

BABYLON –DEFINED BY PIONEERS

"When a religion is good, I conceive that it will support itself; and when it cannot support itself, and God does not take care to support it, so that it's professors are obliged to call for the help of the civil power, it is a sign, I say, of its being a bad one."

Benjamin Franklin to Richard Price, 9 Oct. 1780 Writings 8:153-54

The union of the church with the state, be the degree never so slight, while it may appear to bring the world nearer to the church, does in reality but bring the church nearer to the world" (88GC 297)

When the early church became corrupted by departing from the simplicity of the gospel, and accepting heathen rites and customs, she lost the Spirit and power of God; and in order to control the consciences of the people she sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the State, and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of 'heresy.' In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the State will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends. "Whenever the church has obtained secular power, she has employed it to punish dissent from her doctrines. Protestant churches that have followed in the steps of Rome by forming alliance with worldly powers have manifested a similar desire to restrict liberty of conscience" (88GC 443).

Pioneers on Babylon

"I need not take to give a definition in detail of what **the image of the beast** is; **we all know well that it is the church power using the government, the civil power, for church purposes.** ... Now I want to state a little further upon the principle that **no Christian, being a citizen of the kingdom of God, can of right start any procedure in connection with the civil government.** After it is started by the government itself, that is another question... I repeat therefore, that **upon the principles which govern kingdoms and governments, the very principle of the law in heaven, or law in earth, a Christian cannot start any procedure in connection with civil government.** And of all Christians, Seventh-day Adventists cannot do it. **The very keeping of the Sabbath forbids it"** {February 4, 1895 ATJ, GCB 11.2}

"The true church is a chaste virgin. (2 Cor. 11:2). **The church that is joined with the world in friendship is a harlot. It is this unlawful connection with the kings of the earth that constitutes her the great harlot of the Apocalypse.** (Rev.17). Thus, the Jewish Church, at first espoused to the Lord (Jer. 2:3; 31:32), became a harlot (Eze.16)... The unlawful union with the world of which Babylon is guilty, is positive that it (Babylon) is the civil power... For these reasons, it is very evident that **the Babylon of the Apocalypse is the professed church united with the world"** {1897 UrS, DAR 654.2}

Babylon's Merchandise. - In these verses we have an enumeration of great Babylon's merchandise, which includes every-thing pertaining to luxurious living, pomp, and worldly display. All kinds of mercantile traffic are brought to view. **The declaration concerning "slaves and souls of men" may pertain more particularly to the spiritual domain, and have reference to slavery of conscience by the creeds of these bodies, which in some cases is more oppressive than physical bondage.** {1897 UrS, DAR 720.4}

The following from Elder James White upon the subject of organization and discipline appeared in the Review of Jan. 4, 1881:-

"Organization was designed to secure unity of action, and as a protection from imposture. It was never intended as a scourge to compel obedience, but rather for the protection of the people of God. Christ does not drive his people; he calls them. 'My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me.' Our Living Head leads the way, and calls his people to follow. **"Human creeds cannot produce unity. Church force cannot press the church into one body.** Christ never designed that human minds should be moulded for heaven by the influence of other human minds. 'The head of every man is Christ.' His part is to lead, and to mould, and to stamp his own image upon the heirs of eternal glory. However important organization may be for the protection of the church, and to secure harmony of action, it must not come in to take the discipline from the hands of the Master.

Excerpts from "COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE" New York, The Midnight Cry by George Storrs

Come out of what? *Babylon*. This is the command of that God who will shortly give the kingdom to his Son, and cannot be disregarded without our being —partakers in her plagues. ||

I. WHAT IS BABYLON?

The term *Babylon* signifies the same as Babel. i.e. —*confusion* || or —*mixture*. ||

A Church constituted as I have suggested is such a church as our Lord Jesus Christ prayed his church might be. See John xvii. 21, 22.

—That they all may be ONE; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be *one* in us—that they may be one, EVEN AS WE ARE ONE.

This then is the true Church of God. Now, what are the principal agents in oppressing and injuring this Church? We answer, all those sects, whether Roman Catholics or Protestants, that go to work to divide and bring in —confusion || to the oneness of the Church. **And how is this done? It is done by the manufacturing of creeds**, whether written or oral, and endeavoring to organize a party; the test of fellowship being now, not love to God and each other, but assent to these creeds. The work of dividing or bringing in —confusion || into the true Church, now begins.... **creeds differ, and hence —confusion or Babylon is truly their name.**

Surely we need have no great difficulty in deciding where Babylon is, or what it is. It is the *old mother and all her children*; who are known by the family likeness a domineering, lordly spirit, a spirit to suppress a free search after truth, and a free expression of our conviction of what is truth.

II. WHY COME OUT!

—Every one of us shall give account of HIMSELF to God, || (Rom. xiv. 13.) We have no right to let any men, or body of men, thus lord it over us. And to remain, it appears to me, in such an organized body, is to remain in Babylon.... —Well, || say some, —**if they will turn us out, let them do it; we will stay with them until we are turned out.** —**But, does God say, stay in here till you are turned out! NO. He says—Come out of her my people. Come out of this —confusion, this Babylon....** But it will be asked, —**Where shall we go if we come out? Go to the Lord. Trust in Him.** —Wait for his Son from heaven. **Take care that you**

do not seek to manufacture another church. No church can be organized by man's invention but what it becomes Babylon the moment it is organized. {*COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE" New York, The Midnight Cry by George Storrs*}

THE FINAL CALL FROM BABYLON

And now what remains?—Only this, that God's people hear and obey the call to come out of Babylon, lest by remaining they receive of her plagues. For although the city on the Euphrates was destroyed many hundred years ago, even several hundred years before Christ, yet nearly one hundred years after Christ the prophet John was by the Spirit moved to repeat the very threats uttered by Isaiah against Babylon, and in almost the identical words:— {March 11, 1897 EJW, PTUK 149.1}

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine." Rev. xviii. 7, 8. Compare Isa. xlvii. 7-10. {March 11, 1897 EJW, PTUK 149.2}

Babylon was a heathen city, exalting itself above God. As shown in Belshazzar's feast (Dan. v.), it represented **a religion that defied God. The same spirit exists to-day, not simply in a certain society, but wherever men choose their own way in religion, rather than submit to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.** God in His longsuffering and tender mercy is but waiting until His people, **coming out of Babylon,** and humbling themselves to walk with Him, shall preach this Gospel of the kingdom, with all the power of the kingdom, even the power of the world to come, "in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." {March 11, 1897 EJW, PTUK 149.3}

That "end" will be the destruction of Babylon, just as spoken through Jeremiah; but as Babylon of old was a universal kingdom, and its real king, as shown in Isa. xiv., was Satan, the god of this world, **so the destruction of Babylon is nothing less than the judgment of God on the whole earth,** when He delivers His people. For now read the words which "Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations," when he prophesied about the end of the Babylonian captivity:— {March 11, 1897 EJW, PTUK 149.4}

Sister White on Creeds:

"Do not carry your **creed** to the Bible, and read the Scriptures in the light of that **creed**. If you find that your opinions are opposed to a plain "Thus saith the Lord," or to any command or prohibition He has given, give heed to the Word of God rather than to the sayings of men. Let every controversy or dispute be settled by "It is written." ... {OHC 207.3}

"The mistake made by the Roman Catholic is that he reads the Bible in the light of the priests and rulers of the church, the early fathers, or other Catholic expositors. Laying aside all **creeds** or articles prescribed by any church, we are to read the Bible as the word of God to us. The Light of the world will enable us to distinguish between truth and antagonistic errors." {2MR vol 2, page 89}

"The question is, "What is truth?" It is not how many years have I believed that makes it the truth. You must bring your **creed** to the Bible and let the light of the Bible define your **creed** and show where it comes short and where the difficulty is. The Bible is to be your standard, the living oracles of Jehovah are to be your guide. **You are to dig for the truth as for hidden treasures.** You are to find where the treasure is, and then you are to plow every inch of that field to get the jewels. You are to work the mines of truth for new gems, for new diamonds, and you will find them." FW Chap 9. The Quality of Our Faith

"The reason why He does not oftener choose men of learning and high position to lead out in reform movements is that they trust to their **creeds**, theories, and theological systems, and feel no need to be taught of God. Only those who have a personal connection with the Source of wisdom are able to understand or explain the Scriptures." GC 456.