The Dream of Plagues

The Dream of the Plagues (1884)

Author unknown. “Vision of Plagues”. The Contributor. August 1884, 5:411

The present times seem to be more than usually prolific of prophetic dreams among the Latter-day Saints. In nearly every settlement the people have been warned of events soon to occur; and visions of the future glory of the Kingdom of God upon this earth have passed like a panorama before many of those who love God and obey His commandments.

Some two or three years ago, I had retired for the night, when suddenly a glorious messenger appeared at my bedside and awoke me from my slumber. The light of his presence filled the room, so that objects were discerned as clearly as at noonday.

He handed me a book, saying, “Look, and see what is coming to pass.” I took the book in my hands and, sitting up in bed, examined it carefully and read its contents. In size this book was about seven by ten inches, opening like a copybook and bound in beautiful cover, on the front of which was stamped in gold letters its title, which was The Book of the Plagues. The leaves were printed only on the front side of each, and were composed of the very finest quality of pure white linen, instead of paper. The typography throughout was in the finest style of the printer’s art. Each page was composed of a picture printed in colors as natural as art can copy nature, which occupied the upper half of the space, below which was the printed description of the scene represented.

On the first page was a picture of a feast in progress, with the long table set upon a beautiful lawn, over which were interspersed clumps of fine shrubs and towering trees. In the background through the foliage, could be discerned a stately suburban villa, adorned with all the ornaments of modern architecture. The landscape presented the appearance of midsummer. The sky, and indeed the whole atmosphere, appeared of a peculiar sickly brassy hue, similar to that which may be observed when the sun is wholly eclipsed, and the disc is just beginning again to give its light. Throughout the atmosphere small white specks were represented, similar to a scattering fall of minute snowflakes in winter. About the table a part of richly dressed ladies and gentlemen were seated in the act of partaking of the rich repast with which the table was laden. The minute specks falling from above were dropping into the food apparently unheeded by all, for a sudden destruction had come upon them. Many were falling backward in the agonies of a fearful death; others drooping upon the table, and others pausing with their hand still holding the untasted food, their countenances betraying a fearful astonishment at the peculiar and unlooked for condition of their companions. Death was in the atmosphere; the judgments of God had come upon them as silently and swiftly as upon the proud Sennacharib and his host of Assyrians.

In one corner of this picture was a small circular vignette, showing the front of the store of a dealer in pork. The wide sidewalk was covered by an awning supported on posts at the outer edge, and on this walk were shown barrels of pork, long strings of sausages, fresh slaughtered hogs, piles of smoked bacon and headcheese; and along the edge of the walk, next to the store, beneath the front windows, leaned a number of large hams and pieces of side meat, reaching across the whole front, except a small space at the doorway. There were twelve of these pieces, and on each piece was painted a large letter, in order to make as a whole the word ABOMINATIONS.

Below this scene was the description: A Feast among the Gentiles, commencement of the Plague. And in smaller type below [was] a note saying that the particles of poison, though represented in the picture, are so small as to be invisible to the naked eye.

On the next page was another picture. It was a street scene in a large city. In the foreground were the residences of wealthy city merchants. The character of the buildings gradually changed; along the view and in the distance were shown the great buildings of trade and commerce in the heart of a large metropolis. On the sidewalks throughout the long vista, the busy, throbbing rushing crowd had been cut down like grass before the mower.

Again it was a midsummer scene. The same atoms of poison were falling through the air, but their work was done; the same sickly brazen atmosphere that seemed thick with foul odors laid upon the earth, in which no breeze stirred a leaf of the foliage. Upon the balconies of the richly decorated residences, across the thresholds of the open doorways, along the walks and upon the crossings, lay the men, women and children, who a few days before were enjoying all the pleasures of life. Further on, the dead were everywhere. Houses of business that had been thronged with customers stood with open doorways, frowning upon streets covered with the dead. Across the thresholds of the banks lay the guardians of wealth, but no thieves were there to take the unlocked treasures within. The costly merchandise of a thousand owners laid untouched upon the counters and shelves. In the noonday glare of the sickly sun, not a soul was shown alive; not one had been left to bury the dead—all had been stricken or had fled from the death-dealing plague and the doomed city. Along midway upon the street, a hungry drove of those horrible ugly slaughterhouse dogs, (which may be seen in the pens attached to the filthy slaughtering places in the outskirts of many cities), was tearing and devouring the dead and feasting upon the bodies of rich and poor alike with none to molest them.

Below this picture was the description: Progress of the Plague among the Gentiles. A street scene in a large city. Nearly fifty of these pictures I carefully observed, wherein the fearful effects of this and other plagues were almost as vividly portrayed as if I had actually seen them.

The last scene in the book was descriptive of the same plague as the first. A beautiful park-like, grassy prairie was surrounded by elm and cottonwood trees, the area embraced being about eighty rods across. In the center of this enclosure was a large cone-shaped tent of a bright purple color, about thirty feet in height by twenty in diameter at the base. Midway in height in this tent was a floor dividing the inside into two stories. Near this tent was another, a round wall tent, about thirty feet in diameter, and nearly as high as the first. This was clean and white. Leaving a space of about a hundred yards from these central tents were hundreds of small rectangular wall tents in rows, reaching as far as the surrounding trees, each tent clean and white, and appearing to be of a size suited to the wants of an ordinary family. Not a human being, animal, bird or vehicle was in sight. Not a breath of air appeared to be stirring. The same atmosphere as in the previous pictures, with the atoms of poison, was represented, and the same time and season of the year.

Below this picture was the description: “A camp of the Saints who have gathered together and are living under the daily revelations of God, and are thus preserved from the plague.” I understood from this that each family was in its tent during the hours of the day that the poison falls, and thus were preserved from breathing the deathly particles.

Handing the book to the messenger, who all this time had remained by my side, he vanished from my view as suddenly as he had appeared. I awoke my wife, who was soundly sleeping, and commenced to relate to her what I had just beheld. After telling her the description of the two pictures at the beginning of the book, and commencing on the third, this third picture and all up to the last was suddenly taken from my memory, so that I have never been able to recall them; but still I remember that they were scenes about the plagues and judgments.