

The Third Angel's Message. How Shall We Know the Image?

WE have seen that the Image of the Beast is the last great and chief instrument that Satan uses in his war against the church of Christ; that this is the chief power used by him in his war against "the *remnant*" of her seed, "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. 12:17; 13:12, 15; 14:9, 12.

The Third Angel's Message with "a loud voice" sounds a world-wide warning against the work of the Image of the Beast, and against the worship of the Beast and his Image. And we have seen that this message closes only with the coming of the Lord to reap the harvest of the earth, which is the end of the world. Rev. 14:9-16.

We have seen that the contest between the Beast and his Image on the one side, and the worshipers of God on the other, ends in the triumph of the worshipers of God; and this at the coming of the Lord. Rev. 13:16, 17; 15:1, 2.

We have seen that the Beast and his Image are living, acting powers on the earth when the Lord comes; and that *alive* they are consumed with the brightness of his coming. Dan. 7:11; 2 Thess. 2:8, 9; Rev. 19:11-21.

All these evidences, and many more, make it certain that that which, in the book of Revelation, is called the Image of the Beast is the last of the world-powers to come upon the stage of action; that it arises in the time of the end, and continues unto the very end; and therefore that after it there will be no history. Its time will be comparatively very short. And yet its work is of such a dangerous character to all people, that against it is the warning of the Third Angel's Message—the most terrible warning in all the word of God.

From this it is also evident that there can be no opportunity for persons to wait till they see the actual working of this power in its oppressive and destructive nature in order to understand it and take warning, and escape its deceptions and the worship of it. All this must be understood beforehand, in order to be effectually avoided. And just this need of effectual knowledge *beforehand*, is what is supplied in the Scriptures concerning this power.

What is this power called?—The Image of the Beast. What is an image?—It is a copy, a likeness, of something that was before, as a photograph or a statue; and by its character of a likeness constantly suggests and recalls an original.

In this case the original is the *Beast*. And the Beast is the Papacy. The *Image* of the Beast, then, is the *likeness* of the Papacy; and by its *likeness* constantly suggests and recalls the Papacy, of which it is the likeness. How, then, shall anybody be able to know, to recognize at sight, the Image?—Plainly, and only, by studying the original.

And here is the great advantage that is presented to all, and that all may fully possess, and so be effectually guarded against the deceptions of the Image and the worship of it. The Beast, the original of the Image, has had a career of more than fourteen hundred years. In that time the Beast, in each and every feature of it, can be

marked and traced, from its earliest inception unto its fullest development. The time of the Beast is so long, and its history is so full, that each particular feature can be studied and traced in all its bearings, from inception to full development. And each particular feature being thus studied in detail, such a full-rounded knowledge of the Beast can be obtained that every one who will make the study will be prepared to detect the Image, the *likeness*, of the Beast in whatever way or in whatever disguise it may appear.

And this is essential because the time of the Image is comparatively so short, and his rise, formation, and working, all occur in such a complication of affairs, amid such a swift passing, such a very whirl, of events that the time is not sufficient to study and analyze each feature so as to know and avoid its dangerous effects. The time of the Image is comparatively so short, and its motion with events so swift, that a certain phase will appear, and in its dangerous and oppressive working will be fastened upon men before there is opportunity even to make a study of the thing as if *it* were the original.

Besides all this, it would surely be an incongruous thing to study a *likeness*, in order to obtain a knowledge of *original* characteristics or principles. And how much more incongruous it would be to study the *likeness* in order to obtain a knowledge of *original* characteristics or principles, when the *original itself* is accessible, and can be studied directly in all its details! Inspiration contemplates no such thing, but in every instance directs the attention of all to the study of the Beast as the source of information as to the Image of the Beast. This it does by blending in every instance "the Beast and his Image," "the Beast and his Image."

Therefore by every consideration it is perfectly plain that "to learn what the Image is like, and how it is to be formed, we must study the characteristics of the Beast—the Papacy."

And that it is essential to know what is the Image of the Beast, in order to know what is the force of the Third Angel's Message, is certain from the fact that it is the living Image of the Beast that would compel all to "worship the Beast" and to "receive his mark;" this worship and the receiving of this mark being the very thing against which the warning of the Third Angel is given.

Therefore, in our study of the Third Angel's Message we are now brought to the study of the Beast and his Image in what they actually are. And in order to know what they actually are, we *must* study the Beast, as the great original of the whole subject.

Accordingly, next week we shall *begin* to study the Making of the Beast.

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