



WORSHIPPING THE BEAST.

"If any man worship the beast and his image and receive his mark . . . he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Rev. 14:9-11.

This is another part of the message of the Third Angel, which we studied last week. It brings to view a terrible fate for those who receive the mark of the beast, and full warning is given that none may blindly follow the path that has such an ending. The second coming of the Lord is unto salvation. Heb. 9:28. It is the "blessed hope of believers." It brings the resurrection from the dead, and the reward of the righteous. But to the disobedient, the presence of the Lamb and of the holy angels brings destroying fire.

"Our God is a consuming fire." When Daniel beheld Him on His throne, "a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him." Dan. 7:10. The beast of Daniel's vision was destroyed in this burning flame. (Verse 11.) So we read in the Revelation that, at the coming of Christ in His glory, the beast and the false prophet, that wrought deceiving miracles before him, were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. Rev. 19:20.

There is a fire prepared for the devil and {647} his angels. Matt. 25:41. "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; He hath made it deep and large: the pile

thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." Isa. 30:33. It was this stream of brimstone that kindled the cities of the plain when God rained fire and brimstone from heaven upon them, and again, when Christ comes, He will "be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel." 2 Thess. 1:7, 8.

A DESOLATE EARTH.

When the Son of God comes to bring home His redeemed, and the angels are sent to gather together His elect from the four winds, the worshippers of the beast are destroyed. That which is glory to the saints is torment to them. They have cast in their lot with the rebel powers and they share their fate.

While the saints are taken to heaven and reign with Christ a thousand years, sitting on thrones of judgment, and entering into the joy of their Lord, a very different scene is to be witnessed on the earth.

The beast and the false prophet have been destroyed in the lake of fire, and the remnant are slain with the sword of Him that sat on the horse. Rev. 19:20, 21. Evil men have not been content until they have exalted themselves to supreme control of the earth. They have refused to buy from or sell to those who would not yield to them a sinful obedience, and finally, they decree that no one shall live unless he will receive their mark. Rev. 13:15-17.

But in their momentary triumph, they have destroyed themselves and the earth. "Thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people." Isa. 14:20. "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth." Isa. 24:5, 6.

As the prophet looks upon the earth, smitten with fire and brimstone from heaven, he sees thick volumes of smoke rising from its surface, blotting out the light of the sun, and enveloping the scene in dense darkness. He sees that God's enemies were tormented with fire and brimstone at His presence, "and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." Throughout the thousand years the smoke continues to ascend, although the wicked quickly perished in the flame.

Isaiah saw the same sight. "For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter." "And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever." Isa. 34:2, 9, 10. Yet, although the land will lie waste for ages, it will not be eternally waste, for we read: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." Isa. 35:1.

The message of the Third Angel warns men against the course which will consign them to so dismal a fate, when they might, by choosing God's side, enjoy the inheri-

tance of the saints in light. But there is one more warning yet: "they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

LYING SPIRITS.

In Rev. 19:20, we read of a false prophet who wrought miracles with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast. In Rev. 13:13, 14, we read of the same power that "he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do." Paul says that the coming of Christ will follow "the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." 2 Thess. 2:9, 10. We read also of the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Rev. 16:13, 14. This reference to the spirits of devils connects the Satanic wonders with the work of modern Spiritualism. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." 1 Tim. 4:1.

From the Scriptures we have read, it is evident that the doctrines of devils, communicated to mankind under the guise of messages from departed friends, will yet lead the whole world captive, and will be the main instrument in creating an image to the beset. The spirits will deceive mankind into thinking that such a course is right. This delusion will culminate in false prophets and false Christs, who will profess to be Jesus come the second time, and will receive the worship of the world. All but the elect will be deceived. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before." Matt. 24:23-25.

When Satan has such complete control of the minds of men that they receive him as Christ, the mystery of iniquity will be fully revealed. All who are deceived will yield themselves entirely to his control.

On the other hand, Christ's people will yield themselves fully to Him, and there will be a complete manifestation on both sides of the two spirits. Both harvests will be fully ripe. Christ dwells in His people, and Satan dwells in his subjects. One produces only the works of the flesh; the other bears only the fruits of the Spirit.

The people of God will rest in Him. They will have learned the truth which is taught by God's holy Sabbath. They cease from their own works, and God has a free field in their lives. They are wholly His workmanship and He stamps His name upon them. Rev. 7:2-4; 14:1. "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Rev. 14:5. It is written of them: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12.

STRONG DELUSION.

On the other hand those who, through fear of men or indifference, in their foreheads or in their hands, receive the mark of the beast, by observing the day which he commands and trampling on the Sabbath of Jehovah, thereby take their place among the enemies of God, and withdraw themselves from the provisions of the Gospel. Instead of receiving Christ in their hearts by faith, they receive strong delusion that they should believe a lie, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. 2 Thess. 2:10-12.

They become the dwelling place of evil spirits, and are fully yielded to Satanic control. They have rejected the rest which God offered them: now, "they have no rest day nor night."

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To understand the terrible significance of these words, it is only necessary to glance at the experience of those who have been subject to the control of evil spirits. One of the multitude that came to Christ said: "Master, I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away, . . . and they brought him unto Him: and when he saw Him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming. And He asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child, And oftimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." Mark 9:17-22.

What a terrible existence it must have been for the child! Again we read, "When He was come out of the ship, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. . . . And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones." Mark 5:1-9.

Such scenes as this will be witnessed on every hand among those who receive the mark of the beast: "they have no rest day nor night." God has forewarned us of this terrible evil, that none may experience it. Even now in its present mild form, spiritualism shows what manner of fruit it will bear when it is fully developed.

The Rev. E. W. Moore, MA., says:—

Spiritualism is to be avoided because of the disastrous consequences it often entails even in this life on these who indulge in it. The danger both to health and to morality is of the most alarming character. There is much that might be said on this point, but I will only say that I know, on the very best authority, of a recent victim of this system. A young person, only twenty-four years of age, surrendered herself to the teachings of Spiritualism, and coming completely under the control of a demoniacal influence became convinced that it was the will of God that she should commit suicide, which she accordingly did, dying a short time ago in Kimberly, South Africa. I know that experts in medical science will tell you that many—I will not say half, though in one case it was so said—of the cases in lunatic asylums could be traced to this source. Immorality, insanity, loss of health, and premature death, follow in the wake of the Spiritualist.

No doubt it suits the policy of Spiritualists to deny such statements, but they are too capable of proof. "Mediumship," writes the Edinburgh Review, July, 1868, "has supplied American asylums with thousands of lunatics."

Mr. G. H. Pember, M. A., says: "In the course of an interesting conversation which the writer had with the late Dr. Forbes Winslow, the latter expressed his conviction that a large proportion of the patients in our lunatic asylums are cases of possession, and not of madness."

"Five of my friends," writes a medium of eight years' standing, "destroyed themselves and I attempted it, by direct spiritual influence."—*Grant's Spiritualism Unveiled*, p. 40.

"For a long time," writes Dr. B. F. Hatch (quoted by Miles Grant, *Spiritualism Unveiled*, p. 38), "I was swallowed up in its whirlpool of excitement and comparatively paid but little attention to its evils, believing that much good might result from the opening up of the avenues of spiritual intercourse. But during the past eight months I have devoted my attention to a critical investigation of its moral, social and religious hearings, and I stand appalled before the revelations of its awful and damning realities, and would flee from its influence as I would from the miasma which would destroy both soul and body."

"For seven years," writes a spiritualist, "I held daily intercourse with what purported to be my mother's spirit. I am now firmly persuaded that it was nothing but an evil spirit, an infernal demon, who in that guise gained my soul's confidence, and led me to the very brink of ruin."

The Apostle Paul writes that the second coming of Christ will be preceded by a great apostasy, "and that man of sin will be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 These. 2:3, 4.

This prophecy has already met a partial fulfilment in the history of the Papacy, but it will be yet more terribly fulfilled when Satan takes complete possession of the bodies of men, which are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and sets himself forth as God and is worshipped. The kingdom of darkness and of sin will have a short career, for sin when it is finished bringeth forth death, but while it lasts it will be a veritable hell on earth, even though its king appear as an angel of light.

From such a fate, God would save His creatures, and He sends forth His everlasting Gospel into all the earth with great power, to save unto the uttermost all that will look unto Him and be saved.

E. J. Waggoner.

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