



Thoughts
on
Revelation

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Thoughts on the Revelation.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSES 1-5. And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God.

It is a pleasing feature of the prophetic word that the people of God are never brought into positions of trial and difficulty and there left. Taking them down into scenes of danger, the voice of prophecy does not there cease, leaving them to guess their fate, in doubt, perhaps despair, as to the final result; but it takes them through to the end, and shows the issue in every conflict. The first five verses of Rev. xiv, are an instance of this. The xiiiith chapter left the people of God, a small and apparently weak and defenseless company, in deadly conflict with the mightiest powers of earth which the dragon is able to muster to his service. A decree is passed, backed up by the supreme power of the land, that they shall all receive the anti-christian mark, under pain of death if they refuse to comply. What can the people of God do in such a conflict, and in such an extremity? What will become of them? Glance forward with the apostle to the very next scene in the programme, and what do we behold?

The very same company standing on mount Zion with the Lamb—a victorious company, harping on golden harps, their triumph through the courts of heaven. Thus are we assured that when the time of our conflict with the powers of darkness comes, deliverance is not only certain, but will immediately be given, being the next event in our history, the glorious rest after the weary pilgrimage, the glorious consummation of a life of toil, suffering, and ceaseless conflict here.

That the 144,000 here seen on mount Zion, are the saints who were just before brought to view as objects of the wrath of the beast and his image, several considerations show :

1. They are identical with those sealed in Rev. vii, who have already been shown to be the righteous who are alive at the second coming of Christ.

2. They are the overcomers of the sixth, or Philadelphia, state of the church. See Rev. iii, 11, 12.

3. They are “redeemed from among men,” verse 4, an expression which can be applicable only to those who are translated from among the living. Paul labored if by any means he might attain to a resurrection out from among the dead. Phil. iii, 11. This is the hope of those who sleep in Jesus—a resurrection from the dead: a redemption from among men, from among the living, must mean a different thing, and can mean only one thing, and that is translation. Hence the 144,000 are the living saints who will be translated at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Where is the mount Zion where this company is seen standing? The mount Zion above; for the voice of harpers, which no doubt is uttered by these very ones, is heard from heaven; the same Zion from which the Lord utters his voice when he speaks to his people in close connection with the coming of the Son of man. Joel iii, 16; Heb. xii, 26–28; Rev. xvi, 17. A just consideration of the fact that there is a mount Zion in

Heaven, and a Jerusalem above, would be a powerful antidote against the hallucination of the doctrine called "Age to Come."

A few more particulars, only, respecting the 144,000, will claim notice in these brief thoughts.

1. They have the name of the Lamb's Father in their foreheads. In chap. vii, they are said to have the seal of God in their foreheads. An important key to an understanding of the seal of God is thus furnished us; for we at once perceive that the Father regards his name as his seal. That commandment of the law which contains God's name is therefore the seal of the law. The Sabbath commandment is the only one which has this; that is, that contains the descriptive title which distinguishes the true God above all false gods. Wherever this was placed, there the Father's name was said to be. Deut. xvi, 6, and whoever keeps this commandment has, consequently, the seal of the living God.

2. They sing a new song which no other company is able to learn. In chap. xv, 3, it is called the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses, as may be seen by reference to Ex. xv, was the song of his experience and deliverance. Such therefore is the song of the 144,000. No others can join in it; for no other company will have an experience like theirs.

3. They were not defiled with women. A woman is the Scripture symbol of a church: a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a corrupt woman an apostate church. It is then a characteristic of this company that at the time of their deliverance they are not defiled with, or have no connection with, the corrupt churches of the land. Yet we are not to understand that they never had any connection with these churches; for it is only at a certain time that people become defiled by them. In chap. xviii, 4, we find a call issued to the people of God while they are in Babylon,

to come out, *lest* they become partakers of her sins. Heeding that call, and leaving her connection, they escape the defilement of her sins. So the 144,000, though some of them may once have had a connection with corrupt churches, break off that connection, when it would have become sin to longer retain it.

4. They follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. We understand that this is spoken of them in their redeemed state. They are the special companions of their glorified Lord in the kingdom. Chap. vii, 17, speaking of the same company, and at the same time, says, "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and *shall lead* them unto living fountains of waters."

5. They are "first-fruits" unto God and the Lamb. This term appears to be applied to different ones to denote especial conditions. Christ is the first-fruits as the antitype of the wave-sheaf. The first receivers of the gospel are called by James i, 18, a kind of first-fruits. So the 144,000 ripening up for the heavenly garner here on earth, during the troublous scenes of the last days, being translated to heaven without seeing death, and occupying a pre-eminent position, are in this sense, we understand, called first-fruits unto God and the Lamb.

Verses 6-12. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the

wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation : and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb : and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever : and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints : here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Another scene, and another chain of prophetic events is introduced in these verses. We here have what is known as the three angels' messages of Rev. xiv. The first angel is called another angel, because John had already seen one flying in a similar manner. Chap. viii, 18. He proclaims the gospel, not a new one, but the everlasting gospel, called in Matt. xxiv, 14, "the gospel of the kingdom." But while it is the same gospel, there are particular features which constitute the burden of the message, chief among which as shown by verse 7, is the *nearness* of the kingdom. This message cannot therefore symbolize the preaching of the gospel by the apostles, nor by the reformers, nor by any class of people except those who live when the end is just at hand. The advent proclamation, especially from 1840 to 1844, completely answers to the prophecy, and is the only great religious movement which can be pointed to as its fulfillment. The judgment announced is shown by arguments which the designed brevity of these articles will not here admit, to be the investigative judgment, which the reader will perceive must necessarily take place before the coming of Christ ; for when Christ comes it is already decided who of the dead shall be raised, and who of the living are worthy to be changed. That investigative work we believe commenced in the Sanctuary above, when this message ceased as a leading proclamation, at the close of the prophetic periods in 1844.

The second angel announces the fall of Babylon. What is Babylon? The figure is taken from the ancient city of Babylon; and that took its name from the confusion of tongues which there took place; hence we understand that by this symbol is meant the great mass of confused and corrupt Christianity,

“Whose creeds are various as her costly towers.”

Her fall was a moral fall, caused by rejecting the vivifying truths of the first message, or great advent proclamation.

The third angel follows them with a message of most fearful import. From the language in which it is expressed, we understand at once that it is designed to warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, and prepare them for that time when the decree shall be issued enforcing such worship, as noticed in the previous chapter. This is the issue then into which the world is to be brought: refuse the mark of the beast and thus become exposed to the wrath of antichristian, earthly powers, or receive the mark and brave the unmixed wrath of God. This wrath is embraced, according to chap. xv, 1, in the seven last plagues. The torment of fire and brimstone, when is that? Some apply it at the end of the one thousand years, but we think not necessarily. Chap. xix, 20 shows that there is at the second coming of Christ, what may be compared to a lake of fire and brimstone, into which the beast and false prophet are cast *alive*. This can refer to none other than the destruction visited upon them at the commencement, not at the end, of the thousand years. Again, there is a remarkable passage in Isaiah to which we are obliged to refer in explanation of the phraseology of the threatening of the third angel, and which unquestionably describes scenes to take place here at the second advent, and the

desolate state of the earth during the thousand years following. That the language in the Revelation was borrowed from this prophecy can hardly fail to be seen. After describing the Lord's anger upon the nations, the great slaughter of their armies, the departing of the heavens as a scroll, &c., it says: "For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever." Isa. xxxiv, 8-10. And since there is to be a lake of fire at the end of the thousand years, we can only conclude that the destruction of the living wicked at the commencement, and the final doom of all the ungodly at the end, of this period, are very similar.

The period of the third message is a time of patience with the people of God. Paul and James both give us instruction on this point. Heb. x, 36; James v, 7, 8. Meanwhile this waiting company are keeping the commandments of God, the ten commandments, and the faith of Jesus, all the teachings of Christ and his apostles as contained in the New Testament. For a full exposition of this interesting and important subject, see "The Three Messages of Rev, xiv," published at this Office.

(To be continued.)

Thoughts on the Revelation.

CHAPTER XIV. (CONCLUDED.)

VERSES 13-16. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap, for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Events grow solemn as we near the end. It is this fact which gives to the third angel's message, now going forth, its unusual degree of solemnity and importance. It is the last scene to transpire, the last warning to go forth, prior to the coming of the Son of man. We are fast passing over a line of prophecy which culminates in the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on his foes, and to reward his saints. Not only so, but we have come so near its accomplishment, that the very next link in the chain is this crowning and momentous event. And time never rolls back. As the river does not flinch and fly as it approaches the precipice, but bears all floating bodies over with resistless power, and as the seasons never reverse their course, but summer follows in the path of the budding fig-tree, and winter treads close upon the falling leaf, so we are borne onward and onward, whether we will or not, whether prepared or not, to the unavoidable and irreversible crisis. Ah! how little dream the proud professor or the careless wordling, of the doom that is impending. And how hard for even those who know and profess the truth to realize it as it is!

John is commanded by a voice from Heaven to write,

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; and the response of the Spirit is, "Yea, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." From henceforth must signify from some particular point of time. What point? Evidently from the commencement of the message in connection with which this is spoken. But why are they blessed? There must be some special reason for this. We see at once that they escape the time of fearful peril, which the saints are to encounter, near the close of their pilgrimage; and while they are blessed in this respect, in common with all the righteous dead, they have an advantage over them in being doubtless that company spoken of in Dan. xii, 1, who are raised to everlasting life at the standing up of Michael. Thus escaping the perils through which the rest of the 144,000 pass, they rise and share with them in their final triumph here, and occupy with them their pre-eminent place in the kingdom. In this way we understand their works follow them: They are held in remembrance to be rewarded at the judgment.

Verses 17-20. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden with out the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

It will be noticed that in this line of prophecy three angels precede the Son of man on the white cloud, and three are introduced after that symbol. There is here a little variation from strict chronological order; for we understand that the events accomplished by the

three last angels, take place, not subsequently to the coming of the Son of man, as they are introduced in the prophecy, but right in connection with that event. We understand that six literal angels are engaged in the scenes here described. The first three have charge of the three special messages, or are said to symbolize a body of religious teachers. The three last cannot symbolize such movements; since of these we have one angel praying to another to thrust in his sickle; which if taken symbolically would present the incongruous scene of one body of saints praying to another to execute vengeance on the wicked.

The gathering of both righteous and wicked is here represented: the righteous under the usual figure of wheat harvested for the garner of heaven, see Matt. iii, 12; xiii, 38-43.; and the wicked under the no less usual figure of the ripe and bloated clusters of the vine of the earth, cast into the wine-press of vengeance.

The angel which cries for vengeance on the wicked, comes forth from the altar: showing that the ministrations of mercy are now at an end. He has power over fire: signifying probably some special judgment committed to his hands.

The wine-press is trodden without [or outside of] the city. What city? There is nothing in this scripture to inform us; but when we look at other prophecies describing the same scene, we at once learn what city is referred to. The reader is requested to look carefully at Joel iii, 1, 2, 9-16; Rev. xvi, 14; xix, 16, &c. From these scriptures we learn,

1. That there is to be a gathering of all nations to one place: not of course every individual of the nation, but at least a large portion of all nations.
2. That the place of gathering is to be Jerusalem.
3. That there the Lord comes down to tread the wine-press in his fury, and give the wicked to the

slaughter.

It was without the city where Jesus suffered. Heb. xiii, 12. It is appropriate that that spot should be the scene of his triumph. And this is doubtless the time when "they also which pierced him," having, if we may so express it, a retributive resurrection for this very occasion, shall behold him in his kingly glory, and wail because of him. Chap. i, 7.

CHAPTER XV.

Verses 1-8. And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 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 marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. And after that I looked, and behold the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

The xvth chapter, entire, is but an introduction to the most terrific judgments of the Almighty, that ever have been, or are to be, visited upon this earth in its present state, namely, the seven last plagues. The most that we here behold is a solemn preparation for

the outpouring of these unmixed vials. Verse 5 shows that they are poured out subsequently to the last ministration in the sanctuary; for the temple was opened before they go forth. They are given in charge to seven angels, and these angels are clothed in linen pure and white, a fit emblem of the purity of God's righteousness and justice in the infliction of these judgments. They receive these vials from one of the four beasts. These beasts were decided (see thoughts on chap. iv,) to be a class of Christ's assistants in his sanctuary work. How appropriate, then, that these should be the ones to deliver to the ministers of vengeance, vials to be poured upon those who have slighted Christ's mercy, abused his long suffering, heaped contumely upon his name, and crucified him afresh in the treatment of his followers! While the seven angels are performing their fearful mission, the temple is filled with the glory of God, and no man can enter therein. This shows that the work of mercy is closed, and there is no ministration in the sanctuary during the infliction of the plagues; hence they are manifestations of the wrath of God, without any mixture of mercy.

But in this scene the people of God are not forgotten. The prophet is permitted to anticipate a little, and behold them as victors upon the sea of glass as it were mingled with fire, or sparkling and refulgent with the glory of God, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Thus like the bright sun bursting through the midnight cloud, some scene is presented, or some promise given to the humble followers of the Lamb, in every hour of temptation, as if to assure and re-assure them of God's love and care for them, and of the certainty of their final reward. Verily the words of the prophet are among the true sayings of God: "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him," but, "woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him." Isa. iii, 10, 11.

**What does,
“They were not defiled with women” mean?**

A woman is the Scripture symbol of a church: a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a corrupt woman an apostate church. It is then a characteristic of this company that at the time of their deliverance they are not defiled with, or have no connection with, the corrupt churches of the land. Yet we are not to understand that they never had any connection with these churches; for it is only at a certain time that people become defiled by them. In Chapter xviii, 4 we find a call issued to the people of God while they are in Babylon, to come out, lest they become partakers of her sins.

Matthew 25:6

Reprinted for the Author

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Freely ye have received, freely give.

Mat 10:8



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