

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

"AND I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, 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. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Rev. 14:6-8.

In this quotation from the Scripture there is expressed a great principle concerning Babylon in all its phases in the Christian age. The principle is that wherever the everlasting gospel is disregarded, or its advancing light is not followed, even by those who believe it, there is a moral fall and confusion as the sure result.

As we have before shown, the ancient meaning of "Babel," from which comes "Babylon," was "Gate of God;" and because of the pride and exaltation of those who were of this "Babel," confusion overtook them; and that which originally meant "Gate of God," thenceforth meant only "confusion."

Now the church is "the body of Christ" in this world; and he says: "I am the way," "I am the door." The church of Christ is the Lord's appointed agency through which he would call men unto himself, that they may find in him deliverance from this present evil world. The church is therefore indeed and in truth the "Gate of God" to mankind; and the faith of Jesus is that which gives access through this gate, to all the fullness of God.

If, then, the church, or any part of it, should become proud and self-exalted, and thus there come a confusion of principles and relationships, it would follow that that which at first was "Gate of God" would become confusion. What, then, says the Scripture?—It tells that there would come "a falling away" from the truth of the gospel; that there would come a self-exaltation in the church, through men arising, from the very midst of her trusted ones, who would speak "perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." 2 Thess. 2:3, 4; Acts 20:28, 30.

Now the church in Rome was, in the beginning, pre-eminently a church of Christ. So entirely was this so that she was an example to the whole world; for Inspiration has declared, with thanksgiving, of her faith, that it was "spoken of throughout the whole world." Rom. 1:8.

By this great and exemplary faith that church was clothed with the beautiful garments of salvation and the robe of the Lord's righteousness; she was endued with the power of God and of godliness, before the eyes of all the nations. The beauty of the Lord God was upon her, and she prospered, and her renown went forth to all the world for her beauty, for its was perfect, through his comeliness, which he had put upon her. But not satisfied with the exaltation that the Lord gave, which could remain only through her own humility and purity of faith, the church grew haughty, and exalted herself. Not

content with the beauty of the Lord, which he had put upon her, she prided herself upon her own beauty. Instead of trusting in him for her beauty, she trusted in herself. Not content that God alone should be glorified in her, she "glorified herself, and lived deliciously."

Trusting in herself, priding herself upon her own beauty, magnifying her own merit, and satisfied with her own sufficiency,—this was in itself to put herself in the place of God. Then it was natural enough that she should seek to draw disciples to herself, rather than to the Lord. And having so exalted herself and magnified herself, and trusting in herself, it was impossible for her to draw disciples to anybody but herself. Thus came the apostasy. And thus, instead of remaining the church of Christ in truth, manifesting to the world the mystery of God and of godliness, she became, though still professedly the church of Christ, only the manifestation to the world of the mystery of *self* and of selfishness, which is the very mystery of iniquity.

Thus, pre-eminent in both phases of this career was the church at Rome. She was pre-eminent in faith, insomuch that her faith was "spoken of throughout the whole world." She was also pre-eminent in apostasy, insomuch that this likewise has been spoken of throughout the whole world, and for nearly eighteen hundred years.

There is another thought in the Scriptures, which illustrates this apostasy: In the fifth chapter of Ephesians, the apostle speaks "concerning Christ and the church," under the figure of the marriage relation, with *Christ* in the place of the husband, and *the church* in the place of the wife. And the Word says, "*The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. . . . This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*" Verses 23-32. The relationship of the church to Christ is thus plainly shown to be the same as that of the wife to her own husband. As the husband himself, and *not another man*, is "the head of the wife;" so Christ himself, and *not another*, is "the head of the church."

Now suppose another man should propose to put himself in between a husband and his wife, to speak to her the sentiments of her husband in faith and morals, what would the loyal wife do?—Everybody knows that she would resent such an intrusion, and would promptly repudiate all such proffers. But suppose another man should not only propose to put himself in the place of the husband to the wife, but that the wife should agree to the proposal, and actually accept this other man in the place of her husband, to speak to her the sentiments of her husband in faith and morals, then what would that be but treason to her own husband, apostasy from her marriage vows, and adultery with this other man? And what kind of faith and morals have you in that case?—Everybody knows that that would be nothing but unfaithfulness and immorality.

Now the Bishop of Rome claims to be, and the Church of Rome claims that he is, the head of that church. From Cardinal Gibbons we quote:—

Says the Council of Florence (1439), at which also were present the bishop of the Greek and Latin Church, "We define that the Roman pontiff is the successor of blessed Peter, prince of

the apostles, and the true vicar of Christ, the *head of the whole church*, the father and doctor of all Christians; and we declare that to him, in the person of blessed Peter, was given, by Jesus Christ our Savior, full power to feed, rule, and govern the universal church."

The pope is here called the *true vicar*, or representative, of Christ in this lower kingdom of the church militant; that is, the pope is the organ of our Savior, and speaks his sentiments in faith and morals.—"*The Faith of Our Fathers*," pages 154, 155.

It was the Council of Chalcedon, 451 A.D., that first addressed the Bishop of Rome as "the head, of whom we are the members."

Thus the Church of Rome claims to be "the bride of Christ." She claims that she is "the spouse of Christ." And yet she has accepted another man as the "representative" of her husband, as the "substitute"—*vicar*—for her husband, to occupy the place of her husband in his absence, to occupy the place of her husband in his absence, to speak to her "his sentiments in faith and morals." She not only has accepted another in the place of her husband, but she openly boasts of it, and actually proclaims it as the chiefest evidence of her faithfulness, her morality, and her purity. How could the unfaithfulness, *the apostasy*, the immorality, and the impurity of a church be more plainly shown than in this which is her boast?

How could the complete abandon, the essential wantonness, the utter confusion of moral principles, of a wife, be more clearly demonstrated than in citing the confirmed fact of another man's occupying the place of her husband to her, as evidence of her faithfulness and purity? Would not such a boast, and for such a purpose, be the strongest possible evidence that that woman's native modesty and moral sense had become utterly confused? Yet by her own words this is precisely the case of the Church of Rome. She has accepted another to occupy the place of her husband to her. She constantly boasts before the world that this fact is evidence of her faithfulness, her morality, and her purity; and she insists that all the world shall fall in with her in this course, in order that they may all be faithful and moral and pure! How could she more clearly demonstrate that all true sense of faithfulness, of morality, and of purity has become completely confused in her consciousness? That a confirmed adulteress and harlot should boast of her iniquity as being the only way to righteousness, is certainly nothing else than the very mystery of iniquity itself. And such, even according to her own showing, is the Church of Rome.

Yet she did not stop even there: she went on and took to herself yet other men: she committed fornication with the kings of the earth. Having lost the heavenly power, she now sought for earthly power. Having forsaken the arm of the Lord, she sought the arm of man. Having disconnected herself from the kingdom of heaven, she would now connect herself with the kingdoms of earth.

Still trusting in her own beauty, and her own bedecking of herself with silk and gold and precious stones and pearls, and holding in her hand the proffer of rich gifts to any lover that would receive her immodest advances and form an alliance with her, she finally succeeded, through Constantine, in gaining imperial favor, and in forming an

adulterous connection with an earthly lord. The now unholy church formed an unholy connection with the unholy state.

Thus did she who had been espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ; she who had been joined in the bonds of pure and holy marriage to him who is perfect in power, in love, and purity; she who had known the blissful delights of his love,—thus did she violate her virgin vows, break her marriage ties, and become a bold and vicious harlot, and the very symbol of confusion. Accordingly the next view that is given of her is this: "I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Rev. 17:3-6.

And that all may have the best authority, outside of the Bible, that this Babylon does refer to Rome, we set down here the statements of two standard works of the Church of Rome. One of these is by Cardinal Gibbons, and says:—

"Babylon," from which Peter addressed his first epistle, is understood by learned annotators, Protestant and Catholic, to refer to Rome.—*"The Faith of Our Fathers," page 131.*

The other is by the Very Rev. Joseph Faà di Bruno, D.D., Rector-General of the Pious Society of Missions, and says:—

No one mistook what St. John in the Apocalypse designated under the figure of Babylon. In the end of the first general epistle of St. Peter we have these words: "The church that is in Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you: and so doth my son Mark;" in which passage the word "Babylon" must be taken to mean Rome; in fact, it is not recorded either in Holy Scripture or elsewhere that St. Peter or St. Mark had ever been to ancient Babylon in Asia; and no ancient writer has ever said that this letter was dated really from ancient Babylon, or that it was so understood by any one; on the contrary, it is recorded positively in the history of Eusebius (book 2, chapter 15) as having been stated by Papias, the disciple of St. John the evangelist and friend of St. Polycarp, that St. Peter, in his first epistle, which he wrote from Rome, called Rome figuratively Babylon. The same thing is asserted by St. Jerome in his book of "Illustrious Men," when he speaks of St. Mark.—*"Catholic Belief," pages 323, 324.*

Now since this Babylon signifies Rome, and since it is a church—a woman—that is thus called Babylon, it follows with absolute certainty that it is the Church of Rome that is this "Babylon the mother."

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