

## **THE FOURTH PLAGUE.**

"And the fourth poured out his bowl on the SUN, and to him [it – ROTHERHAM'S TRANSLATION] it was given to burn men with fire. And men were burned with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of that God who has authority over these plagues, and they reformed not to give him glory." – vs. 8,9.

Here the misery of some is caused by an increase of sunlight. As the moon symbolized "THE LAW," so the sun symbolizes the GOSPEL LIGHT. The former was but a shadow or reflection of the latter, and the relationship of the two to the Church (the woman) is beautifully symbolized in Rev. 12:1. The increase of the sunlight means an increased brilliancy of Gospel light and knowledge.

This increase of light is to affect all classes, as is indicated by its not being limited to a certain class as are the other plagues are limited; to "sea," "land," "rivers," etc. It comes upon men – mankind in general and upon representative leaders of men, in particular. It is the increase of light – knowledge – which is causing independence of thought and action among all classes of society. It causes differences between kings and subjects, between capital and labor, between clergy and laity; the increasing light is doing it all. It is Gospel light too; for no matter how Infidels may scoff at the Bible and affect to have superior liberty to that which it teaches, it nevertheless remains a fact, that the grandest liberty is that where Christ makes free; and the essence of Gospel light is in the Master's words, "Ye shall know the TRUTH and the truth shall make you free." It is truth that is spreading – truth on every subject: truth relative to the rights and authority of kings; truth relative to the rights both of capital and labor; truth relative to the claimed superiority and lordship of a self-elevated class termed the clergy.

The conflict is between truth and superstition – light and darkness; it will be a severe struggle, but TRUTH is mighty and shall prevail; debasing the proud and exalting the humble. Those whose deeds are evil – who are in the wrong, – hate the light, is the Master's testimony. It would curtail their power and lower their position to elevate all others to equality. These are scorched or troubled by the increase of light, and none more so than religious lords, for it is the increase of light which doubtless helps to turn the waters of their cherished channels into blood – corruption – making their doctrines and creeds, which emanated from fountains of the sixteenth century, distasteful and obnoxious.

After preaching for years doctrines which called God just and loving, but proved him to be worse than the gods of the heathen – after having defended for years their sectarian isms, some of which teach that God has foreordained the salvation of a "little flock" and their children, but has also foreordained eternal misery as the lot of the great mass of humanity and their offspring – thus teaching, that "there are infants in hell not a span long," etc. – no wonder that such who worship and honor their sect and such teachings, more than they do God and His Word, would feel scorched and annoyed with the great light and heat of truth, as it is now beginning to shine out and reach them.

"And they blasphemed the name of that God." Blasphemy, as the word is used in Scripture, does not signify profane swearing, but rather a misstatement of character. For instance Jesus was accused of "blasphemy" because he said he was the Son of God (John 10:33). These zealous sectarians become so angry against present unfoldings of truth which prove the Love and Mercy of God as well as his Justice, that they go to the very extreme of opposition and grossly misstate God's character and often wrest his Word from its true import to sustain their theories.

This, which is a plague to others, is a wondrous boon to those who are out of Babylon and humbly enjoying the leading of God's Spirit from the one fountain direct – the Word of God. This increase of Gospel light, and consequent increased light thrown upon the Law shadows – showing the true teachings of the Tabernacle and its services and sacrifices, are pointedly foretold in symbol by the prophet (Isaiah 30:26) who says: "The light of the Moon shall be as the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." It is the same day (period) in which He assembles the outcasts, and makes up His Jewels.

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"We hail thy bright beams, O morn of Zion's glory;  
Thy blessed light breaks on our sight  
O hail, happy day!  
"The day that brings a sweet release,  
That crowns our Jesus Prince of Peace,  
And bids our sorrows cease!  
O hail, happy day!"

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THE lily is my symbol of fortitude, white and pure and royal, even as I have seen some dear children of God triumphant though in darkened chambers, and on beds of pain. The mignonette, most unobtrusive, yet most tenderly subtle, of all things in the floral world, is my emblem of patience. Its perfume pervades its neighborhood.

– M. E. Sangster.

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