

THE GREAT CONTROVERSY
CHS. 29.3,25
ENGLISH

To many minds, the origin of sin and the reason for its existence are a source of great perplexity. They see the work of evil, with its terrible results of woe and desolation, and they question how all this can exist under the sovereignty of One who is infinite in wisdom, in power, and in love. Here is a mystery, of which they find no explanation. And in their uncertainty and doubt, they are blinded to truths plainly revealed in God's Word, and essential to salvation. There are those who, in their inquiries concerning the existence of sin, endeavor to search into that which God has never revealed; hence they find no solution of their difficulties; and such as are actuated by a disposition to doubt and cavil, seize upon this as an excuse for rejecting the words of Holy Writ. Others, however, fail of a satisfactory understanding of the great problem of evil, from the fact that tradition and misinterpretation have obscured the teaching of the Bible concerning the character of God, the nature of his government, and the principles of his dealing with sin.

It is impossible to so explain the origin of sin as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin, to fully make manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all his dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that **God was in nowise responsible for the entrance of sin**; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of

rebellion. **Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it, is to defend it.** Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. **Our only definition of sin is that given in the Word of God; it is “the transgression of the law;”** it is the out-working of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.

Before the entrance of evil, there was peace and joy throughout the universe. All was in perfect harmony with the Creator’s will. Love for God was supreme, love for one another impartial. Christ the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father,—one in nature, in character, and in purpose,—the only being in all the universe that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. By Christ, the Father wrought in the creation of all heavenly beings. “By him were all things created, that are in Heaven, . . . whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers;” (Colossians 1:16) and to Christ, equally with the Father, all Heaven gave allegiance.

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. **God desires from all his creatures the service of love,—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of his character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance,** and to all he grants freedom of will, that they may render him voluntary service.

But there was one that chose to pervert this freedom. Sin originated with him, who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God, and who stood highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of Heaven. **Before his fall, Lucifer was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled.** “Thus saith the Lord God: Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering.” “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast

walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." Ezekiel 28:12-15, 17.

Lucifer might have remained in favor with God, beloved and honored by all the angelic host, exercising his noble powers to bless others and to glorify his Maker. But, says the prophet, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Ezekiel 28:12-15, 17. **Little by little, Lucifer came to indulge a desire for self-exaltation.** "Thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God." "Thou hast said: . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation." "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Ezekiel 28:6; Isaiah 14:13, 14. **Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of his creatures, it was Lucifer's endeavor to win their service and homage to himself.** And, coveting the honor which the infinite Father had bestowed upon his Son, this prince of angels aspired to power which it was the prerogative of Christ alone to wield.

All Heaven had rejoiced to reflect the Creator's glory and to show forth his praise. And while God was thus honored, all had been peace and gladness. But a note of discord now marred the celestial harmonies. The service and exaltation of self, contrary to the Creator's plan, awakened forebodings of evil in minds to whom God's glory was supreme. **The heavenly councils pleaded with Lucifer.** The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of his law. God himself had established the order of Heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker, and bring ruin upon himself. **But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed jealousy of Christ to prevail, and he became the more determined.**

Pride in his own glory nourished the desire for supremacy. The high honors conferred upon Lucifer were not appreciated as the gift of God, and called forth no gratitude

to the Creator. He gloried in his brightness and exaltation, and aspired to be equal with God. He was beloved and revered by the heavenly host. Angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. **Yet the Son of God was the acknowledged sovereign of Heaven, one in power and authority with the Father. In all the counsels of God, Christ was a participant, while Lucifer was not permitted thus to enter into the divine purposes.** “Why,” questioned this mighty angel, “should Christ have the supremacy? Why is he thus honored above Lucifer?”

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of God, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God, **he endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint.** Since their natures were holy, he urged that the angels should obey the dictates of their own will. He sought to create sympathy for himself, by representing that God had dealt unjustly with him in bestowing supreme honor upon Christ. **He claimed that in aspiring to greater power and honor he was not aiming at self-exaltation, but was seeking to secure liberty for all the inhabitants of Heaven, that by this means they might attain to a higher state of existence.**

God, in his great mercy, bore long with Lucifer. He was not immediately degraded from his exalted station when he first indulged the spirit of discontent, nor even when he began to present his false claims before the loyal angels. Long was he retained in Heaven. Again and again he was offered pardon, on condition of repentance and submission. **Such efforts as only infinite love and wisdom could devise, were made to convince him of his error. The spirit of discontent had never before been known in Heaven. Lucifer himself did not at first see whither he was drifting;** he did not understand the real nature of his feelings. **But as his**

dissatisfaction was proved to be without cause, Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong, that the divine claims were just, and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all Heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. He had not at this time fully cast off his allegiance to God. Though he had forsaken his position as covering cherub, yet if he had been willing to return to God, acknowledging the Creator's wisdom, and satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God's great plan, he would have been re-instated in his office. **But pride forbade him to submit. He persistently defended his own course, maintained that he had no need of repentance, and fully committed himself, in the great controversy, against his Maker.**

All the powers of his master-mind were now bent to the work of deception, to secure the sympathy of the angels that had been under his command. Even the fact that Christ had warned and counseled him, was perverted to serve his traitorous designs. To those whose loving trust bound them most closely to him, Satan had represented that he was wrongly judged, that his position was not respected, and that his liberty was to be abridged. **From misrepresentation of the words of Christ, he passed to prevarication and direct falsehood, accusing the Son of God of a design to humiliate him before the inhabitants of Heaven. He sought also to make a false issue between himself and the loyal angels. All whom he could not subvert and bring fully to his side, he accused of indifference to the interests of heavenly beings. The very work which he himself was doing, he charged upon those who remained true to God. And to sustain his charge of God's injustice toward him, he resorted to misrepresentation of the words and acts of the Creator. It was his policy to perplex the angels with subtle arguments concerning the purposes of God. Everything that was simple he shrouded in mystery, and by artful perversion cast doubt upon the plainest statements of Jehovah. His high position, in such close connection with the divine administration, gave greater force to his representations, and**

many were induced to unite with him in rebellion against Heaven's authority.

God in his wisdom permitted Satan to carry forward his work, until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all. Lucifer, as the anointed cherub, had been highly exalted; he was greatly loved by the heavenly beings, and his influence over them was strong. God's government included not only the inhabitants of Heaven, but of all the worlds that he had created; and **Satan thought that if he could carry the angels of Heaven with him in rebellion, he could carry also the other worlds.** He had artfully presented his side of the question, employing sophistry and fraud to secure his objects. His power to deceive was very great, and by disguising himself in a cloak of falsehood he had gained an advantage. **Even the loyal angels could not fully discern his character, or see to what his work was leading.**

Satan had been so highly honored, and all his acts were so clothed with mystery, that it was difficult to disclose to the angels the true nature of his work. Until fully developed, sin would not appear the evil thing it was. Heretofore it had had no place in the universe of God, and holy beings had no conception of its nature and malignity. They could not discern the terrible consequences that would result from setting aside the divine law. **Satan had, at first, concealed his work under a specious profession of loyalty to God. He claimed to be seeking to promote the honor of God, the stability of his government, and the good of all the inhabitants of Heaven.** While instilling discontent into the minds of the angels under him, he had artfully made it appear that he was seeking to remove dissatisfaction. When he urged that changes be made in the order and laws of God's government, it was under the pretense that these were necessary in order to preserve harmony in Heaven.

In his dealing with sin, God could employ only righteousness and truth. Satan could use what God could

not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God, and had misrepresented his plan of government before the angels, claiming that God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of Heaven; that in requiring submission and obedience from his creatures, he was seeking merely the exaltation of himself. **Therefore it must be demonstrated before the inhabitants of Heaven as well as of all the worlds, that God's government was just, his law perfect.** Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper, and his real object, must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works.

The discord which his own course had caused in Heaven, Satan charged upon the law and government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore it was necessary that he should demonstrate the nature of his claims, and show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. **His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked.**

Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in Heaven, infinite wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of his creatures must rest upon a conviction of his justice and benevolence. **The inhabitants of Heaven and of other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan.** Had he been immediately blotted from existence, they would have served God from fear, rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. **Evil must be permitted to come to maturity. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, Satan must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against**

the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of his law might forever be placed beyond all question.

Satan's rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages, a perpetual testimony to the nature and terrible results of sin. The working out of Satan's rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God's government and his law is bound up the well-being of all the creatures he has made. Thus the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy intelligences, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its punishment.

To the very close of the controversy in Heaven, the great usurper continued to justify himself. When it was announced that with all his sympathizers he must be expelled from the abodes of bliss, then the rebel leader boldly avowed his contempt for the Creator's law. He reiterated his claim that angels needed no control, but should be left to follow their own will, which would ever guide them right. **He denounced the divine statutes as a restriction of their liberty, and declared that it was his purpose to secure the abolition of law;** that, freed from this restraint, the hosts of Heaven might enter upon a more exalted, more glorious state of existence.

With one accord, Satan and his host threw the blame of their rebellion wholly upon Christ, declaring that if they had not been reprov'd, they would never have rebelled. Thus stubborn and defiant in their disloyalty, seeking vainly to overthrow the government of God, yet blasphemously claiming to be themselves the innocent victims of oppressive power, **the arch-rebel and all his sympathizers were at last banished from Heaven.**

The same spirit that prompted rebellion in Heaven, still inspires rebellion on earth. Satan has continued with

men the same policy which he pursued with the angels. His spirit now reigns in the children of disobedience. Like him they seek to break down the restraints of the law of God, and promise men liberty through transgression of its precepts. Reproof of sin still arouses the spirit of hatred and resistance. When God's messages of warning are brought home to the conscience, **Satan leads men to justify themselves, and to seek the sympathy of others in their course of sin. Instead of correcting their errors, they excite indignation against the reprove**, as if he were the sole cause of difficulty. From the days of righteous Abel to our own time, such is the spirit which has been displayed toward those who dare to condemn sin.

By the same misrepresentation of the character of God as he had practiced in Heaven, causing him to be regarded as severe and tyrannical, **Satan induced man to sin. And having succeeded thus far, he declared that God's unjust restrictions had led to man's fall, as they had led to his own rebellion.**

But the Eternal One himself proclaims his character: "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Exodus 34:6, 7.

In the banishment of Satan from Heaven, God declared his justice, and maintained the honor of his throne. But when man had sinned through yielding to the deceptions of this apostate spirit, God gave an evidence of his love by yielding up his only begotten Son to die for the fallen race. In the atonement the character of God is revealed. The mighty argument of the cross demonstrates to the whole universe that the course of sin which Lucifer had chosen was in nowise chargeable upon the government of God.

In the contest between Christ and Satan, during the Saviour's earthly ministry, the character of the great deceiver was unmasked. Nothing could so effectually have uprooted Satan from the affections of the heavenly angels and the whole loyal universe as did his cruel war-

fare upon the world's Redeemer. The daring blasphemy of his demand that Christ should pay him homage, his presumptuous boldness in bearing him to the mountain summit and the pinnacle of the temple, the malicious intent betrayed in urging him to cast himself down from the dizzy height, the unsleeping malice that hunted him from place to place, inspiring the hearts of priests and people to reject his love, and at the last to cry, "Crucify him! crucify him!"—all this excited the amazement and indignation of the universe.

It was Satan that prompted the world's rejection of Christ. The prince of evil exerted all his power and cunning to destroy Jesus; for he saw that the Saviour's mercy and love, his compassion and pitying tenderness, were representing to the world the character of God. Satan contested every claim put forth by the Son of God, and employed men as his agents to fill the Saviour's life with suffering and sorrow. The sophistry and falsehood by which he had sought to hinder the work of Jesus, the hatred manifested through the children of disobedience, his cruel accusations against Him whose life was one of unexampled goodness, all sprung from deep-seated revenge. **The pent-up fires of envy and malice, hatred and revenge, burst forth on Calvary against the Son of God, while all Heaven gazed upon the scene in silent horror.**

When the great sacrifice had been consummated, Christ ascended on high, refusing the adoration of angels until he had presented the request, "I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." John 17:24. Then with inexpressible love and power came forth the answer from the Father's throne, "Let all the angels of God worship him." Hebrews 1:6. Not a stain rested upon Jesus. His humiliation ended, his sacrifice completed, there was given unto him a name that is above every name.

Now the guilt of Satan stood forth without excuse. He had revealed his true character as a liar and a murderer. It was seen that the very same spirit with which he ruled the children of men, who were under his power, he would have manifested had he been permitted to control the inhabitants

of Heaven. **He had claimed that the transgression of God's law would bring liberty and exaltation; but it was seen to result in bondage and degradation.**

Satan's lying charges against the divine character and government appeared in their true light. He had accused God of seeking merely the exaltation of himself in requiring submission and obedience from his creatures, and had declared that while the Creator exacted self-denial from all others, he himself practiced no self-denial, made no sacrifice. **Now it was seen that for the salvation of a fallen and sinful race, the Ruler of the universe had made the greatest sacrifice which love could make;** for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. It was seen, also, that white Lucifer had opened the door for the entrance of sin, by his desire for honor and supremacy, **Christ had, in order to destroy sin, humbled himself, and become obedient unto death.**

God had manifested his abhorrence of the principles of rebellion. All Heaven saw his justice revealed, both in the condemnation of Satan and in the redemption of man. Lucifer had declared that if the law of God was changeless, and its penalty could not be remitted, every transgressor must be forever debarred from the Creator's favor. He had claimed that the sinful race were placed beyond redemption, and were therefore his rightful prey. **But the death of Christ was an argument in man's behalf that could not be overthrown.** The penalty of the law fell upon him who was equal with God, and man was free to accept the righteousness of Christ, and by a life of penitence and humiliation to triumph, as the Son of God had triumphed, over the power of Satan. Thus God is just, and yet the justifier of all who believe in Jesus.

But it was not merely to accomplish the redemption of man that Christ came to the earth to suffer and to die. He came to "magnify the law" and to "make it honorable." Not alone that the inhabitants of this world might regard the law as it should be regarded; but it was to demonstrate to all the worlds of the universe that God's law is unchangeable. **Could its claims have been set aside, then the**

Son of God need not have yielded up his life to atone for its transgression. The death of Christ proves it immutable. And the sacrifice to which infinite love impelled the Father and the Son, that sinners might be redeemed, demonstrates to all the universe—what nothing less than this plan of atonement could have sufficed to do—that justice and mercy are the foundation of the law and government of God.

In the final execution of the Judgment it will be seen that no cause for sin exists. When the Judge of all the earth shall demand of Satan, “Why hast thou rebelled against me, and robbed me of the subjects of my kingdom?” the originator of evil can render no excuse. Every mouth will be stopped, and all the hosts of rebellion will be speechless.

The cross of Calvary, while it declares the law immutable, proclaims to the universe that the wages of sin is death. In the Saviour’s expiring cry, “It is finished,” the death-knell of Satan was rung. The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain. The Son of God passed through the portals of the tomb, that “through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Hebrews 2:14. Lucifer’s desire for self-exaltation had led him to say, “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High.” God declares, “I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, . . . and never shalt thou be any more.” Isaiah 14:13, 14; Ezekiel 28:18, 19. When **“the day cometh that shall burn as an oven,” “all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up,** saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” Malachi 4:1.

The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate his love and establish his honor before a universe of beings who delight to do his will, and in whose heart is his law. Never will evil again be manifest. Says the Word of God, “Afflic-

tion shall not rise up the second time.” Nahum 1:9. The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. **A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom.**

Chapter Three

All the Steps Down

—*The Apostasy*

For three hundred years fierce persecution lashed at the early Christian Church; and, then in A.D. 311, peace came and things changed. Constantine, the ruler of the Roman Empire, decided for political reasons to become friends with the Church—and what it brought changed all history for all time to come —

Compromise, conformity, and persecution of former brethren began. Gradually the Church took all the steps down. Read what they were —

The apostle Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, foretold the great apostasy which would result in the establishment of the papal power. He declared that the day of Christ should not come, “except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 7. And furthermore, the apostle warns his brethren that “the mystery of iniquity doth already work.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 7. Even at that early date he saw, creeping into the church, errors that would prepare the way for the development of the papacy.

Little by little, at first in stealth and silence, and then more openly as it increased in strength and gained control of the minds of men, the mystery of iniquity carried forward its deceptive and blasphemous work. Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way

into the Christian church. The spirit of compromise and conformity was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism. **But as persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions. The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church.** Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ.

This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of the “man of sin” fore-

HISTORICAL DATING OF THIS UNUSUAL CHAPTER—The primary dates in this chapter cover nine centuries—from A.D. 311 (Constantine’s Edict of Toleration) to 1229 (when the Inquisition began). The papacy was firmly established by the sixth century; and, in A.D. 538, the 1260 years of papal oppression (predicted in Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 13:5-7) began.

The Second Council of Nicea (A.D. 787) finalized the establishment of image worship as a necessary part of Catholic worship. But it was Constantine’s decree of march 7, 321, making Sunday a public holy day, that laid the foundation for their apostasy. The Council of Laodicea (c. 337) officially endorsed that first National Sunday Law.

Shortly afterward, candles were burned before images and prayers were made to them. Gradually the apostasy deepened.

By the Sixth Century the papacy was firmly established in power; and, in A.D. 538, the terrible 1260 years of papal oppression, predicted in Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 13:5-7, began.

As though purgatory, prayers for the dead, and paid indulgences for sin were not enough, the terrible Inquisition, on an “official” basis, began in order to slay Christians—and also seize the property of wealthy Catholics. Millions were to die under its stroke.

told in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power,—a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will.

Satan once endeavored to form a compromise with Christ. He came to the Son of God in the wilderness of temptation, and, showing him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, offered to give all into his hands if he would but acknowledge the supremacy of the prince of darkness. Christ rebuked the presumptuous tempter, and forced him to depart. But Satan meets with greater success in presenting the same temptations to man. **To secure worldly gains and honors, the church was led to seek the favor and support of the great men of earth**, and having thus rejected Christ, she was induced to yield allegiance to the representative of Satan,—the bishop of Rome.

It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism that the pope is the visible head of the universal church of Christ, invested with supreme authority over bishops and pastors in all parts of the world. **More than this, the pope has arrogated the very titles of Deity. He styles himself "Lord God the Pope," assumes infallibility, and demands that all men pay him homage.** Thus the same claim urged by Satan in the wilderness of temptation is still urged by him through the Church of Rome, and vast numbers are ready to yield him homage.

But those who fear and reverence God meet this Heavendaring assumption as Christ met the solicitations of the wily foe: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Luke 4:8. **God has never given a hint in His Word that He has appointed any man to be the head of the church. The doctrine of papal supremacy is directly opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures.** The pope can have no power over Christ's church except by usurpation.

Romanists have persisted in bringing against Protestants the charge of heresy, and willful separation from the true

church. But these accusations apply rather to themselves. They are the ones who laid down the banner of Christ, and departed from "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3.

Satan well knew that the Holy Scriptures would enable men to discern his deceptions and withstand his power. It was by the Word that even the Saviour of the world had resisted his attacks. At every assault, Christ presented the shield of eternal truth, saying, "It is written." To every suggestion of the adversary, he opposed the wisdom and power of the Word. In order for Satan to maintain his sway over men, and establish the authority of the papal usurper, he must keep them in ignorance of the Scriptures. The Bible would exalt God, and place finite men in their true position; therefore its sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed. This logic was adopted by the Roman Church. **For hundreds of years the circulation of the Bible was prohibited. The people were forbidden to read it or to have it in their houses,** and unprincipled priests and prelates interpreted its teachings to sustain their pretensions. Thus the pope came to be almost universally acknowledged as the vicerent of God on earth, endowed with authority over Church and State.

The detector of error having been removed, Satan worked according to his will. Prophecy had declared that the papacy was to "think to change times and laws." Daniel 7:25. This work it was not slow to attempt. **To afford converts from heathenism a substitute for the worship of idols, and thus to promote their nominal acceptance of Christianity, the adoration of images and relics was gradually introduced into the Christian worship.** The decree of a general council [Second Council of Nice, A.D. 787] finally established this system of idolatry. To complete the sacrilegious work, **Rome presumed to expunge from the law of God the second commandment, forbidding image worship, and to divide the tenth commandment, in order to preserve the number.**

The spirit of concession to paganism opened the way

for a still further disregard of Heaven's authority. **Satan tampered with the fourth commandment also, and essayed to set aside the ancient Sabbath, the day which God had blessed and sanctified, (Genesis 2:2, 3) and in its stead to exalt the festival observed by the heathen as "the venerable day of the sun."** This change was not at first attempted openly. **In the first centuries the true Sabbath had been kept by all Christians.** They were jealous for the honor of God, and, believing that His law is immutable, they zealously guarded the sacredness of its precepts. But with great subtlety, Satan worked through his agents to bring about his object. **That the attention of the people might be called to the Sunday, it was made a festival in honor of the resurrection of Christ.** Religious services were held upon it; yet it was regarded as a day of recreation, the Sabbath being still sacredly observed.

To prepare the way for the work which he designed to accomplish, **Satan had led the Jews, before the advent of Christ, to load down the Sabbath with the most rigorous exactions, making its observance a burden. Now, taking advantage of the false light in which he had thus caused it to be regarded, he cast contempt upon it as a Jewish institution.** While Christians continued to observe the Sunday as a joyous festival, he led them, in order to show their hatred of Judaism, to make the Sabbath a fast, a day of sadness and gloom.

In the early part of the fourth century, the emperor Constantine issued a decree making Sunday a public festival throughout the Roman Empire. The day of the sun was revered by his pagan subjects, and was honored by Christians; it was the emperor's policy to unite the conflicting interests of heathenism and Christianity. He was urged to do this by the bishops of the church, who, inspired by ambition, and thirst for power, perceived that if the same day was observed by both Christians and the heathen, it would promote the nominal acceptance of Christianity by pagans, and thus advance the power and glory of the church. But while Christians were gradually led to regard

Sunday as possessing a degree of sacredness, they still held the true Sabbath as the holy of the Lord, and observed it in obedience to the fourth commandment.

The arch-deceiver had not completed his work. He was resolved to gather the Christian world under his banner, and to exercise his power through his vicegerent, the proud pontiff who claimed to be the representative of Christ. Through half-converted pagans, ambitious prelates, and world-loving churchmen, he accomplished his purpose. **Vast councils were held, from time to time, in which the dignitaries of the church were convened from all the world. In nearly every council the Sabbath which God had instituted was pressed down a little lower, while the Sunday was correspondingly exalted. Thus the pagan festival came finally to be honored as a divine institution, while the Bible Sabbath was pronounced a relic of Judaism, and its observers were declared to be accursed.**

The great apostate had succeeded in exalting himself "above all that is called God, or that is worshiped." 2 Thessalonians 2:4. **He had dared to change the only precept of the divine law that unmistakably points all mankind to the true and living God. In the fourth commandment, God is revealed as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and is thereby distinguished from all false gods. It was as a memorial of the work of creation that the seventh day was sanctified as a rest-day for man.** It was designed to keep the living God ever before the minds of men as the source of being and the object of reverence and worship. Satan strives to turn men from their allegiance to God, and from rendering obedience to His law; therefore he directs his efforts especially against that commandment which points to God as the Creator.

Protestants now urge that the resurrection of Christ on Sunday made it the Christian Sabbath. But Scripture evidence is lacking. No such honor was given to the day by Christ or His apostles. The observance of Sunday as a Christian institution had its origin in that "mystery of lawlessness" (2 Thessalonians 2:7, R.V.) which, even in Paul's

day, had begun its work. Where and when did the Lord adopt this child of the papacy? What valid reason can be given for a change which the Scriptures do not sanction?

In the sixth century the papacy had become firmly established. Its seat of power was fixed in the imperial city, and the bishop of Rome was declared to be the head over the entire church. **Paganism had given place to the papacy.** The dragon had given to the beast “his power, and his seat, and great authority.” [Revelation 13:2] **And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation.** Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7. Christians were forced to choose, either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeons or suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman’s ax. Now were fulfilled the words of Jesus, “Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake.” Luke 21:16, 17. **Persecution opened upon the faithful with greater fury than ever before, and the world became a vast battle-field. For hundreds of years the church of Christ found refuge in seclusion and obscurity.** Thus says the prophet: “The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score days.” Revelation 12:6.

The accession of the Roman Church to power marked the beginning of the Dark Ages. As her power increased, the darkness deepened. Faith was transferred from Christ, the true foundation, to the pope of Rome. Instead of trusting in the Son of God for forgiveness of sins and for eternal salvation, the people looked to the pope, and to the priests and prelates to whom he delegated authority. **They were taught that the pope was their earthly mediator, and that none could approach God except through him, and, further, that he stood in the place of God to them, and was therefore to be implicitly obeyed.** A deviation from his requirements was sufficient cause for the

severest punishment to be visited upon the bodies and souls of the offenders. Thus the minds of the people were turned away from God to fallible, erring, and cruel men, nay more, to the prince of darkness himself, who exercised his power through them. Sin was disguised in a garb of sanctity. **When the Scriptures are suppressed, and man comes to regard himself as supreme, we need look only for fraud, deception, and debasing iniquity.** With the elevation of human laws and traditions, was manifest the corruption that ever results from setting aside the law of God.

Those were days of peril for the church of Christ. The faithful standard-bearers were few indeed. Though the truth was not left without witnesses, yet at times it seemed that error and superstition would wholly prevail, and true religion would be banished from the earth. The gospel was lost sight of, but the forms of religion were multiplied, and the people were burdened with rigorous exactions.

They were taught not only to look to the pope as their mediator, but to trust to works of their own to atone for sin. Long pilgrimages, acts of penance, the worship of relics, the erection of churches, shrines, and altars, the payment of large sums to the church,—these and many similar acts were enjoined to appease the wrath of God or to secure His favor; as if God were like men, to be angered at trifles, or pacified by gifts or acts of penance!

Notwithstanding that vice prevailed, even among the leaders of the Romish Church, her influence seemed steadily to increase. About the close of the eighth century, papists put forth the claim that in the first ages of the church the bishops of Rome had possessed the same spiritual power which they now assumed. To establish this claim, some means must be employed to give it a show of authority; and this was readily suggested by the father of lies. **Ancient writings were forged by monks. Decrees of councils before unheard of were discovered, establishing the universal supremacy of the pope from the earliest times.** And a church that had rejected the truth, greedily accepted these deceptions.

The few faithful builders upon the true foundation (1 Corinthians 3:10, 11) were perplexed and hindered, as the rubbish of false doctrine obstructed the work. Like the builders upon the wall of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day, some were ready to say, "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish, so that we are not able to build." Nehemiah 4:10. Wearied with the constant struggle against persecution, fraud, iniquity, and every other obstacle that Satan could devise to hinder their progress, some who had been faithful builders became disheartened; and for the sake of peace and security for their property and their lives they turned away from the true foundation. Others, undaunted by the opposition of their enemies, fearlessly declared, "Be not ye afraid of them; remember the Lord, which is great and terrible; (Nehemiah 4:14) and they proceeded with the work, every one with his sword girded by his side. Ephesians 6:17.

The same spirit of hatred and opposition to the truth has inspired the enemies of God in every age, and the same vigilance and fidelity have been required in His servants. The words of Christ to the first disciples are applicable to His followers to the close of time: "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Mark 13:37.

The darkness seemed to grow more dense. Image worship became more general. Candles were burned before images, and prayers were offered to them. The most absurd and superstitious customs prevailed. The minds of men were so completely controlled by superstition that reason itself seemed to have lost her sway. While priests and bishops were themselves pleasure-loving, sensual, and corrupt, it could only be expected that the people who looked to them for guidance would be sunken in ignorance and vice.

Another step in papal assumption was taken, when, in the eleventh century, Pope Gregory VII proclaimed the perfection of the Romish Church. Among the propositions which he put forth, was one declaring that the church had never erred, nor would it ever err, according to the Scriptures. But the Scripture proofs did not accompany the assertion. The proud pontiff next claimed the power

to depose emperors, and declared that no sentence which he pronounced could be reversed by any one, but that it was his prerogative to reverse the decisions of all others.

A striking illustration of the tyrannical character of this advocate of infallibility was given in his treatment of the German emperor, Henry IV. For presuming to disregard the pope's authority, this monarch was declared to be excommunicated and dethroned. Terrified by the desertion and threats of his own princes, who were encouraged in rebellion against him by the papal mandate, Henry felt the necessity of making his peace with Rome. In company with his wife and a faithful servant, he crossed the Alps in midwinter, that he might humble himself before the pope. Upon reaching the castle whither Gregory had withdrawn, he was conducted, without his guards, into an outer court, and there, in the severe cold of winter, with uncovered head and naked feet, and in a miserable dress, he awaited the pope's permission to come into his presence. Not until he had continued three days fasting and making confession, did the pontiff condescend to grant him pardon. Even then it was only upon condition that the emperor should await the sanction of the pope before resuming the insignia or exercising the power of royalty. And Gregory, elated with his triumph, boasted that it was his duty "to pull down the pride of kings."

How striking the contrast between the overbearing pride of this haughty pontiff and the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who represents Himself as pleading at the door of the heart for admittance, that He may come in to bring pardon and peace, and who taught His disciples, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

The advancing centuries witnessed a constant increase of error in the doctrines put forth from Rome. Even before the establishment of the papacy, the teachings of heathen philosophers had received attention and exerted an influence in the church. Many who professed conversion still clung to the tenets of their pagan philosophy, and not only continued its study themselves, but urged it upon others as a means of extending their influence among

the heathen. **Serious errors were thus introduced into the Christian faith. Prominent among these was the belief in man's natural immortality and his consciousness in death. This doctrine laid the foundation upon which Rome established the invocation of saints and the adoration of the virgin Mary. From this sprung also the heresy of eternal torment for the finally impenitent, which was early incorporated into the papal faith.**

Then the way was prepared for the introduction of still another invention of paganism, which Rome named **purgatory**, and employed to terrify the credulous and superstitious multitudes. By this heresy is affirmed the existence of a place of torment, in which the souls of such as have not merited eternal damnation are to suffer punishment for their sins, and from which, when freed from impurity, they are admitted to Heaven.

Still another fabrication was needed to enable Rome to profit by the fears and the vices of her adherents. This was supplied by **the doctrine of indulgences**. Full remission of sins, past, present, and future, and release from all the pains and penalties incurred, were promised to all who would enlist in the pontiff's wars to extend his temporal dominion, to punish his enemies, or to exterminate those who dared deny his spiritual supremacy. The people were also taught that by **the payment of money to the church** they might free themselves from sin, and also release the souls of their deceased friends who were confined in the tormenting flames. **By such means did Rome fill her coffers, and sustain the magnificence, luxury, and vice of the pretended representatives of Him who had not where to lay his head.**

The scriptural ordinance of the Lord's supper had been supplanted by **the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass**. Papist priests pretended, by their senseless mummery, to convert the simple bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ. With blasphemous presumption, they openly claimed the power of "creating God, the Creator of all things." **All Christians were required, on pain of death, to avow their faith in this horrible, Heaven-insulting heresy. Multitudes**

who refused were given to the flames.

In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy,—**the Inquisition.** The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. In their secret councils, Satan and his angels controlled the minds of evil men, while unseen in the midst stood an angel of God, taking the fearful record of their iniquitous decrees, and writing the history of deeds too horrible to appear to human eyes. **“Babylon the great” was “drunken with the blood of the saints.”** The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power.

Popery had become the world’s despot. Kings and emperors bowed to the decrees of the Roman pontiff. The destinies of men, both for time and for eternity, seemed under his control. For hundreds of years the doctrines of Rome had been extensively and implicitly received, its rites reverently performed, its festivals generally observed. Its clergy were honored and liberally sustained. Never since has the Roman Church attained to greater dignity, magnificence, or power.

The noontide of the papacy was the world’s moral midnight. The Holy Scriptures were almost unknown, not only to the people, but to the priests. Like the Pharisees of old, the papist leaders hated the light which would reveal their sins. **God’s law, the standard of righteousness, having been removed, they exercised power without limit, and practiced vice without restraint. Fraud, avarice, and profligacy prevailed. Men shrank from no crime by which they could gain wealth or position.** The palaces of popes and prelates were scenes of the vilest debauchery. Some of the reigning pontiffs were guilty of crimes so revolting that secular rulers endeavored to depose these dignitaries of the church as monsters too vile to be tolerated. **For centuries Europe had made no progress in learning, arts, or civilization. A moral and intellectual paralysis had fallen upon Christendom.**

The condition of the world under the Romish power pre-

sented a fearful and striking fulfillment of the words of the prophet Hosea: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee; . . . seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." "There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood." Hosea 4:6, 1, 2. **Such were the results of banishing the Word of God.**

CHAPTER SUPPLEMENT: THE APOSTASY PREDICTED

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, . . . For I know this: that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch and remember." *Acts 20:28-31*.

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day."—*Matthew 24:21, 20*.

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the Second Advent of Christ] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work."—*2 Thessalonians 2:3-7*. [*Rev 12:5; 14:8; 12:17; Matt 24:4-6, 9-12*].

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake." *Matthew 24:9*.

"That horn . . . had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." *Daniel 7:20-21*.

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." *Revelation 12:17*.

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." *Acts 20:29-30*.

Also: Daniel 11:33; Matthew 24:9-12, 13, 20, 21, 22; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 12:5; 14:8.

The Mark of the Beast

—God's Law Immutable

One of the most solemn warnings ever given in Scripture is to be found in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of the book of Revelation. What IS the Mark of the Beast? When will it be given? Who will receive it? And most important, what must you and I do in order to avoid receiving it?

This is a subject of overwhelming importance. It contains facts you should know. We are living very near the end of time, and thinking men recognize that an immense crisis is rapidly approaching —

“The temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament.” Revelation 11:19. The ark of God’s testament is in the holy of holies, the second apartment of the sanctuary. In the ministration of the earthly tabernacle, which served “unto the example and shadow of heavenly things,” **this apartment was opened only upon the great day of atonement, for the cleansing of the sanctuary. Therefore the announcement that the temple of God was opened in Heaven, and the ark of His testament was seen, points to the opening of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, in 1844, as Christ entered there to perform the closing work of the atonement. Those who by faith followed their great High Priest, as He entered upon His ministry in the most holy place, beheld the ark of His testament.** As they had studied the subject of the sanctuary, they had come to understand the Saviour’s change of ministration, and they saw that He was now officiating before the ark of God, pleading His blood in be-

half of sinners.

The ark in the tabernacle on earth contained the two tables of stone, upon which were inscribed the precepts of the law of God. The ark was merely a receptacle for the tables of the law, and the presence of these divine precepts gave to it its value and sacredness. When the temple of God was opened in Heaven, the ark of His testament was seen. **Within the holy of holies, in the sanctuary in Heaven, the divine law is sacredly enshrined,**—the law that was spoken by God Himself amid the thunders of Sinai, and written with His own finger on the tables of stone.

The law of God in the sanctuary in Heaven is the great original, of which the precepts inscribed upon the tables of stone, and recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch, were an unerring transcript. **Those who arrived at an understanding of this important point, were thus led to see the sacred, unchanging character of the divine law.** They saw, as never before, the force of the Saviour's words, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law." Matthew 5:18. **The law of God, being a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, must forever endure,** "as a faithful witness in Heaven." Not one command has been annulled; not a jot or tittle has been changed. Says the psalmist: "Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in Heaven." "All His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever." Psalm 119:89; 111:7, 8.

In the very bosom of the decalogue is the fourth commandment, as it was first proclaimed: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but **the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;** in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11.

The Spirit of God impressed the hearts of those students of His Word. **The conviction was urged upon them, that**

they had ignorantly transgressed this precept by disregarding the Creator's rest-day. They began to examine the reasons for observing the first day of the week instead of the day which God had sanctified. They could find no evidence in the Scriptures that the fourth commandment had been abolished, or that the Sabbath had been changed; the blessing which first hallowed the seventh day had never been removed. They had been honestly seeking to know and to do God's will; now, as they saw themselves transgressors of his law, sorrow filled their hearts, and they manifested their loyalty to God by keeping His Sabbath holy.

Many and earnest were the efforts made to overthrow their faith. **None could fail to see that if the earthly sanctuary was a figure or pattern of the heavenly, the law deposited in the ark on earth was an exact transcript of the law in the ark in Heaven; and that an acceptance of the truth concerning the heavenly sanctuary involved an acknowledgment of the claims of God's law, and the obligation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Here was the secret of the bitter and determined opposition to the harmonious exposition of the Scriptures that revealed the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Men sought to close the door which God had opened, and to open the door which He had closed. But "He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth," had declared, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Revelation 3: 7, 8. Christ had opened the door, or ministration, of the most holy place, light was shining from that open door of the sanctuary in Heaven, and the fourth commandment was shown to be included in the law which is there enshrined; what God had established, no man could overthrow.**

Those who had accepted the light concerning the mediation of Christ and the perpetuity of the law of God, found that these were the truths presented in Revelation 14. The messages of this chapter constitute a threefold warning, which is to prepare the inhabitants of the earth for the Lord's second coming. The announcement, "The

hour of His Judgment is come," points to the closing work of Christ's ministration for the salvation of men. It heralds a truth which must be proclaimed until the Saviour's intercession shall cease, and He shall return to the earth to take His people to Himself. **The work of judgment which began in 1844, must continue until the cases of all are decided, both of the living and the dead; hence it will extend to the close of human probation.** That men may be prepared to stand in the Judgment, the message commands them to "fear God, and give glory to Him," "and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." The result of an acceptance of these messages is given in the words, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." **In order to be prepared for the Judgment, it is necessary that men should keep the law of God. That law will be the standard of character in the Judgment.** The apostle Paul declares, "As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." And he says that "the doers of the law shall be justified." Romans 2:12, 16. **Faith is essential in order to keep the law of God;** for "without faith it is impossible to please him." And "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23.

By the first angel, men are called upon to "fear God, and give glory to Him," and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law. Says the wise man, "Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13. Without obedience to his commandments, no worship can be pleasing to God. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." 1 John 5:3; Proverbs 28:9.

The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator, and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. "All the gods of

the nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens." Psalm 96:5. "To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things." "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; . . . I am the Lord; and there is none else." Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18. Says the psalmist, "Know ye that the Lord, He is God; it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Psalm 100:3; 95:6. And the holy beings who worship God in Heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things." Revelation 4:11.

In Revelation 14, men are called upon to worship the Creator, and the prophecy brings to view a class that, as the result of the threefold message, are keeping the commandments of God. One of these commandments points directly to God as the Creator. The fourth precept declares: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. . . . **For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth**, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:10, 11. Concerning the Sabbath, the Lord says, further, that it is "a sign, . . . that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 20:20. And the reason given is, "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." Exodus 31:17.

"The importance of the Sabbath as the memorial of creation is that it keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God," because He is the Creator, and we His creatures. **"The Sabbath therefore lies at the very foundation of divine worship;** for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten." It was to keep

this truth ever before the minds of men, that God instituted the Sabbath in Eden; and so long as the fact that He is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so long the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial. **Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man's thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel. The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to the true God, "Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."** It follows that the message which commands men to worship God and keep His commandments, will especially call upon them to keep the fourth commandment.

In contrast to those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus, the third angel points to another class, against whose errors a solemn and fearful warning is uttered: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." Revelation 14:9, 10. A correct interpretation of the symbols employed is necessary to an understanding of this message. What is represented by the beast, the image, the mark?

The line of prophecy in which these symbols are found, begins with Revelation 12, with the dragon that sought to destroy Christ at His birth. **The dragon is said to be Satan;** (Revelation 12:9) he it was that moved upon Herod to put the Saviour to death. But the chief agent of Satan in making war upon Christ and His people during the first centuries of the Christian era, was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion. **Thus while the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome.**

In chapter 13 (verses 1-10) is described another beast, "like unto a leopard," to which the dragon gave "his power, and his seat, and great authority." This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once

possessed by the ancient Roman Empire. Of the leopard-like beast it is declared: "There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. . . . And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in Heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given Him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." This prophecy, which is nearly identical with the description of the little horn of Daniel 7, unquestionably points to the papacy.

"Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." And, says the prophet, "I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death." And again, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." **The forty and two months are the same as the "time and times and the dividing of time," three years and a half, or 1260 days, of Daniel 7,—the time during which the papal power was to oppress God's people. This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the establishment of the papacy, A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798.** At that time, when the papacy was abolished and the pope made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity."

At this point another symbol is introduced. Says the prophet, "I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb." Revelation 13:11. Both the appearance of this beast and the manner of its rise indicate that the nation which it represents is unlike those presented under the preceding symbols. The great kingdoms that have ruled the world were presented to the prophet Daniel as beasts of prey, rising when the "four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea." Daniel 7:2. In Revelation 17, an angel explained that waters represent "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Revelation 17:15. **Winds are a symbol of strife. The four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea, represent the terrible scenes**

of conquest and revolution by which kingdoms have attained to power.

But the beast with lamb-like horns was seen “coming up out of the earth.” Instead of overthrowing other powers to establish itself, **the nation thus represented must arise in territory previously unoccupied, and grow up gradually and peacefully.** It could not, then, arise among the crowded and struggling nationalities of the Old World,—that turbulent sea of “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” It must be sought in the Western Continent.

What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to **the United States of America.** Again and again the thought, almost the exact words, of the sacred writer have been unconsciously employed by the orator and the historian in describing the rise and growth of this nation. The beast was seen “coming up out of the earth;” and, according to the translators, the word here rendered “coming up” literally signifies to “grow or spring up as a plant.” And, as we have seen, the nation must arise in territory previously unoccupied. A prominent writer, describing the rise of the United States, speaks of “*the mystery of her coming forth from vacancy,*” and says, “Like a *silent seed* we grew into empire.” [Townsend, *The New Word Compared with the Old*, p. 462.] A European journal in 1850 spoke of the United States as a wonderful empire, which was “emerging,” and “*amid the silence of the earth* daily adding to its power and pride” [The Dublin Nation]. Edward Everett, in an oration on the Pilgrim founders of this nation, said: “Did they look for a retired spot, inoffensive from its obscurity, safe in its remoteness from the haunts of despots, where the little church of Leyden might enjoy freedom of conscience? Behold the *mighty regions* over which, in *peaceful conquest*, . . . they have borne the banners of the cross.”

“And he had two horns like a lamb.” The lamb-like

horns indicate youth, innocence, and gentleness, fitly representing the character of the United States when presented to the prophet as “coming up” in 1798. The Christian exiles who first fled to America, sought an asylum from royal oppression and priestly intolerance, and they determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty. The Declaration of Independence sets forth the great truth that “**all men are created equal,**” and endowed with the inalienable right to “**life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.**” And the Constitution guarantees to the people **the right of self-government**, providing that representatives elected by the popular vote shall enact and administer the laws. **Freedom of religious faith** was also granted, every man being permitted to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Republicanism and Protestantism became the fundamental principles of the nation. **These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity.** The oppressed and down-trodden throughout Christendom have turned to this land with interest and hope. Millions have sought its shores, and the United States has risen to a place among the most powerful nations of the earth.

But the beast with lamb-like horns “spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed, . . . saying to them that dwell on the earth, **that they should make an image to the beast,** which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” Revelation 13:11-14.

The lamb-like horns and dragon voice of the symbol point to a striking contradiction between the professions and the practice of the nation thus represented. **The “speaking” of the nation is the action of its legislative and judicial authorities.** By such action it will give the lie to those liberal and peaceful principles which it has put forth as the foundation of its policy. The prediction that it will speak “as a dragon,” and exercise “all the power of the first beast,” plainly foretells a development of the spirit of intolerance and persecution that was manifested by the nations represented by the

dragon and the leopard-like beast. And the statement that the beast with two horns "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast," indicates that **the authority of this nation is to be exercised in enforcing some observance which shall be an act of homage to the papacy.**

Such action would be directly contrary to the principles of this government, to the genius of its free institutions, to the direct and solemn avowals of the Declaration of Independence, and to the Constitution. The founders of the nation wisely sought to guard against the employment of secular power on the part of the church, with its inevitable result—intolerance and persecution. The Constitution provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," and that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office of public trust under the United States." **Only in flagrant violation of these safeguards to the nation's liberty,** can any religious observance be enforced by civil authority. But the inconsistency of such action is no greater than is represented in the symbol. It is the beast with lamb-like horns—in profession pure, gentle, and harmless—that speaks as a dragon.

"Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast." Here is clearly presented a form of government in which the legislative power rests with the people; a most striking evidence that the United States is the nation denoted in the prophecy.

But what is the "image to the beast"? and how is it to be formed? The image is made by the two-horned beast, and is an image to the first beast. It is also called an image of the beast. Then to learn what the image is like, and how it is to be formed, we must study the characteristics of the beast itself,—the papacy. 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. An example of this is given in the long-continued persecution of dissenters by the Church of England. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, thousands of non-conformist ministers were forced to leave their churches, and many, both of pastors and people, were subjected to fine, imprisonment, torture, and martyrdom.

It was apostasy that led the early church to seek the aid of the civil government, and this prepared the way for the development of the papacy,—the beast. Said Paul, There shall "come a falling away, . . . and that man of sin be revealed." 2 Thessalonians 2:3 **So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image to the beast.** And the Bible declares that **before the coming of the Lord there will exist a state of religious declension similar to that in the first centuries.** "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be *lovers of their own selves*, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, *despisers of those that are good*, traitors, heady, highminded, *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness*, but denying the power thereof." 2 Timothy 3:1-5 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." 1 Timothy 4:1. Satan will work "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." And all that "received not the love of the truth, that

they might be saved," will be left to accept "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. When this state of ungodliness shall be reached, the same results will follow as in the first centuries.

The wide diversity of belief in the Protestant churches is regarded by many as decisive proof that no effort to secure a forced uniformity can ever be made. But **there has been for years, in churches of the Protestant faith, a strong and growing sentiment in favor of a union based upon common points of doctrine. To secure such a union, the discussion of subjects upon which all were not agreed—however important they might be from a Bible standpoint—must necessarily be waived.**

Charles Beecher, in a sermon in the year 1846, declared that the ministry of "the evangelical Protestant denominations" is "not only formed all the way up under a tremendous pressure of merely human fear, but they live, and move, and breathe in a state of things radically corrupt, and appealing every hour to every baser element of their nature to hush up the truth, and bow the knee to the power of apostasy. Was not this the way things went with Rome? Are we not living her life over again? **And what do we see just ahead?—Another general council! A world's convention! evangelical alliance, and universal creed!**" When this shall be gained, then, in the effort to secure complete uniformity, it will be only a step to the resort to force.

When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the State to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result.

The beast with two horns "causeth (commands) all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

Revelation 13:16, 17. **The third angel's warning is, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." "The beast" mentioned in this message, whose worship is enforced by the two-horned beast, is the first, or leopard-like beast of Revelation 13,—the papacy. The "image to the beast" represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas. The "mark of the beast" still remains to be defined.**

After the warning against the worship of the beast and his image, the prophecy declares, **"Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."** Since those who keep God's commandments are thus placed in contrast with those that worship the beast and his image and receive his mark, it follows that **the keeping of God's law, on the one hand, and its violation, on the other, will make the distinction between the worshipers of God and the worshipers of the beast.**

The special characteristic of the beast, and therefore of his image, is the breaking of God's commandments. Says Daniel, of the little horn, the papacy, "He shall think to change the times and the law." Daniel 7:25, R. V. And Paul styled the same power the "man of sin," who was to exalt himself above God. One prophecy is a complement of the other. **Only by changing God's law could the papacy exalt itself above God; whoever should understandingly keep the law as thus changed would be giving supreme honor to that power by which the change was made.** Such an act of obedience to papal laws would be a mark of allegiance to the pope in the place of God.

The papacy has attempted to change the law of God. The **second commandment**, forbidding image worship, has been dropped from the law, and the **fourth commandment** has been so changed as to authorize the observance of the first instead of the seventh day as the Sabbath. But papists urge, as a reason for omitting the second commandment, that it is

unnecessary, being included in the first, and that they are giving the law exactly as God designed it to be understood. This cannot be the change foretold by the prophet. **An intentional, deliberate change is presented: "He shall *think* to change the times and the law."** The change in the fourth commandment exactly fulfills the prophecy. For this the only authority claimed is that of the church. Here the papal power openly sets itself above God.

While the worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the fourth commandment,—since this is the sign of His creative power, and the witness to His claim upon man's reverence and homage,—the worshipers of the beast will be distinguished by their efforts to tear down the Creator's memorial, to exalt the institution of Rome. It was in behalf of the Sunday, that popery first asserted its arrogant claims; and its first resort to the power of the State was to compel the observance of Sunday as "the Lord's day." But the Bible points to the seventh day, and not to the first, as the Lord's day. Said Christ, "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." The fourth commandment declares, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord." And by the prophet Isaiah the Lord designates it, "My holy day." Mark 2:28; Isaiah 58:13.

The claim so often put forth, that Christ changed the Sabbath, is disproved by His own words. In his sermon on the mount He said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven." Matthew 5:17-19.

It is a fact generally admitted by Protestants, that the Scriptures give no authority for the change of the Sabbath. This is plainly stated in publications issued by the American Tract Society and the American Sunday-school

Union. One of these works acknowledges “the complete silence of the New Testament so far as any explicit command for the Sabbath (Sunday, the first day of the week) or definite rules for its observance are concerned.” [“The Abiding Sabbath,” p. 184, A \$500 prize essay.]

Another says: “Up to the time of Christ’s death, no change had been made in the day;” and, “so far as the record shows, they (the apostles) did not give any explicit command enjoining the abandonment of the seventh-day Sabbath, and its observance on the first day of the week.” [“The Lord’s Day,” pp. 185, 186, A \$1,000 prize essay.]

Roman Catholics acknowledge that the change of the Sabbath was made by their church, and declare that Protestants, by observing the Sunday, are recognizing her power. In the “Catholic Catechism of Christian Religion,” in answer to a question as to the day to be observed in obedience to the fourth commandment, this statement is made: “During the old law, Saturday was the day sanctified; but *the church*, instructed by Jesus Christ, and directed by the Spirit of God, has substituted Sunday for Saturday; so now we sanctify the first, not the seventh day. Sunday means, and now is, the day of the Lord.”

As the sign of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite, “the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of . . . because by keeping Sunday strictly they acknowledge the church’s power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin.” [Abridgement of Christian Doctrine.] What then is the change of the Sabbath, but the sign or mark of the authority of the Romish Church—“the mark of the beast”?

The Roman Church has not relinquished her claim to supremacy; and when the world and the Protestant churches accept a sabbath of her creating, while they reject the Bible Sabbath, they virtually admit this assumption. They may claim the authority of tradition and of the Fathers for the change; but in so doing they ignore the very principle which separates them from Rome,—that “the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants.” The papist

can see that they are deceiving themselves, willingly closing their eyes to the facts in the case. **As the movement for Sunday enforcement gains favor, he rejoices, feeling assured that it will eventually bring the whole Protestant world under the banner of Rome.**

Romanists declare that **“the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the (Catholic) Church.”** [*Plain Talk about Protestantism*, p. 213.] **The enforcement of Sunday-keeping on the part of Protestant churches is an enforcement of the worship of the papacy—of the beast.** Those who, understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, choose to observe the false instead of the true Sabbath; are thereby paying homage to that power by which alone it is commanded. **But in the very act of enforcing a religious duty by secular power, the churches would themselves form an image to the beast; hence the enforcement of Sunday-keeping in the United States would be an enforcement of the worship of the beast and his image.**

But Christians of past generations observed the Sunday, supposing that in so doing they were keeping the Bible Sabbath, and there are now true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their integrity before Him. But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honor popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome, and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshipping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome—“the mark of the beast.” And it is not until the issue is thus

plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive “the mark of the beast.”

The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortal is contained in the third angel’s message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God’s judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them. Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” **The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread.** It is represented in the prophecy as proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and **it will command the attention of the world.**

In the issue of the contest, all Christendom will be divided into two great classes,—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Although church and State will unite their power to compel “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,” to receive “the mark of the beast” (Revelation 13:16) yet the people of God will not receive it. The prophet of Patmos beholds “them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God,” and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Revelation 15:2, 3.

CHAPTER SUPPLEMENT: THE THREE ANGELS’ MESSAGE

“Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His Judgment is come . . . Babylon is fallen, is fallen . . . because she made all peoples drink . . . If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,—the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation . . . Here is the patience of the saints: Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”—*Revelation 14:7-12.*