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Babylon is Fallen

Babel and Its Builders | What Does Babylon Mean Today? | Dodging the Fall

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Have you ever thought of distributing **The Reformation Herald** among those you meet or already know? More and more, this magazine is being designed to answer the real spiritual hunger of people in today's society, tapping into the exact train of thought being triggered by current events. As Bible prophecy unfolds before our eyes, why not keep some of these magazines on hand in a large ziplock bag, ready to share with honest, thinking people who fear God and are eager to know what in the world is going on?

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"The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold."—*Education*, p. 57.

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PRESSING TOGETHER — OR SEPARATING — *by Faith*

What confusion! It seems that the entire planet is being shaken by violence, turmoil, and uncertainty. What used to be widely recognized as a code of principles of right and wrong—enunciated so clearly in the Ten Commandments engraved on stone by the finger of God—seem to be uprooted by the masses. Even secular cultures that had not traditionally adhered to the Ten Commandments per se still used to at least have some sense of decency and respect for law and order. But at this point in history, the prevailing lawlessness is more than disturbing.

Where did it all start? We know that the transgression of God's law in the garden of Eden was the first problem and it escalated from there, rapidly heading toward its culmination.

This issue of the *Reformation Herald* outlines the concept of "Babylon"—confusion—as brought out in Bible history. As we approach the close of time, the message, "Babylon is fallen" needs to be understood by thinking people who don't want to be stuck in the miry quagmire of confusion.

The Bible brings forth the gracious appeal, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:18–20).

The Sovereign of the universe is both merciful and fair. The Majesty of the whole universe invites us to reason together with Him, confessing our gross immersion and backsliding in the temporal things of this world—the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Those things will not endure to eternity, but the truth of God is what stands forever.

As we press together with fellow believers in the redemption of Christ, we are drawn into a precious unity. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

This good and precious unity is based on walking in the light as Jesus is in the light, not in following a mob to do evil, regardless of whether they are worldly-minded heathen or claim to have a lofty profession of religion. We are warned: "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" (Isaiah 8:12, 13).

To follow in the blood-stained path of the Son of God requires a marked separation from evil. The command is clear: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exodus 23:2). "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18).

Let us therefore flee to the refuge of the revealed will of our heavenly Father as found in Scripture. There is no other safety.

BABEL

and Its

BUILDERS

by Barbara Montrose

Why did the loving Majesty of the universe send a Flood of rain so tremendous that it covered the entire earth? The clear explanation is found in Scripture: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Genesis 6:5, 11, 12).

Indeed, "God had given men His commandments as a rule of life, but His law was transgressed, and every conceivable sin was the result. The wickedness of men was open and daring, justice was trampled in the dust, and the cries of the oppressed reached unto heaven."¹

Polygamy, robbery, and violence prevailed. The earth still in its infancy had already become a cesspool of moral pollution.

THE RAINBOW OF PROMISE

The sole survivors of the great Flood to desolate the corrupted planet were the patriarch Noah and his family. Many underestimate the importance of this vital history! Despite all the evidence, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the



heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Peter 3:3-6).

When the waters receded, the Creator and Ruler of the natural world made a covenant with Noah: He declared, "And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth" (Genesis 9:11).

Those today who worry and fret a lot about changes in the earth's climate should be comforted by the tender assurance of its Creator, "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22). His words are always true.

The Lord even gave a visual sign of His covenant for future generations as well: "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" (Genesis 9:12-16).

APOSTASY RETURNS

It did not take long for evil to again raise up its ugly head. Nimrod, a grandson of Noah, became a mighty hunter who found a plain in the land of Shinar, where he built a tower.

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a

plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:1-4).

Why did they want to build a tower so high?

1. The top would reach heaven (to try to outsmart God).

2. They would make a name for themselves (to exalt themselves above God).

3. They would not be scattered (clear defiance of God's original plan for humanity shown in Genesis 1:28).

"The dwellers on the plain of Shinar disbelieved God's covenant that He would not again bring a flood upon the earth. Many of them denied the existence of God and attributed the Flood to the operation of natural causes. Others believed in a Supreme Being, and that it was He who had destroyed the antediluvian world; and their hearts, like that of Cain, rose up in rebellion against Him. One object before them in the erection of the tower was **to secure their own safety in case of another deluge. By carrying the structure to a much greater height than was reached by the waters of the Flood, they thought to place themselves beyond all possibility of danger. And as they would be able to ascend to the region of the clouds, they hoped to ascertain the cause of the Flood. The whole undertaking was designed to exalt still further the pride of its projectors and to turn the minds of future generations away from God and lead them into idolatry.**"²

The Creator's plan was for the human race to spread throughout the earth, carrying a knowledge of His will to be preserved for future generations as long as the planet should last.

"The Babel builders had indulged the spirit of murmuring against God. Instead of gratefully remembering His mercy to Adam



and His gracious covenant with Noah, they had complained of His severity in expelling the first pair from Eden and destroying the world by a flood. But while they murmured against God as arbitrary and severe, they were accepting the rule of the cruelest of tyrants. **Satan was seeking to bring contempt upon the sacrificial offerings that prefigured the death of Christ; and as the minds of the people were darkened by idolatry, he led them to counterfeit these offerings and sacrifice their own children upon the altars of their gods.** As men turned away from God, the divine attributes—justice, purity, and love—were supplanted by oppression, violence, and brutality.

"The men of Babel had determined to establish a government that should be independent of God. There were some among them, however, who feared the Lord, but who had been deceived by the pretensions of the ungodly and drawn into their schemes. For the sake of these faithful ones the Lord delayed His judgments and gave the people time to reveal their true character. As this was developed, the sons of God labored to turn them from their purpose; but the people were fully united in their Heaven-daring undertaking. Had they gone on unchecked, they would have demoralized the world in its infancy. Their confederacy was founded in rebellion; a kingdom established for self-exaltation, but in which God was to have no rule or honor. Had this confederacy been permitted, a

mighty power would have borne sway to banish righteousness—and with it peace, happiness, and security—from the earth. For the divine statutes, which are ‘holy and just and good’ (Romans 7:12), men were endeavoring to substitute laws to suit the purpose of their own selfish and cruel hearts.”³

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Do we not continue to see such attitudes today? The details may be different, but it’s the same type of scenario, the same old story: “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen” (Romans 1:25–27).

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:16).

GOD-FEARING PEOPLE PRAY—AND GOD ACTS!

“Those that feared the Lord cried unto Him to interpose. ‘And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.’ In mercy to the world He defeated the purpose of the tower builders and overthrew the memorial of their daring. In mercy He confounded their speech, thus putting a check on their purposes of rebellion. God bears long with the perversity of men, giving them ample opportunity for repentance; but He marks all their devices to resist the authority of His just and holy law. From time to time the

unseen hand that holds the scepter of government is stretched out to restrain iniquity. Unmistakable evidence is given that the Creator of the universe, the One infinite in wisdom and love and truth, is the Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, and that none can with impunity defy His power.”⁴

“And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:5–9).

HOW DO ALL SUCH VENTURES ULTIMATELY END?

“The schemes of the Babel builders ended in shame and defeat. The monument to their pride became the memorial of their folly. Yet men are continually pursuing the same course—depending upon self, and rejecting God’s law. It is the principle that Satan tried to carry out in heaven; the same that governed Cain in presenting his offering.

“There are tower builders in our time. Infidels construct their theories from the supposed deductions of sciences, and reject the revealed word of God. They presume to pass sentence upon God’s moral government; they despise His law and boast of the sufficiency of human reason. Then, ‘because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil’ (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

“In the professedly Christian world many turn away from the plain teachings of the Bible and

build up a creed from human speculations and pleasing fables, and they point to their tower as a way to climb up to heaven. Men hang with admiration upon the lips of eloquence while it teaches that the transgressor shall not die, that salvation may be secured without obedience to the law of God.”⁵

Are you making towers of convenient false doctrines to defy Heaven? Am I? So many are doing this, often without even realizing it. We need to examine our hearts and our practices and be vigilant.

UNITY VS. CONFEDERATION

“If the professed followers of Christ would accept God’s standard, it would bring them into unity; but so long as human wisdom is exalted above His Holy Word, there will be divisions and dissension. The existing confusion of conflicting creeds and sects is fitly represented by the term ‘Babylon,’ which prophecy (Revelation 14:8; 18:2) applies to the world-loving churches of the last days.”⁶

The apostle Paul solemnly warned the early church—which had been based on a pure, holy faith—“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29, 30).

Often it becomes necessary to separate from such individuals: “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11:3). “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

To cleave to those who willfully dwell in the darkness of error is perilous. Even as adults, we could be allowing peer pressure to stop us from doing what we know is right. We seem to tremble at the possibility of offending some mere mortal, when our biggest concern should be lest we offend our holy and righteous God.

“Say ye not, A confederacy, to all

them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" (Isaiah 8:12, 13). "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

"Through apostasy, fallen men and fallen angels are in the same confederacy, leagued to work against good. They are united in a desperate companionship. Through his evil angels, Satan contrives to form an alliance with professedly pious men, and thus he leavens the church of God. He knows that if he can induce men, as he induced the angels, to join in rebellion, under the guise of servants of God, he will have in them his most successful allies in his enterprise against heaven. Under the name of godliness, he can inspire them with his own accusing spirit, and lead them to charge God's servants with evil and guile. They are his trained detectives; their work is to create feuds, to make charges which create discord and bitterness among brethren, to set tongues in active service for Satan, to sow seeds of dissension by watching for evil, and by speaking of that which will create discord.

"I beseech all who engage in the work of murmuring and complaining because something has been said or done that does not suit them, and that does not, as they think, give them due consideration, to remember that they are carrying on the very work begun in heaven by Satan. They are following in his track, sowing unbelief, discord, and disloyalty; for no one can entertain feelings of disaffection, and keep them to himself. He must tell others that he is not treated as he should be. Thus they are led to murmur and complain. This is the root of bitterness springing up, whereby many are defiled.

"Thus Satan works today through his evil angels. He confederates with men who claim to be in the faith; and those who are trying to carry forward the work of God with fidelity, having no man's per-

son in admiration, working without hypocrisy and partiality, will have just as severe trials brought against them as Satan can bring through those who claim to love God. Proportionate to the light and knowledge these opposers have is Satan's success. The root of bitterness strikes deep, and is communicated to others. Thus many are defiled. Their statements are confused and untruthful, their principles are unscrupulous, and Satan finds in them the very helpers he needs. . . .

"The question has been asked, What do you mean by a confederacy? Who have formed confederacies? You know what a confederacy is—a union of men in a work that does not bear the stamp of pure, straightforward, unswerving integrity."⁷

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18).

"The wicked are being bound up in bundles, bound up in trusts, in unions, in confederacies. Let us have nothing to do with these organizations. God is our Ruler, our Governor, and He calls us to come out from the world and be separate. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.' If we refuse to do this, if we continue to link up with the world, and to look at every matter from a worldly standpoint, we shall become like the world. When worldly policy and worldly ideas govern our transactions, we cannot stand on the high and holy platform of eternal truth."⁸

TIME TO TAKE ACTION

Babylon—the confederacy of compromised, corrupted, confusion—is fallen. We don't need to fall with her!

Jesus warns: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my

"There are tower builders in our time. Infidels construct their theories from the supposed deductions of sciences, and reject the revealed word of God."

Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:32–34).

"The Saviour bade His disciples not to hope that the world's enmity to the gospel would be overcome, and that after a time its opposition would cease. He said, 'I came not to send peace, but a sword.' This creating of strife is not the effect of the gospel, but the result of opposition to it."⁹

Let us not, through worldly associations, be found in opposition to Christ! He has presented a better way: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:5–7).

"The time of God's investigation is at hand. The Most High will come down to see that which the children of men have builded."¹⁰ *R*

References:

¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 91.

² *Ibid.*, p. 119. [Emphasis added.]

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 120–123. [Emphasis added.]

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 123, 124. [Emphasis added.]

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁷ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1142.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 357.

¹⁰ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 124.

What Does Babylon Mean Today?

by Henry Portalanza

“This room is in a state of Babylon!” my mother would say after one of many unscheduled inspections of my room. As I ponder on the assignment of the challenging topic of Babylon, my mind takes a trip down memory lane, and I vividly hear my mother’s not-so-pleasant verdict on the state of my room during my teenage years. What was the meaning of those words? I perfectly knew what she meant. Even if I were not acquainted with the historical details regarding Babylon, as I put together the sound of displeasure in the tone of my mother’s voice, the state of affairs of my room, and the word Babylon, a clear definition would take shape in my mind that it meant only one thing: Confusion.

What does not begin right will not end up right! So says the maxim. The beginning of Babylon was not the result of a conquest or revolution, but rather it was from a state of utter confusion, and prophecy foretells—and current events confirm—that the end of spiritual Babylon will also be in a condition of complete confusion.

In this article we will examine the beginning and the steps that brought about the rise and fall of ancient Babylon and will apply the key principles that gave rise to spiritual Babylon and that will eventually confirm its fall.

Nimrod had become a fearless hunter in defiance of the Lord. His name means “leopard that subdues”. He was the first to establish a kingdom on earth with himself as its king. The cities of Babel, Erech, Akkad and Calneh were the beginning of his kingdom. Having thus subdued the people in the land of Shinar (lower Mesopotamia), he became the world’s first despot. Josephus wrote, “[Nimrod] gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power. He also said he would be revenged on God, if He should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to reach. And that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers.”¹

"The men of Babel had determined to establish a government that should be independent of God. . . . Had they gone unchecked, they would have demoralized the world in its infancy. Their confederacy was founded in rebellion; a kingdom established for self exaltation, but in which God was to have no rule or honor. Had this confederacy been permitted, a mighty power would have borne sway to banish righteousness—and with it peace, happiness, and security—from the earth."²

History describes the beginning of Babylon as it is tied to the account of the "Tower of Babel":

"Babylon is often designated in the cuneiform texts by a symbolical name, ideographically written, meaning 'the town of the root of languages.' . . .

"The story of the 'Tower of the Tongues' was among the most ancient recollections of the Chaldeans, and was one of the national traditions of the Armenians, who had received it from the civilized nations inhabiting the Tigro-Euphrates basin. Berosus gives the story in a form almost identical with that of the Bible, which will be found further on in the chapter on the Babylonians. . . .

"Some years since an inscription of King Nebuchadnezzar was recovered and translated, in which he boasts of having repaired and completed the tower in honour of one of his gods. He calls it 'The Tower of the Seven Stages, the Eternal House, the Temple of the Seven Illuminaries of the Earth' (the seven planets) to which is attached the most ancient legend of Borsippa. . . .

"Nebuchadnezzar adds, 'Men had abandoned it since the days of the deluge, speaking their words in disorder. The earthquake and lightning had shaken the crude brickwork and split the burnt brickwork of the revetment, the crude brick of the upper stories had crumbled down into mere piles.' "³

The Bible account talks about a city and a tower. The city was related to a government, while the tower indicates worship. Thus the tower of Babel stood for rebellion against

God; rebellion against the government of God and rebellion against the true worship. This is confirmed by the following statement:

"[The Babel builders] determined to keep their community united in one body and to found a monarchy which should eventually embrace the whole earth. . . ." ⁴ "Had [the builders of the tower] succeeded, a mighty power would have borne sway, banishing righteousness and inaugurating a new religion."⁵

This new religion was to replace the worship of God with a counterfeit religion. It consisted in drawing the attention away from the plan of redemption by replacing it with a system of rituals, mysteries, and multiple deities while at the same time it recognized God. And as God dispersed human beings from the valley of Shinar, each civilization inherited and practiced a variant of this mother of all mysteries, Babylon.

It is from the land of Shinar that God called Abraham and said: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee" (Genesis 12:1).

BABYLON'S FALL

The prophet Isaiah foretold the fall of literal Babylon (see Isaiah 47:10, 11).

The fall of the splendid city of Babylon, whose magnificence had been one of the seven wonders of the world, was a shocking surprise to the ancient world. Belshazzar, in a bold act of defiance, presumed to bring to his drunken feast the sacred vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem.

The Bible account says: "Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein" (Daniel 5:2).

The king was so arrogant that, in his view, nothing was too sacred for his hands to handle.

If there is one sin that reaches the limit of God's forbearance—if there is an act that seals the destiny of an individual or of a nation—it is the blatant disregard for the authority of God by mixing the sacred with the profane. The Omnipotent One is swift in dealing with such a challenge. This was also evidenced with Nadab and Abihu when they presented strange fire before the Lord. Now, Belshazzar's Babylon proved to be no exception.

We read, "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote" (verse 5).

In that last night of reveling, Belshazzar and his lords faced the close of their probation. Their attitude and actions filled the cup of their guilt and that of the Chaldean nation. They had spurned the protection of God against the impending destruction. So many times, the Lord had sought to teach them reverence for His law, only to meet with defiant rejection. "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed" (Jeremiah 51:9). Now the kingdom passed into other hands.

WHAT ABOUT SPIRITUAL BABYLON?

The book of Revelation brings the sad news of a moral fall in Babylon. In order for something to fall, it must have once been on a higher level. In the spiritual sense, the definition of the Babylon to whom this sobering statement is addressed can be applied in very broad strokes. As we see the situation of today's Christian world, we need to not just see the apostasy that is prevalent, but also examine how and where we are standing.

Balaam, as he was attempting to curse the people of God while viewing the camp from the mountaintop, said this under inspiration, "From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not

be reckoned among the nations” (Numbers 23:9).

To be a pure and peculiar people, God’s faithful ones have always had to respect this Heaven-ordained principle. They are to be *in* the world, but they are not to be *of* the world. God’s church is not to seek the endorsement of ecumenical councils nor the sanction of the state. God has a people—His church—whom He holds in this morally depraved, rebellious world and He intends that no **authority should be known in it, no laws** be acknowledged by it, but His own.

The other principle, equally important and tied to the first is the following, as ordered through Moses: “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you” (Deuteronomy 4:2).

Then again Solomon instructs and councils: “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:5, 6).

THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT APOSTASY

What was the beginning of spiritual Babylon? The answer reads thus:

“The **very beginning of the great apostasy** was in seeking to supplement the authority of God by that of the church. Rome **began** by enjoining what God had not forbidden, and she **ended** by forbidding what He had explicitly enjoined.”⁶

The apostle Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians sounded a warning in order that the recently established church would be watchful. The members of the church at that time believed that Jesus would return in their lifetime, but Paul under inspiration sent a clear warning about what was to take place prior to the second coming, and to be aware that there was a danger lurking within the ranks that would soon become evident. See 2 Thessalonians 2:3–5.

To the Ephesians he warned: “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:29–31).

No sooner had the last of the disciples died, that Satan’s agents became bolder with their heresies in their attack against the purity of the gospel. In order to gain new converts, unfaithful pastors began adopting heathen customs in their worship.

Within twenty years after the death of John the Revelator, the perversion of the truth of Christ had become widespread. About the history of this century Johann Lorenz von Mosheim, a German church historian and eloquent lecturer, wrote this:

“It is certain that to religious worship, both public and private, many rites were added, without necessity, and to the offense of sober and good men.”⁷

“The Christians were pronounced atheists, because they were destitute of temples, altars, victims, priests, and all that pomp in which the vulgar suppose the essence of religion to consist. For unenlightened persons are prone to estimate religion by what meets their eyes. To silence this accusation, the Christian doctors thought it necessary to introduce some external rites, which would strike the senses of the people, so that they could maintain themselves really to possess all those things of which Christians were charged with being destitute, though under different forms.”⁸

The next step to follow was the adoption of pagan holidays, many of which Christians even in our day celebrate. But the principal of them all was the day of the sun as a festival day. Before the close of the second century the form of worship had been compromised with heathen customs, that the professed Christian world was adopting heathen positions and forms during

their worship and prayers—so much so that the heathen were accusing them of sun-worship. Regarding this Tertullian wrote in his *Apology for the Christians*:

“Others, again, certainly with more information and greater verisimilitude, believe that the sun is our god. We shall be counted Persians perhaps, though we do not worship the orb of day painted on a piece of linen cloth, having himself everywhere in his own disk. The idea no doubt has originated from our being known to turn to the east in prayer. But you, many of you, also under pretense sometimes of worshiping the heavenly bodies, move your lips in the direction of the sunrise. In the same way, if we devote Sunday to rejoicing, from a far different reason than sun-worship, we have some resemblance to those of you who devote the day of Saturn to ease and luxury, though they too go far away from Jewish ways, of which indeed they are ignorant.”⁹

All this was taking place one hundred and fifty years before the proclamation of the conversion of Constantine.

Not satisfied with the gains he was making among the believers, Satan took straight aim at the canon of the Scriptures. The great center of learning in Alexandria was home to a congregation of Christian believers which, during the time of the apostle Paul, had become eminent in the knowledge of the Scriptures but also was exposed to Greek influence. Gnosticism had started to creep into the church and it was starting to become evident in the leadership. Tertullian (A.D. 160–221) wrote to one of these scribes the following:

“Now this heresy of yours does not receive certain Scriptures; and whichever of them it does receive, it perverts by means of additions and diminutions, for the accomplishment of its own purpose; and such as it does receive, it receives not in their entirety; but even when it does receive any up to a certain point as entire, it nevertheless perverts even these by the contrivance of diverse interpretations.”¹⁰

Beginning with Justin Martyr who was born the year of John the Revelator's death, heresies were conveyed, magnified, and then implemented into the manuscript reproduction of the Scriptures. Tatian the Assyrian, Justin Martyr's pupil, wrote a harmony of the gospels called Diatessaron. In it were incorporated Gnostic ideas and heresies. A bishop in Siria at that time became so alarmed that he ordered two hundred copies of this Diatessaron thrown out because it was getting confused with the true gospels. Clement of Alexandria, Tatian's pupil, founded a missionary school where all these heresies and pagan philosophy were being taught as pure gospel. All this became amplified by Origen, his pupil, who further corrupted the New Testament manuscripts in his work, Hexapla, which was six versions of the Bible side by side with commentaries and additions, all in one book. This became the manual which Jerome mainly used in the making of the Latin Vulgate in the year A.D. 382. The Latin Vulgate then became the official version of the Bible for the Catholic Church.

All the groundwork was ready by the time the papacy was established. Because of the thoroughness of the confusion fomented at that time by the events described, the papacy took control—and through the union with the secular power it plunged the known Christian world into a period of spiritual darkness commonly known as the Dark Ages.

THE REFORMATION

Amid the spiritual darkness of this period, certain individuals such as John Wycliff, Jan Huss, and Jerome of Prague were prominent. Their influence was to be heard as a shout of freedom throughout Europe. On October 31, 1517, "Babylon" was dealt a mighty blow when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. As this great reformer stood valiantly against Rome and its dogmas, there arose simultaneously throughout Europe, men who also lifted the banner of



freedom from the spiritual darkness that had been imposed on them for so long. The main point of dissent from Rome was first to recognize the Word of God as the only authority in spiritual issues. People learned that the soul may be justified only by faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, and that the penitent sinner did not need any act of penance in order to be forgiven. They discovered, too, that the individual has been endowed by God with a conscience and given freedom to follow its dictates. In this, all of the various reformers agreed.

MIXTURE OF THE SACRED AND PROFANE

As it was with the fall of old Babylon that the profane wine was placed in sacred vessels, likewise spiritual Babylon will through legislation impose sacredness on a common day. The inspired pen wrote:

"When Protestant churches shall unite with the secular power to sustain a false religion, for opposing which their ancestors endured the fiercest persecution, then will the papal sabbath be enforced by the combined authority of church and state. There will be a national apostasy, which will end only in national ruin."¹¹

There will be no neutral ground. We will either be part of Babylon or part of the saved. We read further:

"Men in authority will enact laws controlling the conscience, after the example of the papacy. Babylon will make all nations drink

of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Every nation will be involved."¹²

The fate of the world will then be sealed. The fall of Babylon will be complete.

CONCLUSION

Today, as we observe the events and see the devil hard at work trying to bring the world, the religious bodies, the society and its families into a state of utter confusion, may we hear the same voice that spoke to Abraham in the land of Shinar: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." As the enemy of our souls presents this world as his work of complete confusion, God will point to us before the universe and before the angels and declare: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). *R*

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by Ghita Ulici

THE SECOND ANGEL'S MESSAGE

“And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, the great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Revelation 14:8).

In daily life, we often need to travel for various purposes. In preparing to take a new or unknown route, it is important to have either a dependable person who knows the route with certainty, a map, a compass, a GPS device, some road signs, or other necessary tools to inform us accurately about the way to go in order to arrive at the desired destination. How disappointing it would be if, due to lack of attention, ignorance or misguidance, we would get confused or disoriented, miss the way and get lost on the route we have to follow—or worse yet, get hurt by accident and thereby arrive

late or even never make it to the destination.

LIFE, A JOURNEY IN A NEW AND UNKNOWN WAY

This scenario also applies to our journey through life on earth. Life was given to us without our asking for it; it was offered with a precisely defined aim by our Creator. Everyone's life is unique in its own way; it is a journey in a new and unknown way. We need a map, road signs, milestones or principles to go by, that both our physical and spiritual life be not branded by failure, confusion, waywardness or even accidents, thereby causing us to fail of reaching the goal. For our safety, God does not leave us to grope in foggy darkness from which there is no escape—in a chaotic journey without a precise

destination. Instead, through His word He tells us: “Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Buy they said, We will not walk therein” (Jeremiah 6:16).

A WAY OF ESCAPE WITH A SURE DESTINATION

Despite the fact that men have chosen—from the very beginning as well as throughout human history—the path of sin, disobedience and rebellion against God's principles, the Lord in His great love did not leave us to be doomed under the power of Satan, to live hopelessly with no compass, road signs, or principles to follow. Instead, He has revealed to us how we can choose the path leading to a sure

destination, the paradise that had been lost by sin. Through His inspired Word, He has provided a handy guide for our daily life. In the Bible, God reveals the objective of our life on this earth and the destination to be reached if we accept His plan of salvation through Christ. "Jesus said unto them: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me' (John 14:6). The golden text of the Bible reveals God's love and His aim for our lives as follows: "For 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).

MESSAGES FROM GOD

In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, which presents the "Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John" (Revelation 1:1), we can see, on the one hand, certain messages of warning and hope from God for those who choose the path of faith founded in love, obedience and victory through His grace over the enemy, over sin and all forms of perversion of the principles the Creator has laid out. On the other hand, we find warnings and judgments for the vast majority of people and worldwide political and religious powers which have decided in the past—and continue so in our days in a more aggravated form—to ignore, defy, and yes, even to change the roadsigns or principles left by God for all humanity.

Therefore, in the book of Revelation, in chapter 14, we find three messages brought by angels, addressing "them that dwell on the earth, ... every nation, and kindred and tongue and people" (Revelation 14:6 last part). We understand that these messages from God are global in scope and must be preached to everyone, the aim being to reveal the real condition of a world wallowing under the deep curse

of sin, and to proclaim the saving solution offered through Jesus Christ. The Lord did not entrust the preaching of the everlasting gospel to literal angels, although they would have been able to accomplish this task. Instead, it was entrusted to the first disciples and to all who would live thenceforth for the remainder of this world's history. The summons was: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16), and, according to the Bible, angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14)

"As His representatives among men, God does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save. Christ took humanity that He might reach humanity. A divine-human Saviour was needed to bring salvation to the world. And to men and women has been committed the sacred trust of making known the unsearchable riches of Christ' (Ephesians 3:8)."¹

"Christ is coming the second time, with power unto salvation. To prepare human beings for this event, He has sent the first, second, and third angels' messages. These angels represent those who receive the truth, and with power open the gospel to the world."²

BABYLON IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN

The message of the second angel is introduced by the words: "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 fornications" (Revelation 14:8). This message is a profoundly negative one, unveiling the degraded condition modern spiritual Babylon has reached, in consequence of departing from God and His word. The phrase "is fallen, is fallen" suggests the accuracy with which these things are being fulfilled. What does it mean? "The

term 'Babylon' is derived from 'Babel,' and signifies confusion. It is employed in Scripture to designate the various forms of false or apostate religion."³

When did this message begin to be preached and how does it apply in our time? Is it still relevant for us today? What will be the final outcome of the corrupt system designed by men and represented by the confusion of Babylon?

"The second angel's message of Revelation 14 was first preached in the summer of 1844, and it then had a more direct application to the churches of the United States, where the warning of the judgment had been most widely proclaimed and most generally rejected, and where the declension in the churches had been most rapid. But the message of the second angel did not reach its complete fulfillment in 1844. The churches then experienced a moral fall, in consequence of their refusal of the light of the advent message; but that fall was not complete. As they have continued to reject the special truths for this time they have fallen lower and lower. Not yet, however, can it be said that 'Babylon is fallen, . . . because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' She has not yet made all nations do this. The spirit of world conforming and indifference to the testing truths for our time exists and has been gaining ground in churches of the Protestant faith in all the countries of Christendom; and these churches are included in the solemn and terrible denunciation of the second angel. But the work of apostasy has not yet reached its culmination."⁴

"The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work 'with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;' and they that 'received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,' will be left to receive 'strong delusion, that they should believe a lie' (2 Thessalonians 2:9-11). Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the

fall of Babylon be complete. The change is a progressive one, and the perfect fulfillment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future."⁵

SHE MADE ALL NATIONS DRINK OF THE WINE OF HER FORNICATION

This message describes the negative impact of Babylon's influence and its wayward teaching upon every nation on the planet. We can see here the complicity of the nations along with the apostate churches in drinking of this malicious brew, represented by "the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

"The great sin charged against Babylon is that she 'made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' This cup of intoxication which she presents to the world represents the false doctrines that she has accepted as the result of her unlawful connection with the great ones of the earth. Friendship with the world corrupts her faith, and in her turn she exerts a corrupting influence upon the world by teaching doctrines which are opposed to the plainest statements of Holy Writ."⁶

The Bible reveals how planet Earth is burdened with the curse of sin and all the ensuing evil, lawless, existing practices. It also reveals the yearning for freedom, for salvation, on the part of those who are looking forward for Christ's second coming. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:22, 23). Why has our world reached such profound spiritual degradation? What is God's attitude towards the sinful practices of the world in which we live?

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known

of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. . . . Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; ... Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:18, 19, 21–28, 32).

A MESSAGE FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

Although the message of the second angel has a strongly negative content, it must, nonetheless, be proclaimed to the entire world in order to save souls who sincerely desire to escape the confusion, deceit and corrupting influences of the professed churches that form today's Babylon. This message shows that any attempt of people to depart, ignore or even despise the principles of God's law and of His Word result in degradation or the spiritual decline of human

society. Many people of different religious, social and even political backgrounds, take notice of the current reality—the reality of human laws being implemented against the Word of God, the family institution, and other biblical principles. As a result, they are frightened by the direction that the world is heading and are anxious to find a way of escape or salvation from the imminent dangers that threaten it. Nowadays we can see very clearly the moral and physical degradation into which society has sunken. Sin takes an honorable place. Various forms of perversions have become legal in the realm of civil laws and even in the churches that have made an ecumenical alliance around modern-day Babylon. At the same time, we can see how people's liberties and God-given freedoms are at stake, and those who want to remain loyal to God and the principles of His Word will soon be viewed as hindrances to the accomplishment of some devilish measures.

"The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the strained, restless relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis."⁷

"If popery or its principles shall again be legislated into power, the fires of persecution will be rekindled against those who will not sacrifice conscience and the truth in deference to popular errors. This evil is on the point of realization."⁸

"Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ's true followers are still to be found in their communion. There are many of these who have never seen the special truths for

“The words of Jesus Christ are spoken to us living down here in the close of this earth's history. ‘When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.’ ”



this time. Not a few are dissatisfied with their present condition and are longing for clearer light. They look in vain for the image of Christ in the churches with which they are connected. As these bodies depart further and further from the truth, and ally themselves more closely with the world, the difference between the two classes will widen, and it will finally result in separation. The time will come when those who love God supremely can no longer remain in connection with such as are 'lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.'"⁹

GOD'S AIM FOR HIS OBEDIENT PEOPLE OF TODAY

Jesus declared: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matthew 24:14). "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

"The words of Jesus Christ are spoken to us living down here in the close of this earth's history. 'When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.' The nations are in unrest. Times of perplexity are upon us. The waves of the sea are roaring; men's hearts are failing them for fear and for expectation of those things that are coming upon the

earth; but those who believe on the Son of God will hear His voice amid the storm, saying, 'It is I; be not afraid'. . . . We see the world lying in wickedness and apostasy. Rebellion to the commandments of God seems almost universal. Amid the tumult of excitement with confusion in every place, there is a work to be done in the world.'"¹⁰

"The third angel's message is to be proclaimed with a loud voice. Tremendous issues are before us. We have **no time to lose**. God forbid that we should allow minor matters to eclipse the light which should be given to the world.'"¹¹

"No longer have the hosts of evil power to keep the church captive; for 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city,' which hath 'made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication;' and to spiritual Israel is given the message, 'Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' Verse 8; 18:4. As the captive exiles heeded the message, 'Flee out of the midst of Babylon' (Jeremiah 51:6), and were restored to the Land of Promise, so those who fear God today are heeding the message to withdraw from spiritual Babylon, and soon they are to stand as trophies of divine grace in the earth made new, the heavenly Canaan. . . .

"In these final hours of probation for the sons of men, when the fate of every soul is so soon to be decided forever, the Lord of heaven and earth expects His church to arouse to action as never before.""¹²

"There needs to be a waking up among God's people, that His work may be carried forward with power. We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We need to understand that God will add to the ranks of His people men of ability and influence, who are to act their part in warning the world. All in the world are not lawless and sinful. God has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. There are God-fearing men in the fallen churches. If this were not so, we should not be given the message to bear, 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.... Come out of her, My people.' "¹³

May God bless us all in the fulfillment of His plans in our lives during the dangerous times in which we live. May we cultivate unshaken faith in Him and maintain our identity as His children, His peculiar people, in a world rapidly approaching its end. May we work with more zealous determination under the mighty influence of the Holy Spirit in behalf of the salvation of our neighbors, that we be victors through His grace, and heirs of His kingdom for eternity. Amen. *R*

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- ⁹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 390.
- ¹⁰ *Evangelism*, p. 18.
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Dodging the Fall

Suppose your friend invites you to go down the Niagara River with him or her. You both climb into a canoe and enjoy the scenery as the current takes you downstream. Suddenly, you realize that you are on your way toward Niagara Falls! You want out, now! You tell your friend to steer toward the bank of the river. But your friend keeps steering toward the middle of the river. He or she tells you that the current takes you along better in the middle. He or she talks about the beauty of the sunshine, the glory of the trees, and the flowers along the way. Your friend calmly admires the birds overhead.

You try to reason with your friend: There is danger ahead. It is safer to act now. When the danger becomes visible, it may be too late to avoid it. The current is stronger close to the falls, and it is harder to get out of the river. But your friend is consumed with the pleasure of the moment. He or she is enjoying

the trip and is not willing to reason with you about it.

You are faced with the worst choice of your life. You can stay friends and fall sixteen stories to your death, or you can abandon your friend and save your life. What do you do when being friends is a form of slow (or sometimes even instant) suicide?

This hypothetical situation is a real choice faced by people in many countries today. Do you remain friends with someone who asks you to be involved in rape? Do you keep a relationship with someone that requires you to be drunk or high on drugs in order to be his or her friend? What about a friend that asks you to cover up murder or some lesser crime?

Christians face this same problem in another form. As Christians, we find that life is more than food and pleasure. We are happiest when we are conscious of the smile of Jesus.

We find that our wisest thoughts are about Him. Our greatest contentment comes while we listen to Jesus or serve others as He has done. He is our best Friend. We are not willing to go anywhere He is not welcome.

But we have family and friends that do not see as we do. They appreciate life and understand many things. But Jesus is someone they do not want. They dislike or maybe even hate His name, His demands, His words, His guidance, His attention. They want to be our friends. But they demand that we ignore or reject Jesus in order to spend time with them. What do you do when your family and your friends pull you away from God? What do you do when friendship is a form of spiritual suicide?

AN EXPERIENCE IN HISTORY

The realization that two cannot walk together except they be agreed



We relied not upon our own wisdom; but we looked to God for guidance and direction, and endeavored to lay ourselves upon His altar, trusting that He would direct our footsteps aright.

As these religious people turned from God to a form of religion and to making themselves prosperous, they became hostile to those who still believed Jesus would come soon. They began to make fun of the people that they used to admire and spend time with. They opposed and eventually attacked their own friends and family for believing what they now rejected. This made life harder for the Advent people.

For thousands of Advent people it was already a very confusing time. They were disappointed also. They wanted Jesus to come. They expected the world to be over before those days. And they had no explanation for what didn't happen. Yet they knew that they were part of a powerful experience. Unity, humility, consecration, dedication were fruits of God, not of Satan. Whatever happened was good. God was in it. But where was He now? Why had He disappointed them? They had questions but no answers. But giving up on God wasn't an option. Like Job of old, they declared that they would trust God even if they died in the process.

Three Advent pastors, Joshua Himes, Sylvester Bliss, and Apollos Hale, published their own observation.

"We were not hasty in embracing our opinions. We believe that we were honest and sincere inquirers after truth. We obeyed our Savior's command to search the Scriptures. We relied not upon our own wisdom; but we looked to God for guidance and direction, and en-

(Amos 3:3) is the question that confronted more than fifty thousand Christians in 1844. In the years leading up to 1844, the Christians of the United States had an astounding experience. The members of various churches could not agree to pray together, but through the American Bible Society they cooperated (without praying together) in the printing and distributing of thousands of Bibles. They could not worship together, but they printed thousands of tracts and sent missionaries to rare places together.

During the years from 1840–1844 many of the churches across America hosted revivals and suddenly cooperated like never before. These churches investigated their own theology and realized that certain new ideas had crept into their churches. They repudiated these new doctrines in favor of the older, more scriptural beliefs. An interest deepened and spread in personal guid-

ance from the Scriptures rather than moral direction coming from church administration. This dependence on the Bible led to trusting Jesus to return to earth in the spring of 1844. But He did not appear. Thousands gave up on God for "disappointing" them. They abandoned the study of the Bible as their source of spiritual guidance and turned to pastors and spiritual experts to provide them with erring, manmade concepts of salvation. They paid less attention to God and more attention to the "social gospel" of trying to help other people through good works. They rejected the idea that Jesus was coming soon and focused on gaining prosperity in this world. They determined that reason and science were more trustworthy than God through His Word. And in a few decades they started to cut out parts of the Bible, such as the record of creation, that didn't fit with their reason and scientific conclusions.

deavored to lay ourselves upon His altar, trusting that He would direct our footsteps aright. We examined all the arguments which were advanced against us with a sincere desire to know the truth and be kept from error; but we must confess that the varied and multiform positions of our opponents only confirmed us in our views. We saw that whether we were right or wrong, our opponents could not be right; and they had no agreement among themselves. The arguments of each were so weak and puerile that they were under the necessity of continually undoing what they had themselves done; and by their opposite and contradictory views they demonstrated that however they might regard our opinions, they had no confidence in the opinions of each other. And, moreover, there was not a cardinal point in our whole position in which we were not sustained by one or more of those who labored to disprove the immediate coming of the Lord. While we had the literal rendering of the Scriptures to sustain us, our opponents endeavored in vain to prove that the Scriptures are not to be understood literally, although every prophecy which has been fulfilled has been so in its most literally minute particulars."¹

Around this time, George Storrs' *Six Sermons* became popular among the Advent believers. In these sermons the Advent preacher examined the Bible teaching about life after death. He could find no proof for the common belief that human minds exist forever, even after the bodies that house and support those minds die. Storrs was thorough. He examined the beliefs of pagans and Christians. He examined the words of Scripture and the expressions popular in his day. He compared everything to the teachings of the Bible and demonstrated that evil people are not conscious throughout eternity. The Bible plainly teaches that what we right now call death is a sleep of mental unconsciousness. It is also plain that people who love evil will lose consciousness and will no longer exist throughout eternity. Storrs made clear that in choosing to love and trust Jesus or reject Him,

one was choosing eternal *life* or eternal *extinction*. During the summer of 1844, many Advent believers accepted the truth that immortality is given only to those that love God and trust Him and to *no one else*.

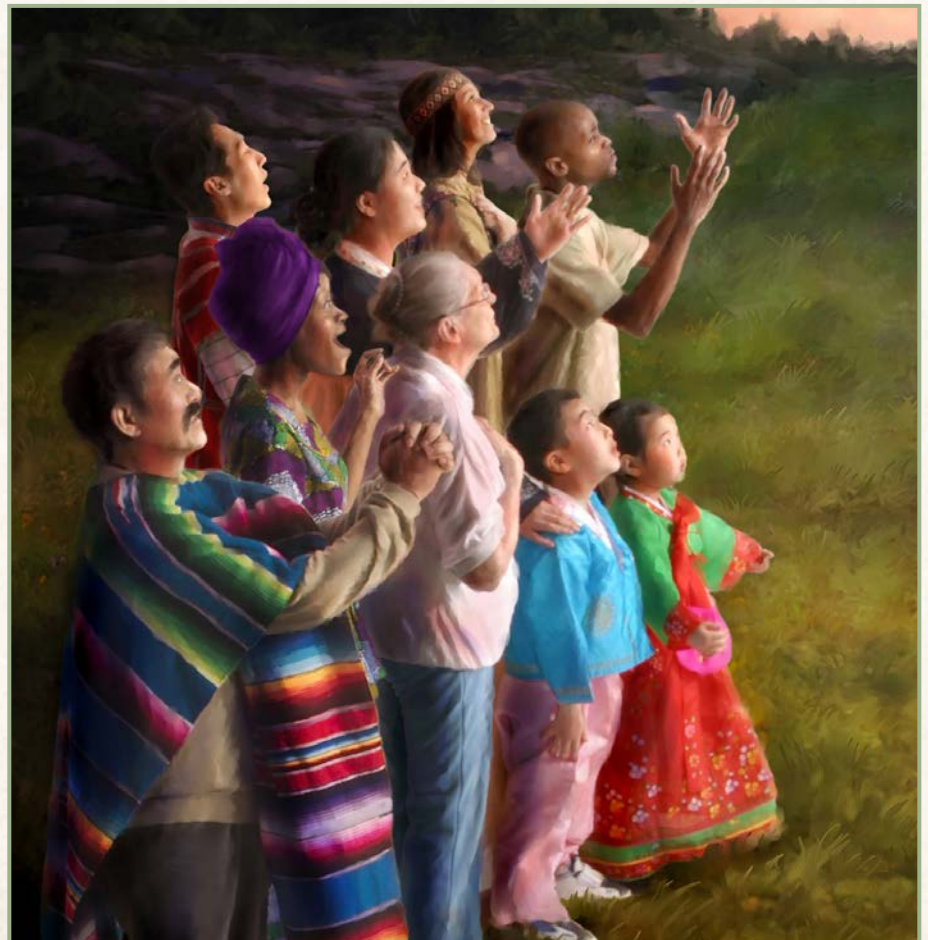
GETTING TO THE NEED OF THE HOUR

During the month of August of 1844, several thousand Advent believers gathered in coastal New Hampshire for a conference. Part way through the conference a minister was giving a routine sermon on prophecy, boring his audience with the repetition of what was already familiar. Suddenly a lady stood up and respectfully interrupted the speaker. "It is too late to spend our time upon these truths, with which we are familiar, and which have been blessed to us in the past, and have served their purpose and their time."²

The speaker sat down and the

lady continued, with everyone listening carefully. "It is too late, brethren, to spend precious time as we have since this camp meeting commenced. Time is short. The Lord has servants here who have meat in due season for his household. Let them speak, and let the people hear them."³

Soon a speaker was invited to present what came to be known as the seventh-month truth. Probably a man by the name of Samuel Snow, the speaker presented details of prophecy that were previously unnoticed. He corrected the year of Jesus' death from A.D. 33 to A.D. 31. He presented that the beginning of the 2300-day prophecy occurred in the fall of 457 B.C. Those 2300 days represent 2300 complete years. And Snow introduced a more careful comparison of the model to the reality, the type to the antitype. The national festivals of ancient Israel were not only illustrations of God and His assistance to and for the salvation of humans. They were also time



prophecies, pinpointing the exact time of Jesus' death and resurrection, and the visible increase in the assistance of the Holy Spirit. So the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Weeks in the fall of the Israelite year should tell us about Jesus' second coming. Accordingly, the cleansing of the sanctuary should take place about the time of the Day of Atonement, or about October 22, 1844.

Thousands of people left that camp meeting passionate about Jesus coming again. Confusion disappeared and even some beginnings of fanaticism among a few people were suppressed. (For example, people meaninglessly repeated "Glory to God," or would have church services of loud shouting and clapping all night, and were constantly making decisions based only on impressions from "God," and sometimes expecting other people to provide all their necessities while they refused to work for themselves and while they read the Bible or sang songs.)

Advent believers understood that they were now experiencing the fulfillment of the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. All of the virgins slept until midnight. Part of them had light or truth that would lead people in the dark. The other group of people had been following truth but now had no truth for the moment. Late spring and early summer of 1844 seemed as a dark night of confusion to many of the religious people of America. But half way between March and October or in the middle of the night at "midnight," truth came to light the way to the heavenly wedding.

"The parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25 also illustrates the experience of the Adventist people [in 1844]. . . . The coming of Christ, as announced by the first angel's message, was understood to be represented by the coming of the bridegroom. The widespread reformation under the proclamation of His soon coming, answered to the going forth of the virgins. In this parable . . . two classes are represented. All had taken their lamps, the Bible, and by its light had gone forth to meet the Bridegroom. . . . [Some] had received the grace of God, the

regenerating, enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, which renders His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. In the fear of God they had studied the Scriptures to learn the truth and had earnestly sought for purity of heart and life. These had a personal experience, a faith in God and in His word, which could not be overthrown by disappointment and delay. Others . . . moved from impulse. Their fears had been excited by the solemn message, but they had depended upon the faith of their brethren, satisfied with the flickering light of good emotions, without a thorough understanding of the truth or a genuine work of grace in the heart. These had gone forth to meet the Lord, full of hope in the prospect of immediate reward; but they were not prepared for delay and disappointment. When trials came, their faith failed, and their lights burned dim. . . .

In this time of uncertainty, the interest of the superficial and halfhearted soon began to waver, and their efforts to relax; but those whose faith was based on a personal knowledge of the Bible had a rock beneath their feet, which the waves of disappointment could not wash away. 'They all slumbered and slept' (verse 5), one class in unconcern and abandonment of their faith, the other class patiently waiting till clearer light should be given. Yet in the night of trial the latter seemed to lose, to some extent, their zeal and devotion. The halfhearted and superficial could no longer lean upon the faith of their brethren. Each must stand or fall for himself."⁴

As enthusiasm, clarity, and certainty returned to the Advent people, the rest of the religious community opposed them even more strongly. "The orthodox churches used every means to prevent the belief in Christ's soon coming from spreading. No liberty was granted in their meetings to those who dared mention a hope of the soon coming of Christ. Professed lovers of Jesus scornfully rejected the tidings that He whom they claimed as their best friend was soon to visit them. They were excited and angered against those who proclaimed

the news of His coming, and who rejoiced that they should speedily behold Him in His glory."⁵ Many Advent believers were thrown out of their local churches for believing in Jesus' second coming. Others left. But they did not leave easily. They only left because it would be spiritual suicide to remain with those that opposed the Bible and its truths so strongly.

STANDING ALONE

Approximately 50,000 people were left without a church. But the separation from their friends and family, as painful as it had been, was almost forgotten in the joy of seeing Jesus soon. He is coming! "Every morning we felt that it was our first work to secure the evidence that our lives were right before God. Our interest for one another increased; we prayed much with and for one another. We assembled in the orchards and groves to commune with God and to offer up our petitions to Him, feeling more fully in His presence when surrounded by His natural works. The joys of salvation were more necessary to us than our food and drink. If clouds obscured our minds, we dared not rest or sleep till they were swept away by the consciousness of our acceptance with the Lord. . . .

"The waiting people of God approached the hour when they fondly hoped their joys would be complete in the coming of the Saviour. But the time again passed unmarked by the advent of Jesus. It was hard to take up the cares of life that we thought had been laid down forever. It was a bitter disappointment that fell upon the little flock whose faith had been so strong and whose hope had been so high. But we were surprised that we felt so free in the Lord and were so strongly sustained by His strength and grace.

"The experience of the former year was, however, repeated to a greater extent. A large class renounced their faith. Some, who had been very confident, were so deeply wounded in their pride that they felt like fleeing from the world. Like



For those who remained loyal to God through embarrassment and disappointment, the road before them was difficult and often lonely. They would have to build all over again. But they could do so with God's help and guidance.

Jonah, they complained of God, and chose death rather than life. Those who had built their faith upon the evidence of others, and not upon the word of God, were now as ready to again change their views. The hypocrites, who had hoped to deceive the Lord as well as themselves with their counterfeit penitence and devotion, now felt relieved from impending danger, and openly opposed the cause they had lately professed to love.

"The weak and the wicked united in declaring that there could be no more fears or expectations now. The time had passed, the Lord had not come, and the world would remain the same for thousands of years. This second great test revealed a mass of worthless drift that had been drawn into the strong current of the advent faith, and been borne along for a time with the true believers and earnest workers."⁶

From hopeful excitement to disappointment to hopeful excitement to disappointment, those who trusted God in 1844 had a year of extremes. They were deeply challenged. But the experience was worthwhile. The separation from their friends and family was painful but justified. It was a separation required to remain true to the central truths of the Reformation: salvation from evil thoughts and actions only by depending on God; the Bible as the personal voice of God to the believer; the understanding of the Bible by personal search of the Scripture rather than through experts and human authorities;

truth as maintained by the collective conscience of the people rather than provided by the ultimatum of the clergy. The believers jumped ship from their Protestant peers. But their consciences were clear and at peace. They left the boat, not because they wanted disunity, but because they refused spiritual suicide. Departure was better than going "over the falls."

Many of the spiritual descendants of the religious world of 1844 have no idea what their forefathers lost when they rejected God's personal guidance through a personal understanding of His Word. They are not personally responsible for that historical choice. But they share in its consequences.

For those who remained loyal to God through embarrassment and disappointment, the road before them was difficult and often lonely. They would have to build all over again. But they could do so with God's help and guidance.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

On which side of this divide do we find ourselves today? We may adopt the Advent doctrines but have the philosophy of those who rejected God's leading in that day. We need the doctrines **and** the personal faith in God of those believers. We need the personal guidance of God through His Word. We need courage to stand alone if necessary, but the dedication to be united with other believers as much as possible.

Courage and moral integrity like this means learning to trust Jesus

and trust Him completely. This faith was another one of the great lessons of 1844. George Storrs described complete faith in Jesus well in one of his last articles before the great disappointment of October 22. He said that preparing for the coming of Jesus was like going to meet a great ship on its way to heaven. The advertisement stated that the ship would only pick up passengers from an island a little way out from shore. And it only picked up those passengers that pushed their little boats away after reaching the island. If you kept your little boat tied on the back of the island, just in case, the ship's captain would refuse to let you on board. As the ship arrived at the island, many people went running to cut loose their boats. But the ship left them behind, and now their little boats were gone also. Storrs urged his fellow Advent believers to recognize that Jesus only takes to heaven those that trust Him completely. If we try to make **our way** of escape rather than trusting Jesus to take us to heaven in **His way**, we will be lost.

Let us consecrate ourselves then to trust Jesus no matter how dearly it costs us, and carry forward the work of the Advent believers as long as human civilization lasts. *R*

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- ² James White: *Life Incidents*, p. 159.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 160.
- ⁴ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 394, 395.
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The Wine of Babylon

by Alfons Balbach

The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication” (Revelation 17:4).

Why do we have to know exactly what is the spiritual “wine” of Babylon in the cup that the woman is holding in her hand? There is a strong reason why. The Babylonian wine is highly poisonous, making us unable to see the difference between truth and error. Once we become intoxicated, we lose our spiritual discernment. And, unconsciously, we allow the powers of darkness to lead us astray in spiritual matters. And what happens if we miss the way to the kingdom of God? We must know the answer.

TWO CHURCHES

In the Bible, truth and error are associated with two symbolic

women representing two churches—the true church and the apostate church. The true church, which upholds the truth, is symbolized by a chaste woman:

“I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman” (Jeremiah 6:2).

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:2).

The fallen church, which teaches and practices error, and which has exercised a strong influence on the nations of the world, is symbolized by a corrupt woman:

“For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink” (Hosea 2:5).

“I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns” (Revelation 17:3).

The fallen church does not stand alone. She is called “Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots” (Revelation 17:5). It is actually a family of churches—the mother church and “seven” daughter churches who share her doctrines and principles. In biblical language, “seven” stands for a full number, meaning here all the apostate churches.

The prophet Isaiah describes this ecclesiastical family under the symbol of seven women who would be interested in only one thing—the name of Jesus:

“In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach” (Isaiah 4:1).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRUE CHURCH

1. She stands on the true foundation—Jesus Christ and the Word of God—the Bible. Matthew 7:24, 25; Luke 11:28; 16:31; 1 Corinthians 3:9–11; Ephesians 2:20, 21; 1 Timothy 3:15; and so on.
2. She puts all religious questions to the test of “the law and testimony.” (Isaiah 8:20; Exodus 31:18). She does not ignore that the law of God, His testimony, which was the basis of the covenant, came forth from the right hand of Christ. Exodus 24:7, 8, 12; Deuteronomy 33:2; Malachi 3:1; Acts 7:38; 1 Corinthians 10:4. (Isaiah 8:14–20 refers to the Christian Dispensation.)
3. She understands that Christ established, taught, and urged His followers to honor the law that He had given at Sinai. Matthew 5:17–20; 15:3; 19:17; 22:36–40; Luke 16:17; Romans 2:12, 13, 18–23; 3:31; 7:7–23; 8:1–4, 7; and so on.
4. She may be persecuted. Revelation 12:13, 17.
5. She identifies herself with the threefold message of Revelation 14:6–12, which is to prepare a special group of believers for the coming of Christ.
6. She is prepared to meet Christ at His coming. 2 Thessalonians 1:7.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FALLEN CHURCH

1. She is described as being “a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (Revelation 18:2).
2. The mother harlot is “arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls” (Revelation 17:4). She must keep a beautiful outward appearance.
3. She is “drunken with the blood of the saints” (verse 6). The role that she played during the centuries of the Inquisition is not to be forgotten.

4. She sits or rides on “a scarlet coloured beast” (verse 3). History says that, during the centuries of her supremacy, she held the reins of political power in her hands.
5. “The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk” with the “wine” of her teachings (verse 2).

WHAT IS THE WINE?

“The human family have been made drunk with the wine of Babylon, and drunken men will not reason. They have taken large drafts of Satan’s sophistry, and they are determined that they will not see the foolishness of accepting another standard, while casting aside the law of the Lord of hosts.”¹

“The fallen denominational churches are Babylon. Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God’s holy, sanctified day. These and kindred errors are presented to the world by the various churches.”²

“Prominent among these false doctrines is that of the temporal millennium—a thousand years of spiritual peace and prosperity, in which the world is to be converted, before the coming of Christ. This siren song has lulled thousands of souls to sleep over the abyss of eternal ruin.

“The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul has opened the way for the artful working of Satan through modern Spiritualism; and besides the Romish errors, purgatory, prayers for the dead, invocation of saints, etc., which have sprung from this source, it has led many Protestants to deny the resurrection and the Judgment, and has given rise to the revolting heresy of eternal torment, and the dangerous delusion of Universalism.

“And even more dangerous and more widely held than these are the

assumptions that the law of God was abolished at the cross, and that the first day of the week is now a holy day, instead of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.”³

“The effort of seducers has been to undermine confidence in the truth of God and to make it impossible to distinguish truth from error. Wonderfully pleasing, fanciful, scientific problems [like the theory of evolution] are introduced and urged upon the attention of the unwary; and unless believers are on their guard, the enemy, disguised as an angel of light, will lead them into false paths.”⁴

Most of the Protestant churches have inherited from the Roman Catholic Church the belief that man is immortal and that after death he lives on in the form of an immortal soul. It is believed that, when a human dies, his or her soul has only two possibilities—to go to enjoy the blessedness of heaven or to suffer the eternal torments of hell.

Baptism, according to the Catholic Church, has two main purposes: “Every child is . . . defiled at its birth with the taint of Adam’s disobedience. . . . Hence baptism, which washes away original sin, is as essential for the infant as for the full grown man in order to obtain the kingdom of heaven.”⁵ Many Protestant churches have inherited the practice of infant baptism from the Catholic Church.

Another practice received from the Catholic Church is the complete disregard of the dietary laws establishing the difference between clean and unclean flesh. For most Protestants it is all right to eat pork. They excuse themselves by quoting Matthew 15:18, 20 and other misunderstood New Testament verses. Some seem to believe that Christ died to purify not only human beings but also animals, even those that are declared unclean (toxic) and unfit for human consumption. See Leviticus 11. Christians should bear in mind the following verses that refer to the soon coming of Christ:

“Behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like

a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 66:15-17).

"When the Lord Jesus shall 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 of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Hereunder are some more ingredients coming especially from the "kitchen" of the mother church that have been added to the "mixed wine" offered to intoxicate the inhabitants of the world:

1. "Jesus, our Lord, founded but one church, which He was pleased to build on Peter."⁶ When Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18), He meant the Rock pointed out in prophecy (Isaiah 8:14; 1 Peter 2:6-8). He could not have meant Peter, whom He had to rebuke saying, "Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me" (Matthew 16:23).
2. "The primacy of St. Peter and the perpetuity of that primacy in the Roman see are dogmatically defined in the canons. . . . Peter and his successors have power to impose laws both preceptive and prohibitive, power likewise to grant dispensation from these laws and, when needful to annul them. It is theirs to judge offenses against the laws, to impose and to remit penalties. This judicial authority will even include the power to pardon sin."⁷
3. "The mass is the most important ceremony in the Catholic worship. It consists in the sacrifice of the

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body and the blood of Jesus Christ on the altar through the ministry of the priest."⁸ "The Eucharist is 'the source and summit of the Christian life.' 'The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch."⁹

4. Purgatory. "The souls who go to purgatory are saved. . . . In purgatory the souls can themselves wipe out their debt only by suffering."¹⁰
5. The invocation of saints is a very important aspect in the life of devout Catholics.
6. "Pius IX, in 1854, proclaimed the dogma of the immaculate conception."¹¹ This dogma teaches that Mary "was preserved free from all stain of original sin."
7. Auricular Confession. "Seek where you will, through heaven and earth and you will find but one created being who can forgive the sinner, who can free him from the chains of hell, that extraordinary being is the priest, the Catholic priest. . . . The priest not only declares that the sinner is forgiven, but he really forgives him. . . . So great is the power of the priest that the judgments of heaven itself are subject to his decision."¹²

"If men would consent to follow the Lord fully, if they were not confused with the wine of Babylon, they would see that to tamper with the Lord's standard, to depart from His commandments, is the worst species of rebellion. This is well represented as the wine of the wrath of the abomination of Babylon, the cup which she has presented to all nations to drink. Were it not for this, thousands, yes, millions, would be found in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in."¹³

It is not enough for us to be able to define the "wine of Babylon" and to specify its ingredients. God wants to rescue honest believers who are in the fallen churches that compose Babylon. And He wants to use us as instruments to help. Therefore, He sends a mighty angel, which represents a movement since 1844, to give the following message to the world:

"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Revelation 14:8). *R*

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- ³ *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 235.
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- ¹¹ Dictionnaire du Foyer Catholique, Art. L'Immaculée Conception, p. 399.
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REJECTING THE RUDIMENTS OF THE WORLD

prepared by the Reformation
Herald Editorial Staff

The apostle Paul bids us, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8). Some of these worldly traditions include false ideas and teachings such as:

Any earthly mediators—male or female—that supposedly would come between Christ and humanity. Such presumption is a myth, “for there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

Temporal dominion and the doctrine of indulgences, whereby remission of sins could be supposedly bought or sold. On the contrary, there is only one price for our salvation: the precious blood of Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 6:20.)

Transubstantiation, whereby the Scriptural ordinance of the Lord’s Supper is supplanted by an idolatrous sacrifice claiming that the symbolic bread and wine are the actual, literal body and blood of Christ. In contrast, see the

actual teaching from the Bible in 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23–26.

False teachings concerning the state of the dead and the end of the wicked. In contrast, see Job 14:7–14; Psalm 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10; Psalm 37:10, 20, 38; 145:20; Revelation 20:9. Popular theology teaches that the redeemed are already in heaven, acquainted with all that takes place here on earth, especially in the lives of friends and family members. For the actual truth, see 1 Corinthians 15:50–55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17; John 14:1–3.

The notion of the world being created in an indefinite, lengthy period of time, instead of in six literal 24-hour days, each recorded in Genesis chapter 1 as an evening and morning.

The false theory of a temporal millennium of peace and prosperity to offer the deceased a second chance at redemption. But in reality, “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

Universalism (teaching that all people will finally be saved) and the denial of the conditional nature of salvation in contrast to Matthew 7:21; Revelation 3:5; 22:14.

The false teaching of “faith, and faith only” in contrast to James 1:22–25; 2:14–17. “The desire for an easy religion that requires no striving, no self-denial, no divorce from the follies of the world, has made the doctrine of faith, and faith only, a popular doctrine; but what saith the word of God? . . . The testimony of the word of God is against this ensnaring doctrine of faith without works. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions upon which mercy is to be granted, it is presumption; for genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.”¹

The distorted doctrine of “once saved, always saved.” Ezekiel 18:23–26; Matthew 24:13 shows the

presumptuous nature of this error. Examples in 1 Kings 13:26 and 2 Peter 2:15–20 provide further clarification. Scripture does not teach biased, unconditional selection with no accountability in response.

The dangerous philosophy that humanity is self-sufficient and one needs only to develop his/her innate powers. We are warned against this in Jeremiah 13:23; John 15:5; Colossians 2:8. The peril is this: “If Satan can so befog and deceive the human mind as to lead mortals to think that there is an inherent power in themselves to accomplish great and good works, they cease to rely upon God to do for them that which they think there is power in themselves to do. They acknowledge not a superior power. They give not God the glory which He claims, and which is due to His great and excellent Majesty. Satan’s object is thus accomplished, and he exults that fallen men presumptuously exalt themselves as he exalted himself in heaven and was thrust out. He knows that if man exalts himself, his ruin is just as certain as was his own.”²

Titus 1:16 reveals that those whose mind and conscience are defiled may “profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” Just as when the tower of Babel was built, “there are tower builders in our time. Infidels construct their theories from the supposed deductions of science and reject the revealed word of God. They presume to pass sentence upon God’s moral government; they despise His law and boast of the sufficiency of human reason. . . .

“In the professedly Christian world many turn away from the plain teachings of the Bible and build up a creed from human speculations and pleasing fables, and they point to their tower as a way to climb up to heaven. Men hang with admiration upon the lips of eloquence while it teaches that the transgressor shall not die, that salvation may be secured without obedience to the law of God. If the professed followers of Christ would

accept God’s standard, it would bring them into unity; but so long as human wisdom is exalted above His Holy Word, there will be divisions and dissension.”³

COMINGLING OF CHURCH AND STATE

Seeking the favor of secular governments by compromising scriptural principles to gain benefits from the state, professed Christianity enters into a spiritually adulterous relationship warned against in James 4:4; Revelation 17:1, 2.

And what of false revivals which are led by a spirit other than the Holy Spirit of God?

TRUE VS. FALSE REVIVAL

The second angel’s message is a message of separation. It is the result of earnest believers seeking to come to higher ground in matters pertaining to God, while others remain behind by refusing the beams of light shining from the heavenly throne.

WHAT IS GENUINE REVIVAL?

The apostle Paul declares: “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter” (2 Corinthians 7:9–11).

“If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be

mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live" (Ezekiel 33:15, 16).

"The most profitable meetings for spiritual advancement are those which are characterized with solemnity and deep searching of heart; each seeking to know himself, and earnestly, and in deep humility, seeking to learn of Christ."⁵

THE COUNTERFEIT: FALSE REVIVAL

Those under the influence of false revival, as the Lord described to the prophet Ezekiel, behave as follows: "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not" (Ezekiel 33:31, 32). "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8).

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

"[Wherever the Word of God has been faithfully preached, genuine] revivals brought deep heart searching and humility. They were characterized by solemn, earnest appeals to the sinner, by yearning compassion for the purchase of the blood of Christ. Men and women prayed and wrestled with God for the salvation of souls. The fruits of such revivals were seen in souls who shrank not at self-denial and sacrifice, but rejoiced

that they were counted worthy to suffer reproach and trial for the sake of Christ. Men beheld a transformation in the lives of those who had professed the name of Jesus. . . .

"But many of the revivals of modern times have presented a marked contrast to those manifestations of divine grace which in earlier days followed the labors of God's servants. It is true that a widespread interest is kindled, many profess conversion, and there are large accessions to the churches; nevertheless the results are not such as to warrant the belief that there has been a corresponding increase of real spiritual life. The light which flames up for a time soon dies out, leaving the darkness more dense than before."⁶

"The teachers of spiritualism will come in a pleasing, bewitching manner to deceive you, and if you listen to their fables you are beguiled by the enemy of righteousness and will surely lose your reward. When once the fascinating influence of the archdeceiver overcomes you, you are poisoned, and its deadly influence adulterates and destroys your faith in Christ's being the Son of God, and you cease to rely on the merits of His blood. . . . Satan has chosen the most certain, fascinating delusion, calculated to take hold of the sympathies of those who have laid their loved ones in the grave. Evil angels assume the form of these loved ones, and relate incidents connected with their lives, and perform acts which their friends performed while living. In this way they deceive and lead the relatives of the dead to believe their deceased friends are angels hovering about them, and communing with them, which they regard with a certain idolatry. What they may say has greater influence over them than the word of God. These evil angels who assume to be dead friends will either utterly reject God's word as idle tales, or if it suits their purpose best will select the vital portions which testify of Christ and point out the way to heaven, and change the plain statements of the word of God to suit their own corrupt nature, and ruin souls. . . .

"Deceived mortals are worshipping evil angels, believing them to be the spirits of their dead friends. The word of God expressly declares that 'the dead have no more a portion in anything done under the sun' (Ecclesiastes 9:6). Spiritualists say the dead know everything that is done under the sun, that they communicate to their friends on earth, give valuable information, and perform wonders. . . . [Satan] works with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. He who could take up the Son of God, who was made a little lower than the angels, and place Him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and take Him up into an exceeding high mountain to present before Him the kingdoms of the world, can exercise his power upon the human family, who are far inferior in strength and wisdom to the Son of God, even after He had taken upon Himself man's nature. In this degenerate age Satan holds control over mortals who depart from the right and venture upon his ground. He exercises his power upon such in an alarming manner. I was directed to these words, 'Intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind' (Colossians 2:18). Some, I was shown, gratify their curiosity, and tamper with the Devil. They have no real faith in spiritualism and would start back with horror at the idea of being a medium. Yet they venture and place themselves in a position where Satan can exercise his power upon them. They do not mean to enter deep into this work, but such know not what they are doing. They are venturing on the Devil's ground and are tempting him to control them. This powerful destroyer considers such his lawful prey and will exercise his power upon them, and that against their will. When they wish to control themselves they cannot. They yielded their mind to Satan and he holds them captive, and he will not release his claims. No power can deliver the ensnared soul but the power of God, in answer to the earnest prayers of his faithful followers.

"The only safety now is to search for the truth as revealed in the



“Spiritualism, which numbers its converts by hundreds of thousands, yea, by millions, which has made its way into scientific circles, which has invaded churches, and has found favor in legislative bodies, and even in the courts of kings—this mammoth deception is but a revival, in a new disguise, of the witchcraft condemned and prohibited of old.”

word of God as for hid treasure. The Sabbath question and man not immortal and the testimony of Jesus are the great and important truths to be understood, which will prove as an anchor to hold God’s people in these perilous times. But the mass despise the truths of God’s word and prefer fables. 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11: ‘Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.’ ”⁷

INFILTRATED BY SPIRITUALISM: TONGUES AND OCCULTISM

How tragic it is that so many of the present-day church revivals do not come from God, but rather are based on ecstatic emotion. “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:20–23).

“Some of these persons [in an 1854 movement with fanatical views] have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great de-

ceiver. Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God has placed in the church. Some have been deceived here. The fruits of all this have not been good. ‘Ye shall know them by their fruits’ (Matthew 7:16). Fanaticism and noise have been considered special evidences of faith. Some are not satisfied with a meeting unless they have a powerful and happy time. They work for this and get up an excitement of feeling. But the influence of such meetings is not beneficial. When the happy flight of feeling is gone, they sink lower than before the meeting because their happiness did not come from the right source.”⁸

The so-called gift of tongues (glossolalia) in modern charismatic revivals is the same ecstatic utterance found in early Mormonism, pagan religions, cults, and even the occult. This is not the gift of languages that was bestowed upon the early Christian disciples for the promulgation of the gospel among foreigners. It is a counterfeit.

“Recent studies have indicated that glossolalia is not a uniquely Christian practice. Glossolalia is practiced by a large number of native non-Christian living religions around the world. Glossolalia is found among the Inuit (Eskimos), The Saami (Lapps), in Japanese seances in Hokkaido, in a small cult led by Genji Yanagide of Moji City, the shamans in Ethiopia in the zar cult and various spirits in Haitian Voodoo. L. Carlyle May shows that glossolalia in non-Christian religions is present in Malaysia, Indonesia, Siberia, Arctic regions, China, Japan, Korea, Arabia, and Burma, among other places. It is also pres-

ent extensively in African tribal religions.”⁹

“The doctrine of man’s consciousness in death, especially the belief that spirits of the dead return to minister to the living, has prepared the way for modern spiritualism. . . . While professing to bring the living into communication with the dead, the prince of evil exercises his bewitching influence upon their minds.

“He has power to bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The counterfeit is perfect; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with marvelous distinctness. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of heaven, and without suspicion of danger, they give ear ‘to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils’ (1 Timothy 4:1).”¹⁰

“In those churches which [the enemy of souls] can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God’s special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.”¹¹

“Spiritualism, which numbers its converts by hundreds of thousands, yea, by millions, which has made its way into scientific circles, which has invaded churches, and has found favor in legislative bodies, and even in the courts of kings—this mammoth deception is but a revival, in a new disguise, of the witchcraft condemned and prohibited of old.”¹²

Since most professed Christian churches believe that the dead are

in a state of consciousness, they are ripe to accept the delusions of spiritualism. "Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves" (Isaiah 28:14, 15).

"As the teachings of spiritualism are accepted by the churches, the restraint imposed upon the carnal heart is removed, and the profession of religion will become a cloak to conceal the basest iniquity. A belief in spiritual manifestations opens the door to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and thus the influence of evil angels will be felt in the churches."¹³ Thus they will fall prey to the deceptive working of Satan through signs and lying wonders.

"The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work 'with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie' (2 Thessalonians 2:9–11). **Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the**

world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete. The change is a progressive one, and the perfect fulfillment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future."¹⁴

The prophet Jeremiah foresaw a dreadful state of things: "I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah" (Jeremiah 23:14).

"The nominal churches are filled with fornication and adultery, crime and murder, the result of base, lustful passion; but these things are kept covered. Ministers in high places are guilty; yet a cloak of godliness covers their dark deeds, and they pass on from year to year in their course of hypocrisy. The sins of the nominal churches have reached unto heaven, and the honest in heart will be brought to the light and come out of them. . . .

"Not all who profess to keep the commandments of God possess their bodies in sanctification and honor. The most solemn message ever committed to mortals has been entrusted to this people, and they can have a powerful influence if they will be sanctified by it. They profess to be standing upon the

elevated platform of eternal truth, keeping all of God's commandments; therefore, if they indulge in sin, if they commit fornication and adultery, their crime is of tenfold greater magnitude than is that of the classes I have named, who do not acknowledge the law of God as binding upon them. In a peculiar sense do those who profess to keep God's law dishonor Him and reproach the truth by transgressing its precepts."¹⁵

"Fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Ephesians 5:3).

THE FINAL DISTINCTION

Ultimately, there will be a clearcut distinction between the nominal churches vs. God's remnant people. "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:12–14). "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

"It is soon to be known who is on the Lord's side, who will not be ashamed of Jesus."¹⁶

"Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:18). *R*

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- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 464.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 556.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 603, 604.
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THE MIDNIGHT CRY

Adapted from a study by Davi Paes Silva
[Emphasis supplied throughout]

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto

the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not” (Matthew 25:1–12).

Earthly illustrations are not sufficient to explain heavenly things. This is why Jesus used many different parables to help His children understand the “kingdom of heaven.”

The parable of the ten virgins is one of the most important parables uttered by Christ. In it we find essential lessons for our spiritual preparation for eternity. Here are some key points:

- **Ten virgins**—In Revelation 14:4, talking about the sealed group of 144,000, it is said that they “were not defiled with women [fallen churches]; for they are virgins.” They are called virgins because they profess a pure faith.
- **Lamps**—God’s Word. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119: 105).
- **Bridegroom**—Jesus Christ.

• **Five wise virgins and five foolish ones**—Two classes in God’s church. “There have ever been two classes among those who profess to be followers of Christ. While one class study the Saviour’s life and earnestly seek to correct their defects and conform to the Pattern, the other class shun the plain, practical truths which expose their errors. Even in her best estate the church was not composed wholly of the true, pure, and sincere.”¹ Both classes fell into spiritual slumber.

• **The Oil:**

- a. A symbol of the Holy Spirit (Zechariah chapter 4.)
- b. The righteousness of Christ reflected in a purified character after His similitude. .
- c. The grace of Christ. “He who relaxes his vigilance because he knows not the day nor the hour when his Lord shall come, who becomes careless, and neglects to have his vessel filled with oil (the grace of Christ) will be found unprepared and will not go in to the wedding. How solemn is the oft-repeated warning that our Lord has given to watch! He says, ‘Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh’ (Matthew 24:44).”²

WHAT WAS THE MIDNIGHT CRY?

In His parable of the ten virgins, Christ says that “at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him” (Matthew 25:6).

“It is in a crisis that character is revealed. When the earnest voice proclaimed at midnight, ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him,’ and the sleeping virgins were roused from their slumbers, it was seen who had made preparation for the event. Both parties were taken unawares; but one was prepared for the emergency, and the other was found without preparation. So now, a

sudden and unlooked-for calamity, something that brings the soul face to face with death, will show whether there is any real faith in the promises of God. It will show whether the soul is sustained by grace. The great final test comes at the close of human probation, when it will be too late for the soul’s need to be supplied.”³

Those who rejected the first angel’s message could not be benefited by either the second angel’s message nor the midnight cry, which was to prepare them to enter with Jesus by faith into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.

THE RELATION TO THE ADVENT MOVEMENT

As we study the application of the parable of the ten virgins, we find that it has applications at different times. For example, the parable had a clear application to the advent movement before 1844.

“The coming of Christ, as announced by the first angel’s message, was understood to be represented by the coming of the bridegroom. The widespread reformation under the proclamation of His soon coming, answered to the going forth of the virgins. In this parable, as in that of Matthew 24, two classes are represented. All had taken their lamps, the Bible, and by its light had gone forth to meet the Bridegroom. But while ‘they that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them,’ ‘the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.’ The latter class had received the grace of God, the regenerating, enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, which renders His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. In the fear of God they had studied the Scriptures to learn the truth, and had earnestly sought for purity of heart and life. These had a personal experience, a faith in God and in His word, which could not be overthrown by disappointment and delay. Others ‘took their lamps, and took no oil with them.’ They had moved from impulse. Their fears had been excited by the solemn message,

but they had depended upon the faith of their brethren, satisfied with the flickering light of good emotions, without a thorough understanding of the truth or a genuine work of grace in the heart. These had gone forth to meet the Lord, full of hope in the prospect of immediate reward; but they were not prepared for delay and disappointment. When trials came, their faith failed, and their lights burned dim.

“While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.’ By the tarrying of the bridegroom is represented the passing of the time when the Lord was expected, the disappointment, and the seeming delay. In this time of uncertainty, the interest of the superficial and halfhearted soon began to waver, and their efforts to relax; but those whose faith was based on a personal knowledge of the Bible had a rock beneath their feet, which the waves of disappointment could not wash away. ‘They all slumbered and slept;’ one class in unconcern and abandonment of their faith, the other class patiently waiting till clearer light should be given. Yet in the night of trial the latter seemed to lose, to some extent, their zeal and devotion. The halfhearted and superficial could no longer lean upon the faith of their brethren. Each must stand or fall for himself.”⁴

The second angel’s message was first proclaimed by the servants of God in the summer of 1844. As a result, many left the fallen churches. In connection with this message the midnight cry (Matthew 25:1–13) was given: “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.”

This brought revival in connection with the second angel message given in 1844. It was a kind of “loud cry” of the second angel’s message.

TO BE REPEATED:

“Christians who fell asleep before the door was opened into the most holy, when **the midnight cry was finished, at the seventh month, 1844**, and who had not kept the true Sabbath, now rest in hope; for they had not the light and the test on the

Again today, with mighty power the cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him” should be proclaimed in spirit and in truth. Yet sadly, “many are expecting to sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb, who are unprepared for the coming of the King. They are like the blind; they do not seem to discern their danger.”

Sabbath which we now have since that door was opened. I saw that Satan was tempting some of God’s people on this point. Because so many good Christians have fallen asleep in the triumphs of faith and have not kept the true Sabbath, they were doubting about its being a test for us now.”⁵

Here we find another very important hint about the “midnight cry”. It is said that “the midnight cry was finished, at the seventh month, 1844.” What was the seventh month?

The first disappointment occurred in March 1844, which correlated with the first month of the Hebrew religious calendar. After further study, it was realised that the day of atonement, which they understood would mark the coming of the Bridegroom, took place on the tenth day of the seventh month in the Hebrew calendar. In that year, the tenth day of the seventh month fell on October 22, 1844. This correction in the reckoning of the month coupled now with an exact day caused a great revival among the Adventist people during the late summer and early autumn of 1844. That revival became known as the “seventh month movement”.

“This was the midnight cry, which was to give power to the second angel’s message. Angels were sent from heaven to arouse the discouraged saints and prepare them for the great work before them. The most talented men were not the first to receive this message. Angels were sent to the humble, devoted ones, and constrained them to raise the cry, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him!’ **Those entrusted with the cry made haste, and in the**

power of the Holy Spirit sounded the message, and aroused their discouraged brethren. This work did not stand in the wisdom and learning of men, but in the power of God, and His saints who heard the cry could not resist it. The most spiritual received this message first, and those who had formerly led in the work were the last to receive and help swell the cry, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him!’

“In every part of the land, light was given upon the second angel’s message, and the cry melted the hearts of thousands. It went from city to city, and from village to village, until the waiting people of God were fully aroused. In many churches the message was not permitted to be given, and a large company who had the living testimony left these fallen churches. A mighty work was accomplished by the midnight cry. The message was heart-searching, leading the believers to seek a living experience for themselves. They knew that they could not lean upon one another.”⁶

The midnight cry, led by the Holy Spirit, was indeed a powerful movement among those who were preaching the second angel’s message. It gave power to the message, before the great disappointment occurred on October 22, 1844.

WHAT ABOUT NOW?

Again today, with mighty power the cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him” should be proclaimed in spirit and in truth. Yet sadly, “many are expecting to sit down to the marriage supper

of the Lamb, who are unprepared for the coming of the King. They are like the blind; they do not seem to discern their danger.”⁷

In conclusion, we would say that the midnight cry was to the second angel’s message what the loud cry will be for the third angel’s message. John the Revelator describes: “And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18:1–4).

“This is no time for the messengers of God to stop to prop up those who know the truth, and who have every advantage. Let them go on to lift the standard and give the warning, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.’”⁸

Amen! *R*

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- ⁴ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 393, 395.
- ⁵ *Early Writings*, pp. 42, 43.
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MOVING? Please let us know.

A MIX-UP MESSES UP

Dear children, have you ever heard the saying, “Babylon is Fallen?” What does it mean? Babylon was an ancient city that we read about in history books and in the Bible. The name “Babylon” comes from the tower of Babel. You may remember the story found in Genesis 11:1-9:

“The whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build

the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”

The people building the tower of Babel were super-proud, so if their plan had worked, it would have made the earth a very bad place to live. These people were rebelling against God—and if they had been able to finish building their gigantic tower, their selfish attitude of trying to be the “boss” of the whole world would have caused a lot of crime and suffering. That is why God mixed up their languages so they would not be able to complete their project. So, from that time on, the term “Babylon” has meant “confusion.”

Have you ever met people that are confused about Bible truth? They may claim that people go straight to heaven as soon as they die, or they may say that God has changed His holy day of rest away from the seventh-day Sabbath of

the Bible. To try to mix Bible truths with false ideas causes confusion—being mixed up and not knowing what is going on.

Have you ever been confused? It’s not a good thing. How much better it is to follow Jesus who is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6)! With God’s Word as our Guide, we do not need to be confused. The psalmist gives a wonderful plan for the youth: “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:9–11). Let’s not mix together with confusion. Babylon is fallen, but we do not need to be down in the ditch with her! — *BHM*.

