

A Part of an Eschatological Essay by J.C. Philpot

Written by BTM

Tuesday, 27 March 2012 17:46

The following is a part of Mr J.C. Philpot's review of "*Apocalyptic Sketches by Dr. Cumming, signs of the times; the Moslem and his end; the Christian and His hope; by Dr. Cumming, The Coming Struggle Among The Nations of the Earth.*", which was printed in the '*Gospel Standard*' magazine, in May 1854.

It is really quite staggering to think that Philpot, over 150 years ago, was given the foresight that Britain would surrender her national sovereignty to a federal European republic (though giving this insight is but a small feat for God!). The full essay deals with the seven vials that are unleashed upon the earth in the last days, as prophesied by John in the Revelation. Philpot approaches eschatology from the *historicist* view, which up until recently, was the majority view in Reformed and Protestant circles.

J.C. Philpot (b.1802, d.1869) was a Christian preacher, who in 1835 seceded from the church of England and became a 'Strict and Particular' Baptist. His sermons are available in written form, and are well worth reading. Philpot was gifted by the Lord in that he was able to be both extremely clear, and yet very thorough, extracting many blessed truths from just one or two verses.

The Loss of Nationalism and National Isolation

5. As it is also the fifth incident of the Seventh Vial, it demands a few moment's consideration: "Every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." This is, of course, not to be understood literally. The face of nature will not be changed. England, the island, will not flee away into the depths of the Atlantic Ocean, nor will the Alps and Pyrenees sink into the level plains; but England as an insular power may cease to be what she now is, an independent nation. She may be so united with the continent, either by alliances or by being connected federally with it as a branch of a great republic, as to lose her present isolated position as the Queen of the Seas in her ocean-girt isle. Steam and electricity, and her present alliances, have already linked her on to the continent, and if the whole of Europe become republican, she may so fraternize with the three great powers as hardly to maintain an independent position. The very expression shows also her connection with the great earthquake, the submerging of islands and the leveling of mountains being frequent results of that natural convulsion. We gather, then, from the expression that there will be a change in England's position as great as if she ceased to be an island altogether. So the " mountains " which now separate the European nations, that is, those barriers which isolate nation from nation, " will no more be found." When

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Louis XIV. placed his grandson on the throne of Spain, he said, " The Pyrenees no longer exist," meaning, of course, not that the mountains which separate France and Spain were actually leveled, but that the barriers were removed which kept the two nations separate. What a commentary on the words, " the mountains were not found!" These barriers are, for the most part, maintained by the jealousies of the great ruling houses, — the kings and emperors whose very thrones, and almost existence, are bound up in hedging themselves around with nationalities. But this tremendous earthquake, in sweeping away all the thrones, with their mutual jealousies, will remove the present barriers that divide nation from nation.

Our interpretation of this and other points may seem arbitrary or uncertain. But what other view seems consistent with itself or the context ? The symbol cannot be explained literally, for its literal meaning has no insignificance or result. The drowning of an island, or the subsidence of a mountain, taken literally, has no meaning in it. And as no one supposes that there is a literal vial, so that the angel actually holds in his hand a golden goblet filled with burning acid, so we cannot suppose that actual islands and literal mountains are meant here. No. They are prophetic symbols, requiring a moral and figurative interpretation. The one we have given, if it has its difficulties, seems to us the most consistent and harmonious.

The full (though annotated) review can be found here:

<http://pbl.oldfaithbaptist.org/Eschatology/Philpot%20Pophecy%20end.pdf>