.

5. Undue **"Prominence"** of the **"Female Sex."** God's sentence upon Eve was that she should be subject to her husband (Gen. 3:16), but the record of the cause of the Flood reveals the fact that the women of those days were not **"stay at homes,"** but were prominent in public affairs. How true is this of today.

6. **"Unlawful Intercourse"** of the **"Denizens of the Air"** (Angels in human form) with the **"Daughters of Men."** Gen. 6:2-4. For a full explanation of this see my book on **"The Spirit World."** The revival of Spiritualism and the resorting to **"Familiar"** or **"SEDUCING SPIRITS"** is one of the **"Signs"** of the **"Latter Times,"** or last days of this Dispensation. I Tim. 4:1-3. The restored city of Babylon will be the **"hold"** of all kind of **"FOUL SPIRITS."** Rev. 18:2.

7. The **"Rejection"** of the Preaching of Enoch and Noah. Jude 14-15. Today the preaching of the Pre-Millennial Coming of the Lord is scoffed at (II Pet. 3:3-4) and turned away from, and teachers who will **"itch the ear"** with some smooth doctrine are popular. I Tim. 4:3-4.

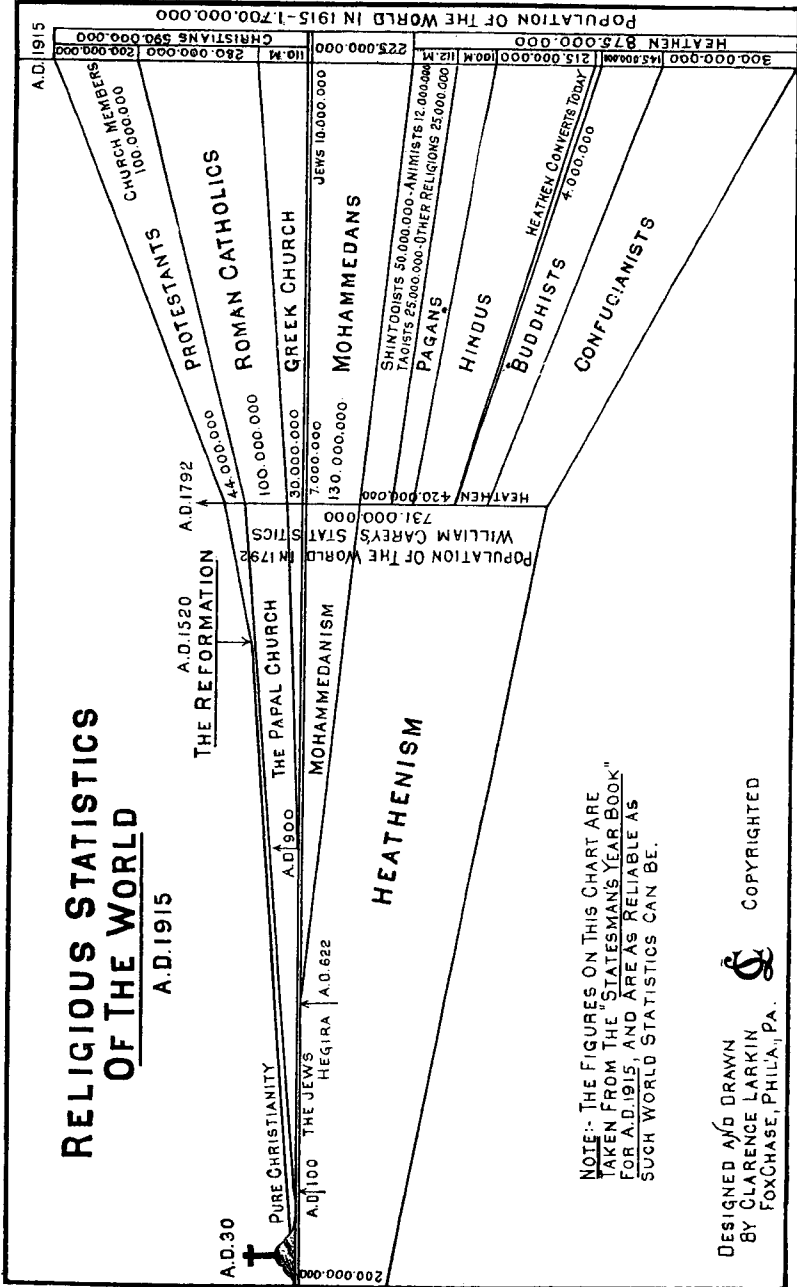
From these seven marked features of the **"Days of Noah"** we see, by comparison, that we are bordering on the **"Days of the Son of Man."**

What we witness today is not a world converted by the preaching of the Gospel, but a **"Godless Civilization"** that has been built up by Satan in his attempt to bring in a **"MOCK MILLENNIUM."** As a world converting power, after nearly 1900 years of effort, the Gospel has been a failure. A careful examination of the **"History of Missions"** reveals the fact that the world today is farther away from being converted than it was at the close of the First Century. Modern missions began with William Carey in A. D. 1792. The population of the world in A. D. 1792 was estimated to be 731,000,000, as follows:

Heathen	420,000,000
Mohammedans	130,000,000
Roman Catholics	100,000,000
Protestants	44,000,000
Greek Church	30,000,000
Jews	7,000,000
	<hr/>
	731,000,000

RELIGIOUS STATISTICS OF THE WORLD

A.D. 1915



NOTE: THE FIGURES ON THIS CHART ARE TAKEN FROM THE "STATESMAN'S YEAR BOOK" FOR A.D. 1915, AND ARE AS RELIABLE AS SUCH WORLD STATISTICS CAN BE.

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The population of the world, from reliable statistics, see the Chart "Religious Statistics," page 63, was, in A. D. 1915, 1,700,000,000, as follows:

Heathen	875,000,000
Mohammedans	225,000,000
Roman Catholics	280,000,000
Protestants	200,000,000
Greek Church	110,000,000
Jews	10,000,000
	1,700,000,000

After 123 years of Foreign Missionary work, from A. D. 1792 to A. D. 1915, there are today in round numbers only about 4,000,000 professing Christians in Heathen lands, which include China, India and Africa. Counting the Roman Catholics, the Greek Church, and the Protestants, only one-third of the world's population is nominally Christian, and of the Protestants only one-half, or 100,000,000, are church members, and of them possibly 50 per cent have never been born again. If in 123 years, from A. D. 1792 to A. D. 1915, Heathenism has increased from 420,000,000 to 875,000,000, and converts from Heathenism have only increased in the same time from the first convert to 4,000,000, is it not evident that there are more than a 100 times as many persons born into the world each year than are "NEW BORN?" How many centuries at this rate will it take the world **not to be converted**, but to **BECOME HEATHEN**? Then we must not forget that, alarmed at the spread of Christianity, there is a revival of the Heathen religions, and that the sending out of "Modern Theology" missionaries is hampering our Foreign Missionary Work. What do these facts and figures prove? Do they prove that the Gospel is a failure? No! The Gospel has never failed, and never will fail. It is the "Power of God" unto **SALVATION**. Rom. 1: 16. The "Gospel" is accomplishing just the mission that God intended it to. What these figures prove is, that it is not God's purpose to convert the world in this Dispensation, but simply to gather out an "Elect Body"—**THE CHURCH**.

