

ARMAGEDDON

and

THE ADVENT

THE TEACHING OF THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

by Louis F. Were

The Spirit of Prophecy declares that the church NEEDS to study the subject of “the Battle of Armageddon” in connection with the Advent:

“We need to study the pouring out of the seventh vial. The powers of evil will not yield up the conflict without a struggle. But Providence has a part to act in the battle of Armageddon. When the earth is lighted with the glory of the angel of Revelation eighteen, the religious elements, good and evil, will awake out of slumber and the armies of the living God will take the field.” E. G. White, Ms. 175, 1899.

Thus the Lord gives faithful instruction and urges His people to give study to the theme of “the battle of Armageddon” in connection with “the religious elements” and “the pouring out the seventh vial” which, as a study of the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy reveals, is associated with the second coming of Christ. “The armies of the living God” come with Christ at His second advent, as the following quotations show.

In Vol. 6, p. 406, the Lord’s servant writes interchangeably of the second advent and Armageddon:

“The return of Christ to our world will not be long delayed. Let this be the keynote of every message.

“The blessed hope of the second appearing of Christ, with its solemn realities, needs to be often presented to the people. Looking for the soon appearing of our Lord will lead us to regard earthly things as emptiness and nothingness.

“The Battle of Armageddon is soon to be fought. He on Whose vesture is written the name, King of kings, and Lord of lords, is soon to lead forth the armies of Heaven . . . It is now

but a short time till the witnesses for God will have done their work in preparing *the way of the Lord.*" Vol. 6, p. 406.

On another occasion the servant of the Lord wrote:

"*The battle of Armageddon* is soon to be fought. He on Whose vesture is written the name, King of kings and Lord of lords leads forth *the armies of heaven* on white horses, clothed in fine linen, clean and white. John writes—(Rev. 19: 11-21)—" E. G. White, Ms. 172, 1899.

"*The enemies of God's law . . . find that they have been fighting against God . . . Soon there appears in the east . . . Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror . . . 'in righteousness He doth judge and make war.'* And *'the armies in Heaven follow Him.'* (Rev. 19: 11, 14) . . . 'And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.' (Rev. 19: 16) . . . *The King of kings descends* upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire. The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, and every mountain and island is moved out of its place." After quoting Rev. 6: 15-17, God's servant says: "Naught now is heard but the voice of prayer and the sound of weeping and lamentation . . . The wicked pray to be buried beneath the rocks of the mountains, rather than meet the face of Him whom they have despised and rejected." "The Great Controversy," pp. 640-642. (Emphasis mine).

Thus we see that the Spirit of Prophecy applies Rev. 19: 11-21 as a description of "the battle of Armageddon"—the finale of the world-wide conflict between good and evil in which *all* of God's enemies are destroyed. Bible commentators, also, apply Rev. 19: 11-21 as a description of "the battle of Armageddon." These verses describe two opposing armies: the "King of kings" "and the *armies which were in heaven* followed Him" to "*make war*" (Rev. 19: 11-16) on "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and *their armies,*" which have "gathered together to make *war* against Him that sat on the horse, and against *His army.*" Rev. 19: 19. The Spirit of Prophecy's application of "the battle of Armageddon" in connection with the "*religious elements*" and the time of the coming of Christ is the true teaching of Scripture. The "*war*" pictures of "the battle of Armageddon," given by the Revelator, are to be understood *symbolically in relation to the battle*

between the forces of good and evil, and not literally in relation to military matters. For Scriptural proof of the correctness of the interpretation presented by the Spirit of Prophecy, the reader is urged to obtain a copy of the booklet "Armageddon—the Battle of that Great Day of God Almighty." (See advertisement on the back page).

In Rev. 16: 12-16 the same two armies described in Rev. 19: 11-21 are brought to view: the heavenly armies, led by the King of kings who, because of the rotundity and rotation of the earth from west to east, come down the eastern heavens—"the Kings from the east"—and "the kings of *the earth* and of *the whole world.*"

As the Lord, through His servant, has clearly shown us that "Armageddon" is that battle in which there are only two "armies"—"the *armies which were in heaven*" and "the beast, and the kings of the earth and *their armies*"—those who are loyal to the Spirit of Prophecy will not advocate ideas concerning "Armageddon" which picture various armies of earth against each other.

Whatever material conflicts there may be between various nations, these wars will have no relation to "Armageddon." As definitely shown by the Lord's servant, "Armageddon" concerns two armies: those of "*heaven*" against those of "the *earth* and of the *whole world.*"

In the teaching that "the battle of Armageddon" is a conflict of nations it necessarily follows that it must occur *before* the coming of Christ. However, God's servant declares that "the battle of Armageddon" will be fought by the Lord *at His second coming.* It is true that just before the coming of Christ, the wicked, who have been bent on the destruction of the saints, are suddenly arrested (by God's intervention in the 6th plague) in their devil-inspired endeavour and, after the false shepherds confess their deception in misleading the people, the multitudes turn on each other. This work of self-destruction is in progress as Jesus with His angels comes to complete the work of destruction. See G.C. 655-657.

Any teaching which declares that Armageddon is a battle between nations and that it occurs *before* the second advent contradicts the teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy.

The following lines are a portion of a hymn entitled "Armageddon," used by our early Advent pioneers in the year 1852. Notice that they interpreted "Armageddon" as the Lord's battle against the wicked at His second advent:

“. . . He comes! He comes! The heavens rend!
Floods clap your hands! Ye mountains joy!
Forests in glad obeisance bend!
Earth, raise your hallelujahs high;
Let Zion wake the lofty strain—
"Live, King of kings! For ever reign!"
Ripe is the vintage of the earth;
Its clustering grapes are round and full;
And vengeance, vengeance bursts to birth,
Sudden and irresistible!
Messiah comes to tread amain,
The wine-press of the battle-plain.
The cry is up, the strife begun,
The struggle of the mighty ones;
And Armageddon's day comes on,
The carnival of slaughter's sons . . ."

By heeding the Spirit of Prophecy many false conceptions concerning "the battle of Armageddon" would be avoided. For instance, one earnestly writing in defence of the teaching that Armageddon pertains to nations in Palestine, after quoting Rev. 17: 14, says: "Now it seems that when Jesus comes as King of kings and Lord of lords, the ten kingdoms will be in a position to oppose His cause." But the Spirit of Prophecy definitely teaches that when "the battle of Armageddon" is fought by Christ at the time of His second advent "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains," praying "to be buried beneath the rocks of the mountains, rather than meet the face of Him whom they have despised and rejected." G.C. 641, 642. Instead of opposing Christ when He "comes as King of kings and Lord of lords," "the kings of the earth, and the great men . . . and the chief captains, and the mighty men" flee in terror from the glory of the Lord.

Any attempt to interpret the prophetic descriptions of "the battle of Armageddon" *in a military sense*, instead of in connection with the conflict between good and evil, as given in the Spirit of Prophecy, will always lead to confusion and error.

As "the battle of Armageddon" is fought *at* the second advent, any magnification of a *previous* so-called "Armageddon" *among the nations* only serves to diminish the greatness of the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. On the other hand, once the truth is realised that "the battle of Armageddon" is fought *by the Lord at His second coming*, the subject of Armageddon is immediately seen to be of great importance. Thus, when writing of "the battle of Armageddon," God's servant also wrote that "the return of Christ" is to be "the *keynote of every message.*" As "Armageddon" refers to the destruction of the Lord's enemies (the word "Armageddon" means "the mountain of destruction") at His coming, all the verses of Scripture which describe the slaughter of the wicked at the second advent refer to "Armageddon."

The fact that the word "Armageddon" is mentioned in the Bible only once does not mean that the subject is unimportant. The fact that the expression "the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1: 10) is mentioned only once, does not prove it unimportant, for other terms for the seventh-day Sabbath are employed in Scripture, and by them we learn that "the Lord's Day" is of the utmost importance. Similarly, throughout the Word of God other terms are employed when referring to the destruction of the wicked at the end of the world, and by them we learn that "Armageddon," meaning "the mountain of slaughter"—the slaughter of all God's enemies—is of great and solemn importance.

By comparing Rev. 19: 11-21 and Rev. 6: 15-17 (the verses quoted by the servant of the Lord when referring to "the battle of Armageddon") with Rev. 16: 14-16, we learn that "Armageddon" involves "every bondman, and every free man" (Rev. 6: 15), "the whole world" (Rev. 16: 14), "all men, both free and bond" (Rev. 19: 18). If limited to Palestine, "Armageddon" would be comparatively unimportant, but as it involves "every man," "the whole world," "all men," it is of the utmost importance.

"The return of Christ" is to be "the keynote of every message." When we understand the teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy concerning "the battle of Armageddon" being fought by Christ against "the whole world" at His second advent, we see that the Revelator made this "the keynote of every message." Instead of "Armageddon" being merely casually mentioned, as inferred by one writer, the application made by the Spirit of Prophecy to Armageddon being fought by our Lord at His second advent shows that the Lord referred to the event of Armageddon in chapters 1, 2, 6, 7, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19 of the Revelation.

Writing in favour of the non-military view of Armageddon, Prof. George McCready Price declares that it is "a subject which is very broad and has many implications." A logical study of the underlying principles shows that the understanding of "Armageddon" is of far greater consequence than many have hitherto thought—what is involved is the principle of interpretation applied in our understanding of the Third Angel's Message as taught by the Spirit of Prophecy. Concerning the Book of Revelation, God's servant declares: "*When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival.*" "*When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience.*" Test. to Min. pp. 113, 114.

An understanding of the subject of Armageddon as taught by the Spirit of Prophecy necessitates a study of the very foundations of the Advent Message. Already there are hundreds who have thus obtained "a better" understanding of "the books of Daniel and Revelation" and have entered into that "entirely different religious experience," having a foretaste of that "great revival" which the Lord's servant has declared would come from "a much closer study of the Word of God."

The Spirit of Prophecy Does Not Contradict Itself.

In many places of the world an increasing number of loyal Seventh-day Adventists from among foremost scholars and spirit-filled laity have discarded the belief that "Armageddon" refers

to a military gathering of nations in Palestine, because they see that such is not in harmony with the principles of the Advent Message and the teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy.

Some others who earnestly desire to prevent the preaching of the non-military view of "Armageddon" have mis-applied statements from the Spirit of Prophecy, making the writings of the Lord's servant appear to contain contradictions. The Spirit of God does not contradict Himself. How misleading to quote the statement from Vol. 5, p. 291: "He does not give one man new light contrary to the established faith of the body," when the so-called "new light" is actually the *old, established* teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy! How misleading, when not "one man" but a *number* of learned and godly members of the Church throughout the world believe the teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy on the non-military nature of "Armageddon!"

Another mis-applied statement from the Spirit of Prophecy is taken from the same testimony as the one just given, and must be understood in the same manner. The Lord's servant says:

"There are a thousand temptations in disguise prepared for those who have the light of truth; and the only safety for any of us is in receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest prayer; and if they see no light in it, yield to their judgment; for 'in the multitude of counsellors there is a safety.'" Vol. 5, p. 293.

Understood in its context this is sound counsel, *but it could have no application to a teaching already contained in the Spirit of Prophecy.* The counsel was primarily given to a man who was "not correct in all points of doctrine," one who led "the people to question and reject the testimonies," one whose heart was "defiled with bitterness, wrath, envy, jealousy, and evil surmising," etc., etc. See Vol. 5, p. 289-297.

How incongruous to apply this testimony in such a way that it is made to reflect against *many* godly "*brethren of experience*" in various parts of the world who believe and teach the non-military "Armageddon," which is taught in the Spirit of Prophecy!

As with Scripture, statements from the Spirit of Prophecy should be read in the light of other statements. Notice the following quotations. Under the heading, "Each One to Think for Himself," God's servant says: "We must study the truth *for ourselves*. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. *Each one of us* must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must *individually* develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God." Test. to Min. pp. 109, 110. "There is a sad neglect of reading the Bible and searching it with humble hearts *for yourselves*. Take no man's explanation of Scripture, whatever his position, but go to the Bible and search for the truth *yourselves*." Test. to Min., p. 155. "We are not to think . . . with the papists, that certain individuals are the sole guardians of truth and knowledge, that men have no right to search the Scriptures for themselves, but must accept the explanations given by the Fathers of the church . . . Those who allow prejudice to bar the mind against the reception of truth cannot receive the divine enlightenment. Yet, when a view of Scripture is presented, many do not ask, Is it true,—in harmony with God's Word? but By whom is it advocated? and *unless it comes through the very channel that pleases them, they do not accept it . . . The Lord often works where we least expect Him; He surprises us by revealing His power through instruments of His own choice, while He passes by the men to whom we have looked as those through whom light should come. God desires us to receive the truth upon its own merits—because it is truth . . . But beware of rejecting that which is truth. The great danger with our people has been that of depending upon men, and making flesh their arm. Those who have not been in the habit of searching the Bible for themselves, or weighing evidence, have confidence in the leading men, and accept the decisions they make; and thus many will reject the very messages God sends to His people, if these leading brethren do not accept them . . . Even if all our leading men should refuse light and truth, that door will still remain open. The Lord will raise up men who will give the*

people the message for this time." Test. to Min., pp. 105-107. (Emphasis mine).

"In the past God has raised up men, and He still has men of opportunity waiting, prepared to do His bidding—men who will go through restrictions which are only as walls daubed with untempered mortar. When God puts His Spirit upon men, they will work. They will proclaim the word of the Lord." T.M. 411. "Labourers who are striving to work in harmony with this instruction, are under the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and need not always, before they make an advance move, first ask permission of someone else. No precise lines are to be laid down. Let the Holy Spirit direct the workers." T.M. 492. "If you know that God would have you engage in any work, go forward. Those who have the light and consciousness that God is leading, *need not depend upon any human agent to define their work.*" T.M. 502. (Emphasis mine).

The Spirit of Prophecy in the Crisis of 1888.

In 1888, when Brethren Waggoner and Jones brought light to the church regarding the truth of Righteousness by Faith, it was not seen by a number of Adventists, and some of the leaders in the work—"well-meaning men in the cause of God"—opposed it. See "Christ Our Righteousness," pp. 56-71, by A. G. Daniells. In these pages, Pastor A. G. Daniells gives an account of *the opposition to the light* of Righteousness by Faith. In part, he says:

"This difference of views among the leaders led to serious results. It created controversy, and a degree of estrangement which was most unfortunate . . . Its rejection by some of the more experienced brethren led the younger men into uncertainty and confusion . . . Back of the opposition is revealed the shrewd plotting of the master-mind of evil, the enemy of righteousness." pp. 68-70. Brethren Waggoner and Jones were (to use the language employed by Mrs. E. G. White) "taunted with being fanatics, extremists, and enthusiasts." The Spirit of Prophecy supported these two brethren against the prevailing opposition. God's servant bore testimony against those "*resisting light* and cherishing the spirit of opposition. How long will you *hate and despise* the messengers

of God's righteousness? God has given them His message. They bear the word of the Lord." T.M., pp. 96, 97.

"This light from heaven was rejected with all the stubbornness the Jews manifested in rejecting Christ, and there was much talk about standing by the old landmarks . . . but the minds of men were fixed, sealed against the entrance of light . . . The work for this time has certainly been a surprising work of various hindrances, owing to the false setting of matters before the minds of many of our people. That which is food to the churches is regarded as dangerous, and should not be given them." E. G. White, Ms. 13, 1889. (Emphasis mine).

History repeats itself. Down through the centuries, opposition to light from Heaven follows a familiar pattern. The unfortunate experience of estrangement and misrepresentation, *engendered by opposition to the light on Righteousness by Faith*, is the usual manifestation of Satan's efforts to hinder the cause of truth and righteousness by preventing the spread of light among God's people. "We need *never* expect that *when the Lord* has light for His people, Satan will stand calmly by and make no effort to prevent them receiving it. *He will work upon minds to excite distrust and jealousy and unbelief*. Let us beware that we do not refuse the light God sends us, *because it does not come in a way to please us.*" Vol. 5, p. 728. (Emphasis mine).

It is a cause of great rejoicing that the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy point forward to the time of the triumph of the Advent Movement. The earth is to be lightened with the glory of God's last-day Message. Rev. 18: 1. God's servant saw a wonderful reformatory work come into being in the closing phases of the work. Such a reformation is always associated with a more faithful study of the Word of God. "Those who eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God will bring from the books of Daniel and Revelation truth that is inspired by the Holy Spirit. They will start into action forces that cannot be repressed. The lips of children will be opened to proclaim the mysteries that have been hidden from the minds of men." T.M. 116.

"As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last

book of the New Testament Scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand." T.M. 116.

As we have seen, the Spirit of Prophecy declares that the Church needs to give study to the theme of "the battle of Armageddon" in connection with the "*religious elements*" and the events associated with the second coming of Christ.

The following publications will assist the reader to follow the counsel of the servant of the Lord in the study of "the battle of Armageddon" in its relation to the second advent:—

"Armageddon—the Battle of that Great Day of God Almighty." Price, 1/6.

(Suitable for distribution among your non-Adventist friends)

"The Certainty of the Third Angel's Message Proved by Important Principles of Prophetic Interpretation: Also Armageddon—Before and After the Millennium." 346 pages. Price, 10/-.

"Christ Conquers! Or Why Christ Rose on Sunday, the First Day of the Week—The Vital Relation to Armageddon, the Battle of that Great Day of God." Price, 6/-.

"What is Armageddon?" Price, 3/6.

"Armageddon—The Time of Spiritual Israel's Deliverance." Free on receipt of postage.

"The Fire of His Jealousy." Free on receipt of postage.

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