

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

"And an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness."

VOL. XXXVIII.

MONCTON, N. B., MARCH 15TH, 1948

No. 197

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Paul S. Rees

Some Observations on Revelation Thirteen
Second Installment

Consider next the areas in which this coming "totalitarianism" will function.

1. It will be clothed with complete political authority. Mark the words of verse 2: "And the dragon gave his power and his seat and great authority." Weymouth translates it: "And it was to the dragon that he owed his power and his throne and his wide dominion." While the Bible teaches the ultimate sovereignty of God over the issues of history and of destiny, it does not hesitate to attribute demonic influence and power to the affairs of men and nations. In the wilderness of temptation Jesus refused Satan's offer of "the kingdoms of this world and the glory thereof." What he declined is going to be accepted by the head of this coming global dictatorship.

Have we not seen in these recent years what absolute political control men can seize with their cunning and determined hands? Both the Italians and the Germans have been "guinea pigs" on which the forerunners of the coming world dictator have performed their vast and vicious experiments. Speaking of their technique, Dawson says: "By continued repression and stimulation, by suggestion and terrorization, the personality is subjected to a methodical psychological assault until it surrenders its freedom and becomes a puppet which shouts and marches and hates and dies at its master's voice, or in response to their unseen and unrecognized stimulation." Then lay down beside it the astounding statement which John makes in verse 4: "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast." It is not necessary to suppose that this worship will be given consciously and in full recognition of who it is that is receiving it. It is the fact to which John is referring and not the interpretation thereof in the minds of these worshippers.

2. The coming world government will, according to John, exercise complete economic control. Look at verses 16 and 17: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

It is not necessary to believe that all of our leaders who, during the last decade, have devised and executed the innumerable laws and

instruments of collectivism, were moved by sinister motives. Whatever may have been the excesses of the so-called bureaucrats, right-thinking people realize that many of the reforms associated with the New Deal in the day of the great depression and many of the regimentation that accompanied the huge war effort were justifiable on the grounds of urgency and necessity.

Nevertheless, the fact remains, and it is a towering significant one, that these economic controls have established precedents and set up machinery which are bound to make it increasingly easy for future leaders to exploit human weakness and economic crises.

Less than ten years ago Emil Ludwig in his biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt which he called "Roosevelt: A Study in Fortune and Power" remarked, "What Roosevelt is doing (referring to the New Deal) is in no sense new to us Europeans; but how he does it, how he is transforming a conservative state into a semi-socialist state, all via popular elections and congress, and in the midst of complete freedom of speech and opposition, all this is a great example and comfort for Europe." This is not cited to cast any reflection on a dead president, but rather to show simply how the emergencies that arise in the midst of our vastly complicated and delicately balanced economy play almost inevitably into the hands of the collectivists. This process is not due to be reversed. It may be moderated here and there, but by and large the trend is toward an immense extension of these economic controls over the lives and fortunes of men.

3. The totalitarianism toward which we are moving will exercise complete religious authority and dictatorship. Look again at verse 4: "And they worshipped the beast, saying, who is like unto the beast?" Such language can mean nothing less than the offering of a final homage. As someone has said, "The property of being incomparable belongs to God only": "to whom then will ye liken me?" is the question that God asked of his ancient people through Isaiah. Here, however, this quality is ascribed to the beast. Again let me allude to Dawson's "The Judgment of the Nations." In a powerful and transiently timely passage he says: "The real meaning of what we call totalitarianism and the totalitarian state is the total control of all human activities and all human energies, spiritual as well as physical, by the State, and their direction to whatever ends are dictated by its interests, or rather the interests of the ruling party or clique. Such an attempt has been made by the despots of the past—for the God-State is the oldest of all the enemies of God—but in the past the power of the State

was limited by the means at its disposal. Today it is unlimited for the advance of science and technology, while it has immeasurably increased man's control of his environment, has also increased the control of society over the individual, of the State over society, and of the rulers over the State." To my mind, that is a pertinent and potent comment on the prophetic development which John is pointing out in this extraordinary chapter.

Yet this final totalitarian system notwithstanding its universality ("All the world wondered after the beast") and notwithstanding its invincibility ("Who is able to make war with him?") is doomed to a crashing collapse. Its mystic number is 666—a triple expression of man's incompleteness and imperfection, his frustration and his failure.

To be sure, if one reads the eighth verse of the chapter, the impression that is created is one of distress for the faithful, for we read, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." That is persecution, but it is not extermination! They are overpowered but they are not defeated. That, however, is not the final word. Turn the page in your Bible and look at chapter 17, verse 14: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them." The forces of anti-Christ may overwhelm the saints, but they are due to meet their match when they collide with the Lamb himself—the unveiled, untrammelled Christ of the Second Advent, "Lords of lords, and King of kings!"

BEFORE ME LIES A FUTURE ALL UNTRIED

Before me lies a future all untried,

About are shadows sinister and grey;
But by my side walks He who planned the whole

And knows the way through each perplexity.

The future hid, the present bulging full
Of problems hard—but God's hand holds the key

That opens every seeming gate of brass
And will unravel every mystery.

'Tis joy untold to have an all-wise Guide
To plan, to choose, to dry the falling tear,
To make the darkness light, the roughness smooth,

To drive away all loneliness and fear.

The future's hid to me, but not to God; ;
I walk in darkness, but the way is plain
To Him who ever orders all my steps
And seeks alone my soul's eternal gain.

—GRACIA L. FERRO.