



A Wonderful and Horrible Thing

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Charles Fitch

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“Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord. Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?”-*Jeremiah 5:29-31.WHT 3.1*

The object of this discourse is to show the application of the foregoing text of sacred Scripture to the existing state of things in the professedly religious world.*WHT 3.2*

I. The prophets prophesy falsely.*WHT 3.3*

II. The priests bear rule by their means.*WHT 3.4*

III. The people love to have it so.*WHT 3.5*

IV. What will ye do in the end thereof?*WHT 3.6*

I. The Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness, has taught us, in his own interpretation of the parable of the tares of the field, that the children of the wicked one, the tares, are to grow together with the children of the kingdom, the wheat, until the harvest, which is the end of this world; when the angels, the reapers, shall gather the wicked as tares and cast them into the fire, and they shall be burned; and that then the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*WHT 3.7*

The false prophets tell us, however, that the time is coming in this

world, when “none shall say to his neighbor or his brother, Know the Lord, for all shall know him, from the least of them to the greatest of them.” In this they directly contradict Christ, who says the children of the wicked one are to grow here until the harvest, which is the end of this world. To make out their theory, however, the false prophets say that not *all* shall know the Lord, but that there shall be some wicked among the righteous, at the very time when God says “all shall know me, from the least of them even to the greatest of them.” *WHT 4.1*

Thus the false prophets contradict God. The wicked shall not dwell in this world to the end of it, because all shall know the Lord. But *all* shall not know the Lord, because there will be some tares, or wicked, until the harvest, which is the end of this world. Let them choose for themselves on which horn of the dilemma they will be transfixed. They are false prophets, for they contradict God. The truth is, both of these declarations of God shall stand. The wicked will dwell in this world until the end of it, when they will be burned as tares in the fire; for this earth itself, as we are told by Peter, is reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But there shall be, according to God’s promise by Isaiah, to which Peter refers, new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; and there, “and then, shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father;” and then “all shall know him, from the least of them even to the greatest of them, and none shall say to his neighbor or his brother, Know the Lord.” *WHT 4.2*

Again. God tells us by Paul, in his epistles to the Thessalonians, that “the man of sin, the son of perdition,” (which is well understood to mean the Roman Catholic Church,) “is to be consumed with the spirit of Christ’s mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming;” which coming shall be “with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” The prophet Daniel, speaking of the same power, says it “shall make war with the saints, and prevail against them, until the Ancient of days shall come;” which he explains to be the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven to take his

dominion and glory and kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him; which is the time, as Daniel teaches, when the judgment shall set, and the books be opened.*WHT 5.1*

But the false prophets tell us, that, before the Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven to judge the world, there shall be a thousand years, and some say “three hundred and sixty thousand probably,” during which the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;” a period of great duration, when “there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all God’s holy mountain.”*WHT 6.1*

How, then, can the enemies of the saints make war and prevail against them, until the Ancient of days, the Son of man, comes, and the judgment is set and the books opened? We see, again, that the false prophets contradict God.*WHT 6.2*

The truth is this. The “man of sin” shall remain until Christ’s coming, and then be destroyed. He shall make war with the saints and prevail against them, till the Ancient of days appears, and the judgment shall set and the books be opened-and then the bodies of them who have opposed the saints, shall be given to the burning flame; after which “the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and shall possess the kingdom *forever, even forever and ever.*” This is no temporal millennium, after which the saints are to be dispossessed, and the wicked are again to inhabit the earth.*WHT 6.3*

Again. The false prophets tell us, that at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, by the universal spread of the gospel and the conversion of all nations to the truth.*WHT 7.1*

But the Bible says, that at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the third wo cometh, when the Lord God Almighty, which is and was and is to come, shall take to him his great power and shall reign-and the nations shall be angry, and God’s wrath shall come, and the time of the dead that they shall be judged-and God shall give reward unto his servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear his name, small and great-and shall destroy them

that destroy the earth.*WHT 7.2*

Then let the world understand that the false prophets prophesy a lie unto them-for when the seventh trump shall sound, and its attending wo shall be poured out, it will be found to consist, not in the conversion and salvation of all nations, but in their destruction by the great power of the Lord God Almighty.*WHT 7.3*

The false prophets tell us, that, after the sounding of the seventh trumpet, there shall be a period of great length, previous to the resurrection, during which the world shall enjoy such peace and prosperity as has never been enjoyed since the world was defiled by sin. But the Bible tells us, that “in a moment, *in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.*” Is not the seventh trumpet the last trumpet? And since at the sounding of the last trump the dead are to be raised in the twinkling of an eye,-upon what authority is this world promised a thousand or perhaps many thousand years of unexampled prosperity, after the sounding of that trumpet and previous to the resurrection? It is on the authority of false prophets alone.*WHT 7.4*

We are also told, that “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with *the trump of God*, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” These things, then, are to take place at the sounding of the trump of God; and since the seventh is the last trump, those mighty events must transpire when the seventh trumpet sounds. Is it asked on what authority the seventh trump is called the last trump? I reply, that a specific design of the book of the Revelation, was to show “the things which shall be hereafter,” and “to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass;” and it was a revelation which God gave unto John for that very purpose. Therein we have mention made of seven trumpets only, at the last of which God’s wrath comes, and the time of the dead that they shall be judged; and the prophets and the saints, and all that fear God, small and great, are then to have their reward, and they that destroy the earth (i. e. the wicked) are then to

be destroyed. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump*, the dead shall be raised incorruptible." In showing "to his servants things which must shortly come to pass," God has mentioned no trump after the seventh. In a twinkling, then, at the sounding of that trump, the world's last catastrophe shall come. Look out, then, O ye inhabitants of the earth, for the wo that is to be poured out at the sounding of that trumpet; for "the second wo is past, and behold the third wo cometh quickly."*WHT 8.1*

"Wo, wo, wo, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound."*WHT 9.1*

The fifth angel sounded, and there went forth locusts, like horses prepared unto battle, with faces of men-hair of women-teeth as lions-tails as scorpions-and on their heads as it were crowns like gold. This is a striking description of the hordes of Turkish horsemen which went forth under Ottoman, their leader, with yellow turbans upon their heads, and long flowing hair; armed with javelins, sharp like the teeth of lions, and wearing cimeters in a scabbard by their side, extending behind them like the tail of the scorpion. After their ravages, which were to continue five prophetic months, or one hundred and fifty years, we are told, "one wo is past, and behold there come two more woes hereafter."*WHT 9.2*

Then "the sixth angel sounded, and a voice was heard from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand. And the horses and they that sat on them, had breastplates of fire and jacinth and brimstone-and from the mouths of the horses issued fire and smoke and brimstone, and by these were the third part of men killed." These four angels were the four Turkish clans on the head waters of the Euphrates, all horsemen, now using fire-arms-for gunpowder and firearms were about that time brought into use-and in the use of these they seemed as having breastplates of fire, smoke and brimstone, which had the appearance of issuing from the mouths of

the horses. Here was the second wo-and many indeed have been the woes which men have suffered from wars waged by fire and smoke and brimstone. After this, the angel standing on sea and land swears by him that liveth forever, that there shall be time no longer; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished. The time allotted to the sounding of the sixth trumpet, of an hour, a day, a month and a year of prophetic periods, being three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days, commencing 1449-when the four angels were loosed and began to slay the third part of men-must terminate in 1840, and must embrace in that period all the events which transpired previous to 1840-including of course the slaying of the two witnesses-in the attempted destruction of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are the witnesses which testify of Christ. These events took place in France, about the year 1798. At the termination of these events, we are told "*the second wo is past*, and behold the third wo cometh quickly;" when the seventh angel shall sound, and great voices shall be heard in heaven, saying, "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."*WHT 10.1*

Not so, say the false prophets; there is no *wo coming quickly*, but the greatest blessing that the world ever saw, in a mighty out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, for the conversion and consequent salvation of all the nations of the earth. Wonderful and horrible indeed, is this thing! thus to deceive the nations, when God declares that "*the third wo cometh quickly, and the time of God's wrath when he shall destroy them that destroy the earth.*" O, how many are deceived with this cry of "peace and safety," just as sudden destruction is about to come upon them "as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape!"*WHT 12.1*

Again: the false prophets say, that, after Christ, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, shall take possession of the nations, by converting and saving them, and there shall be a millennium of peace and safety-the wicked shall again prevail, and the prevalence of Christ's kingdom on earth shall cease. But God has said by Daniel, in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's vision, "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: *and*

the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” So also it is declared, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, by great voices in heaven, “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, *and he shall reign forever and ever.”*WHT 12.2

O, wonderful and horrible thing! thus to deceive men with this promise of a long period of unprecedented peace and safety, when God is just ready to pour out all the vials of his wrath. If the truth were faithfully and fearlessly proclaimed, multitudes would be made sensible of their danger, and would seek and find a place of safety while there is hope. But being deceived by this cry of peace and safety, from these false prophets, they will be emboldened to continue in sin until they perish. This is the very time predicted by Paul, *2 Timothy 4:3*: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts they shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and be turned *unto fables.*”WHT 13.1

Hence the fable of a golden age, a glorious millennium of peace and safety to this world, previous to the coming of Christ for the destruction of the ungodly. This is the very thing to gratify those who lust for the things of earth. I know there is a time coming when “the Lord will comfort Zion, when he will beautify her waste places, and make her wilderness as Eden and her desert like the garden of the Lord.” But this must be the time spoken of in the Revelation, when the new heavens and new earth shall appear, “and the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain; and there shall be no more curse.” Then only can there be a state of things like Eden, where was no evil. When God’s curse is removed, then, in the restitution of all things, “the wilderness shall be as Eden and the desert like the garden of the Lord.” But will God destroy the earth, after he has thus restored and beautified it, and made it like the garden of the Lord? Never. This is to take place in that new earth, which God says *shall remain before him.* See *Isaiah 65:22.*WHT 13.2

To promise the fulfilment of these glorious things to this accursed

world, which God has reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, and thereby to cry peace and safety to the wicked, and lull them asleep in their sins till they perish, is horrible-horrible-horrible!! Shall not God visit for these things? Shall not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this? Thus do the prophets prophesy falsely.*WHT 14.1*

II. The priests bear rule by their means.*WHT 14.2*

In consequence of this fable of a glorious millennium to this world, which for almost six thousand years has been lying under the curse of God, and bringing forth continually its thorns and thistles-a fable which false prophets have invented; the priests at this time bear rule over the people, and keep them at ease in sin. By preaching and praying much about this expected time of peace and safety, they turn the attention of men aside from the immense importance of being prepared for the coming of the great and notable day of the Lord, which is at hand, "when the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up, and the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God." Some, in faithfulness to God and the souls of men, are raising the note of warning, endeavoring to show the people that "the end of all things is at hand;" that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh;" that "yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry;" that the signs which were to precede the Lord's appearing and the end of the world are fulfilled, and that consequently the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, to gather his elect, and cast the wicked into a furnace of fire, is near, even at the doors. But while these are endeavoring, by the terrors of the Lord, to persuade men to flee from the wrath to come, the priests, on the authority of the false prophets, are crying, "the end is not yet;" "my Lord delayeth his coming;" "peace and safety;" there are a thousand years yet, and probably three hundred and sixty thousand years of such peace and safety as the world never saw, before Christ will come to destroy it. This declaration is made and reiterated by priests of all names and sects-orthodox and heterodox-from the most rigid adherent to the doctrine of future endless punishment, to the most unblushing advocate of no

punishment for sin beyond this life. Those who utterly abhor each other in the professed priesthood, are agreed to say the Lord delayeth his coming, and to promise long peace and safety to this world, which God has cursed and reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*WHT 14.3*

Not that all professed ministers are knowingly and wilfully uttering falsehood. They are deceived, and are deceiving one another, and deceiving the people; and thus vast multitudes are bound together in the same deception. If a man appears with the truth on his lips, entreating the people to shake off their deathlike lethargy, and arise and trim their lamps, and be ready to meet their coming Lord, the priests are ready to warn and admonish, and even entreat the people not to hear. In this way they bear rule by the means of the false prophets.*WHT 16.1*

III. The people love to have it so.*WHT 16.2*

This is true of great multitudes who call themselves God's people. Their love to Christ has waxed cold, and consequently they do not love his appearing; but, like Demas, they do love this present world, and therefore any fable, however groundless, which promises them long enjoyment in possessing the trifles of this world, is gladly received: they love to have it so. Others, who are doubtless truly and devotedly the children of God, have been so long accustomed to anticipate a temporal millennium, that their affections have become strongly entwined around it, and they are now manifestly unwilling to give up the long-cherished expectation, even for that blessed hope of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. They cannot say with the Apostle, "our conversation (*polituma*, i. e. citizenship) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." The glorious coming of the Lord, and the glorious resurrection of all the righteous, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom, and glory, and dominion, which shall never pass away, nor be left to other people, are all eclipsed from the minds of such, by the millennium which false prophets have thrown between them and their approaching Lord. Thus the people love to have it as

the false prophets and the priests have taught them, that the Lord delayeth his coming. Some love the thought from a desire to gratify worldly lusts, and others because of a confirmed habit of regarding a temporal millennium as a truth which it is sacrilege to touch; and all are exceedingly backward, if not entirely unwilling to admit that there is evidence that our glorious Lord will soon appear. *WHT 16.3*

They love to have it that the coming of him, whom they profess to love above all other beings, is yet far distant. They say, some of them, that Christ cannot be sufficiently glorified in his everlasting kingdom, unless his coming is delayed until the number of those prepared for heaven shall greatly exceed the multitude of the lost; notwithstanding Christ has himself declared that “many go to destruction, and few find life;” *Matthew 7.*; that “many are called but few chosen.” O, it is horrible, truly horrible, to look into the Bible, and examine the overwhelming proofs that the coming of Christ, and the day of dreadful destruction upon the wicked, is at the door, and consequently that their last opportunity of making their peace with God is now fast wasting away; and to behold prophet and priest combined together to say “my Lord delayeth his coming,” and to promise peace and safety to a world devoted by its Maker to speedy destruction! Said an unconverted man, recently, after listening to the truth relating to the second coming of Christ, “Where are our ministers? We have been paying them to tell us the truth, and they have kept it from us; and now Christ is just upon us, and we are unprepared.” So it is; and many, very many, doubtless, have thus been deceived to their own eternal undoing. How is it, that when the apostles, even in their day, so repeatedly alluded to the fact that the end of all things was at hand, those who live almost eighteen centuries nearer that great and notable day, are now taking it upon them to teach that it is far off? If not wilful deceivers, they must be deceiving others, in consequence of being themselves deceived. They must, on this infinitely momentous subject of Christ’s second coming to judge the world, be blind leaders of the blind. May the Lord, in mercy, save both the leaders and those who are led, from falling together into the tremendous ditch which is just before them, and from which there is no recovery! Neither Christ, nor one of the apostles, has anywhere hinted at anything like such a period of peace and prosperity previous to the resurrection of the righteous, as these prophets and priests are promising the world;

nor does the Old Testament furnish any ground for it, except as those glorious promises-which are to be fulfilled to the righteous above, in their eternal state of blessedness, after the destruction of this accursed world, and of the wicked with it-are dragged into this unhallowed work, and made to promise immense periods of "peace and safety" to a world which God's own word has reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. O Thou, who alone art able to open the understandings of men, that they may understand the Scriptures, in things pertaining to thy kingdom, lead all who call themselves by thy name, to "cry after knowledge, and lift up their voice for understanding-to seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasure;" and then may they truly understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, in things appertaining to the glorious appearing of our blessed Lord and Savior! And O, be merciful to the souls, who, by the cry of peace and safety, have hitherto been encouraged to go on in their sins!*WHT 18.1*

I am aware that many will say, "we utter no cry of peace and safety, though we declare that the Lord's coming is not now at hand. But it is only necessary to notice who they are who listen with approbation to such as say "the end is not yet," and to observe the manner in which they are affected by it, to see clearly that it is regarded by them as a cry of peace and safety, and that it does exert this very influence on their minds. All cold-hearted, worldly-minded professors of religion, all unconverted sinners, skeptics, Deists, Atheists, Universalists, and all the vicious and abandoned of every grade, love to be told that the Lord's coming is not at hand. This is a pleasant sound to them, and they approve and applaud all such as exert themselves to show that the Lord's coming is far distant; and I freely admit that there are many deceived souls among those who, we believe, are the true children of God, who are still attempting to make it appear that their Lord will yet be long absent. The wicked, however, do show that their fears are greatly lulled to rest, when told that there are no good reasons for believing that their Lord will soon come. Say, if you please, "we tell the wicked that there is not an hour's safety for them, though the coming of the Lord is distant, since they may be called any moment to die;" but there is nothing in the thought of death that can scarcely begin to be as effective in rousing men to prepare for what is before them, as in the thought

that Christ will soon appear in the clouds of heaven to judge and reward them according to their works.*WHT 20.1*

IV. And what will ye do in the end thereof?*WHT 21.1*

I know there are many who ask, what will be the result of saying the end of all things is at hand? But I read in my Bible, *Isaiah 66:5*: “Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name’s sake, said, let the Lord be glorified-but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.” I have learned to tremble at the word of the Lord. I can say with one of old, “My flesh trembleth because of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.” I am afraid, when I read in the Bible what is coming upon the wicked, and coming soon, *right soon*. For “he that testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly.” It was declared near eighteen hundred years ago, and therefore must now be at the door. But what will those do who have prophesied falsely, in saying that the Lord’s coming is far off, and the priests who have borne rule by their means, and the people who have loved to have it so-who have taken delight in being deceived? What will they do when the coming of the Son of man shall be seen as lightning from the one part under heaven to the other part under heaven; when it shall come upon them as a thief in the night; when they shall still be saying “peace and safety, and behold sudden destruction?”*WHT 21.2*

O, ye thoughtless, unbelieving ones, what will ye do in the end thereof; when “the people shall be as the burnings of lime, and as thorns cut up shall be burned in the fire; when the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate, and he shall consume the sinners thereof out of it;” when “the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and the proud and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch;” when the Lord shall visit for these things, when his soul shall be avenged on such a nation as this, O, what will ye do in the end thereof? Unbelievers, false prophets, priests that bear rule by their means, people that love to have it so, what will ye do in the end thereof? Shall I, for fear of feeble man, The Spirit’s course in me restrain? Or, undismayed, in deed and word, Be a true witness

of my Lord?*WHT 22.1*

Awed by a mortal's frown, shall I Conceal the word of God most high!
How then before thee shall I dare To stand, or how thine anger bear?*WHT 24.1*

Shall I, to soothe the unholy throng, Soften thy truth, or smooth my tongue
To gain earth's gilded toys, or flee The cross endured, my Lord, by thee?*WHT 24.2*

What then is he whose scorn I dread, Whose wrath or hate makes me afraid?
A man! an heir of death! a slave To sin! a bubble on the wave!*WHT 24.3*

Yea, let men rage; since thou wilt spread Thy shadowing wings around my head;
Since in all pain thy tender love Will still my sure refreshment prove.*WHT 24.4*

