

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

By

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CHAPTER TWELVE

ANTI-"WE-ISM"

SIR Archibald Carlyon, proprietor of the "*Courier*," and Ralph Bastin's employer, had just arrived at the "*Courier*" office. The whilom middle-aged, sprightly old man was as bowed and decrepit as a man of ninety.

As he entered the editorial private room, Ralph, for one instant, did not recognize him. Then, as he realized who it was, he sprang forward with an almost son-like solicitude, and helped him to a chair.

"Sir Archibald, what has happened?" he cried.

The old man lifted weary, hopeless eyes, out of which all the old-time flash had gone, and nothing but heavy dullness remained. "Have you heard from my boy, from George?" he asked.

"No, why, is there anything the matter, Sir Archibald?" Ralph's tones were full of alarmed anxiety.

The baronet's hand had been thrust into his breast-pocket, as he spoke. He took out a letter and handing it to Ralph, groaned out the two words:

"Read that!"

Ralph caught his breath as his eyes took in the first lines: "Dear Uncle, by the time you receive this, I shall be beyond this life, though where - in that outer world, that world beyond - I can-not tell."

Ralph had not turned to the signature, he knew the; writing too well, and knew it for bright, happy jocund George Carlyon's. He read on:

"All that has happened in the world, of late, has driven me mad.

Dear old Tom Hammond wrote me fully of his change of heart, and besought me to face the whole matter of my 'eternal destiny,' as he termed it. I simply did not reply to his letter. Three days later he was taken, with all those others, to GOD. Since then I have plunged into everything trying to drown thought, and remorse, but I cannot, so I am ending all - there's a mad thing to say, as if death could end all. Though I do not doubt but what many other fellows will do what I am doing now.

Good bye, good old Hunky Archie,

"Your unhappy, rotten,
"GEORGE."

As Ralph lifted his eyes from the paper he found Sit Archibald's fixed upon him, and the anguish in the poor old dull eyes drew tears to Ralph's.

"We found him," cried the old man, "in the boathouse, by the lake, with a bullet through his temples. My poor boy! My noble boy!"

Dry-eyes, but with a soul full of anguish, his features, too, twisted with the anguish of his soul, the old man rocked himself for a moment in his chair.

Looking up suddenly, he startled Ralph by the bitterness of his tones, as he said:

"GOD forgive me! But I could find it easy to curse our clergy, our ministers, our bishops, our teachers, for that when we looked to them, and paid them, to tell us the right, the true thing, they let us go on deluded by the belief that attendance upon the outward form was sufficient to make us sure of Heaven in the future.

"Why, Bastin, good fellow, do you know that more than half of the clergymen with whom I was well acquainted, are among those whom GOD has left behind, and not one of those whom I know, thus left, has a mite of concern about their state, but seem to have gone right over to the Devil, if I may so say it. What does it all mean?"

Ralph began to speak kindly, sympathetically to him, but the old man suddenly interrupted with:

"And yesterday's article in '*the Courier*' upon the opening of that Temple at Jerusalem, with all that about the 'Mark of the Beast;' that mock (I suppose it was mock) miracle, with the fire consuming the sacrifice, and then that awful portent of darkness, thunder, and lightning - but no rain. It reminded me of the scene at Calvary, when the CHRIST was crucified. What does it all mean, Bastin?"

"What I have said in that article, I believe, Sir Archibald. The events in Jerusalem, during the last three days are the beginning of the reign of Antichrist. For years, blinded by Satan whom most of us, unknowingly, served, and blinded by what we termed the 'Progress of the Age,' and of the World, but which ought to have been recognized for what it really was, the growing of the Apostasy, which has now begun to be avowed and absolutely universal-blinded, I say, by all this, Sir Archibald, we suffered many mighty forces to stealthily, powerfully work together so that the climax that has come upon us, was made absolutely easy.

"If we had known our Bibles only a tithe as well as we knew our newspapers, we should have seen that all we were glorying in, under the name of 'Progress,' was but a perfecting of human systems, leaving GOD, and His purposes, and His plans utterly out of the question. 'We went to our churches, our chapels, we had a **'form of Godliness,'** but we tacitly, and controversially, in print and speech, **'denied the power thereof.'** We not only made it possible, but easy 'for one man of Master-mind to assume universal dominion, and to be the object of universal worship, as Apleon, the Antichrist, soon will be.'

"And now, Sir Archibald, we are on the eve of a gigantic blend of all religions, with all commercial undertakings. The more I study GOD's word in the light of all that is happening, the more clearly I see this.

"How often, in the old days - say from the mid-eighties - professing Christian men, when expostulated with as to the difference between their professed creed of the Sunday, and their daily practice in business, would say, 'oh, bosh! religion is one thing, business is another!'

"Then, as the years moved on, all kinds of trading concerns sprang up professedly religious, and conducted on professedly religious lines. But even the truest Seers in the Church of GOD would hardly have dared to predict that in a comparatively few years the final outcome of this trend in events would be an absolute coalescence into one vast system of the world's many religious systems and of the world's commerce.

"The most that the Seers of GOD, in His church, dared to say of the future was that the principle of such a combined system was suggested by the text of Revelation 13. For the second Beast **'caused the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first Beast . . . And he had power . . . to cause that as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed. 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 that mark. or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.'**

"Here, for nearly two thousand years, was the principle of this Hell-devised, Devil-developed combined system of religion and commerce, prophesied, but now few even of GOD's choicest saints realized all that would mean.

"The nineteenth and early twentieth century Christendom had lost the Bible ideal of Christianity, and had substituted a very material idea for GOD's idea.

The two decades - last of the nineteenth, and first of the twentieth centuries - were marked by immense religious activities, but while a merely religious movement might manufacture a Christendom, it could never make Christians.

"To be religious is one thing to be a Christian quite another thing. The vast bulk of the members of the so-called Christian Churches of those years, had never been born again from above.

"Christian in name (by virtue of membership in a Church; or by virtue of their subscription to a creed; or by a careful attendance upon the forms of their own particular church) they were yet only religious, because GOD's word regards those only as Christians in whom CHRIST indwells, and none can be indwelt by CHRIST save those into whom He has come in the birth from above. ('Born again' ones). **'Except a man be born again, he CANNOT see the Kingdom of God'** much more live in it.

" **'That which is born of the flesh is flesh,'** and **'flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God,'** but only those spiritually born-born from above. We only become Christians by regeneration.

"In the years immediately before the 'Rapture,' professing Christians, and even professedly Christian ministers, men who had taken vows before GOD to preach the **'whole counsel of God,'** and who received their salary avowedly for this purpose, scouted, and often publicly denied the necessity of the New Birth. Blind leaders of the blind, they surely will have the greater punishment.

"But to return to the other thought.

"The last twenty years of the nineteenth century, and more so the first ten years of the twentieth century, was marked as an age of centralization and concentration of all kinds of interests, commercial and religious. Each year, the trusts and monopolies in the commercial world became more and more concentrated, until it has become perfectly easy for Lucien Apleon, Emperor-Dictator of the World, to govern and control (from that beautiful, hellish city, Babylon the Great), every business interest in the world.

"Two days ago, at Jerusalem, the 'Covenant Sign' – so-called – but which GOD calls the 'Mark of the Beast' – was donned by three or four million people, in the holiday spirit, forty-eight hours ago, will have to be branded on every one's person in the universe in three and a half years time – or less – or else the refuser of the degradation will have to seal his or her loyalty to GOD by their life.

"In three and a half years from now, Sir Archibald, the image of Lucien Apleon, will be set up in the Temple of Jerusalem, and, I believe, in every other great religious center of the World – St. Peter's, Rome; St. Paul's, London; and so on in all our great cities, and world centers. I have been studying this subject naturally, and I find that one great scholar (Hengstenberg) says, that though one image is spoken of, yet having regard to the sense of the language, 'a multitude of images is meant.' "

“But religiously, Basin, religiously?” cried the old man. “How did the condition of things in the end of the nineteenth, and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, help to make it possible for all the world presently to worship the Beast and his image?”

There was an almost childish querulousness of tone in the old baronet’s questioning.

“All those years,” began Ralph, “were marked by a wonderful activity on new lines of deliverance for the human race, from the ills that had grown up around the vast bulk of that race. GOD’s plan was for man’s regeneration, a change of heart and life – a working from the center to the circumference. But the churches – all denomination – of the years we are speaking about, began endless schemes of deliverance that the man, as they hoped, might be changed from the outside – that is to say, man’s idea of benefitting man was by an outward reform.

“They failed to recognize the fundamental fact that all the ‘Ills of Humanity,’ so called, proceeded from man’s natural depravity, from man himself, and not from his environment. We failed to see that a reformed race would only mean a perpetuation of all the old natural lusts, and presently, bring about a return to the old condition of things, which a regenerated race would hold reform in it, and that that reform would not only be perpetual, but ever increasing in its perfecting.

“Then, too, the great religious denominations became fired with the idea of a consolidating, unifying process that should smelt down all denominations into one. To do this every type of religion should find a place. What would it matter if one or more of the religions denied the Deity of CHRIST? That others did not accept the Bible as the Inspired Word of GOD and so on? ‘The doctrine of CHRIST,’ was gradually eliminated from almost all preaching and the doctrine of a divine humanism – ‘The divinity of man,’ became largely the new cult.

“I believe, from all that I can gather, one of the first steps towards this elimination of ‘the doctrine of CHRIST,’ could be traced in the continued elimination from the various denomination hymnbooks (as new ones were issued beginning as far back as the late seventies) of hymns relating to the facts of the Atonement and other kindred subjects, and the substitution of odes, poems, etc., in which aspiration took the place of experimental religion. The hymnbooks of more than one, or two, or three denominations, showed this retrograde movement, through their several successive issues.

“Then, side by side with this Anti-Christian movement, there went on silently that gathering out from the world, and from the merely professing Christian church, those who were, by virtue of their New Birth, through faith in CHRIST, the recipients of Eternal life, and who, when that glorious ‘Rapture’ took place awhile ago, were caught up into the air as a body of living believers to be joined forever, to their head – CHRIST; thus robbing the world of what CHRIST Himself called ‘the salt of the earth’ ”.

With a groan, Sir Archibald cried:

“GOD help us, Bastin! What fools we were!”

Then with a weary upward look into Ralph's face, he rose to his feet, saying:

'I must be going. I've arranged to meet the lawyers in half-an-hour from now. Good-bye, dear fellow. I will come up to town to see you, or you must come down to see me, before the wind-up of the paper, Good-bye.'

The two men wrung each other's hand, then parted.

Ten minutes later George Bullen and Rose arrived. Amazed to see his friend with an extraordinary beautiful girl, Ralph was presently listening to all the wonderful story of their meeting, etc.

Later on, when, for a moment or two, the two men were alone together, in the inner room, Ralph asked George what he proposed to do with the beautiful girl?

"There is but one thing I can do," he replied. "I must marry her, and that soon. It is no time, in the ordinary sense, to be thinking of '**marrying and giving in marriage**,' yet, under the circumstances, I can do no other. I care for her already, as I never cared for any woman, and her affection for me is touching in its clingingness."

"He smiled a little sadly, as he added:

"It is well that there is a little company of us here in London, believers in GOD, and therefore believers in marriage."

* * * *

George Bullen and Rose were married within the week of their landing in England. The ceremony took place in a little company of believers, who gathered on Sunday (old-count of time) and once on a week-night, in a little hall that had been used for a Sunday School in the old days. Sunday Schools, like many of the other religious institutions, of the old days before the "Rapture," were quite a thing of the past.

Marriage was one of the things of the past. Some years before the "Rapture," a booklet entitled "*We-ism*" had been published, in which the author had unblushingly declared: "Women, absolved from shame, servitude, and inequality, shall be enfranchised, owners of themselves . . . We believe in the sacredness of the family and the home, the legitimacy of every child, and the inalienable right of every woman to the absolute possession of herself."

The doctrines and practice of "affinity," the "problem" plays, and "sex" novels, of the first decade of the twentieth century, had all materially helped to make the unregenerate mind and heart ready to receive "free love" in its widest, grossest forms. While a certain teaching of "Christian Science" had had an overwhelming power in the same direction. *

All these forces had helped to make the doctrine of illicit love acceptable in these early days of the Antichrist reign, so that it was only among the little gatherings of true Believers, that marriage was sanctified into the sacrament it had been in the good, true old days.

** We prefer, in a book of this character, to keep back the actual terms of the filthy statement.
Author .*

~ end of chapter 12 ~

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