

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

By

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

THE three-and-a-half years since the Covenant with Lucien Apleon, on the night before the opening of the Temple in Jerusalem, had been signed, had practically expired.

GOD's judgments had been seen in many ways upon the earth during these forty-two months. The position which Apleon now held, as the "World's Dictator," had not been the work of a day. Wars, no longer local, but practically universal had, for many long months at a time, been the order of the history of the world. **"Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."**

These wars occupying only months at this period. would have occupied scores of years had they been events of the mid-nineteenth century. But with the perfection of hideousness - one might safely write Hellishness - of war's latest devices the work of destruction, and almost annihilation became short and sharp.

Aerial warfare helped to bring about this consummation more speedily. The firing of a bomb or of a torpedo from an aerial war engine often accomplished in an hour what could not have been accomplished, a few years before, under months, often years of old-fashioned war.

These fearful conflicts were not confined to those of kingdom and nation against kingdom and nation, but citizens of one city fought with themselves, civil war was "on the rampage." The lust of war, the lust of blood, born of vile passions, burned in the breasts of men and women - for with the growth of the "woman's rights" question, and the establishment of the "equality of the sexes," bands of women fought bands of women.

These Amazons, indeed, wrought even fouler cruelties and butcheries than the men, for as there is no fouler odour under the sun than that of rotted lilies, so the depths to which "the lilies of the human kind" - women - will descend is fouler and deeper than the abysses of fall of men.

The hideous wars - international, civil, and personal conflicts - resulted, as wars ever do, in famine and pestilence. Only in this case, these later horrors had been fearfully aggravated, terribly prolonged.

The picture of the famine is most striking. The rider of the black horse is shown bearing a pair of scales, typifying the exactitude of weight - for single grains counted in these days. A man's full day's wage would purchase only a pint and a half of wheat (a choenix) and that would form but a scant feeding for the day for himself. But there will then not be wheat enough to go round, and people will hail barley with the rapture of starving souls.

The tendency of the days in which we write these lines, is an ever-increasing luxury in eating and drinking, and this, too, among all classes.

That tendency will increase more and more, so that the inhabitants of the famine stricken earth will feel scarcity more than they would otherwise have done.

The pestilence followed the famine, until from war, famine, and pestilence a fourth of the entire population of the earth was swept away.

During the last twelve months quite a crop of false Christs had arisen. Each of these, in his turn, had had a certain following for a brief period, and each had had an untimely end.

The only really notable impostor was a man who had suddenly appeared in London, and who had immediately attracted immense attention. His knowledge of scripture, of the prophecies especially, was marvellous to those whom he addressed. No one ever attempted to verify his quotations, much less his connections of scriptures. For as Jannes and Jambres, Pharaoh's two chief Magicians, withstood Moses by demonology and jugglery, so, by a hellish jugglery, did "Conrad the Conqueror" (as this false CHRIST styled himself) juggle with the scriptures.

Apleon, the Antichrist, had, apparently, taken no notice of any of the petty tribe of mushroom-like false Christs. That he was well acquainted with the sayings and doings of each of them goes without saying, as it was equally so as regarded this more presumptuous of the crew "Conrad the Conqueror." There were many, in London especially, who wondered that Apleon did not appear and refute this man's claims, if they had no foundation.

The evident success of the imposter wrought his own downfall. Inflated with his success he publicly declared that Apleon would perish beneath a blast of his (Conrad's) nostrils, and announced that on a certain evening at ten o'clock on St. Paul's steps he would publicly re-state his claims, and also defy Apleon.

In the first year after the Rapture, the whole of the shops and warehouses on both sides of Ludgate hill, with all the purlieus at the back of each range of buildings, had been demolished, so that a huge open space, spreading fan shape, (the handle at St. Paul's) swept out, ever-widening, on the left as far as the approach of Blackfriar's Bridge, on the right through Farringdon Street to the Viaduct Bridge.

Within this space a million people could not only have congregated, but have heard distinctly, without any effort, the merest whisper spoken into the latest phone discovery the "Hear-it." As, too, every bit of that open space was many yards below the level of St. Paul's steps, everyone had a perfect view of all that transpired there.

The night in question, when the latest and greatest of the false Christs. "Conrad the Conqueror," had arranged to defy Apleon, proved to be exceptionally dark.

Three quarters of a million people were gathered in "The Fan" - that open space had been christened "The Fan" on account of its shape. It was admirably lit by the new light "Radiance," while a perfect blaze of radiance illumined the huge scarlet-covered, scarlet-draped platform that had been erected immediately in front of the steps of the Cathedral. (It was all very stagey, very theatrical, but then that was characteristic of the new age and regime).

The false CHRIST appeared, and was greeted with a curious mixture of groans and hisses, and of cheers. (A keen judge might have been pardoned if he had said that the bulk of the cheers were ironical).

Speaking in his ordinary voice, the suction plates of the "Hear-it" transmitted his words to the farthest remove of that "Fan" so that all could easily hear.

With a Kind of gentle gravity, at first, he began by saying:

"Nearly nineteen hundred years ago when I walked this earth, at my first advent, I warned my disciples - and through them the world - that many false Christs would come, but when it was said 'Lo, here I' or 'Lo, there I' that they were not to go hither and thither, many of these false Christs have appeared, and have tried to lead the people astray. Oh foolish people! How easily were they bewitched! And how worse than foolish the imposters were. They might have known that I should not have suffered them to take My Name in vain."

For ten minutes he talked thus, then suddenly changed his tone, and raising his right arm - it was long, thin, gaunt, and the wide-flowing sleeve of his white seamless robe, fell back showing the lean limb almost to the shoulder - he poured out a defiant speech against Apleon, adding "I have challenged! I wait for my challenge to be accepted."

A sudden, awesome silence fell upon all the gathered, listening thousands. They had not long to wait, for in that same instant a fierce crimson light shone in the dark heavens above them, and looking up they saw a fiery ruby scroll like flame rushing downwards through the sky.

An instant later the fiery scroll resolved itself into the characters of the "Covenant Sign" ("The Mark of the Beast.") With a swoop, like that of some crimson Albatross, the thing descended until it seemed almost to touch the platform where the challenger "Conrad" stood. Then, to the amaze and delight of the vast audience in "The Fan," out from convolutions of the central sign of the "Mark," Apleon stepped on to the platform.

His aerial chair (on this occasion made in the form of his own "number and sign") rose swiftly again and hovered mid-air.

The false CHRIST was as white of face as his robe. He visibly cowered and shrank before the coming of the giant figure of the World's Dictator, as the latter strode in three long strides across the platform.

For one brief second, amid the hush and silence of the absolute awe that rested on the mighty audience, challenger and challenged stood facing each other. Then Apleon's voice was heard, as with a sweep of his hand he uttered the one word:

“PERISH, thou Fool!”

As his hand swept the air in the direction of the false Prophet, a wide sheet of flame leaped out of space, enveloped the white-robed figure, and it was instantly consumed. As at the burning of the sacrificial lamb at the dedication of the temple at Jerusalem, so now, the flame that had consumed the challenging imposter floated a yard or two over the spot where he had stood, and slowly resolved itself into “The Sign of the Covenant” (“Mark of the Beast,”) in pure ruby flame.

“He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.”

Apleon turned towards the mighty gathering, and said, triumphantly: “So perish all impostors!”

A thunder of cheers rose from three quarters of a million throats! Instantly followed by the chorus of the Apleon ode!

“Hail! Hail! Hail man of Men!
World's Deliverer!
APLEON!”

Like a living thing of writhing flames, the brilliant car swept downwards from the sky, where it had waited. Almost, it seemed to skim the scarlet floor of the platform and to scoop up its owner, for none saw Apleon lift a foot to step into it, yet the next moment he was soaring away seated within the upper convolution of the serpent sign.

For hours, thousands of the people remained within the sweep of the great “Fan,” talking of all that had occurred, and more absolutely convinced than ever that Apleon was God – their God.

Thrice during the next hour after Apleon's departure, three separate faithful souls – one of the three a woman – raised a testimony against the Man of Sin. But each one met with death within thirty seconds of their first utterance.

“And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled”

There were, scattered over all the earth, many thousands of believers in GOD, praying **“Thy kingdom come.”** Many of these had turned to GOD during the first days of the shock of realization of “things as they truly were,” when the “Church” had been translated to the heavenlies.

The number of these believers had been added to considerably, during the awful times of war, pestilence and famine, for these horrors (so plainly predicted in the Word of GOD) had taught them to read their Bibles with new eyes, and to receive its truths and obey them. Of these believers, many had been, and many, many more were yet to be **“slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held.”**

The whole of the three-and-a-half years had been rife with growing horrors, with licentiousness, and every evil possible to the unregenerate mind, and heart, and life, when full license is given to them.

The license and indulgence permitted - even arranged for, in the first instance - by the apostate church with a view to the more perfect enslavement of the world's worshippers, had brought forth a full harvest of evil. The effect of license is disorder, and presently anarchy. For three-years-and-a-half the apostate church had grown in assumption and in all abominations, and the effects of the license permitted, and fearfully abused, had produced a condition of things which became such an intolerable burden, that the time had become ripe for the authority in all this, to be destroyed.

The apostate church was the cause and the authority for all the excess of evil of the times, hence the ten-kingdom confederacy which had at first buttressed the impious system, now, by united action, destroyed it. **“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and BURN HER UTTERLY WITH FIRE. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled”** (Revelation 17:16-17).

"Man is a religious animal!" And Lucien Apleon, endowed with special wisdom of his father and Master - the Devil - recognized this necessity for a religion from the outset of his career.

The Devil has always recognized religion, encouraged it, and has even instigated it in a hundred forms, during the last 6,000 years. Only every effort of his Satanic power and force has been directed towards the luring of the religious soul away from GOD. The Devil is a Ritualist! He loves to entangle souls in a ritual, and the more sensuous the ritual, the better he is pleased, because such sensuousness and ritualism ministers to the "flesh," and while men and women's religion is fleshly, it cannot be spiritual. And the FATHER seeketh spiritual worshippers, **“for they that worship Him, must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.”**

Then, too, Satan knows that all religiousness that is of the "flesh," tends to make its devotees anxious for the development of a good-self within them, while true, spiritual life in CHRIST, leads to the continual consciousness that "**in me, that is IN MY FLESH, dwelleth no good thing.**"

Lucien Apleon encouraged religion, but not the religion of the Lord JESUS CHRIST - for he, Apleon was the Antichrist. It was he, with his emissaries, taught and guided by Satan, the Arch-enemy of GOD, and of His CHRIST, that had subtlety, secretly energized the world-religion, that followed the taking away of the church. That worldwide system had been an amalgamation of all the then existing false systems of religion.

With the taking away of the church every type of license had been gradually permitted to the worshippers in the churches of this infernal system, until, at last, as we have seen, the governments had been compelled to abolish what at first they had helped to establish - for license had bred such a character and temper in the peoples that it became a menace to all order.

All this was part of Satan's organized plan, for, when the moment of the crushing out of this licentious, abominable religious system arrived, his plans, as regarded Lucien Apleon, The Antichrist, were so perfected, by the ripeness of the world for the Antichrist rule, that all else seemed plain sailing.

The poor, duped world knew Apleon only as the great SUPERMAN, "long looked-for, come at last," the World's Deliverer, who was presently to be universally acclaimed as the World's Dictator.

The world had long been familiar with the system of private chaplains attached to great men's households. It was familiar knowledge to them that Dan, the Freebooter, (in the days of "The Judges") must needs have a renegade, runaway Levite for a priest, his salary thirty shillings a year, a suit of clothes and his victuals (as much as a renegade was worth). Absalom could do little, in his revolt, without the religious brand, so must needs have Ahithophel. And down to their own times, the World, at the period of Apleon's coming, was familiar with private chaplains.

Apleon's chaplain, a swarthy-skinned Jew (to all outward appearance,) was undoubtedly like Apleon himself, a Satanic resurrection, or if not a resurrection, certainly energized by the same infernal power. The Holy Ghost calls this man "The False Prophet." He exercised all the authority of Antichrist, "in his presence," as well as in his absence. Eight times the emphatic word "**he causeth**" is written of him, by the Holy Spirit, and a more hideous, lying, extraordinarily wicked catalogue of deeds is nowhere else to be found in the world's history:

"He causeth the earth, and those that dwell in it," (does that refer to the foul spirits who dwell in that awful under-world, from which we believe the Antichrist, as Judas re-incarnated came, or does it refer only to dwellers on the earth? It may well mean both!) - "**To worship the first beast.**"

As well as his co-associate, Apleon - The Antichrist, the false Prophet not only claimed the power to work miracles, but he did work them, showing a baleful but powerful supernatural control over the forces of nature.

"And he doeth great miracles . . . And deceiveth them that dwell ON the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the Beast."

In Egypt, three thousand four hundred or more years ago, it was demonstrated by Jannes and Jambres that there is a supernaturalism of the Devil, as well as of GOD, against, as well as for GOD.

Both Antichrist and his subaltern, the false prophet, dealt largely in the miracle of fire. The two witnesses, who had testified that they had come from GOD, had consumed their persecutors, again and again by fire, and the Hell-born imposters felt the necessity of showing that they, too, could command fire.

Utterly destroyed by the ten kings, the world was without an organized religion, and was ready for the fouler, fuller rule of Satan - the worship of Antichrist, and his image.

As GOD had ever had a Trinity of personality and power in Himself, so Satan in his damnable, deceivable counterfeiting has now his trinity. Himself (Satan) the embodiment of evil, the suggester, creator, energizer, he makes a mock CHRIST - Apleon, the Antichrist, answers to the second Person of the divine Trinity. While Apleon's chaplain, the false prophet, answers to the third person of the divine Trinity.

Energized by Satan, even as Antichrist himself is, the false Prophet becomes a mighty force among the world's peoples, persuading them that Apleon really is GOD, and worthy of worship. The whole world has seen and heard of the marvellous miracles of "The Prophet," as he is called.

The infatuation of all the world for the Man of Sin, Lucien Apleon, was almost absolute and complete. He ruled the world, every department of it - social, political, commercial, religious. He blasphemed GOD. He blasphemed the translated Church that occupied the Heavens with her Lord.

Day by day, week by week, month by month he grew bolder, more impious, more cruel, more persecuting to the saints that were then living to GOD.

And through all this time Enoch and Elijah continued their "witness" for their Lord. As judgment prophets, they had been sent in this age of judgment, to resist the awful, the gigantic blasphemies of Antichrist, and to give to the poor, vain, deluded world its last awful warning. For bad as had been the apostate Church, so recently destroyed, the worship of Antichrist himself, would be infamously more impious.

The world hated them, yet feared the two witnesses.

More than once when blatant blasphemers, agents of Apleon, had openly opposed them, and cursed them and their witnessing, these witnesses of JESUS CHRIST, "**the faithful and true witness**," had sent forth fire from themselves and consumed their enemies. And the world had learned to fear them, though they ignored their warnings.

Many times, too, they had wrought fearful, havoc-making miracles, so that as it was with the Egyptians in the days of Moses. so it came to be with all the peoples who witnessed the miracles of these prophets, Enoch and Elijah, for they shut the Heaven, in many places, "**that rain should not fall during the days of their prophesying**." They turned the waters into blood, and "**smote the earth with every plague as often as they willed**." Until the people hated, and feared them, yet, all the time, they hardened themselves against GOD, and the testimony of the two prophets, as Pharaoh hardened himself against GOD.

The multitudes learned that though they were absolutely powerless to hurt the TWO WITNESSES themselves, yet, given that THE WITNESSES were not present the mob found that they could work their will upon their followers - and they did, continually.

It was the morning before the great event that had been announced, the nature of the coming event was not known, though a hundred speculations were rife. The city was astir early, for the night had been too sultry for much sleeping, and everyone was more or less excited, as to what would be the great event which the next thirty hours - more or less - was to bring.

As the sun mounted higher and higher the whole of the districts around the city belched forth their tens of thousands of curious people of every nationality, their goal the city itself.

Suddenly - the suddenness was like some magical effect - the two worst-hated beings in all the world, appeared on a mound of marble blocks, within a hundred yards of and outside the Jaffa Gate.

They were GOD's two gracious, faithful WITNESSES.

The multitudes began to converge towards the spot where they had suddenly appeared. (It was a curious fact, however much people might hate the testimony of the TWO WITNESSES they seemed to have no power to pass on, when once the men of GOD began to preach).

"Men and brethren of every clime," rang out the voice of Enoch. "Once again, in the name of The Lord JESUS, we lift our voices to warn you of the shortness of the time left unto you in which to repent, and to turn unto GOD.

" **'Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?'** as die you certainly will under the breath of the CHRIST, when He presently shall come - for He shall **'slay with the breath of His mouth.'**

"We preach not the gospel of the grace of God which, afore time, before 'The Rapture,' was preached, that gospel which was good news of glad tidings to all sinners.

“That gospel told how He had lived on earth for over thirty-years - GOD inhabiting a human body, for GOD was in CHRIST reconciling the world unto Himself - it told how He died a death of shame and agony, a substitute for sinners, so that whosoever should believe on Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. And as many as believed on Him gave He power to become the sons of GOD.

"It told of His coming again to receive all those sons of GOD, dead or living, unto Himself in the Heavens. Less than four years ago He came. Thousands who knew the truth, but had not accepted it, before He came, did so after the RAPTURE of the saints, and thousands of those have already sealed, and many more thousands will yet, seal their faith with their blood.

"The days of our testimony draws shorter now, we have few more opportunities of warning you, and of witnessing to our GOD. But here, once more, this morning, we preach unto you the gospel of the Kingdom. The gospel of the coming Kingdom of CHRIST.

“ **'For He shall reign whose right it is, and of His kingdom of peace, and joy, and love there shall be no end.'** For nearly two thousand years men have prayed **'Thy kingdom come.'** It is coming soon, but before He begins His reign, He shall put down all enemies under His feet. None will be able to hide from Him for His eyes will be as a flame of fire.

"Those who will now seek Him, accept Him as their king, whether He comes in their life-time, or whether they lay down their lives as faithful witnesses to His coming, all such we proclaim, shall live the glorious life which He has for such."

The crowd numbered a hundred thousand now, and the majority of them kept up a sullen murmur against the preaching.

A native prince of a notable eastern realm, plucked a javelin-type of weapon from his cumberband and hurled it full into the face of the preacher.

It never reached its mark, but, boomerang like, it returned to the thrower and shattered and entered his right temple. But for the density of the crowd, the eastern would have dropped to the earth like a stone - for he was dead.

A way was made for a few to drag the body clear of the mob, then, once clear, those who dragged it thence returned to the crowd. "**Without natural affection,**" a trait of the Times - had degenerated into "without common humanity."

For half-an-hour longer THE TWO WITNESSES preached, warned, pleaded with the multitude.

Then they stepped from the pile of marble blocks, and passed quietly away.

As was customary after every such session of testimony, the crowd split up into many groups and discussed the whole situation.

On this occasion some five hundred men and women, mostly Jews, who had received the testimony,* were moving off in a body, when an unlooked for incident occurred.

** The Author, in common with every other public speaker, and writer, on these themes, has been so often asked the question, "What of my loved ones who are out of CHRIST, how will they fare when we are gone, and the Church is gone?" Let me say that the more I study the Scriptures of the times of which this volume speaks, the more I am convinced that of the many who are brought to accept CHRIST (in the Gospel of His coming to reign, "the Gospel of the Kingdom,") through the sudden translation of the Church, even though they be ill-taught, perhaps only half-hearted, they will, under the preaching of the TWO WITNESSES, be wholly brought into fellowship with CHRIST, and will, themselves in turn, become faithful witnesses to the TRUTH.*

There is nothing in Scripture to warrant the belief that the preaching of the TWO WITNESSES will be confined to Jerusalem, and it is surely reasonable to suppose that London, Edinburgh, New York, Chicago, Berlin, and all other chief cities, will hear their voices in witness and warning. They will doubtless have thousands of converts, Jew and Gentile alike, or where will the great multitude whom John saw, come from. But all those left behind when CHRIST comes, who may be won to Him afterwards, will not only miss the glories of the Heavenlies with CHRIST, but will suffer persecution, and many of them death at the hands of Antichrist and his emissaries. (Author).

Through all the witnessing of GOD's two prophets, there had stood among the listening crowd, a tall, swarthy-faced man, richly attired, a Jew by race, (that was evident from the marked Hebrew lines of his face). The expression of his face, during the WITNESSING, had alternated between mocking and rage. Now his eyes followed the departing band of men and women who were loyal to the Gospel of the Kingdom.

With a scornful, devilish laugh, he pointed to the departing people, as he cried: "If we cannot kill the spawn that preaches, why not kill the hatched-out ones?"

The crowd was ripe for anything. With a roar, like unto Hell itself, they raced after the godly band and in a moment surrounded them, brandishing the long murderous knives of the east, and revolvers of the west.

The foul work of wiping out the whole band of faithful ones began. Every shot went home, every knife found a faithful heart. The twin lusts of hate and of religious fanaticism burned in the breasts of the mob. It was a carnival of cruelty and blood. Everyone wanted to see it. Other thousands hearing the sound of the shots, poured through the gates of the city. Everyone wanted a sight of the entertainment-for this the slaying was regarded, as, of old-time, Rome entertained herself by filling the eighty thousand seats of the great theatre, to see the Christians thrown to the lions.

There was not a coign of vantage to which the mob did not climb. They climbed upon the roofs, the balconies, held themselves perilously upon the sloping verandas, they stood upon window-sills, and hung from electric light pillars, and tram-line standards. They shouted, and sang, and urged upon the slayers to mutilate as well as kill "the carrion."

Then, suddenly, above all the din, and above even the crack of revolvers, the great song of Apleon, that foul ode of idolatrous laudation, set to most wonderful music, rang out from thousands of excited throats. The song was Hell-born, and hellishly sung.

When, a moment later the whole mob had trampled upon the slain believers - wantonly, heedlessly trod upon them, - in their passage towards the city, the swarthy Jew who had incited the crowd to their deed of blood, lit a cigarette, and crossed to where his aerial-chair waited him. He stepped into the upholstered seat, and turned his head to watch the mob, then with that evil laugh of his, he muttered: "Men are but sheep after all, and will follow any bell-weather!"

To his waiting driver, he said: "Esdraelon." The next moment the chair rose in the air, and like some wondrous bird soared away, northwards .

The swarthy Jew was Apleon's Chaplain, the false prophet.

Jerusalem was enormously crowded. Thousands upon thousands of people had come up from Babylon, as well as from every part of the world. The news had been flashed all over the earth, that some world-important event in connection with the Emperor-Dictator, would take place during this last week of the first three-and-a-half years of the "Great Covenant."

At the time of the offering of the Morning Lamb, just as the course of officiating priests were preparing for the slaughter of the lamb, Apleon's resident viceroy, entered the Temple enclosure, followed by a military detachment, and, accompanied by Apleon's chaplain, he whom GOD the Holy Ghost has called the false Prophet. The latter ordered the priest in charge of the "Course," to cease the offering, and to the amazed protest of the priest, he laughed scornfully, vouchsafing no other explanation than that it was his and the Emperor's command, that all Jewish worship-ritual should cease.

The priests could do no other than obey the command, enforced, as it was, by the presence of the Viceroy, and the military force.

The High-Priest lived a mile away from the Temple. One of the minor officials went off to apprise him of this strange new order.

As the man made his way down the marble road to the city level, he met a ponderous motor-driven trolley of great length - the thing was evidently bound for the Temple. Two hundred workmen followed behind the trolley, and the Temple-messenger noticed that on the trolley, lying beside the huge coffin-like packing-case that formed its chief burden, were a number of hoisting and hauling tackles, with a pile of handspikes, jacks, etc.

It was an hour before the messenger returned, the High-Priest accompanying him. By that time. wonders - infernal wonders - had been wrought.

From the packing case there had been taken a gigantic image of Lucien Apleon, and it had been reared upon a plinth of dark green marble, upon the tessellated platform within the Temple.

The statue was of gold, and upon the green marble plinth was engraved: "I AM THAT I AM !"

In amazed, frightened horror, the High-Priest gazed for one moment upon the idolatrous abomination, then, as his blood boiled with a holy, righteous indignation, he thundered forth the words:

"Thou shalt have no other God before me.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."

"Take that foul, idolatrous thing hence!" he cried, with passionate warmth. His eyes were fixed upon Apleon's chaplain, (the false Prophet) whose mocking smile, as he stood by the gang of workmen, angered him beyond measure.

Not a man moved at the order of the High-Priest, and he thundered forth his command again:

"Take that abomination down, and hence, or I will call upon The Lord to send His judgment fire down and consume you all, and the idol as well."

With a blasphemous oath, the false Prophet, spat in the forehead of the fulminating Priest, and hissed:

"Silence, fool, idiot, driveller!"

As the foul spittle touched the face of the Priest, he fell prone upon his back on the pavement of the Temple. A dead hush fell upon everyone present, for as they gazed upon the face of the dead Priest they saw that the whole forehead became filled with the "Mark of the Beast."

The silence of this awesome hush was suddenly, startlingly broken by a peal of mocking laughter. It came from Lucien Apleon's deputy, the false Prophet.

Then, more startling still, the lips of the golden image parted, and in deep, solemn tones the idol cried:

"So perish all who shall dare to oppose the Emperor Lucien's will."

This was no trick. It was not a mechanical device within the image. It was not a clever piece of ventriloquism. Of this we are assured - the image actually spoke. GOD's word cannot lie, and John, under the command of GOD, wrote it down: "**It was given the false Prophet to give spirit to the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should speak.**"

"To give SPIRIT to the image!" What does that mean?

Does it mean that life was given to it, temporarily? Who shall say? Certainly it spoke!"

Unseen, unnoticed, at the very moment that the High-Priest fell, slain by the false Prophet, there had entered the Temple, Cohen, who had been High-Priest for the first year of this new Temple's history.

He slipped away as the image uttered its speech. He met many of the priests of other of the Courses, as they were approaching the Temple, also numbers of the devout Jews of the city and its suburbs, and many from other parts of the world, who had been specially drawn hither by the news that had been flashed world-wide, as to some great event about to happen in Jerusalem.

"Stay!" he cried. His looks told of something serious, and in an instant he was the center of an eager, anxious, enquiring crowd of Jews.

"Lord help us!" he went on. "For those who would be true to Him now, must be prepared for flight or for death. Apleon, is a traitor! **'He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him; he hath broken his covenant.'** Psalm 55:20. **'He shall confirm a covenant with many for one week [seven years].'**" Daniel 9:27. **'The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.'** Psalm 55:21."

Cohen, even while he had been speaking had led the crowding Jews away from that main road, and now, in a *cul-de-sac*, he was continuing his words.

"Blind! Blind! that we were, all of us, I, especially, for my Gentile friend, the editor of *'The Courier'* - London daily paper - warned me. He told me of the meaning of our own prophet Daniel's words, **'In the midst of the week** (the seven years of the covenant we made with that apostate) **he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease!**'"

"This he has done this morning. The priests were stopped in their preparations for the morning sacrifice.

“**'And,** said our father, Daniel, **'for the ever-spreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation.'** Daniel 9:27.

"Brethren, of the House of Israel, the Lord our GOD is one GOD. I am no Mehushmad, but in common with many of our rabbis, I have read the Gentile New Testament, and there, in the words of the Nazarene Prophet, (Matthew 24:15, 16). He prophesied exactly what has come to pass this morning in our beautiful Temple, for he said:

''When ye (that is we of the House of Israel) therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (of the Temple) whoso readeth, let him understand: then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains . . . and pray ye that your flight be not on the sabbath day. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be.'

"Lord help us, brethren! This morning has convinced me that these times are upon us.

“What this day will bring none but The Lord can tell! My last word to you, my advice to you all, is, flee this city, flee the neighborhood. For weeks I have had it borne in upon my soul, that the man we have covenanted with, was working some deep, subtle, hellish scheme. Now he hath shown his hand, there are but three courses open to us, idolatry-worshipping that idol set up in our holy place, yonder; flight; or death.”

Even as Cohen harangued his crowd of priests and Jews, Apleon rode up the white marble road to the Temple. The Hebrew crowd was quite hidden from any observation from that main road. It was well for them, doubtless, that it was so.

A moment or two after Apleon and the mighty throng which followed him had passed, the crowd of Jews left the *cul-de-sac*, and silently, anxiously dispersed in various directions.

Cohen found himself walking with the man who had been High-priest last year. Together they conversed in low, serious, guarded tones, until they suddenly discovered themselves close up to a mighty throng gathered about the now well-known witnesses, Enoch and Elijah.

The two priests paused to listen to the witnesses' denunciations of Apleon, whom they designated "The Beast," - "The Antichrist." Both men had listened often before to these prophets of GOD, and both had often been well-nigh convinced of the truth of the testimony of the two witnesses.

"It is said," whispered Cohen, to his fellow-priest, "that these two men are the two prophets of the Most High GOD, Enoch and Elijah - those two of GOD's servants who never passed through death."

"The three and a half years of their witnessing," replied the second priest, "have been crowded with incident, miracle, and much that has been supernatural. They say that no man has seen them eat. That, like Elijah, when upon earth, they too have been supernaturally fed. Then, too, nothing has been able to harm them. Apleon (the priest's voice was lowered to the merest whisper) has directed his agents to war against them over and over again. They have shot at them, hurled vitriol upon them, and tried to seize them, to bind them, but as they have themselves testified again and again, nothing can harm them until they have finished their testimony."

Cohen bent closer to his fellow-priest, as he whispered:

"The book of Revelation, in the Gentile New Testament, declares that '**they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore [sixty] days, clothed in sack-cloth. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit (I believe that is Apleon) shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.**'"

"Now if this come to pass, then they will die to-day, for it is a thousand two hundred and sixty days, this very evening, since they began their preaching, and-. But, listen, to what the one of them is saying."

The voice of Enoch rang out as it had done five thousand years before, when he had prophesied, saying, **'Behold! the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.'**

But now the message of the prophet had in it testimony as well as warning:

"Have we not warned you for three years and a half, that the man, Apleon, whom you have all trusted in, was but the tool of his father, the Devil? Have we not told you often that he worked upon your deluded minds and imaginations for one purpose only, to keep you from **'the God of Salvation,'** and that, presently, he would set up his own image to be worshipped in that gilded thing of unbelief, upon that mount, yonder?"

A peal of derisive, mocking laughter greeted this statement.

The voice of the prophet cut the laughter, with its supernatural incisiveness, so that it rose clear and distinct above the laughter:

"And now all that we prophesied has come to pass. The image of Apleon (the abomination of desolation) spoken of by Daniel the prophet, has this morning been set up in the Temple over there. **'And that Man of Sin . . . opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God.'** II Thessalonians 2:4.

"Upon the pedestal of his image, that was reared this morning, he has caused to be engraved the very name of our Lord GOD - 'I AM THAT I AM I' as he supposes it to be, because it is thus translated in the Bibles of the world. There is no sense in that way of putting it, as there is no sense, nothing but vanity and coming failure and fall, in that 'Man of Sin' himself. But he has chosen to ape The Lord GOD by using 'I am, that I am!' instead of the true translation which has evidently been hidden from him and which is: 'I AM HE WHO AM FOR EVER!'"

"He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. I John 2:22. The Scriptures have been issued by millions, every soul of you here has had an opportunity of knowing the things whereof we again testify. You have heard, or read, or both, (or you could have done if you would) that he, the Man of Sin, 'would cause an image of himself to be made, that he would give life to it, and that the image should speak' (Revelation 13:14, 15). All this has happened this morning, and all else will happen that is prophesied. Therefore we cry:

'Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die? Why should ye be stricken any more! Ye will revolt more and more. From the sale of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in you, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores: Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before God's eyes; cease to do evil, Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?'

Strangely affected by the power and earnestness of this witness of GOD, Cohen and his fellow-priest turned reluctantly away. In the heart of each of them was the determination to be clear of the Jerusalem neighborhood that very forenoon, if possible. In fact before one o'clock had struck, that mid-day, there had taken place a really remarkable exodus from the city and its neighborhood. Of these, many were Jews, in whose composition there was deeply engraved a deep-seated antagonism to all idolatry.

Then, too, there were many "Kingdom believers" (by what other name can we call them, since, having missed Salvation by the "Gospel of Grace," they now served GOD, while waiting for CHRIST's coming to set up His kingdom). Many of these fled the city and its neighborhood, for they counted not their lives dear when it came to a case of blasphemy and idolatry. Yet, because the love of life is inherent with the race, and because, too, these "Kingdom believers," learned to bring others to GOD, before the final judgments came, and knowing that it was written "**that as many as will not worship the image of the Beast shall be killed,**" they fled Jerusalem.

~ end of chapter 13 ~

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