

A S e r m o n .

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“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is lord of lords, and king of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” –

Revelation 17:14.

The book of Revelation contains the history of the sufferings and victories of the Church of Christ from the beginning of the Christian era down to the day of the final judgment. It is divided into three septenaries.

The *first* of these discloses, by the opening of seven seals, the sufferings and victories of the Church under pagan Rome;

the *second* discloses, by the blowing of seven trumpets, the sufferings of the Church under Papal Rome; while

the *third* reveals, by the pouring of seven vials, the slow but sure destruction of Antichrist, or the Papacy, and the victory of the Church of Christ, culminating in the glorious millennium.

Our text embraces the most of the period taken up by the trumpets and vials. Let us, in humble dependence upon the guidance and assistance of the Spirit of truth, endeavour to consider it. There are

three things in it to which we desire to direct your attention: –

- I. – The parties who are to make war with the Lamb;
- II. – The Lamb and his followers; and
- III. – The war itself and its results.

I. – We are to consider who the parties are that make war with the Lamb.

In the beginning of this chapter, one of the angels who had the seven vials, said to John, “Come hither: I will show thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” The first object revealed to John was a “great whore.” This title given her is to be considered from a spiritual point of view. The name “whore” is commonly applied in the Old Testament Scriptures to the Church when she revolted from the true God and His worship to idolatry. We find the ten tribes of Israel often addressed under this designation after their revolt with Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. The same epithet is used to describe Judah after they set up idolatry. Let this portion of the word suffice here as proof – “Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholiah. And Aholah played the harlot when she was

mine, . . . with their idols she defiled herself” (Jeremiah 3:4-7). The Lord compares the relation between Himself and His Church with that of a husband and wife. When the Church departs from Him as the object of her love and worship, and from His word as the rule of her faith and conduct in things spiritual and temporal, she falls under the name of “whore.” This appears plainly to be the meaning of these words – “Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts” (Hosea 2:2). Why was it necessary that the angel should show John this great whore? The reason was that, at that time, there was not a church in the world that held more firmly the doctrines, form of worship, form of government, and discipline of the Christian faith than the church referred to did. It was not until five hundred years had passed, after John saw her in vision, that she actually became “the whore.” God alone could have foretold that such an apostate church was to appear at such a distant date in the future, and also where that apostacy was to be looked for.

Let us look a little into the context for her characteristics. John records it thus: “So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten

horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of the abomination and filthiness of her fornication; and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”

(1) She sat upon a scarlet-coloured beast, of which we will have more to say afterwards.

(2) “She had a golden cup in her hand, full of the abominations and filthiness of her fornication.” In this cup, which she held in her hand, was the wine of her fornication, which made the inhabitants of the earth drunk. That wine was her superstition, idolatry, and blasphemies, which the inhabitants of the earth believed, and by which she herself became the “great whore,” for it is called the wine of her fornication.

(3) She herself “was drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” Why is it said that the inhabitants of the earth were drunk with the wine of her fornication, but that she herself was drunk with the blood of the saints? Because they drank, spiritually, her doctrines, superstitions, idolatry, and blasphemies, but she knew that they were not true. This has been the reason why she kept the Word of God out of the hands of the

people; for she knew if they were to read the Word of God they would detect the fraud.

(4) “And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” Anything on one’s forehead is easily seen. This indicates how apparently the idolatry of Babylon would show itself in this “mother of harlots.” So it has been observed that all the idolatry of old Babylon had been resuscitated in this “whore,” under Christian names.

(5) “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” This makes it incontrovertibly plain that Rome is pointed at as the “great whore.” For in John’s time the city of Rome did reign over the kings of the earth. It was on this account that the angel described her as sitting upon many waters. He explains the meaning of the “many waters” thus: – “The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.”

Let us sum up the distinguishing marks given of her in this chapter. She made the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication. She was drunk herself with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. She had on her forehead the Babylonish marks of idolatry. She was “that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” This picture is so perfect in all its lineaments

that no one, except he would close his eyes, can fail to identify it as the idolatrous Church of Rome.

Let us now consider the beast on which she sat. “And I saw,” John writes, “a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.” The angel explained the meaning of this beast to John. “I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was and is not and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh he must continue a short space. And the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.” This beast, let us observe, has seven heads. These seven heads mean two things:

(1) They signify seven hills on which the woman sat.

(2) They signify seven kings: five of these were past, one was in existence when John saw the vision, and the other was to come. These kings are

understood, by men of understanding and sound judgment, to mean forms of government. There were five forms of government fallen in Rome before John's time; it was governed by an emperor then; and the seventh, which was to come and that must continue a short time, meant the form of government the Goths and Vandals set up for about eighty years. The eighth, who was of the seven, was to be a mixture of the first six and the Goths and Vandals, for he is declared to be of the seven. Thus the last species of government set up in Rome was the beast, or antichrist, upon whom the whore sat. This was the temporal power given to the bishop of Rome, or the Pope. We are told that this beast, or temporal power, was to ascend out of the bottomless pit. Now, the Scriptures state emphatically that "the powers that be are ordained of God," so it is not said of the other seven that they ascended out of the bottomless pit. No; because they were forms of government legitimately set up among men. But this eighth, who was of the seven, was the "scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy," upon whom the woman sat. One of these names of blasphemy was, "Christ's vicar on earth." Let it be noticed that Christ said to Pontius Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." But the Pope claimed temporal power, contrary to the Word of God. This makes it quite apparent that the Pope's temporal power was not ordained of God, but had

ascended from the bottomless pit. It was contrary to the nature of the kingdom which Jesus Christ set up in the world – that kingdom being entirely spiritual. This shows that it was founded on a lie. This beast was scarlet coloured, and so was the woman that sat on him. The beast was full of names of blasphemy; so was the woman. They represented the same apostacy under two different aspects: the whore represented antichrist as the Church of Rome, and the beast represented antichrist as the temporal power of Rome papal.

Again, we are told that the kings of the earth committed fornication with the great whore. Instead of continuing in the doctrines of the word of God, they forsook them in order to uphold her superstition, idolatry, fables, and blasphemies. These are the ten horns of the beast, or the manner in which his power – that is, the temporal power of the Pope – is to be exercised. “And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet (that is, when John saw the vision); but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.”

We can now discern who they are that will make war with the Lamb: –

(1) The great whore that sits upon the beast – that is, Antichrist, under the aspect of the apostate Church of Rome;

(2) the beast upon whom she sat, or the temporal power of the Pope;

(3) the kings of the earth who committed fornication with the great whore, and who gave their power and strength to the beast. These three are included in the pronoun “these” of our text, who are to make war with the Lamb.

II. – Let us now consider the Lamb and His followers.

(1) Let us consider the captain, or the Lamb. He is Lord of lords and King of kings. He has absolute dominion and sovereignty over all creatures. “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. . . . All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity” (Isaiah 40:15-17). Who made Him as mediator, Lord of lords, and King of kings? God the Father. In the second psalm we read of the heathen raging, and the people imagining a vain thing; the kings of the earth and the rulers taking counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed, so as to make a combined effort to break the bands asunder, and cast from them the cords with which the Lord bound them. What bands and cords are they so deliberately casting away? “The bands of

a man and the cords of love” with which the Lord would draw them to Himself. This is the disposition and conduct of the kings, and rulers, and people of the world yet. The moral and religious bands and cords of the gospel of the Lamb are considered by them unbearable burdens, and therefore they break them asunder, and cast them from them. What other meaning can be taken out of this Sabbath desecration, idolatry, unscriptural forms of worship, fornication, drunkenness, and such like? Clearly the language of their conduct is – “We will not have this man to rule over us.” But the Lord shall have them in derision; for Christ, or the Lamb, is made king by the unchangeable decree of God. He proclaimed this decree long ago – “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill Zion.” The Son reveals the contents of it – “The Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Psalm 2:8,9). This is the captain of the Lord’s hosts, against whom the great whore, the beast, and the kings of the earth make war. Will they succeed in overthrowing this decree, and in exacting upon the Lamb? We trow not.

(2) Let us consider the Lamb’s followers. Three characteristics are given of them.

First, “they are called” – that is, they are called effectually by the Spirit of truth. Effectual calling is an effect of God’s electing love, and by it the sinner is changed both as to his state and nature. He is delivered from being dead in trespasses and sins into a life of holiness and righteousness by faith in Christ. He is translated from the kingdom of darkness unto the kingdom of God’s beloved Son. Spiritual light has been shined into his mind, the love of God is shed abroad in his heart, and his will, that formerly dragged him to sin, being now renewed, concurs with the demands of God’s holy law and of the gospel, and causes him to hunger and thirst after righteousness. He can say from his heart – “For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquettings, and abominable idolatries” (1 Peter 4:3). There is none among the followers of the Lamb, but such as have been so changed. Such as may follow Him without having been thus called, are not included in our text.

(2) “They are chosen.” At first sight, we thought that this meant their election, and therefore that it should be considered before their calling; but after a little serious consideration, we apprehended that that was not the meaning of it. It means, in our humble opinion, that such as were to suffer for Christ and the gospel, were beforehand chosen of God for that most

honourable end. As sure as it was true of Christ Himself, that He was foreordained for this end, as He said – “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (John 18:37), so is it true of the chosen referred to in our text.

(3) “They were faithful.” This is the character God gives to Moses, that “he was faithful in all his house as a servant.” The same is given to those in our text. It was a good thing for others that they were faithful, for had they not been so, the gospel had not, humanly speaking, come to us.

III. – Let us consider the war and its results. In this we have the great whore – Antichrist ecclesiastically considered – the beast – Antichrist considered as to its temporal power – the ten kings who gave their power and strength to the beast, making war with the Lamb and His followers. This is the most extraordinary war ever heard of. The Lamb is God, the Son of God. Do you mean to say that they will make war with God? Yes. If you were to see a mighty host of men preparing to fight, and that you were told that they were going to fight against God, would you not conclude that they were mad? To be sure you would. But, we have noticed already that they were drunk with the wine of the fornication of the woman, and you need not expect drunken men to act very rationally. Indeed, this is true of us as a nation, for we

have turned back again to our vomit, and we have begun anew to drink deeply of the wine of the fornication of the great whore. Our king, the members of the cabinet, and a large number of the people of this nation, are drunk with the superstition, idolatry, fables, and blasphemies of the Papacy. How can we explain otherwise the mad and retrograde step taken in sending an envoy to the Pope, and the unconcerned manner in which the most of our fellow countrymen disregard it? But let us beware that the Papacy has not yet ceased to make war with the Lamb, and that such as will assist her, war against God.

But let us look more closely into the words of our text. You see that the war is made with the Lamb. This brings to our mind the declaration of John the Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). This He did by one offering on Calvary, never to be repeated. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 8:14). How does the Church of Rome act as to this fundamental doctrine? In the Mass, she teaches that her priests offer Christ upon her altars daily as a sacrifice unto God for the sins of the living and the dead. She teaches that by the words of a priest the piece of bread used in the Eucharist is transubstantiated into the very flesh, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ, and that the partaker, whoever he be, is thereby

made a partaker of Christ. She has thus substituted a carnal partaking of a bit of bread for faith in Christ's atoning death. She also teaches that her priests have power to forgive sins, and that all who die without making confession to a priest, and without receiving his forgiveness, are lost. It is written, "None can forgive sin but God." This power is given exclusively to Jesus Christ, as it is written, "For him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). To direct a poor sinner to any other for forgiveness of sin is to deceive him for eternity. Dr. Wylie observed that the word "ante" in Latin means "contrary to," but that in Greek "anti" means "to replace one thing by another," or to substitute. This is what the Church of Rome has done. In her every doctrine of the gospel is subverted and a contrary false one put into its place. She has ousted the Lamb as the one Mediator between God and men, and she has substituted the Virgin Mary, saints, the Pope, and her priests in His place. We will not enlarge on these things, as they are so well known to all who take the trouble to read what has been written concerning them. This is the first method used by the Church of Rome to make war with the Lamb. In this kind of warfare she is "the mother of harlots," that is, of every other Church

that will imitate her methods or adopt them. There are several of these harlots in England and Scotland now-a-days.

But, let us further consider the great whore, the beast, and the kings of the earth as they make war with the Lamb and His followers. The Lamb has a mystical body, which is the Church, and its members are set forth in our text by the designation “called, and chosen, and faithful.” When Saul of Tarsus was on his way to Damascus to bring all that called on the name of Jesus of Nazareth bound to Jerusalem, so that they might be punished, Jesus met him and said to him, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” Christ is the head of his body, the Church, and as you feel when you are hurt even in your foot, so does Jesus Christ feel when any of the members of his mystical body is hurt. Is it not written – “He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.” We have the history of how the great whore, the beast and the kings, persecuted the true Church of Christ. The Church of Rome charged them with being heretics if they dared to disagree with any of her false doctrines, superstition, idolatry, blasphemies, or heathenish rites. These saints appealed to God’s word for proof as to the soundness of their faith and practice but the only arguments used by the Church of Rome to her courts of inquisition, were that the

Church taught otherwise, and that, unless they would recant this faith in God's word, they would be condemned as heretics. The doctrines of the Antichrist as to transubstantiation, the mass, infallibility of the Church, indulgences, the worshipping of images, the power of the priests to forgive sins and such like, were disbelieved by the followers of the Lamb. They held and taught that men are saved by faith in Christ crucified set forth in the Gospel, that they have no meritorious works, but are saved entirely on account of Christ's merit, that Christ is the only mediator between God and men, that saints are not to be prayed to, and that God's word is the only rule of faith and practice. For refusing to abandon these doctrines so clearly set forth in the Bible, they were condemned by the ecclesiastical courts of Rome, and handed over to the civil power – that is, to the beast and his ten horns – the kings of the earth. These kings were the instruments by which they were persecuted in the most horrible manner imaginable. We see here where the kings of the earth come in. They gave their power and strength to the beast; and when the great whore condemned them – that is, the apostate Church of Rome – “the beast,” the Pope's temporal power, handed them over to the kings of the earth to be put to death. This was true, not only of individuals, but of many thousands at the same

time. The Waldenses and the Albigenses are cases in point as a proof of this. So are the Huguenots of France, who were massacred at the instigation of the Pope by Louis XIV., their own king. Between 60,000 and 100,000 were massacred within the space of three days. Surely the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. This is making war with the Lamb and His followers with a vengeance.

But (2) we are told in our text that the Lamb shall overcome them. How did He overcome them, seeing that they put those who followed Him to death in the most inhuman manner imaginable?

(a) We are told that they overcame by their blood. You will observe that their enemies could not make them forsake Christ and the pure doctrines of His word by all their cruelty and persecutions. So, the victory was not on the side of them who put them to death, but on their side who died rather than forsake the faith of the gospel. Our Lord taught His disciples, not to fear them who can kill the body, but have nothing more that they can do; but to fear God who can cast soul and body into hellfire. So when the great whore, and the beast, and the kings of the earth, shed the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus, until the woman was drunk with it, the saints and martyrs overcame them with their blood. They absolutely failed to gain the victory over the saints as to "holding faith and a good

conscience.” Faith and a good conscience were the matters at stake.

But (*b*) they overcame them by the word of their testimony. They could not be restrained by all their threats and persecutions from teaching God’s truth to their fellow sinners. They declared the gospel of the grace of God even on scaffolds and bound to stakes in the flames, and condemned the superstition, idolatry, and blasphemous fables of the Papacy, so that it became a proverb that the ashes of the martyrs was the seed of the Church. Some of their most inveterate enemies and persecutors were converted, listening to their dying testimonies for Christ and the gospel. This war continued down through the centuries under the iron yoke of Rome. But no sooner one was killed than another arose to bear witness for the truth. This can be accounted for only by the power of the Holy Spirit, working by His word through weak instruments. We are told that their warfare would be continued for a definite time. That the Lamb and His followers were to endure the persecution of those enemies, and overcome them even in it, we are assured in our text. So, you may now look back on the past history of the Church of Christ, and see this fulfilled. Christ’s gospel and worship are in the world in spite of all the enmity and persecution of the great whore, the beast, and the kings of the earth. No one can charge them with too much leniency or mercy in their efforts to

crush the true Church of Christ out of existence. They certainly did their utmost.

But the time given them was twelve hundred and sixty years. That that time has expired, we verily believe. The Scriptures declare with no uncertain sound that the Lamb will take the offensive against the great whore, and the beast, and the kings of the earth who gave their power and strength to the beast. We saw in the second Psalm that Christ, the eternal Son of God, has a rod of iron with which He can break kings and nations that oppose His claims like a potter's vessel. He gave a great blow to Antichrist at the Reformation. The errors, and superstition, and idolatry of the Church of Rome were cast away, and England, Scotland, Geneva, Holland, and Germany in part embraced the faith of the gospel as set forth in the Bible. This was a heavy blow given by the Lamb to the Apostate Church of Rome. The King of Spain sent a powerful fleet to conquer England and Scotland, because they had renounced not only the Church of Rome, but also the temporal power of the Papacy. The Lamb sent a storm that battered all Spain's sea power against the rocky coast of Britain, and He continues till this day to bring Spain low among the nations of the world. But the Lamb took the temporal power from the Pope half a century since. So the great whore has lost the beast on whom she sat, and the beast has lost his ten horns. Garibaldi

was the rod used to take the seven-hilled city of Rome and the temporal power from the Papacy. We do not see one word in the book of Revelation indicating that the Roman Apostacy will ever be able to sit upon another beast with heads and horns.

Our context teaches that “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 with fire.” So, the kings of the earth will be used by Christ to destroy the Church of Rome. “For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His word, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the word of God shall be fulfilled.” But when His word shall be fulfilled by their agreeing to give their power (kingdom) to the beast, He will put into their hearts to hate and to utterly destroy her. They have begun, in some small measure, to hate and destroy her. We read that: – “The King’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will.” The Lord uses them as His instruments in carrying out His own purposes in the affairs of men in this world. At the same time they may not have one thought about His authority over them as the King of kings. The King of Italy has stripped her naked; the Government of France has followed suit. So has Portugal, and so have some of the Papal States of South America. The hand of the

Lamb should be acknowledged in the actions of these Governments.

What is it that we see accomplished by this most terrible war? Well, if we look at Belgium (one of the most idolatrous and superstitious nations, who continued till now to give her power and strength to the Church of Rome) do you not see that nation broken to pieces like a potter's vessel? Who did this? Germany has been the iron rod, but that rod is in the hand of the "King set upon the holy hill of Zion." This is not what was in the heart of Germany, no more than it was in the heart of Nebuchadnezzar to do God's will. Pride and covetousness were the moving cause in the one as well as in the other. There is Austria-Hungary, the next most bigoted Roman Catholic country in Europe. Do you not see that Russia has been taken as an iron rod to break her to pieces? Who has done this? "God has come out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity." So we see the nations that have been making war with the Lamb, along with the Antichrist until now, being broken to pieces.

But alas! We as a nation, to our shame be it said, are doing our utmost to build up again that which we pulled down at the Reformation. We have forgotten the wormwood and the gall, which our ancestors had to drink, in the slavery of both soul and body by the "great whore, and the beast, and the kings of the earth

who gave their power and strength to the beast.” We do not value our civil and religious liberty; but we may have yet to repent of our folly with bitter tears, when it will be too late. We concede every thing to that apostate Church which her unscrupulous emissaries demand. If the Lord has favour towards us, as He had towards our fathers, He will open the eyes of our King, and our government, and cause them to turn to God’s truth as their guide in the affairs of Church and State. If not, we are in great danger of bringing the Lamb’s wrath and iron rod down upon our own heads as a nation. Two things will have to take place if this judgment is to be averted.

First. – The Government and people of this country must awaken to a realisation of our imminent danger from the spies of the Vatican, viz., the Jesuits. These crafty and bold plotters have got already the public Press of our country under their thumb, have their agents in both houses of Parliament, also about our Throne, and in almost all the Protestant Churches of this nation. The Church of England is honeycombed by them, and so are the Established, and U.F. Churches in Scotland. If the Lord will not open the eyes of the people of this country, we shall have a rude awakening some day.

Secondly. – All that have been destroyed of the Protestant bulwarks, set up at the Second Reformation and at the Revolution Settlement, will have to be

restored. The Emancipation Act, the change made in the King's Royal Declaration, and the many other changes effected, at the instigation of the Jesuits, so as to set up again the temporal power of the Pope, will have to be unmade. If we look only to men, this change in our attitude toward the Church of Rome will appear almost an impossibility, but, if we look to God, "with God all things are possible." Let us therefore, expose the errors of the Papacy, and declare the whole counsel of God to our fellow countrymen, and lifting our hands and our eyes unto the King of kings, let us commit our case to Him.

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