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## VIEW FROM THE TOWER

Accounts of the widespread and destructive floods of this past month, with their accompanying distress, have ere this reached you through the daily press. Such like events as floods, fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, pestilences, cyclones, etc., have always elicited much comment both from press and pulpit regarding their cause. The most commonly attributed cause is, that God has sent the calamity as a special punishment for supposed greater wickedness of the people of the suffering districts, and as a *warning* to others.

Another and growing view is that it just *happened so* from natural causes; and that, if there is a God, he either cannot help such things, or does not care to do so.

For our part, we cannot endorse either of these views. We quote from the daily press notices of some of the sermons preached in this city. The editor's comments we consider good:

### "THE FLOOD IN THE PULPITS

"The flood, which lapped the doorsteps of a number of churches last week, overflowed into several of the pulpits yesterday. Quite a number of preachers found texts for their sermons in different phases of the disaster. The lessons they drew from it were various. Rev. Mr. Eaton rejoiced that the worst is past without involving us in total destruction; pictured man's impotence to combat the pitiless force of natural elements, and drew a parallel with the floods of temptation which threaten all of us and overwhelm many. Rev. Mr. Prugh dwelt upon it as a proclamation of God's personal presence and power. Rev. Mr. Sands, while giving due recognition to the potency of a heavy rain, combined with the sudden thawing of a deep snow, as flood-creating factors in their way, maintained that God was back of it all, with a purpose of his own in the calamity. The exact design of Providence he did not presume to fathom. Rev. Mr. McCrory took altogether a sterner view of it. He saw in it a visitation of Divine wrath for our multiplied sins, and called upon us to take comfort in the thought that we have not been given nearly the chastisement we deserve.

"There is no question but this last will be the most popular view of it—in the hill wards. To those who dwelt upon the high ground, and so escaped the flood, it will be positive satisfaction to know that the deluge was a punishment sent upon the lowlanders on account of their desperately wicked hearts. The folks who have water in their cellars, however, will probably cling to a more materialistic view—that the high-water line was drawn in accordance with natural topography rather than comparative depravity."

The reasons which lead people in general to suppose these calamities to be “special judgments” are founded, we believe, mainly on the dealings of God with Israel, upon whom he sent calamities, captivities, etc., as national punishments for national sins. But let us remember that Israel was a peculiar people, chosen of God for a special purpose, and, like the saints of the Gospel age, dealt with in a peculiar manner, different from the world. To them he said, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” (Amos 3:2.) Israel was the only nation which Jehovah directly governed: therefore he chastised their sins, and made his promises to them, while other nations were left under the dominion of Satan, the prince of this world, until he whose right it is, shall have come and established the kingdom of God under the whole heavens.

While remembering that God has used calamities, such as the Deluge and the destruction of Sodom, as punishments and examples of an overthrow of the ungodly, it should not be forgotten that those were examples of those who should afterward live ungodly. And these *examples* are not examples of God’s dealings in the present time, but are examples of the punishment or destruction awaiting the finally incorrigible during or at the close of the Millennial judgment period, or day. That Peter so applies those calamities as examples of the *future*, see 2 Pet. 2:4-9.

In Jesus’ day some had the same impression, that great disasters indicated God’s special displeasure; but Jesus corrected them, saying: “Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise PERISH.”

These words of Jesus contain the key to what we believe is the correct view of this subject in the last word, *perish*. The fact is that the *great calamity*, DEATH, of which pestilences, earthquakes, floods, etc., are only *incidentals*, has passed upon ALL MEN, because all are sinners. (Rom. 5:12.) We have become so accustomed to *death*, the great calamity which is rapidly swallowing up the whole race, that it, the greatest of all losses, and the cause of all others, is looked upon as a proper and natural matter. If, however, things were properly considered, *death* as a whole would be seen as the great calamity, and the floods, etc., which only *hasten* it to a few, would be of comparatively little importance.

As *death*, the great calamity and curse, was caused by sin, so all of these calamities spring from the same cause, and are under the control of him that has the power of death, that is the devil (Heb. 2:14), whose dominion and power, thank God, is soon to be taken away and given to the Prince of Peace. As death is the result of sin, so are pestilences, tornadoes, etc.

By one man’s disobedience, *death* with its numerous channels of sickness and disaster passed

upon all men, and those who meet it in one way avoid it in others; but all meet it in some form.

This will be apparent when we remember that when Adam became a sinner, not only did the curse of *death* fall upon him, but the entire dominion of his kingdom—the earth—suffered, and is in a cursed condition. (Gen. 3:17.) For a time Satan is permitted to usurp the dominion of earth, and while seemingly working out his own plans, he at the same time acts as the agent of justice, to execute the penalty of sin. This being true, he is the one who by permission exercises the destructive power upon the earth; and Jehovah does not interfere because mankind has justly come under the curse of a violated law, death; and because man is gaining a valuable lesson under the present dominion of evil and death, which will benefit him when the *curse* is lifted not only legally, but *actually*, by the Redeemer who for *this cause* was manifested, “that he

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might destroy DEATH [the great catastrophe in all its forms] and him that hath the power of death, [and who brings to pass the various calamities] that is, the devil.”

As soon as the new prince, Immanuel, takes possession of the kingdom a great change will begin, both in the world of nature and of mankind. The curse being cancelled will be removed, and the blessings purchased by the “precious blood of Christ” will be bestowed. So great will be the change under the new administration, that in symbol it is called a new heavens [new spiritual ruling power]. Behold he will make all things new: he will *re-new* or restore all things to harmony with God, and to a condition which from God’s standpoint, is “very good.”

Hence we regard those disasters, not as special punishments, but as parts of the general curse, results of sin; but all working out in harmony with God’s design an ultimate good to those rightly *exercised* thereby. We have heretofore seen that the prophet Job was made a type of mankind; that the disaster and trouble and losses which befell him illustrated the losses sustained by mankind, and that his restoration to favor and after-blessing, foreshadowed the “restitution of all things” to mankind. (Acts 3:19). And we call to mind that the source of his trouble was Satan (Job 1:12), whom God in wisdom *permitted* to have power over him. As then the whirlwind, etc., was the agent of Satan, so we claim it is to-day. So, too, it was in Jesus’ day. Jesus did not go about opposing the Father’s will. If the Father had *caused* the death of Lazarus, would Jesus have opposed him by undoing his work? If Jehovah had caused the storm on the Sea of Galilee, which nearly overwhelmed the Lord and his disciples, would Jesus have been justified in stilling that tempest? But if the sickness and death and storms which Jesus counteracted were the work of Satan, the present “prince of the world,” then all is clear, and we and all creation groan and travail and wait for the glorious reign of the new prince, whose relief was foreshadowed by the acts of his earthly ministry, praying, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth.”

When the night of sin and suffering and weeping is over, and the Son of Righteousness arises with healing in his wings for the various troubles of man and of earth, the mists of ignorance will be dispelled, and it will be seen that not Jehovah, but man's sin and his present prince, Satan, has been the direct cause of earth's woe and sorrow.

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— February, 1884 —



Jeżeli zauważyłeś błąd w pisowni, powiadom nas poprzez zaznaczenie tego fragmentu tekstu i przyciśnięcie *Ctrl+Enter*.