

# Has the Apocalypse been Fulfilled?

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- “ I will come again, and receive you  
unto Myself” . . . . . JESUS.
- “ Whom having not seen ye love” . . . . . PETER.
- “ Be patient therefore, brethren” . . . . . JAMES.
- “ We shall see Him as He is” . . . . . JOHN.
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## HAS THE APOCALYPSE BEEN FULFILLED?

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**N**O; except in the dreams of men who draw their wisdom from their own minds or the minds of others, instead of from the pure and undefiled and undefilable fountain of truth, the Word of God.

No doubt there are many quite unacquainted with its structure, aim, and object; and, as is usual with ignorance, quite indifferent to a subject which must in the very near future burst upon them in a moment, with its awful warnings unheeded, and the door of escape for ever closed.

There is another class, not unacquainted with its structure, but from

not taking the view which the Holy Spirit of Truth is ever ready to give to those who will avail themselves of His aid, have persuaded themselves, and seek to persuade others, that its aim and object have been attained, that "the Apocalypse is a Christian prophecy fulfilled in the events of the Christian era." Now, as the Christian era extends from the day of Pentecost till now, it is well to ask ourselves, not whether man says so, but, Does God say it?

If I trust in a blind leader of the blind, what will it profit me in the day of disillusions that he has to hang down his head, and confess that "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool"? (Prov. xxviii. 26.) If any man build upon God's foundation (Jesus Christ) wood, hay, stubble, and the fire tries his work of what sort it is, and it is burned,

and he suffers loss—although personally he may be saved (1 Cor. iii. 12–15), what, I say, will that avail me who have trusted that his wood, hay, and stubble was gold and silver and precious stones? Owing to his attractive but delusive vagaries, I may have missed the weightier matters (to me) of judgment, mercy, and faith. (Matt. xxiii. 23.) Dear reader, see that you be not deluded by these “blind guides” (Matt. xxiii. 24), but take the Word of God in your hands, and if you do not see your way amid the “strifes of words” (1 Tim. vi. 4), fall upon your knees at the first quiet moment. (Matt. vi. 6.) Tell God that you are a fool (1 Cor. iii. 18), and that you want to be wise. (James i. 5.) Fools die for lack of wisdom. (Prov. x. 21.) I quote all these scriptures as credentials. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.” (1 Peter iv.

11.) When a man tells you that this or that which he advances "stands to reason," remember that God has told you that He has made foolish the wisdom of this world. (1 Cor. i. 20.) Do not die for lack of wisdom, when there are such unfathomable stores of it in the Word of God. (Col. ii. 3.) You may sometimes want a helping hand from those who have been longer on the road than yourself, who through many afflictions have learned to believe God rather than themselves, and it is the design of this series of papers to give you such help from time to time, until God shall close it. But even this you must weigh with an exercised conscience before God; and if it matches not with His Word—nay, more, if it be not the rightly dividing of His Word—do not take what your conscience *before God* does not assent to.

Remember, that no word but that of an apostle is authoritative. Such could say, "He that knoweth God heareth us. He that is not of God heareth not us." (1 John iv. 6.) The Lord Jesus had prayed for such as "believe on Me through *their* word." (John xvii. 20.) This is where the "Fathers" led the Church astray almost before the first century had well ended. Ignatius wrote to the church at Ephesus, A.D. 107, "We ought to look upon the Bishop even as upon the Lord Himself, your bishops presiding in the place of God." None but an apostle had the divine commission. The blessed risen Lord Jesus gave them this authority. (Jo'hn xx. 21.) "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; whosoever ye retain, they are retained." No one else has

a like authority. Their word *is* Scripture; all else must be judged *by* Scripture.

There are, then, some very weighty considerations involved in this teaching that is abroad that the Apocalypse is fulfilled in past history, because, if so, the last Book given to the Church might be said to have ceased to be authoritative; to be an interesting record of the judgments on the Pope and the Church of Rome and some other institutions, but to have practically had its day. Any person that "knoweth God" must view such ideas with horror. To regard the Book as a collection of symbols, none of which bear their avowed meaning, is bad enough, but to say that what they mean, or what the prophecy-mongers say they mean, has had its fulfilment, is "to take away the key of knowledge; not entering in



themselves, and hindering those that were." (Luke xi. 52.)

Recollecting, then, that the Apocalypse has been given for our blessing,—“Blessed is he that readeth” (chap. i. 3)—of two things, one: Either the blessing is there, and we may see it, just as we should the blessing of our salvation from death and hell by the atoning work of Jesus, *or* blindness is on us in some form or another. God does not make His blessings a matter of “hide and seek.” There is a hide and seek interpretation, I know; but it is of man, not of God. God’s methods are not those of “hide and seek,” but hide and reveal. “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” (Matt. xi. 25.) “None of the wicked shall understand,

but the wise shall understand." (Dan. xii. 10.) "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear" (he that hath ears to hear, *i.e.*, understand) "the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein" (not let them go), "for the time is at hand" (not fulfilled). (Rev. i. 3.)

Now, if any reader follow thus far, and has fellowship in the spirit with the writer, who is none other than a servant *to*, or fellow-servant, as the case may be, *with* the reader, let him turn to the nineteenth verse of chapter i. "Write the things which thou hast seen——and the things that are——and the things which shall be hereafter."

Deeply interesting,—more so, in fact, than any of the three divisions,—is the first; but we shall only refer to it as being the authority committed to John.

“Alpha and Omega,” “First and Last,” told John to write what he saw in a book, and to send it to seven churches, and then displayed His glory as the Risen One on which all rests, as being the first item. “The things which thou hast seen.”

“The things that are” demand our chief attention. They are depicted in seven churches. The first phase indicates decline. The second, persecution. The third, false doctrine. All these are warned to get back to their first estate, and a promise is given to the overcomer. The fourth, however, shews even worse evil than its predecessors. The fifth is characterless. The sixth God raises as a testimony ere rejection. Seventh, the whole thing is rejected (spued out). The last four are not warned as the first three, but are directed to the Lord’s coming. Promises are given to

overcomers as before, and, to bind all together in one common unity, each church is told to "hear" what the Spirit has said to the other churches.

I put it now to every child of God, Has the Church been "spued out"? Bad as it is, it still exists. Careless, ignorant, inconsistent, if you will; but every shade of opinion will tell you that it is still that which *only* can be designated as "the things that are." The history of these "things that are" terminates with the last verse of chapter iii.

The third division is "the things that shall be after these," viz., after "the things that are." There is nothing else that "after these" could apply to. After these "things that are" are finished, come "the things that shall be after them." Language is useless if its statement is disregarded. The things

*after* the things that *are* have not begun yet, nor will they begin till the things that *are* have come to their conclusion. This conclusion may come at any moment, and it has been, and is looked for with eager expectation, according to the word of the Lord in 1 Thess. iv. 13-15. For the rejection, "the spuing out," we may turn to the Old Testament Scriptures to gather its meaning. "The land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants....That the land spue not you out...as it spued out the nations that were before you." (Lev. xviii. 25, 28.) "That the land whither I bring you to dwell therein spue you not out." (Lev. xx. 22.) With Israel, the land spued them out as it had spued out its previous inhabitants. With the Church, the Lord spues it out of His mouth. Why out of His mouth? Because it can no longer discern between the precious and the vile. "If

thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth." (Jer. xv. 19.) As long as the salt is in sufficient quantity the mass is preserved from corruption, but when the salt fails, what then but what three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, press most solemnly—all speaking of judgment—"It is good for nothing but to be cast out."

So far, then, from the Apocalypse having been fulfilled in the events of the Christian era, we have proved to any one open to conviction that from chapter iv. onward has not only not been fulfilled, but that the transactions of chapters ii., iii. are not yet terminated, for the Church is still in existence, and, to go a step further, chapter i. is addressed to those persons who can say, in the words of chapter i. 5, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from

our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

One word may be necessary in respect to the words "hereafter" (chap. i. 19) and "after this" (chap. iv. 1). Both these are represented by two words (*meta tauta*), literally "after these things," and used ten times in the Apocalypse for the purpose of indicating that what the preposition precedes has no connexion with what has preceded it. These finger-posts are most useful in the interpretation of the book, because they guard us from mixing up what should be kept apart. Many parts of the Word of God have these finger-posts. For instance, the hundred-and-fifty Psalms are divided into five books, bearing on different subjects, the books

being of irregular length. The Spirit of God has kept each book apart by causing the words "Amen and Amen" to conclude each book. So the use of the word "after" in the Revelation. Another series of divisions are preceded by the words "And I saw." This phrase occurs over forty times, and indicates not merely what the eye sees by seeing, but what the mind knows by spiritual perception. John was in the Spirit (four times repeated), and we must have the Spirit of God, or these divine subjects will be foolishness to us, as they have already become to a large class of interpreters.

The Lord give light to the devout student of His Word.

W. R. H.

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JAMES CARTER, 18, Paternoster Row, London. E.C.  
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