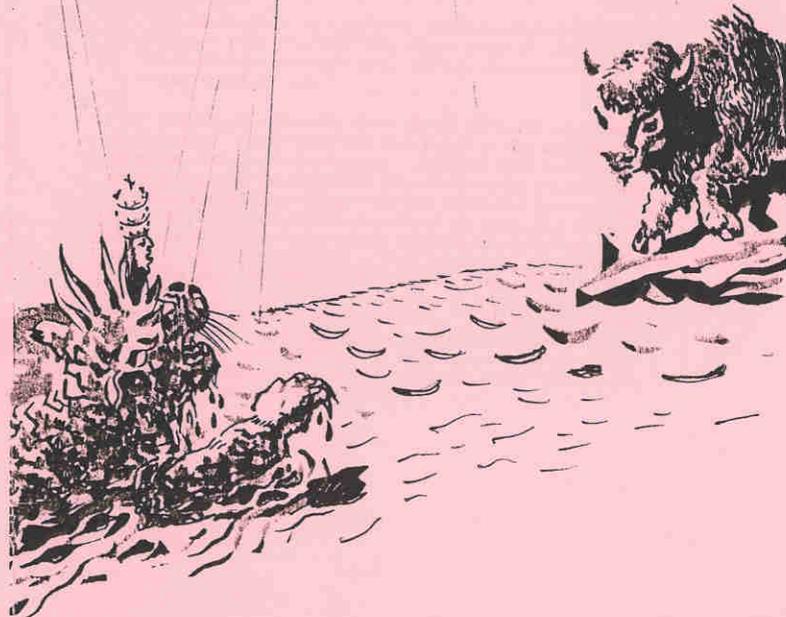


The enemy is preparing for his last campaign against the church. He has so concealed himself from view that many can hardly believe that he exists, much less can they be convinced of his amazing activity and power. They have to a great extent forgotten his past record; and when he makes another advance move, they will not recognize him as their enemy, that old serpent, but they will consider him a friend, one who is doing a good work. Boasting of their independence they will, under his specious, bewitching influence, obey the worst impulses of the human heart and yet believe that God is leading them. Could their eyes be opened to distinguish their captain, they would see that they are not serving God, but the enemy of all righteousness. They would see that their boasted independence is one of the heaviest fetters Satan can rivet on unbalanced minds.

Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 294.

CRISIS AND VICTORY IN REVELATION 13 & 14



CRISIS AND VICTORY IN REVELATION 13 AND 14

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:37-39.

In the days of Noah God provided an ark. He sent a message telling the people that only those who entered into that ark would be saved. I sometimes think back there, and try to imagine the reaction of some of the people. I would not think for a moment that Noah and his family were the only professed believers. I would imagine that there were a multitude of them in those days. I supposed they reasoned, "Well, we didn't have to get into the ark to be saved in past times, so why should we have to enter into the ark in this time in which Noah is preaching?"

Now the ark that Noah prepared is a very clear type of something else that God has provided for us in these last days. Early Writings, p. 78:

"I dreamed of seeing a temple to which many people were flocking. Only those who took refuge in that temple would be saved when time should close. All who remained outside would be forever lost."

Then it goes on to describe Jesus there, the Lamb all mangled and bleeding. "Only those who took refuge in that temple would be saved when time should close." And this little book shows so very clearly that the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary is the refuge that God has provided for these last days. Only those who enter and receive the seal of the living God are going to be saved. I think some people reason today the same way as they reasoned in Noah's day. "Well," they say, "Christians in past ages never had the seal of the living God. They will be in the kingdom of heaven. Why do we have to enter into a special experience? It wasn't presented before." But the fact remains that we have to live in the sight of a holy God without a Mediator. Jesus has made provision that we can receive the seal--all of us. The temple is open. The call is going forth, "All things are ready; come unto the marriage!"

Preparation at the Sanctuary

Before we receive the seal of God, we are called to a great work of preparation around the sanctuary. The Jews in the day of atonement had to assemble around that sanctuary with prayer and fasting, and deep searching of heart. So as we come to the sanctuary, mindful of the fact that Christ is to give us an eternal victory over sin, we should have the right conception of the preparation in which we must engage. It says in Isaiah, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." The king is coming. The Lord is coming suddenly to judgment. He is coming suddenly to His temple. The Bridegroom is coming, friends, and we must be ready. Some of the most forceful passages which show our need of preparation are found in this little book, Early Writings. It is written in an atmosphere of great solemnity in view of the sealing time, the close of probation, and the coming of the day of the Lord. Allow me to read a few passages:

"It is no small thing to be a Christian and to be owned and approved of God. The Lord has shown me some who profess the present truth, whose lives do not correspond with their profession. They have the standard of piety altogether too low, and they come far short of Bible holiness. Some engage in vain and unbecoming conversation, and others give way to the risings of self. We must not expect to please ourselves, live and act like the world, have its pleasures, and enjoy the company of those who are of the world, and reign with Christ in glory." p. 47

"'It will take all to buy the field,' I cried to God to spare His people, some of whom were fainting and dying. Then I saw that the judgments of the Almighty were speedily coming, and I begged of the angel to speak in his language to the people. Said he, 'All the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai would not move those who will not be moved by the plain truths of the Word of God, neither would an angel's message awake them.'" p. 51

What has to move us, friends? Is it persecution? No, it will be too late when the great test comes. It is the plain truths of the Word of God. Nothing else will.

"In a view given June 27, 1850, my accompanying angel said, 'Time is almost finished. Do you reflect the lovely image of Jesus as you should?' Then I was pointed to the earth and saw that there would have to be a getting ready among those who have of late embraced the third angel's message. Said the angel, 'Get ready, get ready, get ready. You will have to die a greater death to the world than ye have ever yet died.' I saw that there was a great work to do for them and but little time in which to do it." p. 64

"Then my eyes were taken from the glory, and I was pointed to the remnant on the earth. The angel said to them, 'Will ye shun the seven last plagues? Will ye go to glory and enjoy all that God has prepared for those who love Him and are willing to suffer for His sake? If so, ye must die that ye may live. Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye must have a greater preparation than ye now have, for the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. Sacrifice all to God. Lay all upon His altar--self, property, and all, a living sacrifice. It will take all to enter glory. Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where no thief can approach or rust corrupt. Ye must be partakers of Christ's sufferings here if ye would be partakers with Him of His glory hereafter.'

"Heaven will be cheap enough, if we obtain it through suffering. We must deny self all along the way, die to self daily, let Jesus alone appear, and keep His glory continually in view."

"'Deny self; ye must step fast,' Some of us have had time to get the truth and to advance step by step, and every step we have taken has given us strength to take the next. But now time is almost finished, and what we have been years learning, they will have to learn in a few months. They will also have much to unlearn and much to learn again." pp. 66, 67.

These passages were written a few years ago. How much more do they apply to us today? As we face the great truth of the sanctuary we must be engaged in a very practical work of preparation. You notice how many times she mentions here, how all must be laid on this altar. We must come to this gate of repentance, and lay hold of the Lord Jesus Christ that all our sins might be sent beforehand to judgment.

Crisis Before Victory

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

Revelation 15: 2, 3.

"I saw them that had gotten the victory." This victory is an eternal victory. It is the victory of the most holy of the heavenly sanctuary. Before God leads His people into this victory, He is going to lead them into a crisis. The great crisis comes before the great victory. This crisis is presented in Revelation 13.

This chapter describes the rise of the papacy in 538, then its reception of the deadly wound in 1798. "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." v. 10. For 1260 years the saints of God were being killed with the sword, and were in captivity. But in 1798 the papacy itself was killed with a sword. It lost its political power. For 1260 years the church was in the wilderness (Rev. 12:6, 14). But in 1798 the papacy was led into the wilderness. So in Revelation 17 we read of this same beast, "He carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." v. 3.

Where does the prophet see the beast? Where does he see the papacy? In the wilderness. During the 1260 years the papacy was ruling over all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people. In 1798 it lost its political power and went into obscurity. Is the beast going to remain in the wilderness? Not at all. Verse 8 says, "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition." How many stages are there in the life of the beast? "The beast which thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit." The beast was. It "was" during the 1260 years. "Is not" refers to the beast without its political power since 1798. Then

it is coming back again. Revelation 13 says, "His deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." v. 3. For the deadly wound to be healed it would seem that political power would be returned to the papacy, and it would be restored to its former state so that all the world would wonder after the beast.

Revelation 17 presents the picture of the states, the governments, and kings, giving their power and strength back to the beast. Verse 12: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour [a short space] with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." The political powers of the earth give their support to the papacy. Revelation 17 differentiates somewhat between the ecclesiastical (church) aspect of the papacy, and its political aspect because it says, "I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast." And this woman is, "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." So when these ten kings give their power and strength unto the beast, they are in reality lending their support to great Babylon. This is the crisis before the church. But when this crisis comes upon God's people, He is going to interpose in a special manner for their salvation. (5T 525), because right at the point when the beast returns from the bottomless pit, God sends His mighty angel:

"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." Rev. 18:1-3.

Let us see why this angel comes down when the beast comes up. The message is, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, because she hath made all nations drink." When all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of Babylon and have given her their political support, and have united with the apostate church, then at that point the angel of Revelation 18 comes down from heaven and gives the message that Babylon has fallen because all nations have drunk.

Crisis and Victory--6

Thus you see, as the servant of the Lord says in Early Writings, p. 277, that this angel comes in at the right time to join in the last great work of the third angel's message as it swells to a loud cry. And, brethren, we should know the times and the seasons if we are tracing down the prophecies in holy faith. That is not to say that we can set times. This we cannot do. But we should not be in darkness concerning these events.

Steps Leading to Crisis

Now Revelation 13 gives us some of the events that will lead up to the restoration of the papacy. "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon," v. 11. As the prophet beheld the papacy going into captivity in 1798 he beheld another beast coming up out of the earth having two horns like a lamb, but then there is a reversal of character. In profession, gentle and innocent, this power (which we understand as this nation) begins to speak as a dragon. It is going to follow in the footsteps of pagan and papal Rome. That means there will be in this country a union of church and state.

1. The Threefold Union--We read in verse 14 that this power is going to say to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by the sword and did live. Apparently it will be thought by this nation that to have a united church in this country, to unite with it for the cause of world peace will be to its advantage. Perhaps it might be proposed on this wise: "We live in a hostile world. We face the great anti-God forces that are gathering against us. Let us put away our intolerance. Let us all unite together as a Christian nation for the cause of world peace." And the churches of this country will do just that. We read in verse 12, "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." Thus, this great Protestant nation is going to stretch its hand across the gulf to unite with Catholicism, and not only with Catholicism, but we read in verses 13 and 14 "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." Reve-

Crisis and Victory--7

lation 16 tells us the nature of these miracles: "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." v. 14. Thus there is a three-fold union in this country: Protestantism, Catholicism, and Spiritualism.

"The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this three-fold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience." GC 588

2. The False Latter Rain--What is going to be the result of this three-fold union which begins with this country and then spreads throughout Christendom? Revelation 13: 13, 14 says, "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." The result of this three-fold union is fire from heaven. When the churches of this land move together and unite with spiritualism, there are going to be some very wonderful results. It will seem to those who are participating in this movement that God is pronouncing His signal blessing upon them. Great wonders will be exhibited, even bringing fire down from heaven upon the earth in the sight of men.

John the Baptist, speaking of Jesus, said, "I baptize you with water." But then, referring to Jesus, says, "He will baptize you with fire, which is the Holy Ghost." You remember Pentecost. There were cloven tongues of fire, which sat upon the disciples who were gathered in the upper room. And when the churches of this land unite and the three-fold union begins to form, it will seem that God pours out His blessing upon them. Fire will come down from heaven. But it will be false fire. It will be the outpouring of the false latter rain. I'll read from Great Controversy concerning this false manifestation of spiritual power that will follow in the wake of this three-fold union:

"As spiritualism more closely imitates the nominal Christianity of the day, it has greater power to deceive and ensnare.

Satan himself is converted, after the modern order of things. He will appear in the character of an angel of light. Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed. And as the spirits will profess faith in the Bible, and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power."

GC 588

This is what comes with the forming of the three-fold union. It will lead to a tremendous revival in the churches of this land. It will be so successful that it will quickly spread to the rest of Christendom, and will be attended with such mighty power that it will appear to the Christian world as the great power of God. The servant of the Lord tells us here on the same page, "they will see in this union a grand movement for the conversion of the world and the ushering in of the long-expected millenium."

Upon what basis do the churches unite? They get together for the cause of World peace, and perhaps, to overthrow Communism. And they see in this manifestation of spiritual power something that will overthrow Communism. We do not find in Revelation that there will be a war to do it, but at least it is clearly represented that the three unclean spirits go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them, and deceive them into joining the confederacy. Then you can imagine how those who are elated with this great manifestation of spiritual power will regard those who will not join in with them. They will be accused of opposing the cause of world peace. They will be regarded as fanatics, as being stubborn.

This false latter rain comes before the true latter rain. The counterfeit always comes before the true. You will find that clearly stated in Early Writings p. 261 and Great Controversy, p. 464. The false latter rain comes before the true one. What is Satan's purpose in this false latter rain? Early Writings, p. 56, describes this manifestation of light and much power, and the servant of the Lord says, "Satan's object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God's children." He has the fallen churches in his grasp and desires to "keep them deceived." His great purpose is to deceive the Remnant, the very elect. The false latter rain is his masterpiece of deception to overcome God's

people. Early Writings, p. 261, gives us to understand that the false latter rain will deceive the nominal Adventists. The test is going to be greater than we anticipate. Spiritualism, as Satan presents it to deceive God's people, is not going to take the form of crude seances, but it will be passed off as the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. But it is Satan's spirit, that he's going to breathe upon them. The test will be great for God's people in the church, especially as the Spirit of Prophecy gives us to understand that at this time the danger and depression of God's church are the greatest (5T 209). In other words, here comes the great manifestation of spiritual power in all these other religious bodies that surround us. And at that time the danger and depression of our church will be the greatest, and many there will be who will look out across the borders of Israel having beheld the spiritual poverty in our own ranks, and their hearts will go out toward this false manifestation.

I'll read in Selected Messages, vol. 2, p. 385, a very interesting statement that I think even now we've begun to see fulfilled:

"I was told that men will employ every policy to make less prominent the difference between the faith of Seventh-day Adventists and those who observe the first day of the week. In this controversy the whole world will be engaged, and the time is short. This is no time to haul down our colors."

Just think of it. The whole world is going to be engaged in this controversy that we are even now beginning to see fulfilled. You only have to read the December, 1960, issue of Christianity Today to realize that. Let us read on:

"A company was presented before me under the name of Seventh-day Adventists, who were advising that the banner or sign which makes us a distinct people should not be held out so strikingly; for they claimed it was not the best policy in securing success to our institutions. This distinctive banner is to be borne through the world to the close of probation. In describing the remnant people of God, John says, 'Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus' (Rev. 14:12). . . . I saw some reaching out their hands to remove the banner, and to obscure its significance. . . ."

Crisis and Victory--10

We have prophecies in the scriptures which tell us what is to take place. Ezekiel 8 describes the background of the sealing time. He was shown two classes among God's people. First of all, he saw men with their backs toward the sanctuary of God, and their faces worshipping toward the east. When the crisis comes, these go out from among us and join those with whom their tendencies have long been tending (5T 463). He saw women weeping for Tamuz too. This is the false Christ. Then is brought to view "the little company who are standing in the light . . . sighing and crying for the abominations that are done in the land. But more especially will their prayers arise in behalf of the church, because its members are doing after the manner of the world." 5T 209.

Many will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. The overflowing scourge is going to come into the "glorious land, and tens of thousands shall fall." (Dan. 11:41, RSV). They will be overcome by the false manifestation of spiritual power. "Many will stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan." TM 409, 410. But the little company who will be standing in the light will not be swept aside by the strong current of evil. They will have their faith in the most holy place with Jesus. They have entered that temple, and have a sure anchor within the second veil. On the other hand, all those who have not come to the sanctuary and entered the second apartment, will be swept away by the Spiritualistic deception.

"I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; [in the first apartment] they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, 'Father, give us Thy Spirit.' Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace." EW 56

And so, if we do not obey the call to come to the sanctuary, and engage in this solemn work of preparation on this great day of atonement, if we fail to hear the King's call to the marriage, and if we are not found there by faith following Jesus, with our eyes fixed upon Him, whether we profess the Sabbath and the doctrine of the non-immortality of the soul or not, Satan will breathe upon us an unholy influence. And only those whose anchor is within

Crisis and Victory--11

that second veil following Jesus and co-operating with Him on the day of atonement, will escape the unholy influence of this false latter rain that will sweep all churches, friends, and alas, even into the "glorious land."

3. Calamities---Out of this great movement that will raise an excitement in the churches, Satan moves forward in his next step of deception. Here it is clearly described in Great Controversy, p. 589:

"Through spiritualism, Satan appears as a benefactor of the race, healing the diseases of the people, and professing to present a new and more exalted system of religious faith; but at the same time he works as a destroyer. . . ."

"While appearing to the children of men as a great physician who can heal all their maladies, he will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast."

4. Sunday Movement Prevails--- I am continuing on page 590 of the same book:

"And then the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils. The class that have provoked the displeasure of Heaven will charge all their troubles upon those whose obedience to God's commandments is a perpetual reproof to transgressors. It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday-sabbath; that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced; and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity."

What grows out of this false latter rain and the calamities which Satan brings? A great agitation for the enforcement of Sunday! Imagine the fanatical zeal with which they will promote that agitation since they think they see God has greatly blessed them in Spiritualistic power, and that the whole world is going to be converted. Why, these people who are not pulling down the banner of the third angel's message and who are standing in the light and presenting the banner higher and higher before the world, will be regarded as troublers of the people, jeopardizing the cause of peace. Spiritualism will be very active in declaring that these calamities will not cease until Sunday is strictly enforced. Thus, the storm will approach. God's people will begin to suffer derision and insult. They will be denounced, spoken against, and threatened, and the agitation will grow and the storm will gather. As Great Controversy says, "As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition."

Quickly, the movement for Sunday enforcement prevails. "And even in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance." GC 592. Let us read it from the Scriptures:

"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."
Revelation 13:15-17.

Although America leads out in this work, every nation on the earth will follow her example. I read here in the Great Controversy, p. 604:

"Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought. The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that 'all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond' (Rev. 13:16), shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath," (see 6T 18)

And thus you see it is not only in this land, but as the servant of the Lord tells us, although America leads out, every nation of the earth will follow her example. The powers of earth unite to war against those who keep the commandments of God and will pass the decree against God's people.

This is the crisis which God's commandment keeping people will face. This brings them to the darkest and the blackest hour of this earth's history. At this time many have abandoned the truth and joined the ranks of opposition. Now they are the most bitter enemies against God's people. They face the wrath of the whole Christian world. "To God's people it will be a night of trial, a night of weeping, a night of persecution for the truth's sake. But out of that night of darkness God's light will shine." COL 415.

When this nation passes the decree, it will be nothing less than to give life to that tyranny which has been long held in suppression. It is by that act of enforcing the papal institution, that this Protestant nation will restore the lost ascendancy of the man of sin.

The Sealing Begins

Now it is at this time when the decree goes forth for men to receive the mark of the beast, that God is going to interpose in a special manner for the salvation of His people. God's people who are following Jesus by faith in the most holy place, and who have been tracing down the prophecies in holy faith, will recognize that event. Paul says, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." 1 Thess. 5:4. Jesus clearly warns us in the message to the church of Sardis: "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Now what do these words signify, "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief"? Now I'll turn it from the negative and put it in the positive. If we do watch, will He come upon us as a thief? Certainly not! When the decree goes forth for men to receive the mark of the beast, God's people recognize the signal, because they will know that as surely as the time has fully come for men to receive the mark of the beast, they will know that the time has fully come for God's people to receive something else. Now what is that? The seal of God! Is not the great decision to be made whether we shall receive the mark of the beast,

or whether we shall receive the seal of the living God? Certainly!

"Now, when the great work of judging the living is about to begin, shall we allow unsanctified ambition to take possession of the heart, and lead us to neglect the education required to meet the needs in this day of peril?"

"In every case the great decision is to be made whether we shall receive the mark of the beast or his image, or the seal of the living God." 6T 130.

"The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. . . . While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God." GC 605.

"The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided. . . .

"This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who prove their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast." SDA Commentary, VII, p. 976.

Then don't God's people recognize the time of the judgment of the living? No one knows how soon that event will be. No one knows the day or the hour, but, brethren, we should not be in darkness that this day should overtake us as a thief. Some people imagine that the judgment of the living is an event that is to go on in heaven, and the people on this earth are to know nothing about it. Not at all! Those who are following Jesus by faith in the most holy place will recognize the time, because they must enter into the judgment by faith and get the victory. In this darkest hour of this earth's history, when the crisis is reached, there is a call for the people at midnight. A cry is heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him." The call reaches two

classes. One class is not prepared for the sudden emergency. They have no faith in the promises of God. They have not come to the sanctuary. They have not obeyed the words of the angel, "Get ready, get ready, get ready." Perhaps they have looked off to the time of the decree and said, "When this event comes, and when this great crisis comes, we'll make our preparation." But when the decree goes forth, it is too late for the foolish virgins to make preparation for the seal of God.

What about the wise? They respond to the call. When the Bridegroom comes, they go with Him into the marriage. They go into the judgment to receive the victory. And this judgment experience is a definite experience in the lives of God's people. As Jesus takes their names in judgment, and as God's faithful people follow Him on the earth, God's people agonize at the sanctuary before Him. I read here:

"As the Holy One upon the throne slowly turned the leaves of the Ledger, and his eyes rested for a moment upon individuals, his glance seemed to burn into their very souls, and at the same moment every word and action of their lives passed before their minds as clearly as though traced before their vision in letters of fire. Trembling seized them, and their faces turned pale." 4T 385.

"I saw some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. Firmness and great earnestness was expressed in their countenances; large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads." EW 269.

What a tremendous experience! For the first time God's people see sin just as God sees it, and their whole life record is passing in review. As Jesus is taking their names in judgment to blot out their sins, the Holy Spirit enters into the inner sanctuary of the soul of God's people, and they see their whole record pass in review before them.

"As Joshua was pleading before the Angel, so the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and earnest faith, will plead for pardon and deliverance through Jesus their Advocate. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives, they see

Crisis and Victory--16

their weakness and unworthiness, and as they look upon themselves they are ready to despair. The tempter stands by to accuse them, as he stood by to resist Joshua. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer."
5T 473

What does Satan do? He points to the whole record of their life, which is coming in review before God. What is his objective? Let us read further:

"He endeavors to affright the soul with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away. He hopes to so destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations, turn from their allegiance to God, and receive the mark of the beast."

Those last words are very significant, because it shows you that when this event is happening, something is there in the world. What is it? The mark of the beast! Supposing, friends, we are among that company who are agonizing before God, and we haven't made thorough work of repentance and confession of sin. What do you think would happen to us? Do you think we would have the faith to hang on at that time? It says there in Early Writings, "The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out and left by the way." p. 271. Friends, our work is at the sanctuary now. We must get ready. Only those who are ready will go with Him into the marriage. This is the experience we must face when that decree goes forth.

Entering In to be Sealed

Just how will God's people receive the victory at that time? How will they lay hold of the seal of the living God? We have a very clear type in scripture that describes to us very vividly how God's people will get the victory. This decree will be very similar to the one passed against the Jews in the days of Queen Esther. Haman is a type of Satan. Mordecai is a type of God's commandment keeping people. You remember Haman caused the decree to be passed by the nation against the Jews that were in the Persian empire. Mordecai sent a message to Queen Esther telling

Crisis and Victory--17

her that she must go in before the king and plead for the life of her people. But Queen Esther sent back this reply to her uncle:

"Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai; All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. And they told to Mordecai Esther's words." Esther 4:10-12.

"Well," Esther said, "I can't go in before the king. The king is sitting in the inner court. It is not lawful to go in there. There is one law for anyone to go in there to put him to death except unto whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre that he might live." So she said, "Well, I can't go in there." But listen to the words of Mordecai:

"Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed; and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him. Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house." Esther 4: 13-17; 5:1.

It wasn't according to the law for anyone to go in there. It was according to the favor of the king only. That is the only thing that Esther could trust in, not the legality of the things. She could hope only in the mercy of the king. And so she said, "If I perish,

I perish," and abandoning herself on the mercy of the king, she went before him in the inner court while the people fasted and prayed.

"And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre. Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom." Esther 5:2, 3.

The decree was not revoked, but the Jews were placed on vantage ground against their enemies so that they obtained the victory. And this experience is given to us as a type of a great victory that God's people will receive at this time when the decree goes forth. They will realize that as surely as the time has come to receive the mark of the beast, they must receive the seal of the living God. They must have an eternal victory and deliverance. There is only one way: They must go in and plead before the king. But the king will be sitting in the inner court of the heavenly sanctuary on the great judgment throne. God's people will realize that the time has fully come for them to be judged in the courts above and they will be ready to despair. As they look upon the perfect purity of Christ, as they gaze into the most holy place, they will realize that they are infinitely short of the standard of the righteousness and purity and holiness of Christ, and like Esther, they will say within themselves, "I can't go in there." There is one law for a sinful human being in the judgment. Put him to death--except unto whom the King shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he might live! As they come face to face with death, God's people will realize that if they don't go in before the King and plead before the judgment bar of God, they will receive the mark of the beast and be lost. And if they do go in before the king--well at worst they will be lost. And so they will say, like Queen Esther, "If I perish, I perish." They will go in before the king which is not according to the law. It is not according to the law to go into the judgment to get the victory. Many imagine that it has to be. They imagine that once they've developed a perfect character, as perfect as God is perfect, that they can stand before the law and that they can go into the most holy place in a legal sort of a way, perhaps like the

Pharisee who came up to the temple, not asking for mercy, but for commendation. It is not according to the law to go into the inner court. It is according to the favor of the king. There is one law for anyone who goes in there trusting in his own righteousness: Put him to death! So God's people will cast themselves upon the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. With brokenness of heart and with earnest faith, they will supplicate the Great Judge of all the earth:

"Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man."
Psalm 43:1.

"He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. . . . He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor." Psalm 72: 2, 4.

As Queen Esther drew near, she touched the top of the sceptre that the king held out to her, and the king said to Queen Esther, "What wilt thou, Queen Esther, I will give it thee even to half of the kingdom." When Jesus stands for His people in the judgment, "Christ now asks that this plan be carried into effect as if man had never fallen. He asks for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne." GC 484. That is the victory of the judgment. Justification full and complete--an eternal deliverance, and as if that is not enough, a share in His glory, and a seat upon His throne. That is the promise to the overcomers of Laodicea, "He that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne even as I also overcome and am set down with my Father in His throne."

What saves God's people at the judgment? Is it their righteousness? Is it their perfection?

"Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying: I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of My hands. 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.' Psalm 51:17." GC 484.

Then, when Jesus judges His people, He takes away the dominion of the oppressor. This He does by sprinkling the blood on the mercy seat. Christ blots out the record of sin, not just from the books of heaven, but from the minds of His people (PP 202; 358). The soul must now be restored fully to its rightful state.

"As the people of God afflict their souls before him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments from them,' and the encouraging words are spoken, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.' The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, never more to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. . . . Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices." 5T 475

Yes, God's people are cleansed, fully cleansed forever. Notice what happens after the cleansing. "While Satan was urging his accusations, and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God." It is in such a crisis hour that God seals His people with the Holy Spirit without measure.

"Then a mighty angel comes,
Ascending from the rising of the sun,
Power and glory are descending,
For the sealing has begun."

The Loud Cry

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with His glory." Rev. 18:1.

In the darkest hour comes deliverance for God's people. Out of that night God's light will shine the brightest. He will say unto His people, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isaiah 60:1. "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 40:5.

Filled with the Spirit, clad in an armor from their head to their feet, having a double angel guard, the church of God now enters upon its final conflict. All those who have not been at the sanctuary have been swept away by the last great crisis. Only those who have made this diligent work of preparation, who have followed Jesus and understood His work in the most holy place will obtain the victory at that time. All the rest are swept away from the church of God. Chaff like a cloud goes up where we see only floors of rich wheat. Then fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners, the church goes forth into all the world conquering and to conquer.

This is the true latter rain. The true latter rain follows the decree. There is no latter rain until after that decree goes forth. The servant of the Lord tells us in the SDA Commentary, VII, p. 976, that this decree is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. In another place it is written, "Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation." 1T 187.

The angel of Revelation 18 comes down as the beast ascends from the bottomless pit. The whole earth is going to be lightened with the glory of God through His people who have obtained the victory in the presence of the judgment. They have been judged, cleansed, and sealed. They go forth to lighten the whole earth with the glory of God. This is a tremendous hour of earth's history when celestial glory and the repetition of the persecutions of the past are blended. Inspiration tells us that the saints at that time will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By means of angels there will be constant communication between heaven and God's people upon the earth. Persecution will rage. Every earthly support will be cut off. But with every assault, the great truth of the third angel's message will shine with even greater clarity and the Lord's house will be established upon the tops of the mountains. Those who have the seal of the living God will hasten from place to place, calling men out of Babylon. Those who have never heard the truth have an eleventh hour opportunity to be saved. It is too late at this time for Seventh-day Adventists who have heard and rejected the third angel's message. The sealed ones will give the message with great power. "Here are

they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." They will point the poor honest souls found in Babylon to the great ministry of Jesus in the most holy place. These will be days of trouble and confusion. Voices will be crying everywhere, "Here is the truth. Lo, here is Christ, lo, there is Christ." But above all the din and confusion there will be one clear voice of the loud cry of the third angel, pointing the honest in heart to the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. The decree has been passed from one end of the earth to the other that all them that dwell on the earth should worship the beast. The angel has the good news to preach unto them that dwell on the earth. "The hour of His judgment is come." Those who respond out in Babylon will enter by faith into the sanctuary and present their petitions before the great Judge of all the earth. The judgment will sit for them, take away the dominion of the man of sin, and seal them with the seal of the living God. Thus as the light comes to the inhabitants of the earth, and they make their decision, they will either receive the mark of the beast or the seal of the living God. In a very short period similar to the midnight cry the whole world will be bathed in the sunlight of the gospel, until the last soul will have heard the message, made his decision, and have been sealed with the seal of the living God. The third angel will swiftly fly back to heaven and say to Jesus, "I have finished the work." Then Christ will throw down the censor.

Let Us Get Ready

As we see the line of prophecy presented to us in the Scriptures, showing us the great crisis that is coming and the eternal victory that is offered us through Jesus in the most holy place, what is our immediate duty at this time? Zephaniah says, "Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired." The words "nation not desired" are very interesting. They mean "nation not ashamed" which is the Laodicean condition. We should be ashamed because we're wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. However, we are saying that we're rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. The Lord says:

"Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you." Zeph. 2: 1, 2.

We are not left in darkness as to where we should gather. Joel 2 takes up the same message:

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar." Joel 2: 15-17.

Friends, we must gather ourselves together, also, before that false latter rain comes, or else we will be swept aside by the great delusion. The Bridegroom is coming soon. The Lord is coming suddenly to His temple. Only those who are ready will go with Him into the marriage. May we indeed hear and heed the words of the angel and the last call to the sanctuary, "Get ready! Get ready! Get ready!"

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