

# WATCH!

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VER 2400 years ago a prophet in vision saw the Shechinah, or the glory of Jehovah's Presence, leaving the temple at Jerusalem. Gradually it left; but surely. First, it was seen over the inner gate of the temple that looked toward the north (Ezek. viii. 4), then it left the cherubim for the threshold of the house (Ezek. x. 3, 4). Then the cherubims and glory took their place over the east gate of the Lord's house (chap. x. 19), afterwards they withdrew to the mountain on the east side of the city (Ezek. xi. 23), and finally went away. And wherefore was this, my reader? No less than six abominations allowed in the midst of the temple or city were the ostensible cause! Could Jehovah and evil go on together! Impossible! 1st, The image of jealousy barred the way to the temple of the Lord! (Ezek. viii. 3). 2nd, Secret abominations and idolatries were going on under the patronage of the chiefs of religion (7-12). 3rd, Women were weeping for Tammuz, the heathen god who was supposed to have been slain by a boar; the torrent called by his name becoming at one season of the year tinged with a red colour, supposed to be the blood of the god, the women weeping at the torrent (ver. 14). 4th, Men worshipping the sun with their backs towards the temple of the Lord (ver. 15, 16). 5th, The princes of Israel in the city denying the approach of judgment, and exciting the

people to build houses, whilst oppressing and murdering (chap. xi. 1-13). 6th, The remnant left taking a high place in reference to their brethren, saying, "Get you far from the Lord : unto us is this land given in possession" (xi. 15, etc.)

It was for these abominations that the glory of Jehovah's Presence left the temple and city.

Let us look at a parallel scene in the history of the professing church represented by the seven assemblies of Asia, as seen by John in Rev. i.-iii.

In Rev. i. 10-20 another Son of man is seen in the midst of these seven representative assemblies. And in like manner gradually withdrawing till He takes His place outside (See Rev. iii. 20).

The glory of God's presence is known in Him, in the midst of the professing church, but alas! here in the aspect of a judge, though, blessed be God, to begin with, clothed with a garment down to the foot (chap. i. 13), betokening His Priestly place in reference to the church.

But otherwise His head and His hair are seen as white as wool, like the Ancient of Days in Daniel (comp. Dan. vii. 9), when He shall judge this world in righteousness. His eyes like a flame of fire, piercing for judgment. His feet like burning brass, walking in righteousness for judgment. His voice as the sound of many waters, the voice of God Himself. In His right hand seven stars : out of His mouth went a two-edged sword, *i.e.* the word of God piercing between soul and spirit, and His countenance as the sun shining in its strength, as He will be when He returns to set up the kingdom in glory.

And what means this, my reader? No less than six abominations were allowed in the professing church as early as John's day, which explains this aspect of Christ. 1st, Ephesus had left its first love (Rev. ii. 4). 2nd, Pergamos allowed the Balaam doctrine to be held. 3rd, It also allowed the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. 4th, Thyatira allowed a false woman to teach, and to seduce the servants of the Lord into idolatry and sin. 5th, Sardis had a name to live and was dead. 6th, Laodicea was lukewarm, neither cold nor hot.

For like abominations in the professing church, Christ must judge it, and set it aside. Don't we see these things all around us, my reader, to day?

And is not there a parallel between what Ezekiel saw in chapters viii.-xi., and the abominations mentioned there, and what the apostle John saw in chapters i.-iii. of Revelations, and the abominations mentioned there? Is there not a striking parallel between the image of jealousy that Ezekiel saw at the entry of the door of the house of the Lord, and the words of the jealous husband to His Church mentioned in Rev. ii. 4, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love?"

Is there not a striking parallel between the secret abominations and idolatries practised by the heads of religion in Ezekiel's days, and the women leading the worship of Tammuz, and the doctrine of Balaam, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes mentioned in Rev. ii. 14-15? Has not Rome, as pictured by that woman Jezebel, erected a modern Baal worship in

Christendom (comp. Rev. ii. 20 with 1 Kings xvi. 31-32), like the men with their backs towards the temple of the Lord, and worshipping the sun in the east? (Ezek. viii. 16). Have we not, too, a parallel between the wicked counsel of the princes of Israel to their nation to build houses and plant vineyards, and in denying that the judgments of Jehovah were near (Ezek. xi. 1-8) and what we find in the address to Sardis (Rev. iii. 1-7) where the church has sunk into a dead state, with a name to live, and Christ threatening it with the world's judgment.

Lastly, is there not a parallel between the remnant left in the land in Ezekiel's days (chap. xi. 15), and the tendency of the present day to boast like Laodicea, saying, We are rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing? (Rev. iii. 17), a sort of spirit which would get rid of our brethren, and appropriate to ourselves,—a few that have left the true ground of the church of God. Again I say, don't we see these things all around us, my reader, to-day.

Then does not the word at the head of this paper come with a loud voice to our ears, "I say unto all, Watch!

I think without a doubt, that we may take the addresses to the seven churches of Asia as a prophetic sketch of the history of the professing church from John's time till the second coming of Christ to set up His kingdom. (See Rev. ii., iii.)

In John's day, the Ephesian era of things had well-nigh come to an end. The church had left its first love, and was threatened. The Smyrnæan era succeeded, one of persecution and trial, such as the church went

through from the 2nd to the 4th centuries. The Pergamos era succeeded when the Balaam doctrine of joining the church and the world together was effected by the advice of the clergy, but the faith was kept notwithstanding, as witnessed by the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. This era might date from about A.D. 325 to A.D. 600, about which time the Pope was pronounced universal Bishop. The Thyatira age succeeded, when that woman Jezebel was allowed to teach, one of the figures used for the church of Rome, the great instrument of idolatry, fornications, and corruptions in the professing church. The remnant are now distinguished from the main body of the church, and are told to look for the Morning Star, *i.e.*, Christ's second coming to take His church to glory. With this ends in one verse the prophetic history of the Church. Jezebel and her children should be judged, the remnant, at least the overcomers, would get the Morning Star.

The midnight hour of the history of the professing church has now arrived. Christ as the Morning Star is held up as the hope of the remnant coming before the morning of the kingdom to take His suffering heavenly church away (Rev. ii., end).

The Sardis era follows, and Christ presents Himself as the coming King of Israel (comp. Isa. xi.), as the One who has the seven Spirits, to set up the kingdom (Rev. iii., 1 2). At the same time He possesses the seven stars, *i.e.*, the messengers of the seven churches. The revival of the reformation takes place, sinking however to a name to live, and moral death settling down upon the church. Warning is given of coming judg-

ment, of Christ coming upon the Church like a thief (see ver. 4-6), as He says He will come upon the world, in 1 Thess. v. This era then commenced about the year 1517 A.D., and continues down to the judgment of the world by Christ, a witness that Protestantism will run on outside of Romanism till the end, but turning into the world, to partake of its judgment.

The Philadelphian era follows. Christ presents Himself again as the Holy One. Again a title of the coming King of Israel (Psalm lxxxi. ; Isaiah vi.), it all causing a fresh humbling, and a fresh separation from evil, in accordance with that title ; the True One also presenting Himself in all that He is, to the faith of His beloved people. (Rev. iii. 7, etc.) Holiness and truth is now the order of the day, Satan opposing by the revival of ritualism and Judaism. But the comforting word of the Coming One revives the courage of the poor feeble remnant, who are preserved from the trial of the great day of tribulation, by being caught away to meet the Lord in the air. This revival began without a doubt in the beginning of this century.

Laodicea follows, witnessing of fresh failure, in the whole professing church. (Rev. iii. 14, &c.) Christ presents Himself as the Amen, the fulfiller of all the promises, the faithful and true witness, when everyone else is unfaithful, the beginning of the creation of God about to take His public place as Head over all things, when the church is sinking back to the ground of the old creation.

Alas ! the revival caused thereby sinks into a state neither cold nor hot, nauseous to Christ, who will spue

the church out of His mouth. Satisfied with herself and with what she possesses, she is indifferent to Christ, and really as to the mass is wanting in what was vital, the gold tried in the fire, the white raiment, and the eye-salve. The corporate thing here is disowned, but the individual faithful one is chastened, having thus the marks of a child of God, which the assembly as a whole lacked, and Christ finds communion with him.

Thus, my reader, taking this as a prophetic history of the church, we have four states at the end running on side by side. That circle where Romanism teaches, as pictured in the address to Thyatira; the circle of Protestantism, as pictured by the church in Sardis; the circle of separation to Christ, pictured by the Church in Philadelphia; and the circle of people's justice which Laodicea signifies, pictured by that assembly. Philadelphia is the only assembly as a whole saved from the great day of tribulation coming on the world. A remnant holds the same promise in Thyatira, individuals alone in the circles of Sardis and Laodicea. My reader, judge where you find yourself to be, as to your church position for to-day.

In Mark xiii., the Lord divided the present dispensation into four watches of the night. The first watch is past, the second watch is past, the midnight cry has gone forth (comp. Matt. xxv. 6). The cock-crowing watch has long ago begun (comp. Rev. ii. 25, 28). The fourth watch is at hand. Reader, are you awake, looking for the morning star? When Christ, as the Sun of righteousness rises (see Malachi iv. 1-3), it will be for judgment on the world, but deliverance for His people

Israel, at least for the faithful remnant. But before this takes place, Christ the Morning Star will have arisen. The dead in Christ will then be raised, the living changed, and all caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 15-18). The world will be left behind for judgment; the professing church, left without the living christians in it, also for judgment. The wise virgins will have entered into the marriage (Matt. xxv. 10). The foolish virgins, the mere professors, shut out. Oh, what a cry of wailing will there be in that day; "Oh, mountains fall upon us; oh, rocks cover us!" "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But answered by the withering reply, "I never knew you;" "Depart from me." My reader, the glory is gradually departing from the assembly as it did formerly from the temple! It has departed from Romanism, it has departed from Protestantism, it is about to depart from Laodicea! A call for a moment from outside! "Behold, I stand at the door and knock!" Then all is over! The last trump sounds, the real church is caught away, the rest left for judgment. Oh, my reader, where are you to-day? Saved or lost? Inside or outside of Christ?

A.P.C.