

The Third Angel's Message. What Is It as to Babylon the Daughters?

WE have seen that, up to the time of the planting of the American colonies, each denomination that had been developed by the advance steps of the Reformation had become joined to the state; and that the Independents, or Congregationalists, who had not joined themselves to the state in Europe, did so in *the New England colonies*, while the Church of England was the established church in all the Southern colonies. Thus it came to pass that in the "New World," church and state were in every colony united, except in Rhode Island, and the whole influence of the colonial governments was enlisted in sustaining the illicit union of professed Protestantism and the state.

But in Virginia, immediately after the Declaration of Independence, the Presbyterians, the Baptists, and the Quakers took the lead in a movement that became universal and even national on this side of the sea. That movement was the total separation of religion and the state, bringing the churches back to the original "principles on which the gospel was first propagated and the Reformation from popery carried on." After a contest of nearly ten years, this splendid task was accomplished for the State of Virginia, "with the hope that it would endure forever."

The long and universal discussion of this great subject in the State of Virginia, had drawn the attention of all the other colonies to this great principle; and when, immediately upon the triumph of the principle in Virginia, the convention was called to form the Constitution, and frame a government, for the whole nation, this principle of the total separation of church and state was established in the National Charter, and was recognized as a fundamental principle. And from this the influence spread, and caused that "in every other American State oppressive statutes concerning religion fell into disuse, and were gradually repealed."

Thus, in this land, and in this great nation, Protestantism was placed in its original attitude, as in the beginning of the Reformation, and as the first principles of the Reformation required; and also in the original attitude of Christianity as it was preached by Christ and the apostles, and as the fundamental principles of Christianity require. Thus Protestantism—the church, even in its different denominations—became clothed with a power that made her once more, and rightly, the "Gate of God." And the benign influence of this excellent example acted upon all the nations of the Old World, and led them forward in the path of light and liberty, which is the path of true Protestantism, which is the path of true Christianity, which is the path of the total separation of the church from the state: the path in which the church walks only with her true Husband, with her dependence solely upon God.

Then, in 1840-44 there came the time when, "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," God would send the message of "the everlasting gospel," proclaiming, to all men: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of

waters." Rev. 14:6, 7. Thus the church in this great nation, standing in an attitude the purest and the closest to God of any in the world,—in the nature of things, this church would be the chosen instrument by which God would spread that message of blessing and of warning to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Also thus, in the nature of things, this nation would be the place where that message would rise in its power, and from which it would spread to all nations.

Here was a wonderful blessing that God had for his church at that time,—a blessing by which she would have been indeed the "Gate of God" to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" on the earth. It was a message that opened up to the church the length and breadth and depth and height of the glory of the everlasting gospel as it had never been seen before since the days when the apostles preached it in the fullness of its living power. In this message was "the mystery of God" revealed in all its fullness,—God manifest in the flesh,—Christ in men "the hope of glory." And all this blessing and glory was to be proclaimed to all the world in view of the fact that "the hour of His judgment is come;" and in order that men might be fitted to stand holy and without blame before God, ready in all respects to be translated without seeing death, at the coming of the glorious Lord.

But lo! instead of receiving this wonderful blessing; instead of rejoicing and being glad that God had sent to her a message that would clothe her with such power as would make her the instrument of God's greatest work for the salvation of the nations, she refused the blessing, rejected the message of God, and would not walk in the light that had come to her and to the world.

Then history again repeated itself. By thus rejecting the message of God, there was a "falling away" again from the truth, and she that had been the "Gate of God," became "confusion," and of her it had to be said, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen."

Faith is the strength and salvation of the church, as of the individual. Faith is the breath of life of the church, as of the individual; and, like the breath of life, it must be constantly and momentarily used, in order to live by it; because "the just shall live by faith," and faith comes by hearing the word of God.

Since, then, faith comes by hearing the word of God, whenever any word of God, any message of the word of God, is rejected, either by the church or by the individual, *faith itself it rejected*; because it is impossible to retain faith while rejecting that by which alone faith comes. Further: when any advance light or additional truth is rejected by a church or by an individual, that church or individual not only rejects this advance light and truth, but rejects whatever light and truth such church or individual *formerly possessed*. A person refusing to breathe rejects not only renewed life, but loses the life that he already has.

This is strongly illustrated in the words of Jesus concerning the people of his day on earth, who rejected him: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." John 15:22. Before Jesus came, these people were walking in the light of faith as they then had it, and Jesus testifies that they were accepted in it. If those folks had died before Jesus came, they would have been saved,

because "they had not had sin." But when he came with such light and truth and glory; when he spoke to them such words as had never been spoken to them; when he did among them such works as none ever had done; and they rejected it all and refused him, in so doing they rejected *all true faith*; not only the present faith in him and his message, but also the faith which they had before he came, and which made them accepted before God in their day *before he came*. Accordingly, Jesus further said: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated me and my Father." Verse 24.

Men cannot reject the truth of God, and still *retain* the truth of God: they cannot *refuse* to walk in the light, and still walk in the light: they can not hate Christ and God, and still be the brethren of Christ and the children of God.

Consequently, when in 1840-44 God's wonderful message of the everlasting gospel of light and blessing and of truth, to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, bringing to them the presence, the power, the righteousness, of God, which would prepare them to stand in the judgment,—when this was rejected, and when God's messengers whom he sent to give it were hated and persecuted, then she which had been the "Gate of God" in her day, ceased to be the "Gate of God," and became only "confusion."

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