ECCLESIASTICS INDICTED

CIVILIZATION DOOMED

Reason for World Crisis

Blessing of the People to Follow

The greatest convention of Bible Students ever held on earth, assembled at Columbus, Ohio, July 20 to 27, 1924. Two electric voice amplifiers were used, which enabled every one of the great multitude to hear the speakers easily. Judge Rutherford, President of the SOCIETY, delivered the keynote address, following which an indictment was read which was unanimously approved by the rising vote of this mighty throng of Christians. An indictment is a formal statement of offenses presented and charged against a certain class of persons. The indictment herein is laid chiefly against the clergy, showing that they have fallen before the temptations of Satan, proved unfaithful to the Lord and to the responsibility resting upon them; and that this is the chief cause of the world's present deplorable state. Below is the substance of Judge Rutherford's address. The formal indictment follows in another column.

True civilization is the very antithesis of barbarism. It can be builded only upon truth, justice and righteousness, with love as the moving cause. It stands for education, culture, refinement, and truth. Present civilization is veneered, underneath which exists barbarism in its most malignant form.

Commerce and politics have both played their part in present civilization. Greed for gain and power has turned legitimate commerce into wicked profiteering. The commercial giants traffic in human blood as they do in the inanimate products of the earth.

Ambition for power and influence has caused politicians to juggle with the rights of the people, to prove unfaithful to their constituency, and to use public office for private gain.

The desire for bodily ease and comfort; the desire to be approved by men rather than to have the approval of God; ambition for the establishment of the Lord's kingdom on earth before due time, and contrary to His way has caused the clergy to fall to the seductive influence of Satan, to become disloyal to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to form a part of present civilization.

Had the clergy been faithful to their trust in representing the Lord, the world today would not be facing the greatest crisis of all time.

The sayings of some of the greatest thinkers of the world are here given in proof of the near collapse of civilization:

"Before the war people often supposed that ours was a Christian culture. The war has revealed us to ourselves. Civilization is Pagan."—Dr. Bernard I. Bell.

"The future is very dark. We have reached the twilight of civilization."—Dr. H. L. Brailsford.

"No man unless he is drunk with optimism can deny that the world is very sick, and it may be a sickness unto death."—Sir Philip Gibbs.

"The United States is preparing for war that would tax us to the utmost in manpower resources."—Sec'y of War Weeks.

"You responded to Europe's need in 1917. The work is only half done; and if not completed, civilization is doomed within this generation to a catastrophe such as the world has never known." "Force is the only thing that rules in the world. Unless you stamp out that conviction, civilization is doomed upon this earth."—Lloyd George.

The Reason

These great men of the world see the storm of fire and blood irresistibly sweeping on to the destruction of human institutions; but they assign no cause, and are at a loss for an adequate remedy. Hence their perplexity and distress. Jehovah, knowing the end from the beginning, foresaw and through His prophets foretold this dreadful day thus: "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people. . . . For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations. . . . For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance."—Isaiah 34:1, 2, 8.

The Seed of Promise
versus
The Seed of the Serpent

INDICTMENT

WE, the International Bible Students, in convention assembled, declare our unqualified allegiance to Christ, who is now present and setting up His kingdom, and to that kingdom.

We believe that every consecrated child of God is an ambassador for Christ and is duty-bound to give a faithful and true witness on behalf of His kingdom. As ambassadors for Christ, and without assuming any self-righteousness, we believe and hold that God has commissioned us to "proclaim the day of vengeance of our God and to comfort all that mourn."—Isaiah 61:2.

We believe and hold that it is God's due time for His displeasure to be expressed against wicked systems that have blinded the people to the truth and thereby deprived them of peace and hope; and to the end that the people might know the truth and receive some comfort and hope for future blessings we present this indictment, based upon the Word of God, and point to the divine plan as the remedy for man's complete relief.

We present and charge that Satan formed a conspiracy for the purpose of keeping the people in ignorance of God's provision for blessing them with life, liberty and happiness; and that others, to wit, unfaithful preachers, conscienceless profiteers, and unscrupulous politicians, have entered into said conspiracy, either willingly or unwillingly.

That unfaithful preachers have formed themselves into ecclesiastical systems, consisting of councils, synods, presbyteries, associations, etc., and have designated themselves therein as popes, cardinals, bishops, doctors of divinity, pastors, shepherds, reverends, etc., and elected themselves to such offices, which aggregation is herein designated as "the clergy"; and that these have willingly made commercial giants and professional politicians the principal ones of their flocks.

We present and charge that the clergy have yielded to the temptations presented to them by Satan and, contrary to God's Word, have joined in said conspiracy, and in furtherance thereof have committed the overt acts as follows, to wit:

(1) That they have used their spiritual powers, enjoyed by reason of their position, to gratify their own selfish desires by feeding and exalting themselves and failing and refusing to feed or teach the people God's Word of truth;

(2) That loving the glory of this world, and desiring to shine before men and have the approval of men, [Luke 4:8; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15] they have clothed themselves in gaudy apparel, decked themselves with jewels, and have assumed a form of godliness while denying God's Word and the power thereof;

(3) That they have failed and refused to preach to the people the message of Messiah's kingdom and to point them to the evidences relating to His second coming; and being unwilling to await the Lord's due time to set up His kingdom and being ambitious to appear wise and great, they have, together with their coconspirators, claimed the ability to set up God's kingdom on earth without God, and have endorsed the League of Nations and declared it to be "the political expression of God's kingdom on earth", thereby breaking their allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ and declaring their allegiance to the devil, the god of evil; and to this end they have advocated and sanctified war, turned their church edifices into recruiting stations, acted as recruiting officers for pay, and preached men into the trenches, there to suffer and die; and when the Lord presented to them the clear and indisputable proof that the old world has ended and that His kingdom is at hand, they have scoffed at and rejected the testimony, persecuted, arrested and caused the imprisonment of witnesses for the Lord.

DOCTRINES

We further present and charge that the clergy as a class have constituted themselves the fountain of doctrines which, in the furtherance of said conspiracy, they have sent forth to the people, claiming such doctrines to be the teachings of God's Word, well knowing the same to be untrue, in this, to wit:

(1) That they falsely claim to be the divinely appointed successors to the inspired apostles of Jesus Christ; whereas the Scriptures clearly show that there are no successors to the Lord's apostles;

(2) That they claim the sole right to interpret the Scriptures, and that therefore they alone know what the people should believe; and by this means they have kept the people in ignorance of the Bible; and now in this time of increased knowledge and much reading, when the people might read and understand, these self-constituted "successors to the apostles" discourage the people from reading the Bible and Bible literature, deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, teach evolution, and by these means turn the minds of the people away from God and His Word of truth;

(3) That they have taught and teach the divine right of kings to rule the peoples, claiming such rule to be the kingdom of God on earth; they hold that they and the principal of their flocks are commissioned of God to direct the policy and course of the nations, and that if the people do not submissively concur in such policies then the people are unpatriotic or disloyal;

(4) That they are the authors of the unreasonable and false doctrine of the trinity, by which they claim and teach that Jehovah, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are three persons in one, which fallacy they admit cannot be understood nor explained; that this false doctrine has blinded the people to the true meaning of the great ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ, through which men can be saved;

(5) That they teach and have taught the false doctrine of human immortality; that is to say, that all men are created immortal souls, which cannot die; which doctrine they well know to be false, for it is based exclusively upon the statement of Satan, which statement Jesus declares to be a great lie (John 8:44);

(6) That they preach and teach the doctrine of eternal torment; that is to say, that the penalty for sin is conscious torment in hell, eternal in duration; whereas they know that the Bible teaches that the wages of sin is death; that hell is the state of death or the tomb; that the dead are unconscious until the resurrection, and that the ransom sacrifice is provided that all in due time may have an opportunity to believe and obey the Lord and live, while the wilfully wicked are to be punished with an everlasting destruction;

(7) That they deny the right of the Lord to establish His kingdom on earth, well knowing that Jesus taught that He would come again at the end of the world, and that the fact of that time would be made known by the nations of Christendom engaging in a world war, quickly followed by famine, pestilence, revolutions, the return of God's favor to the Jews, distress and perplexity of the nations; and that during such time the God of heaven would set up His kingdom, which will stand forever (Daniel 2:44); that ignoring and refusing to consider these plain truths and evidences, they have willingly gone on in darkness, together with their allies, profiteers and politicians, in an attempt to set up a world power for the purpose of ruling and keeping the people in subjection, all of which is contrary to the Word of God and against His dignity and good name.

The doctrines taught by the clergy and their course of action herein stated are admitted; and upon the undisputed facts and upon the law of God's Word they stand confessedly guilty before God and in the eyes of the world upon every charge in this indictment.

Upon the authority of the prophecy of God's Word now being fulfilled, we declare that this is the day of God's wrath upon Christendom; and that He stands in the midst of the mighty and controlling factors of the world, to wit, the clergy and the principal of their flocks, to judge and to express His righteous indignation against them and their unrighteous systems and doctrines.

We further declare that the only hope for the peace and happiness of the peoples of earth is Messiah's kingdom, for which Jesus taught His followers to pray.

Therefore we call upon the peoples and nations of earth to witness that the statements here made are true; and in order that the people might, in this time of perplexity and distress, have hope and comfort, we urge upon them prayerful and diligent study of the Bible, that they might learn therefrom that God through Christ and His kingdom has a complete and adequate plan for the blessing of mankind upon earth with peace and prosperity, liberty, happiness and eternal life, and that His kingdom is at hand.