

This last sentence gives the chronology of this beast to a certainty; at least it brings us down to the present century. The deadly wound was given to the first beast in 1798. The wound was healed when the papal government was restored, and another head created to the Catholic Church, as has been shown. Pius VII. was elected in 1800. When the deadly wound was given, the second beast was seen coming up from the earth. And all the work described in the life of this beast, comes down this side of 1800 A. D.

One of the most interesting declarations of this prophecy is found in the words—"and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast." And it is one of the most easily identified. Not only them that dwell in the earth, but the earth itself, is caused to worship the first beast. The expression is so unusual that there can be no mistaking the fulfilment when it is once pointed out. But we shall pass by the interpretation of this point until we come to another branch of the subject.

Verse 13. "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men."

Verse 14. "And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."

It has been assumed, with little consideration, that these wonders are manifested in the wonderful inventions and improvements in these last days. That these are times of great improvements and inventions, none can deny. Let the reader imagine that the world were suddenly placed exactly where it was threescore years ago, and how could people live? Limited steam navigation, no railways, no telegraphs, no telephones, not even the common friction match, and hundreds of other common necessities of life, which were not known a hundred years ago. The middle-aged of the present generation have not the remotest idea how people plodded along at the beginning of this century. If they were suddenly transported to the likeness of a hundred years ago, they would behold a world that they could neither recognize nor understand. But

all this has nothing to do with this prophecy. The prophecy presents miracles designed to deceive, and the deception has for its object false worship. Nothing which is mechanical or scientific can be called a miracle. Others have applied this prophecy to the papacy itself, and said that the priests have always maintained their ascendancy over the people by pretending to work miracles, and thus deceiving them. But the prophecy does not admit of such an interpretation; it does not say that the beast deceived them that dwell upon the earth by pretending to work miracles, but he deceived them by means of those miracles *which he had power to do*. They are workings with power, intended to deceive, and to turn people away from the true worship of God. As it is said again in this book of Revelation, "For they are the spirits of devils [Greek demons], working miracles." Rev. 16:15. The Saviour prophesied of the same, when speaking of the days when his second coming is near, he said:—

"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." Matt. 24:24.

These wonder-workings are not strange in these days. Spirit communications, or spirit manifestations, as they have been called, are well known throughout the world, in this century, and especially for the last forty years, during which time they have become prevalent everywhere. Such things have always existed, but they have shown themselves with unusual prominence at certain times. When God was about to deliver his people from the bondage of Egypt, the magicians came forward with their enchantments to resist the message of the Lord to the king, and to counterfeit the miracles wrought through Moses and Aaron. See Ex. 7:10-12, etc. Again, when the Son of God appeared on this earth, the spirits of demons were busily working, possessing the minds of the people, and opposing the truth. The Saviour gave his disciples power over unclean spirits, and told them to cast out demons; and they reported that the spirits were subject to them in this name. Matt. 10:1-8; Luke 10:17-20. And Paul said that in the last

days there would be deceivers resisting the truth as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses. 2 Tim. 3:1-9. And again, in discoursing of the second coming of Christ, he said:—

“Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.” 2 Thess. 2:9, 10.

It is a fact that these modern wonders, these spirit manifestations, first revealed themselves in the United States, in the western part of the State of New York. And it has been through American mediums that they have gone to every quarter of the globe. There are some who yet insist that there is no reality in these professed manifestations; that they are mere deceptions. That they are deceitful and deceiving, we have no doubt; neither have we any doubt that there is reality in them. And they who deny their reality, who deny that there is power and intelligence in them above that of the mediums, cannot have examined the subject with much care. Some of the most painstaking students, men of the highest scientific attainments, have spent months and even years putting them to the severest tests, and have declared, as the result of their inquiries, that they were not produced by any means within human control. In other words, they confess that they are superhuman, supernatural, or truly miraculous.

At the first, Spiritualism appeared, as it is in fact, an anti-christian system, commending itself solely by its physical manifestations. By this means it attracted attention, and though it reviled the Bible and Christianity, and blasphemed the name of God and of Christ, it convinced the multitude that there was power in it, and thousands were turned away from the truth of God to accept its silly fables. That the world was ripe for the deception is proved by the fact that, in a few years, its believers and adherents were numbered by millions.

It has been remarked that these miracles are deceitful, and were intended to lead the people to embrace a false system of worship. But the question would constantly arise in many minds, How can that lead to a false system of worship which is so openly irreligious; which reviles all that is esteemed sacred

by religious people? To some, and for a time, this seemed a problem too difficult to be solved. But the advocates of Spiritualism have themselves given the solution. They determined that their course was impolitic; that, instead of trying to destroy the Bible and Christianity, it would prove to their advantage to uphold them, and to turn their testimony to the benefit of their system. The foundation of Spiritualism is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. And as nearly all professed Christians regard that as one of the leading doctrines of Revelation, and inasmuch as they had no direct proof for it in the Scriptures, and Spiritualism proposed to demonstrate that it is true, it was easy to foresee that a compromise between the parties would not be difficult to effect. And the consequence is just what was anticipated. Tens and hundreds of thousands of members of all the leading denominations, who would yet be unwilling to be known as Spiritualists, are following it. Many hold social circles, where neighbours meet to converse with their supposed friends, and where mediums are developed. These parties suppose that their conduct is innocent; but they do not consult the word of God in regard to the nature of Spiritualism. They take it for granted that it is the spirits of their lost friends with whom they hold converse, and are unwilling to be aroused from their delusion. If they would turn to the Bible they would learn better.

This work is well characterized by the prophet of God, in these words:—

“And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isa. 8:19, 20.

Shall men turn away from the word of God, to seek knowledge of the dead? Shall a living man go to inquire of the dead? That is done in these days, but the Scriptures utterly condemn the practice. Thus the Lord said to the children of Israel:—

“There shall not be found among you anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer

of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer." Deut. 18: 10, 11.

A necromancer, literally, and as the original plainly reads, is one who inquires of the dead. The Lord said to his people that they should not learn to do after the abominations of the nations that dwell in the land of Canaan. He then enumerated the prohibited works, as here quoted, and added:—

"For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee." Verse 12.

The Lord declares that inquiring of the dead is an abomination in his sight; but this practice is the very life and front of Spiritualism. But it has been argued that this law was for Israel, and for no other people, and cannot bind us. But mark this: The Lord did not say that these things were the abominations of Israel. They were the abominable practices of the nations in Canaan, whom the Lord drove out before Israel. And he said it was because of these wicked practices that he destroyed them out of the land. "For," said he, "all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord." And the folly as well as the wickedness of this practice is shown in the Bible, which plainly declares that "the dead know not anything." Eccl. 9:5.

But one replies: If the dead know not anything, as, indeed, the Bible plainly says, what can be the harm of inquiring of them, seeing they cannot hear or know what is said? But the facts of Spiritualism abundantly prove that *somebody* or *something* hears and answers the inquiries. The scripture under investigation (Rev. 13:13, 14) says that these miracles are wrought to deceive; and one part of the deception is this, that the spirits consulted profess to be our dead friends, when they are not. God has stored the treasures of knowledge in his word—in the law and in the testimony. They who neglect this word, and seek knowledge from forbidden sources, must expect to be deceived. Jesus, speaking of the last days, the days preceding his second coming, says:—

"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." Matt. 24: 24.

They profess to be Christs, sent of God; but they are not. They profess to be prophets, commissioned of God to speak to the world, and to instruct mankind concerning the future, but they are not. They are living spirits, the angels of the adversary, Satan. Compare Matt. 25: 41; 2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6.

But again it is asked, How can we be deceived? We have heard the familiar tones of the voices of our friends, and some have beheld their very faces. They must be what they profess to be.

But this reasoning is not good. All Spiritualists confess that spirits have not material forms nor visible faces. They say that these are materialized for the occasion. And if they have power to assume forms which do not properly belong to the nature of a spirit, they can certainly assume one form as readily as another, and can personate whom they will. And that they do so we are well assured. The apostle says that Satan is transformed into an angel of light. And if he can assume the form and appearance of an angel of light, it is no marvel that his ministers profess to be the ministers of righteousness; that his angels assume to be Christs and prophets. 2 Cor. 11:14, 15.

Now it is a fact clearly taught by Jesus and his holy apostles, that wicked spirits, professing to be sent of God to enlighten the world, will work signs and wonders to deceive. They profess to be the spirits of the dead, but the Bible says that the dead know not anything, and therefore they cannot communicate with us. What, then, are these spirits in fact? On this the divine word informs us:—

"For they are the spirits of devils [Greek, demons], working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Rev. 16: 14.

And just at this time Jesus says: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth." Verse 15.

Spiritualism is built upon the assumption that man is immortal in his nature, which is contrary to the Scriptures.

In Rom. 2:7 we are told that if we would have immortality we must seek for it; and 2 Tim. 1:10 informs us that Jesus Christ our Saviour has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. In 1 Cor. 15:51-54, we learn that immortality will be put on by the saints in the resurrection. In this present state, man is mortal, corruptible. Rom. 1:23. The Scriptures do not say, in any manner, that man is immortal in his present state; they do not speak of the finally wicked, the lost, as ever becoming immortal, because they fail to seek for immortality where it can only be found,—in the gospel of Christ. In the resurrection the righteous put on immortality; but again the apostle writes:—

“He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” Gal. 6:8.

In the beginning, as we have before noticed, when man was created, he was placed on probation. Life and death were set before him, and he was a probationer for life. But he sinned, and was shut away from the tree of life, lest he should eat and live forever in sin. Gen. 3:22-24. But God had regard to the work of his own hands, and would not leave him to perish utterly. He provided a way, through the seed of the woman, to recover man from the ruin that he had brought upon himself. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. Jesus, our only Redeemer, said: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” John 10:27, 28.

Jesus brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, because he is the only Saviour from sin. Matt. 1:21. “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 6:23. Wherever sin prevails, there death must follow. The only way to escape the penalty of sin, which is death, is to be saved from sin; and as Jesus alone can save from sin, he is the only way of eternal life. Hence he is called our life. Col. 3:4. And of this the Father bears most emphatic witness as follows:—

“He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” 1 John 5:10, 11

Eternal life is not in our nature. Adam did not bequeath it to his posterity. By his sin he was shut away from the tree of life, and returned unto the ground out of which he was taken. And in Adam all die. 1 Cor. 15:22. Death has passed upon all men. Rom. 5:12. The seed of the woman, the second Adam, came to seek and to save the lost. He came to bring life and immortality to light in the gospel, and to give life to as many as will believe and follow him. John 6:40. But we must turn to him with all our hearts, for Christ hath no concord with Belial; he will not divide honours with his great enemy. To say that we have immortality without his gospel, is to rob him of the highest glory of his mission. To submit to the deceptions of Satan and his angels, is to reject the Saviour.

The result of these wonder-workings is just what would be expected from such a deception as this has proved to be. Satan has always shown a greater desire to pervert worship than to destroy it. Man has a natural inclination to worship; he has also a natural aversion to purity of heart—to humility and self-denial. Therefore an effort of Satan to destroy worship would meet with the opposition of even the carnal heart, for only the lowest tribes of earth have no system of worship. But perversion of worship is pleasing to the carnal mind. False worship satisfies the hardened conscience, and lulls the sinner to sleep. It is the most fatal of all delusions.

Rev. 13:14 says that the object of these deceitful miracles is to induce them that dwell upon the earth to make an image to the beast, which had a wound by a sword and did live. We have seen that it was the papacy that was wounded to death, and had its deadly wound healed. The papal church system was a worldly church, a State or national church, a base perversion of Christianity.

We have also seen that the beast with two horns, where these modern miracles took their rise, is the United States of

America. Within the dominion of this beast, an image or likeness will be made to the first or papal beast. That is, the government will be turned into a State church government—a likeness of the religious system established by Constantine and his successors in the throne of the Roman Empire. So plainly is this fact indicated by this prophecy that there have been those who have preached and published, for the last forty years, that Church and State would be united in that government. Nay, they even pointed out the very religious questions that would be put forward to bring about such a result. But as there has always been a strong aversion to the very name of Church and State in that nation, these expositors of the prophecy were laughed to scorn for preaching that such a state of things would ever be in America. But now what do we behold?—Some years since, an organization was formed called the “National Reform Association,” the object of which is to nationalize Christianity, or what they may call Christianity; for, as a matter of fact, there can be no national Christianity in any nation in a wicked world. Christianity is a matter of conscience. The moment it is put under restraint of civil law it becomes a worldly religion, and ceases to be Christianity. We do not mean that there can be no Christians under legalized religion; for individual Christians can live under unfavourable conditions. But just as far as an individual’s religion is governed and moulded by civil law, just so far it is worldly, and not heavenly—not the religion of Christ. Over the conscience no government can hold rightful control. The worst usurpation is that of exercising power over the consciences of men, for it is usurping the place of God; it is setting aside the authority of the Most High.

This so-called National Reform Association has become very strong and influential; and it has secured the interest of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union,—an organization as widespread as the nation, which has pledged its influence towards securing a religious amendment to the national Constitution, by means of which such Christianity as the dominant party may happen to favour, may be enforced by law. When-

ever this object is accomplished, and the prospects are favourable to its speedy accomplishment, then the United States Government will have become a perfect image of the first beast, which had the wound by the sword and did live.

Verse 15. “And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”

Here the climax is reached. Here is where this beast speaks like a dragon. But there are preliminary steps taken before this bitterness of persecution is shown. Verses 16, 17 say:—

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

It is a notable truth that any government, however mild and just it may have been before, becomes oppressive and persecuting as soon as it unites the religious to the civil power. Or, in other words, all religion becomes oppressive and persecuting when the sword of power is put into its hands. If the people do not feel the oppression, it is because they have suffered their religious convictions to fall to the low level of mere formalism. And lifeless formality is the natural product of enforced religion. And, true to the spirit of national religion, the leaders of the movement above referred to, already boast that when they have changed the form of the American Government, none will be considered *bona fide* citizens, none will be eligible to offices of trust, except those who subscribe to the national faith. When the rights of conscience are denied, the rights of citizenship are of little worth; and when these are denied, then will this scripture be fulfilled,—no man may buy or sell save he that worships the image of the beast and receives his mark.

The Scriptures reveal this fact that the conscientious and God-fearing are the very ones against whom this persecution will be directed. And so it has always been when the church has held control of the sword of power. Heresy is considered

the highest crime. The martyrs of the papal power were considered the greatest criminals of the realm. None were so sure to be burned alive as the heretics. What a burning shame that in this enlightened age, with the force of historical facts to warn us, men should seek to repeat, in the name of Christ, such a history by clothing religious bigots with the power to punish those who will not subscribe to their particular creeds.

We need not think that all the persecution will fall on the devoted ones in that land. Already the wheels of the Reformation inaugurated by such men as Huss, Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin, and other valiant men, for the truth of God, are turned backward. The pope of Rome is recovering the favour he lost in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and there are none who dare stand up, as did Huss and Luther, in defence of the Bible as the only rule of religious rights.

But God, who points out the trials through which his people have to pass, does not leave them cast down with such a dark prospect. Immediately after this revelation of the working of iniquity, and the bitter persecution of the saints, the prophet beholds the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him a glorified company, who have gotten the victory, and are singing the song of their redemption. Rev. 14:1-5. This is not the whole assembly of those who shall be redeemed of Adam's race; it includes only those who have passed through the persecution just described. They are not redeemed from the graves. They are redeemed from among men,—out from the generations of the living; they are they who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 4:15-17), as will be further shown.

Nor does God in his wisdom leave the vision here. He does not reveal the wickedness of the wicked without pointing out the sad consequences of their actions. He not only shows us the triumph of the faithful, who refuse to worship the beast and his image, but he also forewarns of the destiny of the persecutors and of those who are willingly deceived by their wiles. In Rev. 14:9-11, are the following terrible words concerning the very things we have been considering:—

“If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and 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.”

Attention is called to the connection of these awfully solemn words.

1. The verse following says: “Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” This shows that the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, separate between the saints and those who worship the beast and receive his mark. And this furnishes a clue to the understanding of the message, what it is to worship the beast, and to receive his mark.

2. By verse 14 and onward, we learn that the Son of man comes on a white cloud to reap the harvest of the earth, immediately after this solemn warning is given. The Lord said that the harvest is the end of the world, and that the Son of man will send forth his angels to gather his elect, and they will also gather them that do iniquity to destroy them. Matt. 13:39-43; 24:30, 31. As we have passed by the great tribulation under papal Rome; have passed the wounding of that power in 1798; and as we are in the time of the wonder-working of the second beast, when the elements are in motion to bring the world under further deception, even to the making of an image to the beast, and receiving of his mark, now is the time to heed this warning, for now we are in the last days, when the Son of man is near to come to reap the harvest of the earth.

3. By verse 9 we learn that the solemn warning message, quoted above, is given by “the third angel.” Two angels precede this one, the first one (verses 6, 7) declaring that the hour of God's judgment is come. These important truths must be noticed, that we may understand our relation to the perils of the last days, and that we may perfectly understand the solemn warning that God in mercy has sent to this generation.