

# THE MARK OF THE BEAST

By

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## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### MARTYRED

IT was three months since the image of Apleon had been set up in the "Holy" place in Jerusalem. Now all the world worshipped "The Beast," for the images had been multiplied until every town and city and almost every church, etc., had its own idol.

The world had begun by "Wondering after the Beast, it gave itself up to error, despised the Truth, opened itself to receive the "**Strong delusion**," the Antichrist lie, so that the worship of the Beast himself, then of his image, became but just consequent steps one after the other.

In Ancient Roman days its Emperors took divine titles, accepted homage, worship, honor, all of which belonged, by right, to Deity alone. Augustus had temples reared for the worship of himself, and, through all the ages since, the remains of one of these temples (at Angora) has remained, and inscribed upon a great stone lintel is the significant word: "TO THE GOD AUGUSTUS." Near by, in the same district, is a kindred inscription, "TO MARCUS AURELIUS . . . by one most devoted to his Godhead." Nero and Domitian, fiends of blood and lust, were styled, while they lived, "GOD," and "OUR GOD AND LORD."

And Apleon fulfilled, to the minutest letter, all that was prophesied of him as regarded his assumption of the divine. "**He will exalt himself**," wrote Daniel "**and magnify himself above God. He will speak marvellous things against the God of gods. He will not regard any God, for he will magnify himself above all.**" "**He opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God**," Paul said, "**or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.**"

Whatever may be the cause of it, the fact remains that ever since the Devil's lie in Eden was absorbed by, and ruined man, there has been a proneness, a latent tendency to idolatry in the human race. And the manifestations of this tendency have not been confined to peoples who in their recent past have been won from idol worship.

As late as the revolution days, in cultured, polished France, busts of Marat and others, were greeted in the streets with bursts of Hallelujahs, by the populace, and, even in the churches, all over France, the people sang odes and Hallelujahs, and bowed themselves before these busts, and at the mention of their names. Marat, especially was treated as divine and "was universally deified," and "divine" worship of his image was everywhere set up in churches. And the "**worship of the Beast**" came about easily, and as the natural transition from the world's earlier adulation of the "**Man of Sin**."

Millions upon millions of his image, in the form of charms, were worn like the icons of the Greek church. In the hour of death these *eikons* (likenesses) "**of the Beast**," were held before the eyes of the passing soul, as the crucifix was held, (in the old days before the destruction of the older ecclesiastical systems), before the eyes of the dying Romanist and Ritualist.

In that first three months of the second half of the seven years of Antichrist, much had changed in every way in the world. Under the supreme dictation of Apleon changes commanded by him were effected throughout the whole world, in one week, that would have occupied a century in the old days of the nineteenth century, say.

Babylon the Great, which had long since been rebuilt, had become the world's commercial center. It was exclusively a commercial city, there was nothing ecclesiastical (Babylon ecclesiastical, the religious system had been destroyed, when all religious headship had been summed up in Apleon).

There was nothing military, in the New Babylon, and though every vileness in the form of entertainment was to be found in the great city, all this was but the recreative side of the life of the commercial people of the world's metropolis.

Ever increasingly, during the 19th century, and the first decade of the 20th, commerce had been growing as clamorous and as exciting as the "horse-leech," never satisfied, ever crying "give, give." It had clamored for a common currency, common weights and measures, common code of terms, and a hundred and one kindred things.

But it was in Babylon the Great, that the woman of Zechariah 5:1 – Commerce - had found all she had been insisting for, through all the past years,-and it all emanated from, and was centered in Apleon. And it was all connected with worship. "**Covetousness, which is idolatry.**"

With the utter destruction of "Mystic Babylon," the vast religious system, (whose destruction we have seen), there came a mighty impulse of commerce, and of consequent wealth to "Babylon the Great" the City. Apleon had made it his head-quarters. "**The kings of the earth lived wantonly with her.**" Her wharves and warehouses - built on that wondrous Euphrates - were packed with "**merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.**"

Her vessels traded with the whole world. Her liners, travelling at 100 miles per hour, were in easy touch of every land. Her pride in her Maritime and commercial power, was overwhelming: **"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously . . . for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen!"** Her aerial merchandise fleets, too, were amazing!

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The three months had brought great changes to the trio in whom we are specially interested- Ralph Bastin, George Bullen, and Rose, his young wife.

Ralph, in quitting the editor's chair of *the Courier*, had received a handsome *doucier*, from Sir Archibald Carlyon, and this, at his special request, had been paid to him in the new paper currency of the time - there was a world-common currency, under the Apleon regime, as there was also a world-common code, weights and measures, etc.

He had also contrived to turn his savings into the paper currency. George Bullen had done the same, though in the case of each of them it had not been easy work, for both were marked men. They knew themselves to be hated - and watched, again and again they had narrowly escaped death, and each day they realized that it might be the last.

The news of the wondrous enthusiasm of the world's peoples gathered in Babylon and Jerusalem, in their new worship of the golden images of Apleon, had stirred London, New York, Berlin, Paris - atheistical Paris; and all other great world-centers, and in each city many images had been set up.

Though neither Ralph Bastin, or George Bullen had now anything to do with journalism - they could not obtain work of any kind because of the absence of the "mark of the Beast" upon their foreheads. But both were journalists by nature, hence when they knew that the image of the Beast was to be set up in St. Paul's on a given Sunday, they determined to be present to see how far this basest of idolatry had really laid hold of London. The trio lived together in a little house, in a by-street in Bloomsbury. Rose would never allow her husband to go out without her; the times were too perilous, either for him to be in the streets, or for her to remain alone at home. In the actual language of Ruth, she had said to him:-

"Entreat me not to leave thee:- for whither thou goest I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge; . . . where thou diest, I will die, . . . the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

On reaching the Mansion House - the old building was still there, though used for another purpose - they were amazed at the excitement which prevailed in the streets. Thousands of excited people were moving westwards, many of them evidently bound for St. Paul's.

Everyone seemed to be wearing the brand of the "Beast," and more than once our trio came very near to being set upon, for that they were defying public opinion, as well as the command of the All-Supreme Director of consciences as well as lives - Apleon - by the absence of the "Mark" upon them.

Arrived at the cathedral they had no difficulty in getting in, since the hour was early, and a rumour having obtained credence that the great idol was to be wheeled out upon the steps of the cathedral, the vast bulk of would-be worshippers remained outside of the huge building.

Presently those outside must have become acquainted with the falseness of the rumour for there was a tremendous rush into the building, until, in three minutes, it was packed to its utmost limits.

Ralph, George and Rose had secured seats, in the center of the third row, almost under the great dome, for they wanted to get as perfect a view of the image as possible.

The hum of several thousand voices, as the gathered people gossiped about the image, made quite a volume of sound. Every eye was fixed on the great golden statue. It was a wondrous piece of work and the likeness of Apleon was an extraordinary one. The people who were seated far back could see only from the breast upwards. But those nearer (Ralph, and George, and Rose among them) who could see not only the whole figure, but the plinth and the pedestal upon which it stood, saw that the inscription on the plinth was the same as that which had been reported as upon the first image, the one set up in the Temple at Jerusalem - "I AM THAT I AM!"

A shudder passed over our trio, as they read the blasphemy.

Now, suddenly, a richly-robed priest, holding a silver bugle to his lips, stood out on the altar steps. The shrill bugle call for "silence" rang through the great building, and a tomb-like hush fell upon the multitude.

Another priest, more gorgeously costumed than the first, came slowly forward chanting dearly and distinctly:

"We believe in Man, in the Religion of Humanity, Man is God, and God is man. We believe that all the excellencies which of old, were attributed to the God of the Bible, were but sparks struck out of the goodnesses that were within the man Himself. Hence we no longer need to be Divine by proxy." \*

*\* "This creed, in its essence, and often in its terminology is taken from a book already published, in which the religion of Humanism exalts man to the place of God." (Author).*

The organ rolled out a gay note to which the gathered thousands chanted a gay "Amen!"

"We believe," the priest went on in his chant - "that the living God, is the marriage of Force and matter, of Head and Hand. And we believe that the product of this co-ordination is in our Great Superman, the God of the Universe, Apleon, our Superior-God, and Him we worship and adore--"

The priest made a well-understood sign, and the whole mass of the people knelt - they were too crowded to prostrate themselves.

The great organ pealed forth in some wondrous chordings, that were dying down into zephyr-like breaths, when the voice of the priest broke the comparative silence.

In harsh, commanding tones, he cried:

"You three rebels, kneel at once!"

The whole congregation lifted their eyes to see two men, and a beautiful woman between them, standing proudly, fearlessly, amid the great kneeling throng.

"Kneel, you apostate rebels!" thundered the priest. For answer, Rose lifted her strong, powerful, beautiful voice, in a God-inspired spontaneous burst of true worship, singing:

"All Hail the power of JESUS' Name,  
Let angels prostrate fall."

Ralph and her husband caught the inspiration and the musical key, and the trio had reached the

"Bring forth the Royal Diadem,"

before the great congregation of blasphemers awoke to the full meaning of what the song of the trio meant. Then, with a roar like ten thousand lions, they shouted:

"Kill them! Murder them!"

The priest raised his hand, the bugler sounded "Silence." The old hush fell upon the people, instantly, and the priest, with a triumphant note ringing in his voice, and with an equally triumphant smile on his face. cried:

"We have anticipated the action of such rebels as these, and have prepared for them. Outside there has been already set up an automatically-locked scaffold-" With a wave of his hand towards our trio, he cried; "To the block with them, unless they instantly worship."

Pointing with his long index finger to the three Protesters, he shouted: "Kneel!"

For answer they drew themselves upright, and with a ringing gladness began to sing:

"Crown JESUS Lord of all!"

Instantly they were seized, and hurried out of one of the side entrances. With the utmost difficulty a way was cleared for the passage of the priests and the three victims - the bugler going ahead sounding sharp notes of warning on his instrument.

They reached the front of the cathedral, at last. The whole of the space in the front, at the sides, and far away into "The Fan" was packed with a seething, excited mass of human life.

Twenty feet high, a light but strong scaffold had been rapidly, and practically silently, erected - the whole structure having all its separate parts fitted with automatic lockings. The scaffold stood just outside the railings that fenced the cathedral from the "Fan." On the platform of the scaffold was a conical-shaped block, enameled in a brilliant red. A huge fellow, leaning on the handle of a wide-bladed gleaming axe, stood by the side of the block.

The trio of believers were taken up the steps of the scaffold. Two priests accompanied them. The chief of the two priests, he who had led the chant in the cathedral, held up before the trio a silver figure of Apleon, about eighteen inches long, and, (amid the intense silence all around, his words were distinctly heard) cried: Will you worship God?"

"We do worship GOD - but we will not worship either the Antichrist, Anti-God, or his image!"

It was Ralph who, in ringing fearless tones, replied, the other two responding with:

"Amen! Amen! to our GOD who sitteth on  
The Throne, and to the Lamb, forever!"

A savage roar swept upwards from the maddened mass below.

Ralph was told to bow his head upon the block. He did so, while Rose sang clear and strong:

"Am I a soldier of the cross,  
A follower of the Lamb,  
And shall I fear ———— "

The chief of the two priests, struck her heavily across the mouth and silenced her. At the same instant the executioner held aloft, by the hair, the severed head of Ralph Bastin.

Yells of delight, mingled with "Long live our God Apleon!" greeted the sight of the head. George Bullen's head was now upon the block, while Rose, the light of a holy triumph in her eyes, unable to sing because of her bleeding mouth, shouted,

"JESUS! JESUS! Precious CHRIST!"

She kept her eyes from the block, and turned slightly away, as the head of her dear one was held aloft amid the frantic delighted cries of the murderous mass below.

It was her turn now, and she turned rapturously towards the block. But before she could lay her head upon the blood-stained horror, the chief of the priests thrust her forward to the near edge of the floor of the scaffold, and, holding his hand up for silence, cried:

"Is she too beautiful for the block?"

He caught her up suddenly in his arms, and held her as high aloft as his strength would permit, as he shouted:

"Does anyone want her, if you do, say so, and I will hurl her down!"

"Behead her!" roared a voice in the crowd, and thousands of voices joined in the cry.

The priest dragged her to the block and laid her neck in the hollow of it. There was a flash of steel in the sunlight, and the beautiful head rolled into the basket. The next moment it was being held aloft by the long, lovely hair, the people below yelling with joy.

At a sign from the priest, the bugler sounded for "silence." Then the priest cried:

"So shall die every rebel against our LORD GOD, The Emperor!"

With a wave of his hand towards the Cathedral behind him, he added:

"Our worship will be continued in our Temple and, for today, at least, worship will continue all day."

The fools, the dupes, flocked back to the cathedral - as many as could crowd in. Those who could not get in watched the bodies and heads of the three martyrs for GOD hurled down from the scaffold on the stones below.

Someone suggested the river, and six lengths of line were quickly got, and amid the howls of mingled execrations, and the notes of a fiendish joy, the three heads and three trunks were dragged down to the black friars end of the embankment. Here men cut the clothes from the three bodies, and the naked forms were kicked into almost shapeless masses, before they were eventually hurled over the embankment into the swirling muddy Thames.

**"He, (The False Prophet) had power . . . to cause that as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed."**

From this day there began a perfect reign of terror on the earth, for the vast bulk of the people who had yielded utter allegiance to the "Beast," and to his worship, became heretic-hunters. Natural affection appeared to be actually absent from the world, and sons and daughter betrayed fathers and mothers, husbands betrayed wives, wives husbands, and the friend his friends.

Thousands were beheaded every month, taking the earth over-men, women, and children, who had learned to trust God, and who waited for the coming Kingdom of CHRIST, when, having put down all enemies under his feet, he should begin his reign of a thousand years. These saved ones, and martyred ones, were **"an innumerable multitude saved out of THE great tribulation, from all nations, kindreds, and peoples, and tongues."**

~ end of chapter 16 ~

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