

Foreword

The first chapters of The Order of Last Day Events, Vol.1 & Vol.2, are part of a series of 42 chapters which came from the pen of this brother I mentioned at the beginning of the book That Which Has Been Will Be. I decided to present this series because I believe that this is possibly the best one could ever read on this important topic. In later chapters, which will appear in Vol.3 and 4, I have introduced the concept of righteousness by faith in the the context of the message sent from Heaven at the Minneapolis meeting in 1888 and which was missing. So this series is a combination of what this brother wrote, for the most part, and my small contribution. I am very grateful to the Lord for this series. Now the reader must decide for himself if it is timely or not.

God bless.

Laval Picard

VOLUME 1

The Order of last day events

Introduction

It was the late Sir Winston Churchill who said that the great secret of being a successful politician was to be able to predict accurately what would happen in a years time, and then to be able to explain why it didn't happen when the time came!

This is the predicament that the wisest men of the world together with all the lesser men and women find themselves in. The future is the great, dark, uncertain, fear inspiring unknown for them, but this is not so for the humble, God-fearing

child of God who searches the Scriptures to know what is coming upon the earth. "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. You are the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others but let us watch and be sober." 1 Thess. 5:4-6.

No mystery

The prophecies are not difficult to understand. The Word of God describes them as being a light that shines in a dark place. Darkness is mysterious and uncertain but the light dispels all of that and makes that which was mysterious, clear and plain. The very wording of Scripture indicates that there is no mystery about these things. True, the prophecies are written in code language but the key to the code is also supplied together with the wonderful guidance of that great and marvellous Teacher, the

Holy Spirit. 1 John 2:20,27. No one needs to be in the least doubt or uncertainty as to what these messages mean to them.

"The bible was designed to be a guide to all who wish to become acquainted with the will of their Maker. God gave to men the sure word of prophecy; angels and even Christ Himself came to make known to Daniel and John the things that must shortly come to pass. Those important matters that concern our salvation were not left involved in mystery. They were not revealed in such a way as to perplex and mislead the honest seeker after truth. Said the Lord by the prophet Habakkuk, 'Write the vision, and make it plain that he may run that readeth it.' Hab.2:2. The word of God is plain to all who study it with a prayerful heart. Every truly honest soul will come to the light of truth. 'Light is sown for the righteous.' And no church can advance in holiness unless its members are earnestly seeking for truth as for hid treasures." The Great Controversy, pp.521,522.

In view of the fact that the Lord has made things so clear and so plain, then it is a wonder that so many of us are confused on just what is to take place in the last days of this earth's history. This should not be, and every effort must be made to so clarify in our minds the great teachings of the prophecies that we shall be truly the people of the light and not of darkness.

But there is one good reason as to why things are not yet clear to all and that is that light is progressive. Not all is given to be understood at the one time, but is understood according to the need of the time. "The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18. "Even the prophets who were favoured with the special illumination of the Spirit did not fully comprehend the import of the revelations committed to them. The meaning was to be unfolded from age to age as the people of God should

need the instruction therein contained." The Great Controversy, p.344; Christ's Object Lessons, p.78.

One has but to study the history of prophetic interpretation to see that, as each generation of Christ's followers came upon the scene, that they understood the prophecies that were the guidelines for their own day while those that were to be fulfilled in a far-future generation were not opened to them fully by the Holy Spirit. They were opened to them to an extent but not in the fullness of the light with which they were revealed to the later generation.

Thus for instance it is clear that in the days of the early Christians the image of Daniel 2 and the four beasts of chapter seven were clearly understood to symbolize the four great world empires of Babylon, Medo Persia, Greece and Rome, but they did not understand the matter of the time, times and dividing of times. Daniel 7:25. But when we come to the Middle Ages, the times of the great

Protestant awakening, then we find that Daniel 7 with its description of the Papacy was the great focal point of study and understanding while little or no attention was given to Daniel 8:14. And this situation continued right through till 1798. Then the interest shifted quite dramatically to the study of Daniel 8:14. And this shift of interest happened all over the world in different places quite independently of any influence from other areas.

Diligent study needed

Note the words of counsel in this quotation: "Yet while it was not given to the prophets to understand fully the things revealed to them, they earnestly sought to obtain all the light which God had been pleased to make manifest. They 'inquired and searched diligently...' What a lesson to the people of God in the Christian age, for whose benefits these

prophecies were given to His servants! 'Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister,' 1 Peter 1:10-12. Witness those holy men of God as they 'inquired and searched diligently' concerning generations that were yet unborn. Contrast their holy zeal with the listless unconcern with which the favoured ones of later ages treat this gift of Heaven. What a rebuke to the ease-loving, world-loving indifference which is content to declare that the prophecies cannot be understood." The Great Controversy, p.344.

Now the time has surely come when we are facing the last events in this world's history. We can see the steady trend of advancing events in the earth that warn us of the coming crisis. It is thus to be expected that the time has most surely come for the Lord to open more clearly before us the details of the prophecies that reveal what He will do in this final and finishing conflict. We have before us the sure

promise that "Increased light will shine upon all the grand truths of prophecy, and they will be seen in freshness and brilliancy, because the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness will illuminate the whole." Evangelism, p.343.

As we turn now to our study of last day events, let us remember that, "In the last great conflict... That which has been will be..." for "The work of God in the earth presents, from age to age, a striking similarity in every great reformation or religious movement. The important movements of the present have their parallel in those of the past, and the experience of the church in former ages has lessons of great value for our own time." G.C.343.

Chapter One

In the study of the order of last day events, it soon becomes apparent that there is one event that emerges as a key happening in the sequence. It is quickly established as a peg in a sure place and having it in place it is possible to draw up the lines of sequence out from it in either directions. That event is the setting up of the image of the beast. Its setting up is foretold in Revelation 13:11-18.

As stated in the introduction, it is assumed that the student will have a sound basic understanding of the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation and will therefore know that the first beast referred to in Revelation 13, as set forth in the first ten verses of the chapter, is none other than the Papal power that ruled supreme over the world for the 1260 years from 538-1798 A.D. It will be also understood that the Lamb-like

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beast that rises to power after the temporary demise of the first beast is none other than the power of Apostate Protestantism especially as cradled in the United States of America.

In this chapter (Rev.13) we are expressly told that this power as symbolized by the lamblike beast will set up an image of the first beast that had the wound by the sword and did live. What is an image? It is a likeness in the form of a reproduction of that which was before, the same thing all over again.

And there can be no mistake as to what this reproduction is. There can be no mistake on two counts. In the first case the actual image itself is described to us here in Rev. 13, and in the second case we have but to go back and study the character of the first beast to see what the image is to be. We find that they are identical.

"By this first beast is represented the Roman Church, an ecclesiastical body clothed with civil power, having authority to punish all dissenters. The image to the beast represents another religious body with similar powers. The formation of this image is the work of that beast whose peaceful rise and mild professions render it so striking a symbol of the United States. Here is to be found an image of the Papacy. When the churches of our land, uniting upon such points of faith as are held by them in common, shall influence the State to enforce their decrees and sustain their institutions, then will Protestant America have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy. Then the true church will be assailed by persecution, as were God's ancient people." Story of Redemption, pp.381,382.

We find that we have a religious power that has enlisted the power of the state as her servant and uses that power to enforce her decrees even to the end, to the death penalty

where men refuse to yield to her demands. Thus it was with the Papacy and thus we are plainly told it will be with the image. Rev.13:15-18. This is a picture of what is coming to that which is now the free world and, first of all, in that nation which has all along steadfastly held to the right of every man to the utmost freedom to choose as to how and where he will worship or as to whether he will worship at all.

There are those that cannot believe that this could ever be possible. But the word of God has declared that it will be and that is all that we have to believe. The more one studies the prophecies, then the more we see that things that men could never believe were possible but were foretold in the Word, did happen just as they were foretold to happen.

Of course there are factors that lead up to this. There are forces that gradually bring it about so that it does not exactly happen over night. These have also been clearly outlined

in the prophetic word and it is important that we study them. This we will do in the proper order once we have established the actual fact of the setting up of the image of the beast in the United States of America and what is involved in that action.

Setting up the image

At what point of time will the image be set up? What act upon the part of men will establish it? What is involved in this? These are the questions that are now to be answered. And the answers are there. There is no mystery about it. Let us turn to the prophetic word for the answers:

"When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held 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 '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 Great Controversy, p.445.

"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.' Mgr. Segur, Plain Talk About the Protestants of Today, 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 of Rev.13:1-10. Those who, understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, choose to observe the false instead of the true Sabbath, are thereby giving homage to the power by which 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." The Great Controversy, pp.448-449.

Thus is answered the question, At what point of time will the image of the beast be set up? It will be set up at that point of time when the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such point of doctrine as they hold in common, shall obtain the power of the civil authorities to enforce as law the laws and injunctions of the church itself especially in regard to the enforcement of the Sunday legislation. That time is still future but it is not too much distant anymore. Already the movement for church unity is well advanced and strides have been made in this direction that would not have been thought possible but a few short years ago.

Many see in this unity a great blessing for the world and it is true that the prayer of Christ is for the unity of His people. But let us never forget that the unity that Jesus prayed for is not the root, but the fruit. First comes the unity with the truth of God and then all that are united with that truth will in turn be united with each other as the fruit of the basic unity with the truth.

The unity proposed here is not a platform of truth but as an expediency to gain a substitute power for the power of God. Having lost the power of God in the rejection of the great truths of the Advent message, the only remaining power that the churches can turn to is the arm of the state. But they cannot gain this power until they can go as a united front to take it up. Therefore they must first unify among themselves so that they will have the power to go to the state and demand and obtain that power to enforce their wishes. The reasons for this and the factors

involved will be more fully developed as we proceed into this series of studies.

Some may feel that the image of the beast must already be set up because there are numerous Sunday Laws upon the State books throughout the United States as well as in Australia, Canada and Europe. But at the present time these stand largely unenforced while the time will come when, in the face of certain issues, there will be a strong uniting of the churches and a very definite enforcement of the law on a national basis. It will be a nation wide affair that will involve the Constitution. It will be a "national apostasy which will end only in national ruin." Bible Commentary, Vol.7, p.976.

So there we have before us fact number one. The setting up of the enforcement of the Sunday law as the will of the leading and by then united churches on a national scale in the United States of America first, is the setting up of the image

of the beast. But what takes place in the United States first is followed by every other country on the face of the globe. This is evident from the fact that the message of warning against the beast and his image as contained in Revelation 14:6-12 is a warning that is sent to "every nation, kindred, tongue and people."

"As America, the land of religious liberty, shall unite with the Papacy in forcing the conscience and compelling men to honour the false sabbath, the people of every country of the globe will be led to follow her example." "Foreign nations will follow the example of the United States. Though she leads out, yet the same crisis will come upon our people in all parts of the world." Testimonies, Vol.6, pp.18,395.

The significance of the event

The setting up of the image of the beast is a most significant event. It is an event that brings the world to a certain point of acute crisis and ushers in a series of chain reactions that end only in the seven last plagues, the coming of the Lord in glory and the destruction of the wicked. Hence the importance of putting this peg in its sure place at the very outset of this study.

In the first case this act brings the United States first of all, and each other nation in their turn as they follow her, to the point of NATIONAL APOSTASY: "When our nation (USA) in its legislative councils, shall enact laws to bind the consciences of men in regard to their religious privileges, enforcing Sunday observance, and bringing oppressive power to bear against those that keep the seventh-day Sabbath, the law of God will, to all intents and purposes, be made void in the land and national apostasy will be followed by national ruin." RH Dec.18, 1888.

Note that this statement distinctly equates the passing of the Sunday law and its enforcement on the national scale with national apostasy. This is further made plain in this statement that tells us that by this act the USA will have fully disconnected herself from righteousness.

"By the decree enforcing the institution of the Papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation (USA) will disconnect herself fully from righteousness. When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its constitution as a Protestant and Republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehood and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvellous working of Satan and that the end is

near. As the approach of the Roman soldiers was a sign to the disciples of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, so may this apostasy be a sign to us that the limit of God's forbearance is reached and that the angel of mercy is about to take her flight, never to return." 5 T 451

"When Protestant churches shall unite with the secular powers to sustain a false religion for opposing which their ancestors endured the fiercest persecution, then will the papal sabbath be enforced by the combined authority of church and state. There will be a national apostasy, which will end only in national ruin." Evangelism p.235.

"It is at the time of the national apostasy, when, acting the policy of Satan, the rulers of the land will rank themselves on the side of the man of sin, it is then that the measure of guilt is full; the national apostasy is the signal for national ruin." Selected Messages, Vol.2, p.373.

These statements need no further comment. They plainly tell that the act of passing and enforcing a Sunday law as an act of homage to the papacy, is an act of national apostasy that brings the complete severance from all righteousness, fills the measure of their guilt and causes the angel of mercy to leave, never to return. It is no wonder that this is a significant event and one that is fraught with fearful consequences. It is the great point of no return. Once that step is taken then the powers of this earth will have gone too far to return and their destruction is certified. But there is more yet to be learned about this event, for by it *the device of Satan will be perfected*. For a long time the devil has been working to bring the whole world under his complete control and to unite it into one vast army of confederated opposition against the people and the truth of God.

Now at last his device is perfected and he is ready for the last great battle of the ages. Note how clearly this fact of the perfecting of his device is stated in the following quotation:

"When the legislature frames laws which exalt the first day of the week, and put it in the place of the seventh day, the device of Satan will be perfected." RH, April 15, 1890.

Inasmuch as the whole object of the devil from the very beginning has been to make of none effect the law of God, (G.C.582) then it follows that if the device of Satan has been perfected at this time, then *The law of God is also made void.*

And so it proves to be as these statements show. "A time is coming when the law of God is, in a special sense, to be made void in our land. The rulers of our nation will, by legislative enactments, enforce the Sunday law, and thus God's people

will be brought into great peril. When our nation in its legislative assemblies, shall enact laws to bind the consciences of man in regard to their religious privileges, enforcing Sunday observance, and bringing oppressive power to bear against those who keep the Seventh day Sabbath, the law of God will, to all intents and purposes, be made void in the land; and national apostasy will be followed by national ruin." Review and Herald, Dec.18,1888.

Very naturally this will bring a great test for the people of God.

"The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes: for it is to be the great test for the people of God by which their eternal destiny will be decided... Rev.13:11-17 (quoted here)... This is the great test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who prove their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the

banner of the Lord God Jehovah and will receive the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of divine origin, and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast." Bible Commentary, Vol.7, p. 976.

Finally we will notice that this event marks *the signal to flee from the cities*. "As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains." 5 T 464,465.

And now without advancing the evidences, we will state here that this is also the time for the complete spiritual fall of Babylon the Great and the beginning of the

long looked for outpouring of the latter rain and the loud cry.

No question of its great significance

There can be no question then in the light of the foregoing evidences from the prophetic Word that this event is a very significant and important one indeed. It marks a very definite point of development in the great final conflict and we must be thoroughly acquainted with all the facts that concern it. These facts will take on even greater significance as we proceed with the study and witness the bearing that they will have on the crisis.

For now it is time to turn to a study of what leads up to and actually brings the image into existence. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

The image of the beast

The setting up of the image of the beast is not something that happens without cause. Rather it is the result of the outworking of certain steps and certain decisions that have been made along the way, and is the logical and inescapable culmination of those steps. It is something to which the church and the state, having set their feet in certain paths, must of necessity come to in the end.

For us who are called upon by God to be faithful Bible students it is not enough to know that the image is to be set up and to know what is involved in the setting up of that image. We must know how it comes to be set up. We must understand as far as it is revealed and as far as it is possible for the human mind aided by the Spirit of God to understand the

outworking of the very principles that lead up to this situation. It is an important part of the study of prophecy.

What was it then that led to the setting up of the beast in the first case and to the setting up of the image of that beast in the second case? Inasmuch as the setting up of the beast is the result of the outworking of certain forces and the setting up of the image is the same result except at a later date, then it follows that the same forces that resulted in the setting up of the beast must have been again at work to set up the repetition of that beast in the image of it. Therefore to understand that which is yet to be we must study carefully that which has already been and can be clearly seen.

That then is the question, and the answer is given to us in language clear and plain. "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 shall be revealed.' 2 Thess.2:3. So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image of the beast." G.C.443,444.

Now, why is it that the setting up of the beast and then of the image is the natural and inevitable consequence of the apostasy?

The loss of the power of God

The word apostasy or falling away means to fall away, or to depart from the truth of God. This is only to fall away from the power of God and thus to leave the church powerless. To be powerless means to be without any ability to accomplish anything at all. This then means that the church has lost all right of existence when it has come to this place where she has nothing at all to attract the people, and she finds herself

drifting more and more into insignificance. Therefore, the church must seek another power to attract the people other than the power of God. But what other power was there? There was only one other power and that was the power of force. If the people would not of themselves come to the churches and support them then they must be forced to come.

But the power of force rested not in the hands of the church. The state was the custodian of that. Therefore it followed that by some means the church must win the support of the state until they could finally control it and use it to force the people to do exactly what they wanted them to do.

There could be no other possible outcome than this. It was the inevitable step by step development of it all. And it was not a sudden thing. No apostasy or the result of it is ever sudden. It is a process. And inasmuch as that power is firmly held in the possession of the secular

authorities who have been put in the world to rule those who cannot rule themselves, it follows that the church must gain the control of the State in order to control the power of the State. And when that is accomplished, then the beast is formed.

The rise of the beast

It is important for our future study to spend a little space in the study of the development of the original Sunday law which is, in other words, the study of the development of the control of the church over the people by the force of the power of the State.

The time had come when the churches so lacked the power of God that they could no longer attract the people at all and on the Sunday, and special feast days, the priests found that the people would rather work than come to church. This would never do,

for not only was it a serious blow to their pride and prestige, but a decided threat to their livelihood. Having in the meantime gained great favour and power with the Emperor they went to him and secured the law that forbade all work on the first day of the week.

Neander in his history of the Christian Religion and Church, vol.2. section 3, part 2, div.3, par.4, records the fact in these words, "By a law of the year 386, these older changes effected by the Emperor Constantine were more rigorously enforced; and, in general, civil transactions of every kind on Sunday were strictly forbidden. Whosoever transgressed was to be considered, in fact, guilty of sacrilege."

"As a direct result of this law, there soon appeared an evil which, under the circumstances and in the logic of the case, called for further legislation in the same direction. The law forbade all work. But as the people had no such religion as would

cause them to devote the day to pious and moral exercises, the effect of the law was only to enforce idleness. Enforced idleness only multiplied opportunity for dissipation. The natural consequences was that the circuses and the theatres throughout the empire were crowded every Sunday." A.T. Jones, Great Empires of Prophecy, p.488.

What to do now? The answer was simple. Having entered upon this wrong path there was nothing left to do but to go further along that path and accordingly they worked till they had a law that closed the theatres on the Sunday. At the council of Carthage in June A.D.401, the following canon was enacted: "Canon 5. On Sundays and feast days, no plays may be performed." This they carried to the Emperor Honorius and requested that he pass this into law.

"The church members had not enough religion or love of right to do what they professed to believe was right, therefore, the State was asked to

take away from them all opportunity to do wrong; then they would be Christians! Satan himself could be that kind of Christian in that way, and he would be the devil still." Ibid, 490.

In 425 this came into law and the priests were now confident that the churches were to be filled with a people who, not being permitted by law to work on the Sunday or to play either would now come to church. But again they were disappointed for the people would rather do nothing at all than come to the church which held nothing for them. Accordingly they rested at home on the Sunday and the church was as empty as ever.

"In the logic of this theory there was one more step to be taken. To see how logically it came about, let us glance at the steps taken from the first one to this point: First, the church had all work on Sunday forbidden, in order that the people might attend to things divine; work was forbidden, that the people might

worship. But the people would not worship; they went to the circuses and to the theatres instead of to church. Then the church had laws enacted closing the circuses and the theatres, in order that the people might attend church. But even then the people would not be devoted, nor attend church, for they had no real religion. The next step to be taken therefore, in the logic of the situation was to compel them to be devoted, to compel them to attend to things divine. This was the next step logically to be taken, and it was taken. The theocratical bishops were equal to the occasion. They exactly met the demands of the case; and one of the grandest of the Catholic Fathers and Catholic saints was the father of this Catholic saintly theory. He wrote:

"It is indeed better that men should be brought to serve God by instruction than by fear of punishment or by pain. But because the former means are better, the latter must not therefore be

rejected.... Many must be often brought back to their Lord, like wicked servants, by the rod of temporal sufferings, before they attain the highest grade of religious development." Augustine, Ibid, p.491.

On to the ultimate

And in this fashion and along this course of development, which step by step was the only possible outcome in the nature of the situation as it stood, came the development of the beast in the early days of the Christian dispensation. Of course the majority of people who before did not have enough religion to take them to church now went, for they did not have enough religion in them either to discern the nature of this force to offer any resistance to it.

But now the true people of God began to find themselves in difficulty. They could obey a civil law that

forbade work on the first day of the week, and the law that forbade them from going to the circuses and the theatres did not touch them either, but when a law came into being that demanded that they worship on the false sabbath, then they found that they had to disobey that law.

So they found themselves suffering the civil penalties of breaking a law that the church had caused the State to enact in the selfish interests of a church which, having lost the power of God, had no right to even exist as a church. And when the church found that such punishments as were inflicted did not cause the true ones to waver and to obey, then, in the ultimate, they brought in the death decree and as history attests, they slew with savage and heartless cruelty the thousands who would not yield but would obey God rather than man no matter what the price might be.

Such was the history of the setting up of the beast. "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 Great Controversy, p.443.

Thus it was with the setting up of the beast and so will it be in the setting up of the image to the beast. The one is a matter of the past, but the other is yet in the future and terrible will be the repetition of this thing.

In the historical word we have the story of the rise of the beast. In the Prophetic word we have the story of the rise of the image. It is time to spend a little time and space on the story of the rise of the image. This will be the subject of the next chapter in this series.

CHAPTER 3

The rise of the image

So far in this study of the order of last day events, we have noted that the Image of the Beast is a landmark in the unrolling of the prophetic scroll. It is accomplished when the churches, having secured the support of the power of the State, have the National Sunday Law passed and enforced. Such an act, we learned, would bring about national ruin. It will have brought the powers of church and state to the point of no return and there will be left only the calling out of the true children of God before the judgments on Babylon fall in deadly earnest and destroy her completely.

Such a point of disaster will not have been reached in a moment. Rather, it is the outworking of certain forces over quite a period of time and the object of our study at the moment is to understand this

outworking, so that we can follow it as it develops and know that all things are at hand in the final finishing movements of this earth's history.

We are fortunate that already such an outworking has taken place as we have already seen from the words of The Great Controversy, pp.443,444, the development of the beast before it. There we read, "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 of Rev.13:1-10. So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the Image of the Beast." Rev.13:11-18.

The word "so" means, "in just the same way." This then is but to say that as the apostasy in the early church led to the rise of the papacy, so, in exactly the same way, apostasy in the modern church will lead to the rise of the Image of the Beast. This is the very thing that is happening and is in fact well advanced to the

full outworking of the evil thing that it is.

Having seen then in our last chapter, the history of the development of the rise of the apostasy and the consequent rise of the beast in the early centuries, let us now study the step by step development of the rise of the apostasy in the modern church which will lead to the rise of the Image of the Beast in this our day.

Light rejected

Between the years 1833-1844, the Lord of Heaven and Earth sent to the Protestant Churches who were then the professed churches of God in the world, the glorious light of the Advent message. Had that light been received as the Lord planned that it should, then those churches would have become a mighty power in the world, soon the gospel would have been carried to every nation, kindred, tongue and people, and the

kingdom of Christ would have been established.

But the light that was sent was unwelcome and was fiercely rejected and this led to a serious spiritual fall. "The second angel's message of Revelation 14 was first preached in the summer of 1844, and it then had a direct application to the churches of the United States, where the warning of the judgment had been most generally rejected, and where the declensions in the churches had been most rapid. But the message of the second angel did not reach its complete fulfilment in 1844. The churches then experienced a moral fall, in consequence of their refusal of the light of the Advent message; but that fall was not complete. As they have continued to reject the special truths for this time they have fallen lower and lower." The Great Controversy, p.389.

That rejection of light there was a step which could only end in the full formation of the Image of the Beast.

There is no possible outcome than this. The setting up of the Image of the Beast and all the oppression and persecution which will go with it, was from that moment on, an unavoidable certainty. It is such not by any arbitrary decree of God, nor even basically by the will and choice of man, but simply because effect will follow the cause in this field as surely as in any other field. That is to say, just as surely as the cause is there, then just as surely will the effects follow.

To understand this let us follow the matter through step by step. The message and the warning which came to those people in 1844 was the Glad Tidings of the all-sufficient merits of Jesus Christ, the power of God unto salvation from sin. Romans 3:25; 1:16; Matt.1:21. Now, if they who needed it so much refused to receive it, then they did not have it. That is obvious. The churches stood devoid of power when they refused to accept the power of God which was ready to

be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:5.

Pitted against the church is the power of sin and the church is in the world to save men from sin. It has no other right to exist than this. Now either the church has that power or she does not. It is not the possession of great and splendid organization, not the number of people that serve the church, nor the amount of money under her command, nor any other of these things which gives to a church such power, but the acceptance of the truth as it is brought to the church by God, not the acceptance of the mere theory of the truth but of the living experience of the truth which brings the power of God.

In 1844, the churches rejected the truth of God in the experience and power of it and thus were left without the power of God to combat the power of sin. It must therefore follow that sin must make mighty inroads into their domains, so that

wickedness and immorality would increase and prosper. This is the only possible outworking of the situation. Such a cause must be followed by the certain effects of that cause. History itself attests to this in the past as we read: "The iniquity and spiritual darkness that prevailed under the supremacy of Rome were the inevitable result of her suppression of the Scriptures." The Great Controversy, p.586.

As it was in the past so it will be in the future for the same rejection of the truth of God will bring the same sad results.

The message of the everlasting gospel as brought in the light of the Advent truth of 1844, called upon men to receive the righteousness of Christ which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God including the Seventh Day Sabbath. Truly understood, received and obeyed, the Sabbath of God is the evidence of the presence and power of God, and therefore its place in the

teaching of the last message to the world is vital and necessary. It has to be there or the message is incomplete and lacking in vital power and efficiency. But the Sabbath is particularly objectionable to those that reject the message and they are led to cast aside the whole law in order to avoid the claims of the Sabbath. But the work of Sabbath reform extends nevertheless and the more it does then the more it is resisted by the churches. In this way their rejection of the truth of God becomes the more confirmed, and inevitably the power of sin makes the more determined and effective inroads into the world. Thus the very churches that are in the world as the channels by which the salvation of God is to come to the world become the very means by which sin is strengthened and entrenched.

Thus we read, "As the work of Sabbath reform extends, this rejection of the Divine law to avoid the claims of the fourth commandment will become well-nigh universal. The teachings of

religious leaders have opened the door to infidelity, to spiritualism, and to contempt of God's holy law, and upon these leaders rests a fearful responsibility for the iniquity that exists in the Christian world." The Great Controversy, p.587.

This is utterly true

None but those who know nothing of history can deny it. Up till 1844, the churches were strong teachers of the obligation of the law and the period is recognized as one of the most circumspect and moral of history. True, there was the worldly class who lived wickedly but the hard core of society was religious and law abiding. It was a period when there were men and women of decided strength of character and moral worth.

But when came the added light of the Advent message in 1844, and as has been noted already, the churches led

out in a rejection of that message. Ever since there has been an ever increasing crime wave around the world. The family unit is no longer stable, juvenile as well as adult crime is of such fearful proportion to be a major concern of the powers that be. Divorce is common, and violence is rampant the world over. And all this is rapidly on the increase.

These are facts and no one can honestly deny them. The world is not getting to be a better place. It is getting worse and worse at a fearful pace. 2 Tim.3:1-5.

We are in the last days and this situation exists right now. The common man, the man in the street can see it. The officials can see it. The church can see it and the leaders of the nations can see it. Everyone can see it. And it is because they can, and because they are disturbed by it that it becomes the issue on political platforms. Every election in the United States stresses the

need for the restoration of Law and Order.

Men will advance a number of different reasons for its presence or even be at a loss to give a reason at all, but let it be known on the authority of the Word of God that there is but one reason for it and that is the rejection of the truth sent to the churches from heaven. This is the reason. Having rejected the truth of God, they have rejected the power of God and thus have no method of defence against the power of sin in their lives, and therefore, the ever increasing crime, violence and immorality provides an ever strengthening pressure to come up with an answer that will either solve the situation or at least remove the blame from the churches.

This brings us to the next step in the inexorable march to the setting up of the Image of the Beast. They have rejected the truth of God, the Sabbath of God, the power of God. The

barrier to sin removed, it has swept in like a flood. Now what?

Already quoted above is this statement, "The teachings or religious leaders have opened the door to infidelity, to spiritualism, and to contempt of God's holy law; and upon these leaders rests a fearful responsibility for the iniquity that exists in the 'Christian' world." The Great Controversy, p.587.

Now there immediately follows this word, "Yet this very class put forth the claim that the fast spreading corruption is largely attributable to the desecration of the so-called 'Christian sabbath,' and that the enforcement of Sunday would greatly improve the morality of society." The Great Controversy, p.587.

So here the churches, having rejected the Sabbath of God and the power of God, add further sin to the first sin by charging the trouble to Sunday desecration when it is not that at

all. This is an act in support of Sunday and therefore is a further act in the rejection of the Sabbath, the truth and the power of God.

This then can only drive them still further away from God, still more firmly and deeply into the power of sin and thus the more widely open the door to the inroads of immorality, sin and spiritualism. Thus the churches are found to be in a descending spiral of ever frightening proportions until a crisis is reached of such dimension as will demand drastic and inevitable action. And that action will be the call for the enforcement of the Sunday, which, when it is accomplished, will be the setting up of the Image of the Beast.

This crisis will force the churches to the point where they will have to have the Image set up in their behalf or they themselves will cease to exist. It will be a matter of their own survival. So serious will the situation have become, so desperate the plight to which the world will

have come, that something will have to be done to meet the situation. On every hand the church will see faith in her institutions and her authority fading away. Conscious of the fact that they are powerless to reach and hold the people, conscious of the fact that they cannot stem the rising tide of evil, the churches will be forced to seek power where it can be found. But they have rejected the power of God and have confirmed themselves in that rejection to the point where they have no mind to confess the sin and return to the Lord. Therefore they must find some other power and they will. The only other power that is available is the power of force, the means whereby a man is compelled to do that which it is not in him do do.

But such power is vested, not in the church, but in the state. It is not the way of God to force anyone to do anything. God desires only willing and cheerful obedience. He looks for a people who are willing to be made willing by trusting wholly in the

merits of the blood of a crucified and risen Saviour. But the power of the state is such that it can obtain obedience to its laws only by force. It has no other means. Therefore, when the church has lost the power of God, the power to appeal to the heart of man, and needs the power of force, then she will go to the State and obtain from it the power which it has, the power of force, and, when she has obtained that, then she will have set up the image of the beast. But such a situation will not have arrived in a moment. It will be the culmination of a long process beginning with the rejection of the power of God, followed by the consequent inroads of immorality, vice, spiritualism, violence, rebellion, and such like.

If they were but to see that this is the outworking of their own mischievous course of action and thus be led to repent of that which caused the problem, that one wrong action leads to another and then another until the matter reaches crisis

proportions and a desperate church calls in the power of the State to do that which she is powerless to do.

This is the procedure, long and remorseless, which leads up to the Image of the Beast. Already this is well advanced and shortly we shall see the fruition of it all.

✧ The End ✧

