

Study for the Month May 2012

The Seven Churches of Revelation

THIS MONTH'S FOCUS: CONTINUATION OF THE STUDY OF PERGAMOS STAGE

The Age of Popularity. Time Period: 325- 538 A.D.

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Note: Our study last month, the Pergamos stage, of the church showed that:

“Little by little, at first in stealth and silence, and then more openly as it increased in strength and gained control of the minds of men, ‘the mystery of iniquity’ [1 Thess. 2: 7, 3-12] carried forward the deceptive and blasphemous work. Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church. The *spirit of compromise and conformity* was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism. But as *persecution ceased*, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she *laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers*; and in place of the requirements of God, she *substituted human theories and traditions*. The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, cause great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ.” – *Great Controversy*, pp. 49-50.

We continue this month’s study with an immediate summary of the major steps of the falling away of the church that reached its darkest period during the Thyatira stage. The information below is found in the Great Controversy edition published by Pilgrim’s Rest.

- About 300 A.D.** – Prayers for the dead
 - making sign of the cross
- 320 A.D.** – wax candles
- 375 A.D.** – veneration of angels and “dead saints”
 - the use of images
- 394 A.D.** – introduction of Mass as daily celebration
- 431 A.D.** – beginning of exaltation of Mary. The term “Mother of God” first applied to her by the Council of Orleans
- 500 A.D.** – Priests begin to dress differently than laymen
- 526 A.D.** – Extreme unction introduced
- 593 A.D.** – Doctrine of Purgatory established by Pope Gregory I
- 600 A.D.** – Latin language used in prayer and worship commanded by Gregory I
 - Prayers directed to Mary, angels, and dead saints
- 607 A.D.** – Title of Pope (“Bishop of the universe”) given to Boniface III

- by emperor Phocas
- 709 A.D.** – Kissing the pope’s feet begins with Pope Constantine
- 750 A.D.** – Temporal power of the popes is conferred by Pepin, king of Franks
- 786 A.D.** – Worship of the cross, images, and relics is now officially authorized
- 850 A.D.** – Holy water (mixed with pinch of salt & blessed by priest) introduced
- 890 A.D.** –The worship of St. Joseph
- 927 A.D.** – College of Cardinals established
- 965 A.D.** – Baptism of bells instituted by Pope John XIII
- 995 A.D.** – Canonization of dead saints first done by pope John XV
- 998 A.D.** – Fasting on Fridays and during “Lent” begins
- 1050 A.D.** – Mass has developed into a “Sacrifice;” attendance is now obligatory
- 1079 A.D.** – Celibacy of priesthood required by Pope Gregory II
- 1090 A.D.** – The rosary, a mechanical praying with beads, introduced by Peter the Hermit
- 1184 A.D.** – The Inquisition, in operation for centuries, now made official by Council of Verona
- 1190 A.D.** – The sale of Indulgences begins
- 1215 A.D.** – Error of Transubstantiation is proclaimed by Innocent III as the power of priest to bring down God out of heaven into a cup and wafer.
- Auricular confession of sins to a priest, instead of to God, is instituted by Pope Innocent III in the Lateran Council.
- 1220 A.D.** – The adoration of the wafer (“host”) is decreed by Pope Honorius III
- 1229 A.D.** –Laymen are officially forbidden to have or read the Bible—it is placed in the “Index of Forbidden Books” by the Council of Valencia.
- 1251 A.D.** – Protection by a piece of cloth, the scapular, invented by Simon Stock, a British monk.
- 1414 A.D.** – Laymen are forbidden to drink the cup at Communion, by order of the Council of Constance.
- 1439 A.D.** – Purgatory is proclaimed as a dogma by Council of Florence.
- 1508 A.D.** – The first part of the “Ave Maria” saying is made official
- 1534 A.D.** – The Jesuit Order is founded by Ignatius Loyola
- 1545 A.D.** – Tradition (the sayings of popes and councils) is declared to be equal in authority with the Bible, by the Council of Trent.
- 1560 A.D.** – The creed of Pope Pius IV imposed as the official creed of the church
- 1593 A.D.** – Last part of “Ave Maria” prepared and required of the faithful by Pope Sixtus V.
- 1864 A.D.** –The “Syllabus of Errors” is proclaimed by Pope Pius X, and ratified by the First Vatican Council, as the truth of God. (It condemns the freedom of religion, speech, press, all scientific discoveries that have not been approved by the church.
- Temporal authority of the pope over all powers is officially reaffirmed
- 1870 A.D.** –The absolute infallibility of the pope in all matters of faith and

- morals is proclaimed by Vatican I.
- 1930 A.D.** – Public schools are condemned by Pope Pius XI.
- 1950 A.D.** –The assumption of Virgin Mary (bodily ascension into heaven shortly after her death) is proclaimed by Pope Pius XII.
- 1954 A.D.** –Mary is proclaimed to be “Mother of God,” “Holy Queen” by Pope Pius XII.

“Paul states plainly that ‘the man of sin’ will continue until the second advent. 2 Thess. 2; 3-8. To the very close of time, he will carry forward the work of deception. And the revelator declares, *also* referring to the papacy, ‘All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life.’ Rev. 13: 8. In both the Old and the New World, the papacy will receive homage in honor paid to the Sunday institution, that rests solely upon the authority of the Roman Church.”- Great Controversy, p. 579.

The Pergamos Church

This period of the church history may be called the church’s **Age of Popularity**. The discussion following reveals why unpopularity, hatred, suffering and persecution of the Christian church, starting with the Jews and followed by the cruel Roman Caesars was a *blessing in disguise* while its cessation, replaced by a new period of *compromising tolerance*, and eventually even popularity because of Emperor Constantine’s *nominal* conversion, became the church’s *greatest curse, disguised as a blessing!*

“The Pergamos period of church history may be thought of as beginning about the time the emperor Constantine espoused the cause of the church, in A.D. 313--or his own professed conversion in 323—and ending in 538. it was during this period of time that the papacy consolidated its position as the religious and political leader of Western Europe, and that Satan established his ‘seat’ within the Christian church. The papacy was a skilful blend of paganism with Christianity.”- *Notes, E.G. Comprehensive Commentary on Revelation, Vol. II.*

Many venerated historians both secular and religious, who are ignorant of the true nature of the great controversy, as clearly taught in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation (yet lack the humility to acknowledge it), hail Constantine as a hero of Christianity! Instead, he was the one who engineered the first step towards the prophesied “falling away of the church” through compromise. Apostle Paul, in his day, warned the young church not to be shaken or troubled that Christ would not be coming in their time because “that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.” (see on 2 Thess. 2: 1-4). But there are also men from other denominations of great mind whom the Holy Spirit inspired to preserve the knowledge of unpopular truth.

Hereunder are just a couple of examples of how the churches and the world-at-large view Constantine largely due to the powerful propagand machinery of the Roman Catholic Church. However, to the delight of those truly searching for Biblical truth, they are actually unimpeachable official evidences that clearly show how, where, why, when, and under whose watch the expressly-forbidden union of church and state powers began—which the fathers of the U.S Constitution sought with great pains and skill to prevent from happening again by writing it in as the first of the Bill of Rights! But Revelation 13 prophesies that it shall repudiated again as the final act of apostasy of the Protestant churches and the United States of America, in cohorts with the Papacy.

The Bible student can clearly trace from cause to effect and know who and what laid the groundwork for the first Sunday Law that as of a necessity, preceded the dawn of darkest chapter of human history--the Dark Ages, the Thyatira period of the church-- when “the noontime of the Papacy was the midnight of the world.”

Halley's Bible Handbook (Zondervan), on the Edict of Milan, says (emphasis mine):--

“The persecutions ended in 313 with the edict of Milan, issued by Emperor Constantine. Unlike Diocletian, **Constantine saw Christianity as an ally to help save the empire and Greco-Roman culture.** When he and his army had almost been crushed by enemies, Constantine reportedly had a vision of a cross with the words *In hoc signo vinces* (‘In this sign conquer’) on it. He took this as a favorable omen, defeated his enemies, and took control of the state.

After the Edict of Milan, the Roman Empire favored the church; there was freedom of worship, confiscated property was returned to Christians, and clergy were exempted from public service. **Eventually the church was subsidized by the state, and Sunday was made the official day of rest and worship** [note this!].

Constantine continued to be chief priest of the pagan state and was not baptized until just before his death [!]. But with the exception of one setback, under Emperor Julian, Constantine’s successor, **Christianity continued on its way to become the official state religion. This meant that the state would be involved in attempting to settle the internal problems faced by the church.**— pp. 981, 982.

Webster's Unified Dictionary & Encyclopedia, 1960 edition says:

“Constantine, the Great, 278-237, was the illegitimate son of Emperor Constantius I, and on his father’s death was proclaimed emperor, 306. After 6 years of disputes with various contestants, Constantine acquired supreme power of the west by his defeat of Maximentius near Rome when he [allegedly] saw *the Cross* in a vision. He secured *toleration* for Christianity 313, and in 324 overthrew Licinius, emperor of the East. He moved his capital from Rome to Byzantium, 330, and *made Christianity the State religion*. After further victories Constantine died at **Nicomedia**, receiving Christian baptism [by sprinkling!] before his death. He imposed an absolute monarchy, hereditary in his line, upon the Empire, *replaced the Senate* by a new aristocracy, and separated civil from military administration. His son, *Constantine II*, 316-40, disputed the division of the Empire with his brothers, Constans and Constantius, and was killed while invading Italy. Of the remaining emperors with the name, **Constantine XI Paleologus**. 1448-53, the last Emperor of the East [Roman Empire], was forced to surrender Constantinople to the Turks, 1453.”

The brief historical yet official facts which we just considered (particularly the ones rendered in bold for emphasis), will be very helpful in understanding the **seven trumpets** which will be our next Bible Study series. Kindly take note of them. True history and Bible prophecy are in perfect harmony and collaborate to reveal the real nature of all the major conflicts and wars on earth. That is why Satan in desperation is surreptitiously working overtime through his agencies on earth, constantly trying to rewrite the books chronicling the true history of mankind and church history—but only as far as God allows—as He did in the patriarch Job’s classic case. (See on book of Job).

Constantine allegedly “saw the Cross in a vision.” From all the portrayals of what this “cross” is and means in all mainstream religious literature, artifacts, relics, sacerdotal garments, etc., it is the *literal* shape of a cross, as traditionally they say it looked like. Regarding this alleged vision, nothing is even mentioned about *Christ* on that cross! In fact, a *Christ-less cross* is a very dangerous and bloody religious symbol, as church history records attest. It was employed as the justification for “religious conquests” that were nothing but the Papacy’s expansion of its apostate designs to control the conscience of man universally. But the true meaning of *Christ’s cross* is the cross of ultimate condescension when God took on the fallen human nature in the incarnation, demonstrating the true meaning of *meekness, humility, self-denial, self-sacrifice*, and obedience unto death, *even the death of the cross!*

(For a true and clear Biblical explanation of what the cross of Christ means, see the devotional, *Sons & Daughters*, pp. 248, 247, 246, 245, 244, 243, 242,241, 240, 237):--

The True Facts Regarding Constantine's Alleged Conversion to Christianity

Bible gospel truth and church history would have been infinitely better served if Constantine was introduced to us in the history books as "*the Father of Compromise*," and the "Father of the first Roman Catholic Sunday Law," for indeed he was, as true history attests. But that is wishful thinking. A shrewd politician, he retained till death the title "Pontifex Maximus" of the "Sol invictus" or the invincible sun-god. Pope Sylvester carried with him to his grave the dubious distinction as the pope who co-operated with Emperor Constantine in officially bringing in paganism into the Christian church through the masterful and devastating alchemy of amalgamation of "merging," fusing and recasting," and "new-modeling" the cause of God. The result was the prophesied falling away of the apostolic church to emerge as "Mystery Babylon, the mother of harlots" of the last days. 2 Thess. 2: 1-12; Rev. 1-7.

As one has to dive deep below the ocean surface to obtain "the mother of pearl" that "perisheth" so does obtaining anything regarding the imperishable "pearl of great price." This Pearl of great price is the glorious and comprehensive plan of salvation from sin, as modeled in the sacrificial life and teachings of Christ. This invariably includes understanding Satan's work of *deception* implemented through his agencies on earth—particularly the authoritative purveyors of counterfeit doctrines and false history of the "synagogue of Satan."

When pressed for answers as to why we refuse to join the whole world and all churches and keep "the Christian sabbath," meaning, Sunday---pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and then humbly and courteously tell them that while Sun-day may indeed be a sabbath *for them*, it is *the sabbath of compromise* created by men usurping the authority and prerogatives of God. The following historical facts will be very helpful in the quest for truth on the matter. We will be quoting quite extensively from the book *Facts of Faith* by Christian Edwardson, *Southern Publishing Association, Nashville 8, Tennessee (Revised), copyright 1943, pp. 36, 109-115*. It clearly documents Constantine's plans to unite heathenism and Christianity. Christian Edwardson says:

"After Constantine had removed the seat of the empire from Rome to Constantinople, the Roman people were (at intervals) ruled from the Eastern capital, until the pope had grown to power in Rome. While the Papacy was gradually gaining control over the people of the West, the Eastern emperors were courting the good will of the popes in order to hold their Western subjects.

From the time of Constantine to that of Justinian there was a deadly struggle between the two largest factions of the Church, *the Catholics and the Arians*. Often there was terrible strife, and even bloodshed. 'The streets of Alexandria and Constantinople were deluged with blood by the partisans of rival bishops.' --- *'History of Christianity,' H. H. Milman, Book III, chap. 5, par. 2, p. 410. New York: 2-vol. ed., 1881*. Most of the barbarous nations into which the Roman Empire was now split had accepted the *Catholic* faith. But the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths were Arians.

While the emperors courted the help of the popes for *political reasons*, the popes sought the assistance of the emperors to *destroy* the Arians. Theodosius, the Emperor of the East, had already (380-395 A.D.) given 'fifteen stern edicts against heresy, one on the average for every year of his reign. . . .So began the campaign which ended the virtual extinction of Arianism in the Roman world.' -- *Italy and her Invaders,' Thomas Hodgkin, Vol. I, pp. 368, 369. Oxford: Clarendon press, 8-vol. ed; of 1899.- Facts of Faith, pp. 36, 37.*

"Constantine had been watching, he said, those Caesars who had persecuted the Christians, and found that they usually had a bad end, while his father, who was

favorable toward them, had prospered. So, when he and Licinius met at Milan in 313 A.D., they jointly prepared an edict, usually called ‘The Edict of Milano,’ which gave equal liberty to Christians and pagans. *Had Constantine stopped here, he might have been honored as the originator of religious liberty in the Roman Empire, but he had different aims in view. The Roman Empire had been ruled at times by two, four, and even six Caesars jointly, and in his ambition to become sole Emperor, Constantine, as a shrewd statesman, soon saw that the Christian church had the vitality to become the strongest factor in the empire. The other Caesars were persecuting the Christians. If he could win them without losing the good will of the pagans, he would win the game. He therefore set him self to the task of blending the two religions into one.* As H. G. Hegtveit (Lutheran) says:

“Constantine labored at this time untiringly to unite the worshippers of the old and the new faith in one religion. All his laws and contrivances are aimed at promoting this amalgamation of religions. He would by all lawful and peaceful means melt together a purified heathenism and a moderated Christianity. . . . **His injunction that the ‘Day of the Sun should be a general rest day was characteristic of his standpoint.** . . . Of all his blending and melting together of Christianity and heathenism none is more easy to see through than this making of *his Sunday Law*. ‘The Christians worshipped their Christ, the heathen their sun-god; according to the opinions of the Emperor, the objects for worship in both religions were essentially the same.’—“*Kirkehistorie*” (*Church History*), pp. 233, 234, Chicago: 1898. — *Facts of Faith*, p. 109, Southern Publishing Asso., Nashville, Tennessee,

God’s seventh-day Sabbath law is universal, eternal, immutable, and unchanging, applicable to all mankind. Constantine’s Sun-day Law of 321 A.D. is clearly a creation of man: it forbade work for some yet legalized the same for others. It reads as follows:

“On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain-growing or for vineyard-planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost. (Given the 7th day of March, Crispus and Constantine being consuls each of them for the second time.” — “*Codex Justinianus, lib. 3, tit. 12, 3*”; translated in “*History of the Christian Church*,” Philip Schaff, D.D., (7-vol. ed.) Vol. III, p. 380. New York: 1884.

“Dr. A. Chr. Bang (Lutheran bishop, Norway) says:

“This Sunday law constituted no real favoritism towards Christianity. . . . It is evident from all his statutory provisions that the Emperor during the time 313-323 with full consciousness has sought the realization of his religious aim: **the amalgamation of heathenism and Christianity.**” — “*Kirken og Romerstaten*” (“*The Church and the Roma State*”), p. 256. *Christiana: 1879.*

That Constantine by his Sunday law intended only to enforce the popular heathen festival is acknowledged by Professor Hutton Webster, Ph.D. (University of Nebraska), who says:

“This legislation by Constantine probably bore no relation to Christianity; it appears, on the contrary that the Emperor, in his capacity as Pontifex Maximus, was *only adding the day of the sun*, the worship of which was then firmly established in the Roman Empire, to other ferial days of the sacred calendar.” — “*Rest Days*,” p. 122, *New York: 1916.*

“A. H. Lewis, D.D., who spent years of study and research on this subject, declares that, “the pagan religion of Rome had many holidays on which partial or complete cessation of business and labor was demanded,” and that Constantine by his Sunday law was merely one more festival to the fest of the empire.” — “*A Critical History of Sunday legislation from 321 to 1888 A.D.*” pp, 8, 12. *New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1888.*

“This is clearly seen when we carefully examine all the circumstances presented by Dr. Lewis:

1. Constantine’s Sunday edict was given March 7, 321. *The very next day he issued an edict commanding purely heathen superstition.* We quote: “The August Emperor Constantine to Maximus: “If any part of the palace or other public works shall be struck by lightning, let the soothsayers, following old usages, inquire into the meaning of the portent, and let their written words, very carefully collected, be reported to our knowledge.” - *Id.* p. 19.

2. The Caesars for over a century had been worshippers of the sun-god, whose weekly holiday was Sunday. Dr. Lewis says: "The sun-worship cult had grown steadily in the Roman Empire for a long time." – *Id.*, p. 20. He then quotes the following from Schaff in regards to Elagabalus, a Roman Caesar of a century before Constantine's time: "The abandoned youth, El-Gabal or Heliogabalus (218-222), who polluted the throne with the blackest vices and follies, tolerated all religions in the hope of at last merging them in his favorite *Syrian worship of the sun, with its abominable excesses*. He himself as a priest of the god of the sun, and thence took his name." – *Id.*, pp. 20, 21.

"Dean H. Millman says:

"It was openly asserted that the worship of the sun, under the name of Elagabalus, was to supersede all other worship. If we may believe the biographies in the Augustan history, a more ambitious scheme of a universal religion had dawned upon the mind of the emperor. The Jewish, the Samaritan, even the Christian, were to be fused and recast into one great system, of which the Sun was to be the central object of adoration." – "*History of Christianity*," Vol. II, Book 2, chap. 8, par. 22, pp. 17, 179. New York: 1881.

"Dr. Lewis further says: that Aurelian, who reigned from 270-276 A.D., embellished the temple of the Sun with "above fifteen thousand pounds of gold." – "*History of Sunday Legislation*," p. 23. Diocletian, who reigned from 284 to 305, "appealed in the face of the army to the all-seeing deity of the sun." – *Id.* p. 24.

"Such were the influences which preceded Constantine and surrounded him when he came into power. The following extract shows still plainer the character of Constantine, and his attitude toward the sun-worship cults, when the first 'Sunday edict' was issued:

"But the devotion of Constantine was more peculiarly directed towards the genius of the sun, the **Apollo** of the Greek and Roman mythology. . . . The sun was universally celebrated as the universal the invincible guide and protector of Constantine." – *Id.*, pp. 26, 27.

"These facts combine to show that Sunday legislation was purely pagan in its origin." – *Ibid*, p. 31.

"In this law he only sought to give additional honor to the 'venerable day' of his patron-deity, the sun-god." – *Id.*, p. 32.

"His attitude toward Christianity was that of a shrewd politician rather than a devout adherent." – *Id.* p. 6.

"Dr. Lewis quotes from Dr. Schaff a very fitting conclusion to his remarks regarding Constantine:

"And down to the end of his life he retained the title and dignity as **pontifex maximus**, or high priest of the heathen hierarchy. His coins bore on the one side the letters of the name of Christ, on the other the figure of the sun-god, and the inscription, '**Sol invictus**.'" – *Id.* p. 10.

It is therefore no surprise to find out who, today, retains the name and title as "Pontifex Maximus"— the Pope, as the "supreme pontiff"—who simply inherited and elaborated on the pagan powers of the Roman Caesars and Emperors! Notice (emphasis in bold mine, italics, in the original):

"**Pontifex**, a member of the ancient member of the *Roman Collegium* which served as the highest authority in all matters appertaining to **religion**. It was under the rule of the *pontifex maxumus*. Who was responsible for the *rex sacrorum*, the flamens, the pontifices, and the *vestal virgins*. Originally there were only three pontifices, but by 82 B.C. the number of members had been raised to fifteen. **The name Pontifex Maximus is one of the titles of the Pope.**" – *Webster's Unified Dictionary & Encyclopedia*, 1960 edition, H. S. Stuttman Co. Inc., New York 16, N.Y.

Question. Were there still Christians observing the Bible Sabbath during the time Constantine issued his Sunday law edict?

Answer. Yes. They were disparagingly called "primitive Christians." But such spiritual primitiveness will once more be the distinguishing mark of the faithful Christians at the outpouring of the latter rain, before the close of time! Notice:--

"That the Christians at this time were still keeping the Sabbath may be seen from the following statement of Hugo Gratius, quoted by Robert Fox, F.S.A. Scot. :

"He refers to **Eusebius** for proof that Constantine, besides issuing his well-known edict that labor should be suspended on Sunday, enacted that the people should not be brought before the law courts on the seventh day of the week, which also, he adds, was observed by **the primitive Christians** as a day for

religious meetings. . . . And this, says he, refutes those who think that the Lord's Day [Sunday] was substituted for the Sabbath—a thing nowhere mentioned either by Christ or His apostles.' – *Opera Omnia Theologia*, "Hugo Grotius (died 1645), (London, 1679); quoted in "Literature of the Sabbath Question," Cox, Vol. I., p. 233. Edinburgh: Maclachlan and Stewart, 1865.

"Notwithstanding the widespread declension of faith and piety, there are true followers of Christ in these [fallen] churches. Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such **a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since the apostolic times**. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which a love for this world has supplanted love for God and His word." – *E.G. White, Great Controversy*, p. 264, 1911 edition.

Edwardson continues (emphasis in bold mine):

"**Pope Sylvester** cooperated with Constantine to bring *paganism* into the Christian church (especially Sunday-keeping). This caused the Christians to have repugnance for him. The **Waldenses** believed that he was the Antichrist. Dr. Peter Allix quotes the following from a prominent Roman Catholic author regarding the Waldenses:

"They [the Waldenses] say that the blessed Pope Sylvester was the *Antichrist*, of whom mention is made in the Epistles of Paul, as being the son of perdition, who extols himself above everything that is called God; for, from that time, they say, the church perished. . . .

"He lays it down also as one of their opinions, 'That the law of Moses is to be kept according to the letter, and that the keeping of the Sabbath. . . .and other legal observances, ought to take place.'" – *Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, p. 169. Oxford: 1821. Page 154 in the edition of 1690.

"Having obtained a glimpse of the opposition of God's people to this falling away [of the Christian church], let us now return to our subject, to get a view of the *novel means* Constantine employed to make converts in accordance with his *amalgamation scheme*. Edward Gibbons says:

' "The hopes of wealth and honors, the example of an emperor, his exhortations, his irresistible smiles, diffused conviction upon the venal and obsequious crowds which usually fill the apartments of a palace. . . . As the lower ranks of society are governed by imitation, the conversion of those who possessed any eminence of birth, of powers, of riches, was soon followed by dependent multitudes. *The salvation of the common people was purchased at an easy rate, if it be true that, in one year, twelve thousand men were baptized at Rome. . . . and that a white garment, twenty pieces of gold, had been promised by the emperor to every convert.*" – "Decline and Fall." Chap. 20, par. 18."

Constantine gave the following instructions to the bishops at the Council of Niceaea, which shows his constant policy:

"In all ways unbelievers must be saved. It was not everyone who would be converted by learning and reasoning. Some join us from the desire for maintenance; some for preferment; some for presents; nothing is so rare as a real lover of truth. We must be like physicians, and accommodate our medicines to the diseases, our teaching to the different minds of all.'" – "Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church," Arthur Penryhn Stanley, D.D. Lecture 5, p. 271. New York: 1975.

"The bishops were only too willing to follow the emperor's instruction, and the result was disastrous to the church. J.A. W. Neander in the following paragraph gives some of the results of this policy:

"Such were those who, without any real interest whatever in the concerns of religion, living half in Paganism and half in an outward show of Christianity, composed the crowds that thronged the churches on the festivals of the Christians, and the theaters on the festivals of the pagans." – "History of the Christian Religion and Church," Vol II. Sec. 3, Part 1, Div. 1, par. 1, p. 233. Boston: 1885.

No wonder Reverend H. H. Milmann exclaims:

"Is this Paganism approximating Christianity, or Christianity degrading into Paganism?-- "History of Christianity," pp. 341, 342. He answers this question later by saying: "With a large portion of mankind, it must be admitted that the religion itself was Paganism under another form." – *Id.* p. 412.

"**Eusebius**, bishop of Caesarea, and an admirer of **Constantine**, co-operated with him in bringing in the 'venerable day of the sun' into the Christian church. Speaking of **Pope Sylvester**, Constantine, and himself, he says:

“All things whatsoever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these **we** have transferred to the Lord’s day, as more appropriately belonging to it, because it has a precedence and is first in rank, and more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath. For on that day, in making the world, God said, ‘Let there be light, and there was light.’” – “*Commentary on the Psalms*” quoted in “*Literature on the Sabbath Question*,” Robert Cox, Vol. I, p. 361.

Eusebius evidently used the strongest argument he knew as proof for Sunday-keeping; but advocates of this new holiday had probably *not yet conceived the idea that Christ’s resurrection* would be an argument in favor of Sunday-keeping, so he [mis]used creation instead!” – Christian Edwardson, “*Facts of Faith*,” pp. 109-115.

Once more, diligent students of the Bible would do well to remember the **three individuals** who were responsible for misleading the whole Christian world—Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Evangelicals—on what the true Biblical Sabbath is: **Emperor Constantine, Pope Sylvester, and Eusebius**. Now who is Eusebius and how important is he considered to be, both to the Roman Catholic Church and to the Evangelical theologians? Let their own literature speak for themselves.

For mainstream Christianity we quote from *Halley’s Bible Handbook*, pp. 1074-5 (emphasis mine). Supposedly an authoritative resource for theologians and Bible students, notice how frighteningly distorted and deceptive its description of that era was, making it appear that Rome’s final effort to blot out the Bible and Christianity took place during Emperor Diocletian’s reign (284-305 A.D.) This is a skillful way of eliminating the Roman Catholic Church of the Papacy as the “abomination of desolation,” “the beast,” “the man of sin and son of perdition” “Mystery, Babylon, the Mother of Harlots,” who waged the worst and longest persecution of Sabbath-keepers this world will ever know-- for 1200 years during the earth’s Dark Ages, 538-1798 A.D.! This is the object of Preterism—the other counterfeit method of interpreting prophecy (the other one is Futurism). Its work is to make it appear that all that the prophecies of Daniel Revelation have to say about who the “beast” is, and its work, refers to some other entity in the *past*.

“Eusebius (A.D. 264 -340) was bishop of Caesarea. **He was the first great church historian, and we owe to him much of our knowledge of what happened during the first centuries of the Christian church.** Eusebius lived through, and was imprisoned during **Diocletian’s persecution of Christians, which was Rome’s final effort to blot out Christianity. One of Diocletian’s final object was the destruction of all Christian Scriptures.** For 10 years, Bibles were hunted by the agents of Rome and burned in public market places. To Christians, the question of just what books composed their Scriptures was no idle matter!

Eusebius lived during the reign of Emperor Constantine, who accepted Christianity. **Eusebius became Constantine’s chief religious adviser.** One of Constantine’s first acts upon ascending the throne was to order 50 Bibles for the churches of Constantinople, to be prepared by skillful copyists under the direction of Eusebius, on the finest of vellum, and to be delivered by royal carriages from Caesarea to Constantinople.

What books constituted the New Testament of Eusebius? Exactly the same ones that we have now in the New Testament. Eusebius, by extensive research, informed himself as to what books had been generally accepted by the churches. In his *Church History* he speaks of four classes of books: 1. The universally accepted books. 2. The ‘**disputed books**’: James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude, which though included in his own Bibles, were doubted by some.” . . . --*Halley’s Bible Handbook with the New International Version*, pp. 1074-1075, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49530 USA.

- It is not surprising at all that the book of **James** was a “disputed book.” It boldly declares the Decalogue as “the perfect law of liberty,” contradicting the modern teaching that the law of God is a “yoke and a heavy burden.” It defines “pure and undefiled religion” as “visiting orphans and widows in their trouble and *keeping oneself unspotted from the world*,” exposing the religions that claim to be “pure and true” and yet assure salvation to its members openly indulging in worldly practices and pursuits. It explains the true relationship of faith and works, declaring that “faith without works is dead”—which flies in the face New Theology that claims that “faith” is all that we need and that obedience to God’s law is “works.” Apostle James frankly tells us that the unsanctified tongue “is a fire,

a world of iniquity. . an unruly evil, full of deadly poison,” serving notice to all glib-and-fork-tongued preachers who pervert the Scriptures and lead their followers to perdition. It clearly tells us how to distinguish the difference between “the wisdom that is from above” and that which comes from beneath” –which is bad news the churches whose doctrines blur the difference between the two. It boldly declares that there is “only One Law Giver who is able to save and destroy,” and thus exposes that every religious law other than that which God spoke and wrote with His own finger—the Ten Commandments,—is man-made, and spurious, and cannot but be unbiblical and antichristian.

- It is not surprising at all that **2 Peter** was a “disputed book.” In chapter 1: 4-12 the Apostle clearly defines the *conditional terms* of our “eternal life insurance policy,” often referred to as “Peter’s ladder.” He says: “Give *diligence* to make your calling and election *sure* for if you *do* these things, ye shall never fall.” Not once-saved-always saved.” There is much to be *done* on our part by the empowering grace of Christ as part of the plan of salvation! Continuing, the apostle declares: “For if, *after* they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are *again* entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is *worse* for them than in the beginning. For it would have been better for them *not* to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the *holy commandment* delivered to them.” – 2 Pet. 2: 20, 21. And many sleek and smooth-talking preachers and evangelists presumptuously declare from their pulpits and lecterns that “all you need to do is to believe and you are already saved.”
- It is not surprising at all that **2 and 3 John** were “disputed books.” In **2 John 6, 7** it says: “This is love, that we walk [live] according to His commandments. This is the commandment, *that as you have heard from the beginning*, you should walk in it. For many *deceivers* have gone out into the world who *do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh*. This is a deceiver and *antichrist*.” The Roman Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception denies that Jesus incarnated into the literal flesh and blood nature of fallen man, i.e., without its pollutions. Having “been tempted in all points as we are yet with out sin, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” (Heb. 2: 9, 10 14-18; 4: 14, 15). Thus He is our faithful and merciful Advocate, Intercessor, and High Priest—not the priests, bishops, popes, dead saints, and certainly *not Mary!* In **3 John 11** it says, “Beloved do not imitate that which is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has *not* seen God.” The language is too plain!
- It is not surprising at all that **Jude**, the penultimate book of the Bible, was a “disputed book.” Verse 3 urges us to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.” In the following verse it reveals the very nature of the false doctrine of grace so popular today—“turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and licentiousness.” In **verse 11** it declares “woe” on the three general classes of sins that the whole world and all the fallen churches are guilty of: (1) “the way of Cain”—the first murderer who killed his righteous brother Abel, because his *worship* was rejected of God while that of his brother was accepted of God. Since then that has been the very nature of battle between good and evil on earth (2) “the greedy error of Balaam”—the love of money, wealth, power, and fame that actuates all false religionists who teach their followers, like the false prophet Balaam to compromise with sin. (3) “the rebellion of Korah”—the general rebellion against God’s own anointed and instituted human authorities and institutions and replacing it with their own man-made ones. Their destruction is as sure as that of Korah Dathan, and Abiram, including their families, in the “strange act of God” in the last days!

Next month, we will focus on Thyatira, the Dark Ages, 538-1798.

