

[The Witness Apr 7, 1946.]

HEAVEN AND CIVILIZATION

Gordon H. Clark

BEFORE World War I the superficial aspect of civilization was so pleasing that many people felt no need of Heaven. This life here and now was so nearly perfect and was so easily to be improved that all human aspirations could be satisfied without waiting for some dreamy life after death. And so Modernism with its man-centered religion replaced in popular esteem God-centered orthodox Christianity with its message of sin and salvation, Hell and Heaven.

Today it is clear that it was Modernism that was a dream. World War II has awakened most people. They now see that this life is grim, and that it is very difficult, perhaps impossible to hope for human satisfaction in this life. Thinkers who predict the end of civilization are no longer ridiculed as absurd. It is more likely that their predictions will come true in the near future.

During the war the British bravely met their dangers with the slogan, "There'll always be an England." Do you recall the earlier stirring slogan, "There'll always be a Babylon"? And will there always be a U. S. A.? Is our nation the one nation that shall survive the doom to which all others have succumbed? Can the western world succeed where Persia, Greece, and Rome have failed?

Those who put their trust in human goodness and human ability are headed for two disappointments. First this world and this life will disappoint them—their dreams of heaven on earth will not come true. Then, second, they will be grievously disappointed in the future life—contrary to their expectations there will be a future life and there will be a Heaven and a Hell. And the man-centered message of Modernism will mock them throughout God's eternity.

But those who now listen to the message of salvation, those who know that Christ has paid the penalty for their sins, those who believe and rejoice in His resurrection, will be received into glory. With the hope of Heaven based on the merits of Christ, the believer need not worry about the collapse of an iniquitous civilization.