

Ellen G. White Estate

THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

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Chapter 25—God’s Law Immutable

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“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 behalf 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.”

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[[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](#).]

[435] 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, [See Appendix, Note 8.] 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 the keeping of 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.]

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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.]

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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 Jehovah; and there is none else.” [Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18.] Says the psalmist, “Know ye that Jehovah, 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. [438]

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 [439]

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."

[440] 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, in “The New World Compared with the Old,” p. 462.] A European journal in 1850 spoke of the **United States** as a wonderful [441] 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.

[442] 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.

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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

[444] 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.

[445] 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. [446]

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, Revised Version.] 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.

[447] 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; [See [Appendix](#), note 9.] 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.” [448]

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.” [“Abridgment 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.

[449] 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 worshiping 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. [450]

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.]