

Study for the Month of August 2014

## ***The Papacy Series-Part XVIII***

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### ***The Name and Number of the Beast***

*And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in the 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. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six. Revelation 13: 16-18, Authorized Version.*

First this: I received last week (as some you may also have) from two contacts the same forward entitled Islamic Terrorist Network in America. One said, “The real story-- Terrorists in Your Backyard.” The other commented: “They are here [in America] alright. . . . Remember the ones called Sleeper Cells? Some are from the Middle East and others are locals who convert to Islam...”

Attached were a (1) a map of America indicating in red the presence of Moslems by state, and (2) another map showing the distribution of Mosques in the U.S. It also included a caricature of man bowing down, Moslem-like during their worship, the top half of his body colored blue with four white stars and his lower portion colored red---a clear reference to the U.S. Flag, and captioned, “DHIMMICRAT.”

Many brilliant theologians, Bible commentators, well-meaning pastors, zealous Bible teachers, individual Bible students, and now a seeming groundswell of *politicians* largely coming from the extreme Right of Republican and Tea Party lines (for now) are publicly touting (what they may not yet fully realize) are in fact, the brainchild of the Spanish Jesuit priest Ribera which is the Futuristic interpretations of end-time prophecies: We will focus on this specific topic in the coming issues.

Such ignorance of Bible prophecy in these last days when Bible truth, its availability and accessibility to all and the critical enlightenment for the end-time it brings were never more easier and free than in ages past, deeply pains all who love the truth and carry a heavy burden in their hearts for souls who are perishing in gross errors that are covering the earth (Isa. 60:2) especially regarding the divine plan of salvation, the central issue of contention between God and Satan —being God’s moral law and all who advocate it.

“In a world like ours, when truth and falsehood are so closely mingled it is difficult to discern between them, it is a perilous matter to neglect wisdom from on high. Those who will now take heed and turn to the Lord without delay, taking their position on the true foundation, will receive pardon. *All error is mixed with truth, and this makes the deceptions of Satan harder to see.* But when the time of test and trial comes upon us,

there will be seen the difference between the righteousness of the righteous, and the wickedness of the wicked.

“Every error is sin, and every sin has its origin with Satan. Wrong practices have blinded the eyes and blighted the perceptive faculties of men and women. We need now to be guarded on every point. The inhabitants of the world, under Satan’s leadership, are binding up in bundles ready to be burned [by their own careless, presumptuous, proud, and rebellious choices]. We have no time, not a moment to lose. *The judgments of God are in the land*, and those who stand obstinate, unconvinced by the warnings that God sends, will be bound up in the bundles ready to be burned. Let ministers and church members go forth into the vineyard [either through pen or personal voice]. They will find their harvest wherever they proclaim *the forgotten truths of the Bible* [specifically the present truth doctrines].” – *Ellen G. White, This Day With God (Devotional), p. 162, Letter 103, June 3, 1903.*

“Error is never harmless. It never sanctifies, but always brings confusion and dissension. It is always dangerous. The enemy has great power over minds that are not thoroughly fortified by prayer and established in Bible truth.” – *Ibid, Counsels to Writers and Editors, p. 47.*

No one is saved in error; it is called darkness in the Bible. God’s last message of mercy is already being given to a perishing world, and is swelling into the final loud cry of Revelation 18—the final global movement of revival and reformation which is calling people to quickly “come out of darkness into the marvelous light” of present, testing truth “as it is in Jesus.”

The greatest enemy of America, long prophesied by Daniel, Paul, and John in these last days was never the Muslims and their so-called “Sharia law” like the Tea Party candidates are trying to fire up their bases with and scare credulous Christians whose eschatology of last days events are based on Preterism and Futurism, brainchilds of the Spanish *Jesuit priests* Alcasar an Ribera to counteract the work of the Reformers in the past, exposing the Papacy as the Antichrist and the Roman Catholic Church as the “beast of prophecy.”

At this very minute, further exacerbating the confusion in the most politically-divided America ever, nations arising against nations, tribes against tribes, religions and against their own, bloodshed, new forms of deadly diseases, drought, flooding, earthquakes, economic collapse of nations, multiplying disasters by land, earth, and sea and the like sweeping throughout the Middle East and Africa, etc., prejudice and hatred, and now, the latest bogeyman—the militant ISIS.” Bible Prophecy clearly foretells that the greatest enemy of the America in the last days is papal principles and itself, for transforming as a nation, from one that sacred and secular historians, describe as growing up peacefully as “a beast with lamb-like horns,” into one “speaking like a dragon,” mimicking the leopard-like beast before it—the revived Papacy!

But the more urgent and specific call for these last days is the very first Jesuit Pope, Francis, is currently sweeping nations from their feet with his charisma and strategy, gathering them under his wings in preparation for the closing scenes of the great controversy, the focus being the Sabbath of the fourth commandment of the Ten Commandments and all who will be loyal and true to the God of Heaven. The call npw to be given is: “Come out of her, *My people*, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.” Revelation. 18: 5.

## The Beast and the Mark of the Beast

In our last month's issue, Study for the Month July, 2014, we invoked authentic evidences from the Bible to various Bible scholars of different denominations to secular historical sources and from the official documents of the Roman Catholic Church itself that: (1) the beast of prophecy is the Papacy (2) the mark of the beast is their bold and official declaration that they had the power to transfer the sanctity of the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment to Sunday, the first day of the week.

Here's more from Christian Edwardson's book, *Facts of Faith*, pp. 293-299, quoting various official literature including Catholic sources:

"The Catholic Church for over a thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her Divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday."- *"The Christian Sabbath,"* p. 29. *Printed by the "Catholic Mirror," the official organ of Cardinal Gibbons, Baltimore, Md., 1893.*

"Kindly notice how often Catholic authors refer to the fact that there is no Scripture proof for Sunday, but that it rests solely on the authority of the Catholic Church. Rt. Reverend John Milner says:

'The first precept in the Bible is that of sanctifying the seventh day: God blessed *the seventh day*, and sanctified it.' Genesis 2: 3. [Even before He spoke and wrote it in the Ten Commandments and gave it to Moses atop Mt. Sinai to be given to the people, Exodus 19, 20]. This precept was confirmed by God in the Ten Commandments: 'Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.' Exodus 20. On the other hand, Christ declares that He is not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it [as our Example]. Matthew 5: 17. He Himself observed the Sabbath: 'And *as His custom was*, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.' Luke 4: 16. His disciples likewise observed it *after* His death: '*They rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment,*' Luke 23: 56. Yet with all this weight of Scripture authority for keeping the Sabbath, or seventh day, holy, *Protestants of all denominations make this a profane day, and transfer the obligation of it to the first day of the week*, or Sunday. Now what authority have they for doing this? None whatsoever, except the unwritten word, or tradition, of the Catholic Church.' – '*End of Religious Controversy,*' p. 89. *New York: P.K. Kennedy, 1897./ quoted in Facts of Faith, p. 294.*

Who was the Right Reverend John Milner? He was an English Roman Catholic Bishop. See Wikipedia (who says Milner was a "controversialist") and other internet sources. When one speaks the plain truth, he is called names such heretical, schismatic or a trouble-maker of the establishment or the existing institutions, particularly the state churches.

Ellen. G. White points out in *The Great Controversy* , 1911 ed., pp. 458-9:

"Now as in former ages, the presentation of a truth that reproves the sins and errors of the times will excite opposition. 'Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.' John 3: 20. As men see that they cannot maintain their position by the Scriptures, many determine to maintain it at all hazards, and with a malicious spirit they assail the character and motives of those who stand in defense of unpopular truth. It is the same policy which has been pursued in all ages. Elijah was declared [by wicked king Ahab] to be a troubler in Israel [1 Kings 18:17],

Jeremiah a traitor [Jer. 37: 12-18], Paul a polluter of the temple [Acts 16: 20; 21: 20-40; 25: 1-9; 28: 17-29. From that day to this, those who would be loyal to truth will be denounced as seditious, heretical, or schismatic. Multitudes who are too unbelieving to accept the sure word of prophecy will receive with unquestioning credulity and accusation against those who dare to reprove fashionable sins. This spirit will increase more and more. And the Bible plainly teaches that a time is approaching when the laws of the state will so conflict with the law of God that whosoever would obey all the divine precepts must brave reproach and punishment as an evildoer.”

“In view of this, what is the duty of the messenger of truth? Shall he conclude that the truth ought not to be presented, since often its only effect is to arouse men to evade or resist its claims? No; he has no more reason for withholding the testimony of God’s word, because it excites opposition than had earlier Reformers [such as the Wldenses, Albigenes, Vaudois, Luther and Melanchthon in Germany; Zwingli in Switzerland, Lefevre and his student William Farel, the bishop of Meaux, Berquin, John Calvin in Paris, France, Erasmus in Holland, John Knox in Scotland, Wycliffe and Tyndale, etc.]. The confession of faith made by saints and martyrs was recorded for the benefit of succeeding generations. Those living examples of holiness and steadfast integrity have come down to inspire courage in those who are now called to stand as witnesses for God. They received grace and truth, not for themselves alone, but that, through them, the knowledge of God might enlighten the earth. Has God given light to His servants in this generation? Then they should let it shine forth to the world. . . .

“So far as his opportunities extend, *everyone* who has received the light of truth is under the same solemn and fearful responsibility as was the prophet of Israel, to whom the word of the Lord came, saying: ‘Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word of My mouth, and warn them from Me. [the rest of Ezekiel. 33: 7-9 quoted].”

“The Brotherhood of St. Vincent de Paul says:

‘The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work.’ (Exod. XX. 8, 9). . . . Such being God’s command then, I ask again, Why do you not obey it? . . .

‘You will answer me, perhaps, that you *do* keep holy the Sabbath-day; for that you abstain from all worldly business, and diligently go to church, and say your prayers, and read your Bible at home, every Sunday of your lives.

‘But *Sunday is not the Sabbath day*, Sunday is the *first* day of the week; the Sabbath-day was the *seventh* day of the week. Almighty God did not give a commandment that men should keep holy *one day in seven*; but He named His own day, and said distinctly, ‘Thou shalt keep holy *the seventh day*’: and He assigned a reason which belongs only to the seventh day of the week, and cannot be applied to the rest. He says, ‘For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; *wherefore* the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.’

‘Almighty God ordered that all men should rest from their labor on the seventh day, because He too rested on that day: He did not rest on Sunday, but on Saturday. On Sunday, which is the first day of the week, He *began the work* of creation . . . Genesis 2: 2, 3. Nothing can be more plain and easy to understand than all this; and there is nobody who attempts to deny it [not even the Papacy!]. . . . Why then do you keep holy the Sunday and not Saturday?

‘You will tell me that Saturday was the *Jewish* Sabbath, but that the *Christian* Sabbath has been changed to Sunday. Changed! But by whom? Who has authority to change an express commandment of Almighty God? When God has spoken and said, Thou shalt keep holy the seventh day, who shall dare to say, Nay, thou mayest work and

do all manner of worldly business on the seventh day; but thou shalt keep holy the first day in its stead? This is a most-important question, which I know not how you can answer.

‘You are a Protestant [today’s mainstream Christianity, made up of Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Born-again Christians, etc.], and you profess to go by the Bible and the Bible only. . . . The command to keep holy the seventh day is one of the Ten Commandments; you believe that the other nine are still binding; who gave you authority to tamper with the fourth?

‘We blame you not for making Sunday your weekly holy day instead of Saturday, but for rejecting tradition, which is the only safe and clear rule by which this observance can be justified.’ – *‘Why Don’t You Keep Holy the Sabbath-Day?’* pp. 2-3, 8. London: Burns and Oates. Found also in *‘The Clifton Tracts,’* Most Reverend John Hughes, D.D.

‘That the [Roman Catholic] Church has instituted the Sunday as the Lord’s day instead of the Sabbath. . . . shows forth her great power which she solemnly received from Christ.’ – *‘Manual of the Catholic Religion,’* p. 186. Quoted in *Facts of Faith,* Christian Edwardson, pp. 294, 295.

“Dr. Martin Luther and Melanchthon felt the stinging force of this Catholic argument in proof of the power of the papal church, *although they knew that the time had not then come for a Sabbath reform.* [italics mine]. Dr. Eck, disputing with Luther, said:

‘If, however, the Church has had power to change the Sabbath of the Bible into Sunday and to command Sunday-keeping, why should it not have also the power concerning other days? . . . If you omit the latter, and turn from the Church to the Scriptures alone, then you must keep the Sabbath with the Jews, *which has been kept from the beginning of the world.*’ [Italics mine].—*‘Enchiridion,’* pp. 78, 79. 15. 33.

“Calling attention to this Roman Catholic assumption of authority, the Reformers said:

‘They also point out, that the Sabbath is changed to Sunday, contrary as it seems, to the Ten Commandments; and there is no example over which they make more ado than the change of the Sabbath. Great, they assert, must be the power of the [Roman Catholic] Church, when it can grant release from on the Ten Commandments.’ – *The Augsburg Confession,* ‘art. 28, in *‘Book of Concord,’* p. 79. (Norwegian Edition, printed in Christiania, 1882.)

“At the **Great Council of Trent** (1545-1563), which was called to determine the ‘doctrines of the Church in answer to *the heresies of the Protestants*’ (Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XV, art. ‘Trent,’ p. 30), the question of the authority of the church over that of the Bible was decided in the following manner:

‘Finally, at the last [session] opening on the eighteenth of **January, 1562**, their last scruple was set aside; the archbishop of Reggio made a speech in which he *openly declared that tradition stood above Scripture.* (Italics mine). The authority of the church could therefore not be bound to the authority of the Scripture, because the church had changed Sabbath into Sunday, not by the command of Christ, but by its own [apostate] authority. With this, to be sure, the last illusion was destroyed, and it was declared that tradition does not signify antiquity, but continual inspiration.’ – *‘Canon and Tradition,’* Dr. J.H. Holtzman, p. 263. (*‘Source Book,’* pp. 603, 604.)

“After the Jesuits were expelled from England in 1579 they determined to recapture that country, and at their school at Rheims, France, they translated their New Testament from the Vulgate Latin into English in 1582. (Their Old Testament was printed in Douay,

1609, so that their whole Bible has come to be called the Douay version.) In their English New Testament, translated from the Vulgate Edition of 1582, printed in New York, 1834, we read on page 413, Note on the Apocalypse [Revelation] 1:10:

‘And if the Church had authority and inspiration from God, to make Sunday, being a work-day before, and everlasting holy day: and that Saturday, that before was a holy-day, now a common work-day: why may not the same Church prescribe and appoint other feasts of *Easter, Whitsuntide, Christmas, and the rest?* For the same warrant she hath for the one she hath for the other.’

“Thus we see that the Roman Catholic Church always and everywhere points to her change of the Sabbath as the mark, or evidence, of her having the power and inspiration from God to legislate in Christ’s stead for His church on earth, and that this power is vested in the pope. Pope Leo XIII says:

‘We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.’ All must yield ‘complete submission and obedience of will to the Church and to the *Roman Pontiff*, as to God Himself.’—‘*The Great Encyclical Letters*,’ pp. 304, 193. And Pope Gregory says of the power of the pope:

‘Hence he is said to have a heavenly power, and hence changes even the nature of things, applying the substantial of one thing to another---can make something out of nothing---a judgment which is null he makes to be real, since in the things he wills, his will is taken for a reason. Nor is there any one to say to him, Why doest thou this? For he can dispense with the law, he can turn injustice into justice by correcting and changing the law, and he has the fullness of power.’—‘*Decretals of Gregory*’ (R.C.), Book I, title 7, chap. 3. *Gloss on the Transfer of Bishops*.

“The Roman ‘Decretalia,’ an authentic work on Roman ecclesiastical law, says of the power of the pope:

‘He can pronounce sentences and judgments *in contradiction* to the right of nations, *to the law of God* and man. . . . He can *free himself* from the commands of the apostles, be being their superior, and *from the rules of the Old Testament*.

‘The pope has power *to change times*, to abrogate laws, and to *dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ*.’—‘*Decretal, de Translat. Episcop. Cap.*’

‘The Pope’s will stands for reason. He can dispense *above the law*; and of wrong make right, by correcting and changing laws.’—*Pope Nicholas, Dist. 96; quoted in ‘Facts of the Times,’ pp. 55, 56. 1893. – Quoted in “Facts of Faith,” Christian Edwardson, pp. 294-296.*

### **“The Mark of the Name”**

Edwardson continues:

“We have now seen that the pope claims to be the ‘Vicar of the Son of God’ on earth [instead of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus Himself declared]; to have *authority to act in His name*. And as proof for this claim he points to the fact that he has changed the Sabbath into Sunday. How conclusive! He must be authorized as Christ’s ‘Vicar’ in order to validly make such a vital change in God’s moral law. That is imperative! The Sunday-Sabbath is therefore the proof or mark of his ‘vicarship’; it is the mark of his name.’ Revelation 14: 11.

“When once a person has become aware of the wording of this text (Revelation 14: 11), it becomes *impossible* for him to exchange this explanation of either the ‘mark’ or the ‘name’ for some other. For the creation of the Sunday-Sabbath by the Papacy constitutes the mark, or proof, of the pope’s being invested with the authority to act as ‘Vicar of the Son of God.’ This ‘mark’ and this ‘name’ fit together as prepared by the divine hand of prophecy, and no others do. Catholics can therefore appeal to Protestants [and all Christians who keep Sunday] in the following way:

“Sunday-keeping ‘not only has no foundation in the Bible, but it is a flagrant contradiction with its letter, which commands rest on the Sabbath, which is Saturday. It was the Catholic Church which, by the authority of Jesus Christ, has transferred this rest to the Sunday . . . . Thus the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Roman Catholic] Church.’ –‘*Plain Talk About Protestantism of Today, from the French by Segur, p. 213. Boston: 1868.; Ibid, p. 298.*

“While God did not attribute this sin to His people in former ages, when they had not been enlightened on the subject, we are now approaching the final struggle between Christ and the *restored Papacy*, and it behooves us to show under which flag we have decided to stand. For example: In times of peace, no serious results would come to an alien in this country, if, on his holiday, he should hoist his native flag. But if our country was at war with his homeland, and he then should tear down the ‘Stars and Stripes,’ and trample on it, while he hoisted his own flag, it would be an entirely different matter.

“And so now, while Christ and Antichrist face each other in the last deadly struggle, it becomes a serious matter to hoist the enemy’s flag, while trampling on the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel!

“The papal power was ‘to continue forty and two months’ (Rev. 13: 5), and, as the Bible reckons thirty days to a month, this period would be 1260 prophetic days (Rev/ 11: 2, 3). And a day in prophecy stands for a year. (Ezekiel 4: 6; Num. 14: 34.) Thus we see that the papal supremacy would continue for 1260 years. We have already seen [as discussed in previous issues] began in 538 A.D. and ended in 1798 A.D. (See pp. 52-60 of this book, *Facts of Faith*). At that time the pope, who had for centuries driven God’s people ‘into captivity,’ was himself to ‘go into captivity,’ the prophet declared. (Revelation 13: 10.) And when the hour struck, to which God’s prophetic clock had pointed for 1700 years, the pope had to ‘go into captivity.’ Rome was taken by the French on February 10, 1798, the Roman Republic proclaimed on the fifteenth, and on the night of the twentieth, Pope Pius VI was hurried off ‘into captivity,’ where he finally died at Valence, France, in 1799. Napoleon had previously given orders that no new pope was to be elected in his place. ‘No wonder that half Europe thought Napoleon’s veto would be obeyed, and that with the Pope the Papacy was dead.’ –‘*Modern Papacy, Joseph Rickaby, S.J., p. 1.*

“But this prophecy also foretells its restitution. The prophet declares: ‘His deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast.’ Revelation 13: 3. (Compare 17: 8.) A new pope (Pius VII) was elected March 14, 1800, and, as J. Rickaby further states:

‘Yet since then, the Papacy has been lifted to a pinnacle of spiritual power unreachd, it may be, since earliest Christian history.’ – *Id., p. 1.*

“Especially since the days of Pope Leo XIII the healing of the ‘deadly wound’ has been steadily progressing. On February 11, 1939, the pope once more became a *civil ruler* ( a

king). Some day he will attempt to assume his ancient authority over the nations of the earth, and then the world will realize that the Papacy is unchanged in spirit, that it will do today just what it did in the Dark Ages.” – *Christian Edwardson, Facts of Faith*, pp. 297- 299. (Revised) Southern Publishing Association. Nashville 8, TN, 1943.

Ellen G. White, America’s most prolific woman author and God’s messenger in these last days, penned the same truths back in the late 1800s:

“But notwithstanding all the efforts to establish Sunday sacredness, papists themselves publicly confessed the divine authority of the Sabbath [as the above official Catholic writings and decretals clearly state], and the human origin of the [Sunday] institution by which it had been supplanted. In the sixteenth century a papal council plainly declared: ‘Let all Christians remember that the seventh day was consecrated by God, and hath been received and observed, not only by the Jews, but by all others who pretend to worship God; though we Christians [Catholics] have changed their Sabbath into the Lord’s day.’ Those who were tampering with the divine law were not ignorant of the character of their work. They deliberately setting themselves above God. [emphasis mine].

“A striking illustration of Rome’s policy toward those who honor the Sabbath was given in the long and bloody persecutions of the Waldenses. Others suffered in a similar manner for their fidelity to the same truth. Amid the doom of the Dark Ages, the Christians of Central Africa were lost sight of and forgotten by the world, and for many centuries they enjoyed freedom in the exercise of their faith. But at last Rome learned of their existence, and the emperor of Abyssinia was soon beguiled into an acknowledgment of the pope as vicar of Christ. Other concessions followed. An edict was issued forbidding the observance of the Sabbath under the severest penalties. But papal tyranny soon became a galling yoke; and the Abyssinians determined to break it from their necks. After a terrible struggle, the Romanists were banished from their dominions, and the ancient faith was restored. The churches rejoiced in their freedom, and they never forgot the lesson they had learned concerning the deception, the fanaticism, and the despotic power of Rome.

“The churches of Africa held the Sabbath as it was held by the papal church *before* her complete apostasy. While they kept the seventh day in obedience to the commandment of God, they abstained from labor on the Sunday in conformity to the custom of the church. Upon obtaining supreme power [in 538 A.D.], Rome had trampled upon the Sabbath of God to exalt her own; but the churches of Africa, hidden for nearly a thousand years, did not share in this apostasy. When brought under the sway of Rome, they were forced to set aside the true and exalt the false Sabbath; but no sooner had they regained their independence than they returned to obedience to the fourth commandment.

**“These records of the past clearly reveal the enmity of Rome toward the true Sabbath and its defenders, and the means she employs to honor the institution of her own creating.** The Word of God teaches that these scenes are to be repeated as papists and Protestants unite for the exaltation of the Sunday [Rev. 13: 11, 12. See Appendix, Note 8.].”- p. 396. . . .

“Marvelous in her shrewdness and cunning is the Romish Church. She can read what is to be. She bides her time, seeing that the Protestant churches [Evangelicals, Pentecostals, etc.] are paying her homage in their acceptance of the false Sabbath, and that they are preparing to employ the very means which she herself employed in bygone



days. Those who reject the light of truth will yet seek the aid of this self-styled infallible power to exalt an institution that originated with her. How readily she will come to the help of Protestants in this work, it is not difficult to conjecture. Who understands better than popery how to deal with those who are disobedient to the [Roman Catholic] church?

“The Christian world will learn what Romanism really is, when it is *too late* to escape the snare. She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exalting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. Throughout the land she is piling up her lofty and massive structures, in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated. She is stealthily and unsuspectingly strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is soon to be given to her. In *the near future* we shall see and shall feel what the purpose of what the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution.” - *Ellen G. White, Vol. 4 Spirit of Prophecy, Ellen G. White, original edition of the Great Controversy, “Aims of the Papacy” chapter, pp. 396, 397. Pacific Press, Oakland CA., Review & Herald, Battle Creek, Michigan, 1884.*

**Question: Why does the prophesied persecution seem to be so long delayed?**

“There is another and more important question that should engage the attention of the churches today. The apostle Paul declares that ‘all that will live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution.’ 2 Tim. 3: 12. Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? ---The only reason is, that the church has conformed to the world’s standard, and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion current in our day is not of the pure and holy character which marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular [especially today’s “mega churches” with their “prosperity gospels” which absolutely contains earth’s final warnings of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14: 6-12!] with the world. *Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled.*” – *Ibid, pp. 49, 50.*

This reveals another profound aspect and reason as to why the Sabbath of the fourth commandment--and not the nine others---is the final test of mankind. Satan himself, through his chief agency on earth, has singled out the Sabbath because it alone of the Ten reveals who God is, Jesus Christ, the Creator of heaven and earth! Satan, the enemy of God and man, hates Jesus with the greatest venom of all---envy that leads to jealousy that leads to murder. It was he who instigated the torture and crucifixion of Jesus through the desperate confederacy of apostasy and abomination in the union of the Jews and the Romans—the union of church power and state power. And by attempting to replace God’s own appointed weekly memorial day of the six literal days of creation and His creative power, by his own counterfeit sabbath, he has succeeded in seducing and coercing countless souls to worship him instead of God! Yet there are unnumbered souls who are keeping Sunday honestly believing it to be the day of worship. Thousands upon thousands have seen the truth and

Once more, lest we be beguiled by the crafty enemy of souls: As of this writing no one has yet received the mark of the beast *insofar as this specific prophecy of Revelation 13 is concerned*, because Sunday worship has not yet been enacted and enforced as the law of the land, starting in the United States and quickly adopted by all nations of the world thereafter.

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4: 12, N.K.J.V. “For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.” 1 Samuel 16: 7.

So, anyone and everyone, regardless of religious persuasion, denomination, church, culture, profession, young or old, whatever station in life whether rich, poor, educated or uneducated who has a rational mind, who, in his heart and mind, has seen and understood either from the Bible or from the living preacher or “silent preacher” (tracts, books, magazines, etc) and has been convicted by the Holy Spirit regarding the Sabbath as being the sanctifying sign and seal of God Creator with His people on earth (Ezekiel 20: 12, 20), is held accountable and is already being tested by God on the Sabbath even *before* the Sunday law is enacted and enforced. “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble (offend) in one is guilty of all.” James 2: 10; “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” James 4: 17. “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” James 3: 17.

God’s merciful and just reward of all sins unrepented of, unconfessed, and unforsaken during each one’s individual probation time that ends at his death, in spite of God’s divine empowering grace imparted through the Holy Spirit (“for by grace are you saved through faith, and not by your works. . . .” Ephesians 2: 8-10) and our unwilling submission to and persistent rejection of His revealed will, receives its eternal reward in the “second death,” to which there is no resurrection. (Compare Revelation 20: 5, 6 to Luke 14: 14; 1 Cor. 15: 12-26).

It is in this sense that all who are already keeping the seventh day Sabbath of the fourth commandment are being tested *weekly* as to whether they are keeping it holy as clearly specified in the commandment. Numberless thousands have died and will yet die since the Sabbath truth began to be proclaimed as a test by the third angel’s message after the Great Disappointment of 1844. If they died in the faith--keeping the seventh day Sabbath holy-- they died in the Lord, and therefore rest from their labors. Thus the angel declared to John after the giving of the three angels’ messages (Revelation 14: 6-12): “Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the [Holy] Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.’” Revelation 14: 13.

“Blessed are the dead.” – This one of the so-called seven beatitudes of the book of Revelation (cf. on Matt. 5: 3). The others are found in Rev. 1: 3; 16: 15; 19: 9; 20: 6; 22: 7, 14.” *Footnotes on “Blessed are the dead.” An E. G. White Exhaustive Commentary on Revelation, Vol. 2, p. 993.*

“From now on.” – This doubtless refers to the period of the three angels’ messages which embraces the period of persecution by the beast and his image, when the boycott is imposed and the death penalty passed (see Rev. 13: 12-17). Those who go to their graves in this period rest, as it were, a little moment until the indignation be overpast. Then they will be privileged to come forth in the special resurrection preceding the general resurrection of the righteous. (see on Daniel 12: 2).” – *Ibid.*

(To be continued next month)

