

## **THE SEVEN CHURCHES.**

### **THYATIRA. Rev. 2:18-29.**

"And to the Messenger of the Congregation in Thyatira write."

It is claimed that the name Thyatira means "sweet savor of labor." We think it applies to the first part of the period during which the church was said to be in the wilderness; the time also in which the papacy was in power. It would thus cover the period during which the true church, purified by persecution, relieved of its ordinary load of lazy dead-heads, and untrammelled by the class who always choose the popular side, was fully harnessed and faithfully laboring in the Lord's work. Many evidently had more zeal than knowledge, but they were faithful to the light they had. "These things sayeth the Son of God."

This is a more emphatic declaration of who the speaker is, than in any previous message. It was necessary. A usurper had arisen, who, as foretold by Daniel, had "a mouth speaking great things." Claiming to be the Vicar of Christ, he assumed to speak as the mouth-piece of God.

Our Lord here announces himself as speaking through his written Word – his only authorized authority. This declaration would call to mind the words of Paul: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

"Eyes as a flame of fire." Expressive of their piercing brightness. Despised and persecuted for the truth, as the little faithful company were, by those who claimed to be the church of God, it was a cheering thought to know that their exalted head "seeth not as man seeth"; but "the Lord knoweth them that are his."

"His feet are like to polished brass." The description here is very like that of the spiritual being seen by Daniel [10:6]: "Eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass." This metal was perhaps the most useful and enduring known to the ancients. It seems as if he would say to them: Fear not in **[R389 : page 1]** all your terrible journey of 1260 years in the wilderness, lo! I am with you; we shall walk together; I will be your companion and guide.

"I know thy works, and thy love and faith and service and patience, and thy last works are more than the first." This is generous praise, and shows the Lord's appreciation of the faithful labors of the true church of this period. The language is quite similar to that used in addressing the first church, with the apparent recognition that works of Thyatira were even more abundant than those of Ephesus.

"But I have against thee that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and seduces my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things offered to idols."

The Bible is a wonderful book. We find in it a faithful record of human history, and many curious events, sometimes so strange as to be almost or quite disbelieved by the natural man. Various attempts have been made to prove the Bible unhistorical; that while it taught spiritual truths, it was not intended to teach history, science, etc., and was in those directions entirely unreliable. The light of modern research and criticism is fast scattering such infidelity, and proving, day by day, the antiquity and reliability of the Book of books. Not only is its historical and scientific truthfulness shining out clearly, but there also appears a strangely deeper vein of truth which seals its supernatural origin, by revealing the astonishing fact, that that history was a living, speaking, prophetic pantomime – a prophecy acted out in type by living characters. Even their faults and

misdeeds faithfully noted (to the disgust of some over-particular people) being apparently necessary to fill up the anti-type.

The history of Elijah, and his relations with Ahab and Jezebel, is one of these prophetic pictures, seen not in vision, but in real characters. As this type is familiar to many of our readers, and will be treated fully soon for the benefit of all, we only take space to note a few of the prophetic features.

Jezebel, as the nourisher and protector of the prophets of Baal, is the type of the Papal Church, the mother of abominations. 1 Kings 18:19; 2 Kings 9:22. Ahab, her husband, the king of Israel, represents the kings or kingdoms of Europe who committed spiritual fornication with the "mother church."

The Elijah of Malachi 4, is evidently the Gospel church in its militant condition, and which must be fully come – filled up. Rom. 11:25 – before the trouble spoken of can fairly begin, seeing that they assist in pouring out the plagues. The three-and- a-half years of drouth and famine foretold by Elijah (during which he was miraculously fed) were typical of the three-and-a-half "times" or symbolic years of spiritual drouth and famine foretold by Amos (8:11), during the combined reign of the Babylonian Jezebel and her kingly paramours. **[R389 : page 2]**

If we compare Dan. 7:25; 12:7, with Rev. 11:2,3,9,12, and 12:6,14, we will find that they measure the same length of time. In symbolic language a "time" is composed of twelve months, of thirty years each (a day thus symbolizing a year). A symbolic year is 360 literal years, and 3½ of these years, or 3½ times 360 is 1260. Also 42 months multiplied by 30 days to a month is 1260 symbolic years. There is abundant proof that this is the way God intended us to calculate symbolic time.

We thus see that the flight of the true children into the wilderness, from the face of the false church during 1260 years, while the harlot reigned a queen, and lived deliciously with the kings of earth, was clearly foretold in Elijah's flight from the face of Jezebel, and the 3½ years of famine. 1 Kings 19:3, also 17:1 – with Luke 4:25.

The description of Jezebel in this message exactly fits the teaching of Rome. "To eat things offered to idols." How could the Pagan ideas taught by the Papacy, and clung to by Protestantism, be better described? The natural immortality of all men, as first taught by the most beastly of idolaters – the Egyptians – the eternity of sin; and, worst of all, the character of God so degraded that no heathen monstrosity ever invented by pagan priest-craft could compare with it. Instead of a loving Father, a vindictive Giant, kind indeed to his followers [are not the heathen so?], but infinitely cruel to, not his enemies alone, but also to those who, never having heard of him, could neither like nor dislike him. True, we were told that he – or rather his Son – was love personified; but this idea was so mixed up with the hideous doctrine of "eternal torment" that the result was Babylon [confusion]. "She teaches and seduces my servants to commit fornication."

Churches are continually typified in the Scriptures by women, so the teaching alluded to is the following and union with some of the daughters of Babylon. So successful has been this seduction that Protestants generally would rather associate with an immoral member of an orthodox church, or a member of the body of anti-Christ, than a faithful and consistent Christian, who has thrown off the fetters of sectarianism.

Rome has claimed to teach the doctrine of "one church"; but the direct result of her teaching has been the various creed-bound sects which still hold captive the spiritual Zion.

"And I gave her TIME that she might repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication. Behold, I cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation [see Rev. 2:21,22] if they repent not of HER works." [Sinaitic, Vatican, and Ephraim MSS., and other best authorities: "HER WORKS."]

The time given for repentance must date, we think, from the dawn of the light of the Reformation. Strange to say, just about 365 years have passed away since Luther began to preach against the errors of Rome. On the 31st day of October, 1517, he placed his ninety-five theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg. In a few weeks the theses were known throughout Christendom, having been translated into several languages. This is considered the beginning of the Reformation in Germany. Now, we see the force of the language of our Lord in this message.

"I gave her [a] time that she might repent." A "time," 360 years from the first clear rays of light through Bro. Luther, brings us to the hour when our Lord said to the nominal Gospel Church – as shown by the parallels – "Your house is left unto you desolate." If we read the signs of the times aright they have already entered the "affliction" promised.

"And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give to you every one according to your works.

Rome, in the days of Thyatira, endeavored to kill Thyatira's children with literal death; and the Lord cheers them by the assurance that the reverse would finally take place; and that while those who had imbibed that persecuting spirit of Jezebel would be stricken with spiritual death [the anti-type of the 450 priests of Baal whom Jezebel fed, and whom Elijah destroyed], she (all having the spirit of Thyatira) would receive the glorious reward according to your works. This changed condition of things will also reveal to "all the

churches" who it is that is doing the sifting work. "But to you I say: to the rest which are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching; who know not the deep things of Satan (as they say); I put upon you no other burden; but that which ye have, hold fast till I come."

It will be noticed that there is a peculiarity in the use of the expression "deep things." There are apparently certain ideas which "they" call deep things [of God] which our Lord calls by their proper name: "deep things of Satan."

When we speak to a certain class about God's dealings with mankind, and of the justice [?] of consigning the ignorant to everlasting misery, as imputed to our heavenly Father, we are at once told that we cannot fathom God's purpose in allowing all this sin and misery; that he has not revealed his plans; that our reasonings are mere speculation, the whole matter belongs to the "deep things" of God, which he has not revealed. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard," etc.; not knowing that Paul continues: "but God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit."

Although knowing that anti-Christ has loaded "Our Father's" name with odium, and his character with infamy, they still persist in asserting that it is not our business to attempt to clear him; he will do that himself on the day of judgment, when, according to their theology, it will be too late to do anybody any good.

We, who see the plan of the ages, might be content to wait; but we have a right to expect that those who believe that the world is now on probation should do all in their power to place God's character and dealings in a proper light before the world. We would be ashamed to treat an earthly friend so, how much more the "friend above all others"? Thank God we have not learned this "voluntary humility."

"I love to tell the story,

Because I know it's true."

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To the faithful laborers in Thyatira he lays no other "burden." He began his message by commending them for their "works" and "service." He ends by telling them to patiently carry this burden, holding fast what they have "till I come." We think we know some still living who have the Thyatira spirit.

"And he that overcomes, and he that keeps my works until the end, to him will I give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter are they dashed to pieces, as I also have received of my Father."

The promise to the overcomers of the Thyatira age is peculiarly appropriate. Rome, the false church, was at this time in the height of her glory, claiming to be the kingdom of God; that Christ's reign had begun – through his vice-gerent, the Pope. Claiming, of course, the promises given to those who reign with Christ, she did literally rule the nations with a rod of iron, dashing in pieces whom she would.

The type (in a sense) of the iron rule and great power of the true kingdom was thus signified [made signs of – shown by signs – Rev. 1:1] before their eyes; making even their terrible persecution a reminder of the glory and power they were called to inherit.

"And I will give him the morning star."

These who would continue to "work" in harmony with God's plan (which they could only do by walking in the light of present truth), are promised not only increasing light, but advanced light – as if before it was due; also the first sure proof of "Day Dawn," and of the approach of the glorious Sun of Righteousness who shall rise – not to bring DARKNESS, (Is John 1:9 fulfilled?) – not to destroy, but with healing in his wings. "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

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