

Tyre and Zidon

Description

TYRE AND ZIDON

Although different Bible writers had some things to say about the two ancient cities of the east, it seems that the Lord laid upon the prophet Ezekiel the main burden for Tyre and Zidon – especially Tyre. This story, or prophecy, is found in the book of Ezekiel, chapters 26 to 28. Some are of the opinion that Ezekiel gave the prophecy after the fall of the ancient city Tyre. We can quickly see from Ezekiel 28:14 that the prophecy is highly figurative. In order for us to understand the prophecy and get the full lesson, we must study it in this light. Although the prophecy applies to the civil powers of today, we see after reading chapter 28 that it has a religious application also. It predicts not only the final overthrow of all earthly governments by the Lord, but the overthrow of all false theories and practices in religion.

In these three chapters of the Bible is prophesied the fate of Tyre or Tyrus (Latin) – the story of how “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon a king of kings” – would come against her and how she would fall and be no more. It is written why she should fall – because she said “aha” against Jerusalem (Eze. 26:2) when the king of Babylon took Judah captive. The Lord says: “Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.” Prov. 17:5.

There is another reason why Tyre should fall – because of her much traffick – dishonest dealing. Tyre, as you know, was not a warring city. History tells us she was a gigantic commercial center, the greatest of her time. The Bible says that Tyre and Zidon had taken the Lord’s silver and gold into their own temples; they were very religious, you see. We see that their religion was not after the Lord’s order, but was after their own making. Also, they have sold the children of Judah and Jerusalem to the Grecians. In return, the Lord promises that He will sell their children into the hands of the children of Judah and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, a people far off (Joel 3:4-8); Joel 3:9 says, “Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles.” War will surely come. The mighty men will wake up, the weak will say, “I am strong,” the heathen will come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and there will the Lord sit to judge them. This is the time of the great harvest, the Judgment of the Living (Joel 3:10-14).

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Since the Lord is now revealing this great prophecy in Ezekiel, chapters 26 to 28, for the first time, it must be that “the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.” So we see from this that Ezekiel’s prophecy reaches beyond the destruction of the ancient city of Tyre to the “great day” of the Lord – our time. To this most Bible students will agree.

Time and space do not permit giving a detailed explanation of this prophecy, only an overall description can be given. But once the student of prophecy has the key he will be able to fill in the details.

In studying this prophecy of Tyrus and Zidon we can quickly see that it has a parallel in our time. Just as there are three chapters pertaining to the prophecy in the book of Ezekiel, we also see that there is a three-step development of the prophecy. Each step is linked to the other, overlapping, just as the three chapters of the prophecy are tied together. The prophecy evidently was given in three sections as Ezekiel proclaimed in chapter 26:1: "And it came to pass in the eleventh year." (Evidently in the eleventh year of His captivity.) While in chapter 27:1 he says: "The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying." Verse 2, "Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus." In chapter 28:1, 2, Ezekiel writes: "The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus." In verse 12 Ezekiel was admonished to lament for the king of Tyrus. The 28th chapter is subdivided into four parts.

In the time of ancient Tyre and Zidon, a city occupied about the same position as does a nation or a country today. A city, anciently, was a separate state – a kingdom. Therefore, Tyre and Zidon would parallel in Bible prophecy a nation in our time.

Tyre was not only the center of world trade but was the center of ancient Phoenician religious culture. As David and Solomon were a trade ally of Hiram, king of Tyre, just so would God's people be on friendly terms with modern Tyre. Just as Tyre of old was known as the "crowning city" (Isa. 23:8), so likewise, modern Tyre would be the home of those to be crowned today. As the 144,000 are the ones to be crowned, then their home is modern Tyre. Since Tyre of old was a descendant and an off-shoot far superior in commercial and religious trade to ancient Zidon; so modern Tyre and Zidon must answer to the same description.

We see from this that the 144,000 are mainly of the English-speaking people. Since the church has penetrated a large portion of the

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world, we must conclude that there will be those of other tongues among them.

Step 1 "Son of man, because that Tyrus had said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste." Eze. 26:2.

The only one that could possibly parallel this prophecy saying "Aha" at Jerusalem's calamity today, would be when the church said "Aha" when the top of Carmel withered (Amos 1:2). Because the church exults over the withering of the top of Carmel, the king of Babylon – a King of Kings, Christ – will come upon her and make her like the top of a rock (Eze. 26:7, 4).

John said of Jesus, "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matt. 3:12.

Some may apply this Scripture to the second coming of Christ, but the Spirit of Prophecy places the "purging of His floor" at the purification of the church. "But the days of purification of the church

are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor.” – Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 80.

“Those who have rendered supreme homage to ‘science falsely so called’ will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them.” – Ibid.

“In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ’s righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.” – Ibid., p. 81.

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“The church will be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. If her moral character and spiritual state do not correspond with the benefits and blessings God has conferred upon her, she will be found wanting The knowledge of our state as God views it, seems to be hidden from us. We see, but perceive not; we hear, but do not understand; and we rest as unconcerned as if the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, rested upon our sanctuary. We profess to know God, and to believe the truth, but in works deny Him. Our deeds are directly adverse to the principles of truth and righteousness, by which we profess to be governed.” – Ibid., pp. 83, 84.

In these statements Sister White explains the condition of the church before the purification. They are as unconcerned as if the pillar of cloud by day was resting upon their sanctuary; dead formality rests upon them. In other words, while the Bridegroom tarried, all ten virgins slumbered and slept.

Isaiah views the church after the purification. “In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.” Isa. 4:2-6.

The Branch of the Lord will be beautiful to the escaped of Israel – those that escape the purification. All the escaped ones will be holy – a pure church. After the purging of the blood of the daughters of Zion by the spirit of judgment and burning, He will create upon every home of Mount

Zion a cloud and smoke by day and a flaming fire by night. This shining fire is for a defence – the protection of those that dwell in Mount Zion. This flaming, shining fire, very evidently, is like the flaming sword that protected the garden of Eden after our first parents were driven out. This is conclusive evidence that the first dominion is restored before probation is closed; for in heaven or in the earth made new the saints will need no defence. Verse 6 says that this place is a place of refuge, a place where God's people can be pro-

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tected from rain and from storm. The earth made new is not a place of refuge from rain and storm for there is none when the earth is made new.

At this time the Lord says: "I shall set glory in the land of the living." Eze. 26:20, last part. But first, the church must be purified.

"Thus saith the Lord God to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee?" Eze. 26:15.

Sister White had visions of just such an event: "Many, I saw, were flattering themselves that they were good Christians, who have not a single ray of light from Jesus And I saw that the Lord was whetting His sword in Heaven to cut them down. Oh, that every lukewarm professor could realize the clean work that God is about to make among His professed people! Dear friends, do not deceive yourselves concerning your condition. You cannot deceive God." –

Testimonies, Vol. 1, p. 190.

"But the general slaughter of all those who do not thus see the wide contrast between sin and righteousness, and do not feel as those do who stand in the counsel of God and receive the mark, is described in the order to the five men with slaughter weapons." – Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 267.

"Read the ninth chapter of Ezekiel." – Ibid.

"And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword." Eze. 26:6.

"... slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My Sanctuary (Eze. 9:6)." – Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 267.

You see, friends, there is no need to root up the tares, for God's angels with slaughter weapons will slaughter them out. Ezekiel tells also what will happen to the princes of this world.

"Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee." Eze. 26:16.

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The Lord declares through His servant: "The final overthrow of all earthly dominions is plainly foretold in the word of truth. In the prophecy uttered when sentence from God was pronounced upon the last king of Israel is given the message:

" 'Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: . . . exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him.' Ezekiel 21:26, 27.

"The crown removed from Israel passed successively to the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. God says, 'it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him.'

"That time is at hand. Today the signs of the times declare that we are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Everything in our world is in agitation. Before our eyes is fulfilling the Saviour's prophecy of the events to precede His coming

". . . Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes. . . recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place – that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis." – Education, p. 179.

The removal of the crown from the nations and the princes coming down off their thrones must evidently be in the time when the Assyrian falls. "For in that day," says Inspiration, "every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands made unto you for a sin. Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited." Isa. 31:7,8.

When the Lord pours out His judgments upon the disobedient among His professed people, the kings of the earth will know about it and they will be clothed with trembling and astonishment. They will come to realize that if God deals so severely with the sinners in His church, their punishment will be far greater. So they tremble and are astonished because fear has seized them.

The slaughter that Ezekiel speaks of in the 26th chapter could not be the time in which the ten horns hate the whore and burn her with fire (Rev. 17:16) for verse 12 says that they do not lose their crowns for they have not received a kingdom as yet; but receive power as

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kings one hour with the beast. At the destruction of the woman, the kings of the earth do not fall and become dismayed; but, rather, they rise up against her and destroy her; whereas, Ezekiel's vision was a view of when the diadem was removed from the nations and given back to Israel. So the nations in their perplexity are organized into a religio-political system – which is Babylon the great (Rev. 17).

John the Revelator had a vision of the destruction of that system; whereas, Ezekiel had a vision of the beginning of it, and was admonished to take up a lamentation for Tyrus, that art situate at the entry of the sea – the beginning of this future religio-political world trade system (Eze. 27:3). This

incidentally brings us to the second step of the prophecy by Ezekiel.

The Tyrus spoken of in chapter 27 makes the claim of perfect beauty because her builders (organizers) have perfected her beauty (verses 3, 4). The first part of chapter 27, beginning with the 7th to the 25th verse, is written in past tense; whereas, verse 26 and onward is written in future tense and shows what is to happen to the future Tyrus. This is a

different Tyrus from the one in chapter 26 because Tyrus in chapter 26:15 was destroyed by a slaughter, and the princes tremble and are astonished at her fall. In comparison, Tyrus of Ezekiel 27:26 is to be broken by "the east wind," and they "shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads." verse 30; whereas, in the Revelation, it is written in past tense concerning the destruction of Babylon the great: "and they cast dust on their heads and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea." Rev. 18:19. Ezekiel and John wrote of the same event. In Ezekiel is the prophecy and in the Revelation is the fulfillment.

Inspiration declares that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, but after seventy years she shall sing as an harlot. "And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth." Isa. 23:17.

Sister White wrote that if the brethren had accepted the message of Revelation 18:1 when it came in 1888 to General Conference, that in two years they would have been in the kingdom. Since that time the brethren have decided that there will be no kingdom; whereas the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy declares there will be. In fact, the very prophecy that we are dealing with in Ezekiel 26 to 28 shows the events to take place at the time God sets up His kingdom.

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Daniel prophesied: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Dan. 2:44.

The Scripture reads "in the days of these kings," while they still exist, will the God of Heaven set up His Kingdom; "and the kingdom shall not be left to other people. . . and it shall stand for ever." It shall stand until Jesus comes in the clouds to translate it to heaven. But Jesus inquires when He comes to set up His Kingdom, will He find faith on the earth (Luke 18:8)? There will be plenty of faith when He comes in the clouds of heaven for all from the least to the greatest shall know Him.

"And they teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer. 31:34.

"For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For

this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest." Heb. 8:8-11.

"The kingdom," Jesus said, "is like hunting for a precious jewel, a pearl of great price" that has been lost (Matt. 13:46). It would be hard to find a pearl in a field. Even after you did find the treasure Jesus said it would be necessary to go sell all you have and buy the field that contains the coveted jewel. In other words, it would not be right to go and dig up a treasure in another man's field. So it is with the kingdom message. It runs all through the Bible, but you have to dig for it and once you have found it, you will rejoice. It will take all you possess to buy the field. Consider, though, dear friends, that once you have the field in your possession you will receive "an hundredfold, and shall

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inherit everlasting life." Matt. 19:29.

Once you have the key to the kingdom message it becomes quite plain and easy to understand, and that key is laid upon Jesus, as we learn from Isaiah. "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." Isa. 22:22.

Inspiration says, "and I shall set glory in the land of the living." Eze. 26:20. God's glory is to be among those that escape the slaughter. How can one escape who does not take Jesus as His word?

"And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Isa. 49:6.

"Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." Isa. 49:8.

Friends, there are just no desolate heritages in heaven or the earth made new. Please read all of Isaiah 49, especially take note of verses 19 and 20. Surely heaven will not be so crowded that the people will say there is hardly enough room. It is very doubtful that in the earth made new it will be necessary for a person to ask his brother to move over and make room for him, by reason of the multitudes there. If Jesus meant that there would scarcely be any faith on the earth when He comes in the clouds of heaven, He surely would have instructed Isaiah to write differently. If it be true that only a few are saved when Jesus comes in the clouds, Isaiah just had the wrong slant on the subject.

Now, not then, Inspiration declares: "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see." Isa. 42:18. Who is as blind as those that will not see?

God's people are robbed of the wonderful truth of the kingdom and they are spoiled and held in prison houses of sin as it were, and none say anything about the restoration of the kingdom. They dare not, lest they be disfellowshipped. But, He will magnify the law, and make it honorable.

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"Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock." Eze. 36:37.

The honest, who are not like those who have need of nothing more will inquire of the Lord about the kingdom. So we say, praise the Lord, and give thanks to His Holy Name, for His Word is true and His promises sure.

". . . Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years. . . after the end of seventy years shall Tyrus sing as an harlot." Isa. 23:15.

"And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth." Isa. 23:17.

Soon the Lord is to visit the religionist of today in judgment and when He does, they will turn to their hire, and will reject Him and His message and commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the earth.

"And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." Isa. 4:1.

They prefer their own righteousness to that of the Lord's. They sell themselves for earthly gain, but Isaiah 23:18 tells us that their merchandise shall avail them nothing but will be to the Lord for gain and to His people for food and durable clothing. ". . . thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall." Eze. 27:34, last part.

This brings us to Ezekiel 28 and the third step. The prophecy, like the two preceding chapters pertain to ancient Tyre and its king; but it is plain to see that it has a latter-day fulfillment.

The Lord admonishes Ezekiel to remind the prince of Tyrus that, although he thinks he is a god, in reality he is only a man. Although by his great wisdom and by his traffic he has amassed great fortunes, so much so that his heart is lifted up and he thinks he is a god – regardless of how much he may think he is a god, he must realize that he is only a man in the hand of Him that "slayeth" him.

Verse 12 brings us to the second part of the lesson in chapter 28. 12

Ezekiel is commanded to take up a lamentation for the king of Tyrus. Though presented as mourning for the king, yet some of the statements can hardly be applied to a literal king. Let us consider the following: "Thou hast been in Eden." Verse 13. "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth." Verse 14.

Evidently the veil was lifted and Ezekiel saw the unseen; Satan the true ruler of Tyrus, who, in actuality, ruled Tyre through a king. Since the prophecy meets its complete fulfillment in our time, the prophecy is perhaps analogous to Revelation 13:18. "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." Eze. 28:12. ". . . and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." Rev. 17:6. The number being made up thus the crowns are removed from all earthly kings and they reign one hour with the beast (Rev. 17:12).

Since twelve is the number of God's government, and there are only nine stones mentioned in verse 13, there is a possibility that the third row of three stones could be figurative of the angels that rebelled in heaven and were drawn to earth by the dragon (Rev. 12:4). Since the number of God's government is to be complete and the 144,000 are to replace the vacancy left by the fallen angels, there is, therefore, evidence to conclude that the three stones which replace the three missing stones are figurative of the 144,000 which are in the three great divisions of the genuine Seventh-day Adventist movement (see , by Mrs. E. G. White, pp. 306, 307 [Ed: Life Incidents was written by James S. White]).

The dragon which is Satan and the devil, drew the angels of heaven and cast them to earth, but the Lord overcame the dragon and cast him out of heaven. Therefore, the Lord Himself is the rightful one to restore and refill the vacancy.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:22.

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." 1 Cor. 15:24.

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Rev. 19:20.

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"Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee." Eze. 28:18.

As the beast and false prophet were destroyed in the lake of fire, so the prince and king of Tyrus are consumed by fire.

This brings us to the third thought of the lesson. Ezekiel is commanded to set his face against Zidon and warn her that God is against her and that He will be glorified in the midst of her and they shall know that He is the Lord. When God's judgment is accomplished in Zidon, there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel. When the Lord shall have gathered the house of Israel from among the people and is sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then they shall dwell in their own land.

"And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I am the Lord God. Thus

saith the Lord God; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God.” Eze. 28:24-26.

They shall dwell safely and build houses and plant vineyards. They shall dwell in confidence when the Lord executes judgment upon all that are around about them.

So the fourth thought of the lesson closes the chapter and prophecy with the setting up of the kingdom, which is the “ensign to the nations.” Isa. 5:26.

All who do not let prejudice bar their minds because of their preconceived ideas, will quickly see that some of the church’s former ideas about the kingdom are contrary to the revealed Word of God. If His people are to move forward under the direction of the Holy Spirit it may be necessary for some to revise their thinking and take only a “thus saith the Lord.” This is what the Testimonies teach:

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“But not all are following the light. Some are moving away from the safe path, which at every step is a path of humility. God has committed to His servants a message for this time; but this message does not in every particular coincide with the ideas of all the leading men, and some criticize the message and the messengers. They dare even to reject the words of reproof sent to them from God through His Holy Spirit.” – Life Sketches, p. 324.

“What reserve power has the Lord with which to reach those who have cast aside His warnings and reproofs, and have accredited the Testimonies of the Spirit of God to no higher source than human wisdom? ...You cannot neglect God’s messages of warning, you cannot reject them or treat them lightly, but at the peril of infinite loss.” – Ibid., pp. 324, 325.

“The advance of the gospel message must not be hindered by the prejudices and preferences of men, whatever might be their position in the church.” – The Acts of the Apostles, p. 200.

NOTE: Emphases in quotations ours.

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Yours for advancing truth in Christ’s name,

Ben L. Roden