

Son); thirdly, the second Beast, who leads to idolatry or false religion (the counterfeit of the Holy Spirit); this trinity of evil forming the final apostasy of the last days of the world during the approaching Great Tribulation.

It is the passing these three ever active guards that constitutes the fight of faith in the true believer (1 Timothy vi. 12). Peter indeed seems to pass by them without serious hindrance, and is not stopped in his passage out; so also WILL EVERY BELIEVER who FOLLOWS ON CLOSE AFTER THE ANGEL; and why? For we who believe have exceeding power if we really lay hold of it by faith (Ephesians i. 19), including power over *all* the power of the enemy (or devils, the keepers of the door—Luke x. 19), as well as over *all* sin (or the two wards—Romans vi. 14); but to do this we must follow the Lord closely in this life.

Those believers in Christ who do not do this, but are cold and half-hearted towards God, are such who do not gird themselves for service to God, to follow the Angel. They may be free from the chains, but they linger in the prison gloom, hindered from true light and liberty by the keepers and the wards, up to the very iron gate itself. For we must ever remember another lesson taught here. The Angel does not *force* Peter to do anything. The Angel does all that which Peter could not do, but leaves to the free will of Peter himself the following of His instructions and commands. Peter willingly obeyed, and got free from all hindrance, and so it depends on the willingness of our thorough obedience to CHRIST whether we get into full and blessed liberty and rejoicing (2 Corinthians x. 5, 6, and Ephesians iii. 17-20).

The Iron Gate.—What a singular recital is here. This gate *opens of its own accord* when the Angel and Peter approach it. Surely this represents the gate of death, for through it all must pass either

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