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The Seal of God

and its Counterfeit

—BY—

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The Seal of God and Its Counterfeit.

BY J. O. CORLISS.

To THE reflective mind all nature reveals the wisdom and power of its Director. The existence of material matter, the regular succession of day and night, and the orderly recurrence of the seasons emphatically proclaim creative energy, and the sovereign sway of a First Great Cause, whose subtle force penetrates to the farthest bounds of the universe. But while the infinite might of Jehovah is so universally made known by His created works, no mortal eye has ever been privileged to behold His substance. His form has ever been hidden from the vulgar gaze, and the only-begotten Son, who holds a place in the bosom of the Father, has always declared Jehovah's being and power. John 1 : 18.

The Manifestation of God.

When, therefore, the world was called into existence, it came in response to the voice of the Son of the Highest, who personated His Father. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1 : 1-3. He was indeed the WORD of God, because through Him the Word was spoken by which the worlds were framed, and have since been upheld in their courses. Heb. 1 : 2, 3.

When Christ appeared to men in the flesh, He was

the manifestation of God, the revelation of the *living power* of the Word of God. 1 Tim. 3:16. He came in His Father's *name*, invested with *all power* of heaven and earth. John 5:43; Matt. 28:18. To see Him, and witness His deeds, was, therefore, to behold the Father in every essential feature. John 14:9, 10. When the destitute throng waited on His gracious words, at the expense of the physical suffering from lack of food, His word of blessing produced more than bread enough to meet the demand. Mark 6:40-44. At His command the most loathsome form of leprosy was instantly banished from the wasting frame of the humble suppliant, and the putrid flesh resumed the normal functions of a pure and healthy body. Luke 5:12, 13. When Lazarus had lain four days in the embrace of death, with the work of decay already begun, the voice of Christ, as the Word of Jehovah, called forth the dead to life and health. John 11:39-44. In all His miracles the Lord Jesus spoke forth creative power, as at the beginning, in order that men might believe in Him as the Son of God, the Creator. John 20:30, 31.

Revealing the Father.

In all this prominent work Christ took no credit to Himself. After His greatest miracles had failed to convince the hardened hearts of the Jewish leaders, and the word of God from heaven, like the "voice of a great thunder," reassured Jesus that His work was accepted, He cried out before the people: "He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me but on Him that sent Me; and he that seeth Me seeth Him that sent

Me." John 12 : 27-29, 44, 45. The strength of this grand truth is fully revealed in another statement made to explain the first: "For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak." Verses 49, 50.

Again, when His authority and connection with God was questioned by the Jews, the Lord replied: "Verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." John 5 : 19. His were always but the words and works of God, whom none may know but through the revelation of the Son of the Most High. Matt. 11 : 27.

When Christ's mission in the flesh was about to close, and the disciples were distressed at the thought of His going from them, He soothed their troubled minds with the precious promise: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." This coming was not, however, to be a *personal advent*, but the descent of the Holy Ghost, sent by the Father in the *name of Christ*. John 14 : 18, 26. Its presence *in* the believer, was to be the indwelling of a comforter, whose office would be to testify of Christ,—that is, to be His Representative among men while He personally should be absent. John 15 : 26.

But the mission of Christ in the earth, as already seen, was to reveal God—not only to show His creative power, but to exhibit His infinite love in a willingness to use that



Revelation of God's Power and Love in Raising the Dead to Life.

creative power in relieving creature necessities. It was for this purpose that the hungry were miraculously fed, the lepers cleansed, the blind made to see, the deaf to hear, and the dead were raised. Everything in the life-work of Christ pointed to that one end, of directing humanity to trust in *creative power* for the relief and restoration of the lost race.

Then, too, when infinite love went so far as to permit the innocent Representative of God among men, to become the accursed prey of those for whose salvation He came to exert the creative power of Jehovah, that same original energy was employed to raise Him from the dead and seat Him at the right hand of God, who is the fulness of all power. Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1. The Holy Spirit coming from God to men, for the carrying out of Christ's work, His must be the operation of the power of God, which is creative energy. It is this power dwelling in men who are dead in trespasses and sins, that restores to them the life and favor of God (Eph. 2:1; Rom. 8:11), and so constituting them *new* creatures in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17). Thus the Spirit of God is not only a witness to the Sonship of Christ, but is also the representative of God's creative power in the human form.

The Sealing Power of God.

To perform this mission in man, the Spirit *occupies his body*, when permitted, appointing it His temple, or dwelling-place. 1 Cor. 6:19. He there communes with the individual, first concerning his own sins, then about God, and the treasures of His love, bringing hope

and comfort to the sorrowing, longing heart. John 16 : 7, 8; 2 Cor. 13 : 14; Acts 9 : 31. Thus the love of God is cultivated in the place where human hate had been, sanctifying the mind to the service of the Master, and so controlling its very thoughts, from which follow the expression of the lips. Rom. 5 : 5; 15 : 16; Mark 13 : 11.

This is the part which the power of Jehovah acts in fallen man to fit him for the association of holy beings. But without this operation of the Spirit in man, it follows that he must be entirely devoid of that transforming power which alone is able to renew his life, and so restore him to the image of God. Then to slight and grieve the Holy Spirit is to renounce the only power which is able to restore the impress of Jehovah upon the creature of sin. Eph. 4 : 30.

So to be sealed by the Holy Spirit, is to be stamped with the character of Jehovah, which is hidden in His name. That the name of God stands for His character may be learned from the fact that when God would reveal all of His goodness to Moses, He did so by proclaiming *His name* before Him. Calling His servant up into a mountain, the Lord there gave His name as: "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth [or steadfastness], keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." Ex. 33 : 19; 34 : 6, 7.

The Name of God.

The infinite power of God is lodged in His *name*, which, when summed up, is I AM THAT I AM, that is, the *Self-existent One*, who is just *what He is*. Ex. 3 : 14, 15. What He *is*, aside from His self-existence, is revealed in that part of His name called *merciful, gracious, long-suffering*, etc. All these features of the eternal name of God were shown in the earth-life of Jesus Christ, who came to seek and save the lost. He was ever patient toward those who opposed Him, and dealt with them after the most courteous and tender manner. When instructing the Jews concerning His mission He said: "Before Abraham was, I am." John 8 : 58.

In *that name alone* the disciples of Christ had power to work miracles. Acts 3 : 6; 4 : 10, 30. The Gospel of Christ *is the power of God* unto salvation to all who believe, simply because in it *is revealed the name* of God, which is His righteousness. Rom. 1 : 16, 17. Were this creative power not in the Gospel, it could not possibly lift the sinner out of the path of sin. But being itself wholly that power, it not only lifts up the sinner, but through faith in the power it carries, the one thus converted is *kept unto salvation*. 1 Peter 1 : 4, 5. For this reason we are exhorted to "commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a *faithful Creator*." 1 Peter 4 : 19.

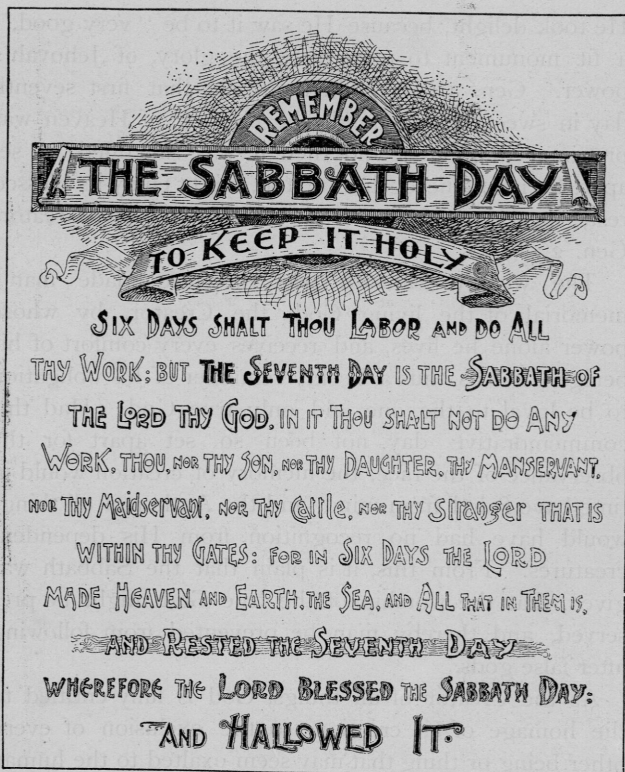
The great aim of faith, then, is to secure some requisite power to insure success in the race for life. The history of the ages is a sure witness to the fact that

human ability breaks down under every attack of Satan. The creature mind of itself has not even sufficient strength with which to serve its Creator acceptably. If it does so, it must receive the power from another and higher Source. Then surely when man was placed in Eden, this power was subject to his demand, or he could not have been held accountable for the fault of his conduct. Since Christ was a "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13 : 8), the power of His everlasting Gospel must have been available from the beginning, and the failure of Adam and Eve to comply with the conditions of grace, resulted from their not embracing the gift of God's power, which was then, as now, eternal life through Jesus Christ. Rom. 6 : 23.

Again, the knowledge of God and of Christ is eternal life. John 17 : 3. But the knowledge of God involves the comprehension of His power, and so every avenue of inspired thought leads back to the First Great Cause, the infinite Creator, who is above all things. It was therefore necessary for some *distinctive mark* of His creative ability to be constantly before man from the beginning, in order that he might keep in mind, not only the Author of his being, but the extent of His sovereign influence, and in this way ever look to the true source of strength.

The Sign of God's Faithfulness.

So, true to His infinite faithfulness in providing for the necessity of His creatures, the very first institution God gave, looking beyond domestic happiness, was a frequently recurring one, in which man was required to



The Sign of God's Faithfulness.

so participate, as fully to impress its object upon his mind. The six days of creative acts completed, the Creator—Christ—paused on the seventh day, to contemplate the new world which had come into existence at the call of the eternal Word passing His lips. In this

He took delight, because He saw it to be "very good," a fit monument to perpetuate the glory of Jehovah's power. Gen. 1:31. Having spent that first seventh day in sweet rest of mind, the blessing of Heaven was pronounced upon it, and then it was sanctified, or set apart for man's need, that he, too, might enjoy its blessed rest, in contemplation and worship of the Creator. Gen. 2:23.

The weekly Sabbath was therefore made man's memorial of the living God, the Creator, by whose power alone he lives, and receives every comfort of his being. It was thus a weekly reminder of his obligation to be loyal to the one and only true God. Had this commemorative day not been so set apart for the observance of the race, the memory of creation would in time have faded from mind, and the Author of all things would have had no recognition from His dependent creatures. From this, it is plain that the Sabbath was given, that the worship of the true God might be preserved, and thereby man be prevented from following after false gods.

As the Creator of all things, God is fully entitled to the homage of all creation, to the exclusion of every other being or thing that may seem exalted to the human mind. Loyalty to God therefore demands that no other object shall be permitted to hold the first place in man's affections. It also requires that no likeness of anything, in heaven or earth, shall be formed, before which men may bow in worship, or religiously serve *in addition* to the required worship and service of Jehovah. The Creator must have not only the first, but the only place

in the affections of His creatures. But this is not all. The sacred *name* of Jehovah must not be used lightly, as a common thing, lest irreverence be generated. Every mention of that hallowed title should be with the most solemn awe. These indeed are the first points of consideration in the law of Jehovah. Ex. 20:1-7. But lest the obligation they enjoin be unwittingly transferred to another being, and so Jehovah be robbed of His glory, the weekly rest day was given, to guard man's mind against deception. After stating *which* day of the week is the Lord's rest, and how it should be observed, the fourth commandment gives the *reason* for the requirement: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore [for this reason] the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Ex. 20:8-11.

So the blessing and setting apart of the Sabbath day rest on the facts of creation, making it a memento of sovereign power. It points to creative power as the distinguishing feature of the true God, and the *mark* by which He may be separated in mind from every other claimant to the worship of man. Jer. 10:10-12; Acts 17:22-25. It is therefore not only a *sign* by which man may know the true God, as distinguished from false claimants, that true worship may be rendered, but it is also the expression of God's authority by which He may claim worship from His creatures.

Not only, then, is the observance of the Sabbath man's outward sign of faith in, and acknowledgment of the sovereignty of creative power, but it is also the setting of his hand, or seal, to that expressed conviction. It is the

witness of his agreement to obey and trust in the name of Him who is Creator of all things. On God's part the Sabbath is the *signature* of His power, the *seal* of His ability to sanctify, or set apart to His service those who acknowledge His sovereignty. This was the original design of the Sabbath, according to the Lord's own rendering of it: "I gave them My Sabbaths, *to be a sign* between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Eze. 20 : 12. So, then, the promise is: "Hallow My Sabbaths; and *they shall be a sign* between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." Verse 20.

The Mark of His Authority.

To whom, then, does the Sabbath become this sign of double recognition?—To those only who, in every age, *hallow*, or keep sacred, the day, as God has commanded. To all such it is the memorial sign of Jehovah's might, and the seal of His faithfulness to apply that promised power in behalf of the needy. It is not possible, therefore, for the observer of the true Sabbath to forget God, because his practise keeps constantly in mind the Creator, and distinguishes Him as the only God of power, and whose authority over man is supreme.

No law can possibly be valid, except it carries some mark of authority. Its validity, too, is limited to the extent of the authority held by the one whose signature gives it force. A decree bearing the signature of the President of the United States, while being valid within the territory over which he is the recognized executive,

carries no weight whatever across the Mexican boundary, simply because his authority has no recognition beyond the limits of the jurisdiction assigned him. The very fact upon which this illustration is based makes it necessary for every executive, great or small, to have a seal of office, so that those in his jurisdiction may not be misled as to where the authority of their obligation is lodged.

The Seal of His Law.

So when any measure becomes law in a country, the great seal of that government is attached to the document to give it dignity and authority. The reason for this is obvious. Because of the possibility of several being in a given territory each holding the same name as that

of the executive, any one of whom might mischievously attach his name to some document with the intention to deceive and mislead, there must, of necessity be some seal of that office, which will invariably designate the authority of its executive, as well as tell the name he bears. With the seal of office thus connected with the



Great Seal of the United States.

Above the name of the President, when signed to official documents, are these words: "In testimony whereof I have caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed to these presents, and signed the same with my hand."

(JOHN ADAMS.)

name, all danger of dividing the authority with the executive, by some other person bearing the same name, is obviated, because the means of knowing the executive is fully made known and carefully guarded.

The same rule obtains regarding the establishment of the true object of worship. If the God of the Christian can not lay any specific claim to men's worship, what reason can be assigned for rendering that devotion more than the heathen have for the worship of their deities? If there be not some distinctive sign by which He may be counted superior to all other gods, and so be singled out from them, why should one choose His service more than theirs? But we are not left in darkness on this point. There has been a mark of difference provided, and one on which all may depend with absolute certainty. The law of Jehovah clearly reveals this, to those whose eyes have been opened by the spirit of God to behold the wondrous things therein contained. Ps. 119:18.

But had the Sabbath commandment, with the reason for its observance, not been attached to the law, that instrument could not have revealed its Author. All Christians admit the force of the first commandment of that law, which forbids putting some other God in the place of the true One, yet there is nothing in that commandment to tell who is its Author. Were there nothing more than what it contains, to reveal its authority, the heathen might make as strong claim for his deity, being the author of it, as the Christian could for his God. It simply says: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." But as this does not tell who "me" is, it is

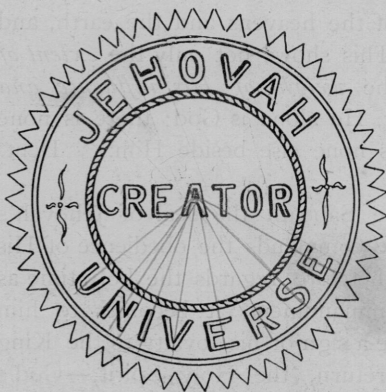
necessary to look further for the desired information. The second commandment does say that the One who speaks is a jealous God, but does not reveal the source of His power. The third precept simply forbids using the name of the God in a careless way, but leads the mind no nearer to the Source of its authority. The fourth commandment, however, after making known the obligation to reverence the Sabbath, adds to the demand the seal of sovereignty which distinguishes the Lawgiver from every other god in the universe. In that He calls Himself the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and all things in them. This shows not only the *extent of His dominion*, but the *weight of His influence and power*. In this light, He alone is God; there is none holy as He; "there is none else beside Him." Deut. 4:35; Isa. 45:21.

This constitutes the Sabbath the seal of Jehovah's authority by which He commands the obedience of His subjects. Whoever, therefore, regards the holy time as appointed by the commandment, it becomes to him before all the universe a sign of his loyalty to the King of Heaven, and in return, the Holy Spirit,—God's earthly Representative,—engages to lead him in the way of holiness, and finally puts on him the seal of His Father's name, which is His righteousness. But on the other hand, he who refuses to acknowledge the claims of the divinely-appointed day, after learning its nature and design, really denies the right of God to rule over him, and tramples underfoot the authority of the Creator, thus forfeiting all claim to His protection and guidance.

A Stamp of Character.

When God established His everlasting covenant with Abraham, as the surety of a coming Messiah, the patriarch then and there "received the *sign of circumcision*," which was "a *seal of the righteousness of the faith*" which he entertained in the promise made. In other words, the *outward sign* or form became a seal or evidence of what was *hidden in the heart*. In this sense,

the Sabbath, as an outward sign of faith in creative power to convert and save, becomes a seal of the *righteousness of such faith*, which, in turn, brings the sealing power of the Holy Spirit, to put on the believer the impress of God's character.



A Graphic Representation of the Seal of Authority in the Fourth Commandment.

of divinity. It was the sense of this resting on Him which brought forth the words concerning His standing in Heaven: "For Him hath God the Father sealed." John 6:27. That is to say that, although appearing in the flesh as the "Son of man," He carried the seal, or impress, of the Father, which constituted Him the Son of

Thus the Saviour's life and work revealed the impress

God. Acts 13:33. This decree was also confirmed by the descent of the Holy Spirit, which, in the form of a dove, gave an outward sign of the sealing act. Mark 1:10, 11.

All the glory of His life was therefore ascribed to His Father. He came to earth in the Father's *name* (John 5:43), and so did nothing but what was in imitation of the Father. Verse 19. He spoke only the *words* of the Father, thus flashing out the reflex of the Father's character, and all because He was endowed with the unmeasured power of the Spirit of the Father. John 3:34, 35. In this He wore the Father's name, and so manifested it to all who came under His influence. John 17:6, 8, 25, 26.

Every one who becomes a son of God and is thus made ready to meet the returning Saviour, will have received the divine impress of his Master. 1 John 3:1, 2. Those whom the seer of Patmos beheld standing on Mount Zion with Christ, having been redeemed at His coming, all bore the impress of the Father's name in their foreheads. Rev. 14:1, 4. But as already learned, the name of God not only expresses His infinite creative *power*, but also His perfect *character* of mercy, grace, long-suffering, goodness and truth toward all His people. Ex. 34:5-7. So the name of God, which will then adorn the remnant people, revealing in them the image of Christ (1 John 3:2), and by which they are fitted to stand with their Lord on Mount Zion at His coming, is the character of God, just as it was seen in the fleshly life of Christ. And this seal of resemblance will have been placed there by the reception and

indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God's own Representative among men.

Earth's Closing Scenes.

It will be noticed, however, that the number thus "redeemed from among men,"—that is from the living,—aggregate 144,000. Of course, myriads of others of all ages and climes, will be redeemed from the dead. (Rev. 7:9), but these are a special "first-fruits," who, after having successfully passed through the dire temptations that only the closing scenes of earth's history will know, are translated at the coming of Christ, to sing a song which none of the other redeemed will ever learn. Rev. 14: 1-5.

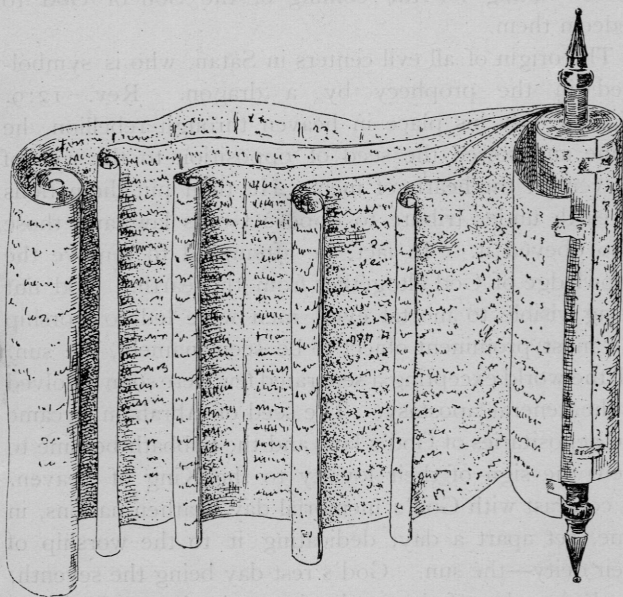
This development in the growth of the remnant people is shown elsewhere. Looking through the fifth and sixth chapters of Revelation, we there find unfolded a prophetic history of the Christian age, under the symbol of a book from which the seals are being removed one by one by the Lord Jesus. Rev. 5:4-7; 6:1. The opening of the sixth seal reveals an earthquake, the darkening of the sun and moon, and the casting to earth of the stars of heaven. Immediately following, the very covering of heaven moves off, like the rolling up of a scroll, while the mountains and islands change their places, and all classes of men cry to be covered from the wrath of the last great day. Rev. 6:12-17.

Every one must see that this is the drama of earth's closing scenes. It is a time of trouble such as never was before, since nations existed. Dan. 12:1, 2. Commotion is on every hand, and men's hearts are failing them

for fear, in anticipation of worse scenes to come. Luke 21:25-27. But in the midst of it all an angel is seen ascending before the sun-rising of the eternal day, which is just beginning to dawn, having the seal of God to bestow upon His waiting people. At His command heavenly assistants hold the winds of strife from hurting the candidates for confirmation honors, until the sealing of the 144,000 is completed. Rev. 7:1-4.

A Power from Beneath.

As previously seen, when thus sealed, the saints are



The Book of Seven Seals of Revelation 5 to 8.

made to stand with Christ on Mount Zion, at His coming, having been redeemed from among the living, to follow the Lamb *whithersoever He goeth*. Their peculiar experience on earth had been the fitting prelude to a constant companionship with the King of kings, in His triumphant tours of a redeemed empire. But while this light, life, and power from above descended on the remnant people, as God's seal of special favor, an intensity of evil was taking full possession of Satan's agencies. Old controversies were renewed, and new ones started, all calculated to compromise the faith of those waiting for the coming of the Son of God to redeem them.

The origin of all evil centers in Satan, who is symbolized in the prophecy by a dragon. Rev. 12:9. Having lost his place in heaven through rebellion, he came and sowed the seed of opposition to the rule of heaven, in the hearts of men. He then put the nations of earth under tribute to oppose God's law, and those who obeyed it. In fact, he attempted to remove the knowledge of God altogether from the earth. God not being visible to mortal eyes, men were led to worship the most prominent object to be seen, namely, the sun. All the world excepting a separated few were soon involved in the general apostasy. The seed of Abraham became the depositaries of God's law, and the Sabbath became to them the sign of their loyalty to the King of heaven. In contrast with God's memorial day heathen nations, in time, set apart a day, dedicating it to the worship of their deity—the sun. God's rest day being the seventh, or closing day of the week, the sun's day was laid on

the first, or opening day of the week. The rest of the seventh day being the seal of God's title to His kingship over the universe, it was necessary to displace that with another, in order to successfully operate against the kingdom of God.

The Venerable Day of the Sun.

This movement was confided to the nations, which are symbolized by a sly, cruel, and strong beast, having power and authority from the dragon, which is Satan. Rev. 13:1, 2. In the effort of this beast against the rule of Jehovah, the seal of His authority became the center of attack. The emperor of Rome issued an edict in the year 321 A. D., in which he said:—

“Let all the judges and townspeople, and the occupation of all trades rest on the venerable day of the sun; but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty attend to the business of agriculture, because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines; lest, the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted by heaven.”

It will be noticed that this edict was to enforce the observance of the “venerable day of the sun,” upon all who were not tillers of the land, whether pagan or Christian. Yet the name and character of the day were both pagan, and it had long been the established day of pagan worship. All who rested on that day gave the sign of pagan adherence, and because real Christians could not conscientiously do this, a controversy immedi-

ately sprang up on this point, which was destined to affect the religious sentiment of the entire world.

This decree of Constantine was the assumption of a secular ruler to control human consciences in the matter of religious worship. Voluntary submission to such a demand would be to acknowledge the authority of the state equal to the sovereignty of heaven, provided one gave the day required to be kept by the state the same recognition as the day of God's appointment. But should the day set apart by Jehovah as the sign of loyalty to Him, become displaced in the forms of religious worship by another day, commanded by a secular power, it is plain that the observance of that day could not possibly be to the honor of God, but must be to the credit alone of the power enjoining its observance.

A Sign of Paganism.

In this sense, the edict of Constantine constituted the "day of the sun" a sign of allegiance to paganism. But evil does not halt after taking the first step. Four years later, having in the meantime nominally connected himself with Christianity, the emperor convened the Council of Nice, which was made entirely subservient to his will. Two questions were to be settled: one relative to the Arian controversy and the other respecting the proper day on which to celebrate Easter. The latter question was one of the principal reasons for calling the council. Some of the churches had previously celebrated that ordinance on the fourteenth day after the new moon, without regard to the day of the week, just as the Jews

had always done in observing the Passover, while others wanted it to be universally observed on Sunday.—*Boyle's History of the Council of Nice, p. 22.*

This question was settled by the emperor, who had by that time “assumed to himself the external administration of the church.” In the letter announcing the verdict, sent by him to the churches, he settled the matter upon the basis that they should “have nothing in common with the most hostile rabble of the Jews.”—*Ibid., p. 52.* The epistle closed with the exhortation: “Wherefore having announced to our beloved brethren what has been already written, *it is your duty to receive and establish the arguments already stated, and the observance of the most holy day.*”—*Ibid., p. 54.*

A Counterfeit Lord's Day.

Thus the “venerable day of the sun” of four years before, now for the first time was made to the church a “most holy day,” and that only by the decree of a Roman emperor. When Constantine professed conversion to Christianity in 323 A. D., he, like other pagans who had nominally accepted the new faith, refused to surrender the day so long dedicated to sun-worship, and so brought the heathen holiday forward as a fitting day of rest in Christian worship. Nicephorus declares that the emperor, considering himself the head of the church equally with the bishop, “directed that the day which the Jews considered the first day of the week, and which the Greeks dedicated to the sun, should be called the Lord's day.”—*Quoted in Elliott's Horæ Apocalypticæ, fifth edition, vol. 4, p. 603.*

So the first official title of Lord's day given to the day of the sun, was by the *civil power*, claiming authority to direct the consciences of men in religious worship. To show that the church was in perfect harmony with such interference of the state, Sylvester, who was then bishop of Rome, by his "apostolic" authority, and with the approval of Constantine, conferred upon the day, in behalf of the church, the solemn title of "Lord's day."—*Historia Ecclesiastica, per M. Ludovicum Lucium, cent. 4, chap. 10, pp. 739, 740.*

But this was not the end of the matter. The churches had received the decree that the day of the sun was the Lord's holy day, made so by governmental order, and sanctioned by the bishop of Rome. This was the church's recognition of the supreme power of the state, elevated to the place of Jehovah. From that time on, civil law, rather than the Spirit of God, was depended on to be director of the conscience. Many, however, did not entirely accept the condition, but continued the recognition of the seventh day as God's rest, though some gave equal honor to the first day in obedience to the civil law. This divided service not being satisfactory to the leaders of the church, the Council of Laodicea was convened in A. D. 364, and after due deliberation sent forth the following as a part of canon twenty-nine of that council:—

"Because Christians ought not to Judaize, and to rest on the Sabbath, but to work in that day, preferring to honor the Lord's day. . . . Therefore if any shall be found to Judaize, let them be accursed from Christ."—*Quoted by William Prynne in Dissertations on the Lord's Day Sabbath, pp. 33, 34.*

The civil power co-operated with the church in enforcing the Sunday laws, and thus obliged many, against their consciences, to display in their religious rites the sign of loyalty to a church-and-state union. Some, however, went down under cruel persecution rather than yield their convictions. The Bible was destroyed wherever found in the hands of the laity, yet through it all, faithful souls testified to the saving grace of infinite power, by observing the sign of Jehovah's creative energy. Thus the issue was squarely drawn between the forces of good and evil, and the servants of each were identified by the badge of loyalty displayed in the weekly rest.

The Last Message of Mercy.

As time went on, and the authority of this unholy union was strengthened in its opposition to God, all nations and tongues came under its blighting influence, until all people of the earth, except those whose names were found in the book of life, had become worshipers of the beast. Rev. 13:6-8. Following these by the light of prophecy to our own time, we find them making further and final decrees that the few in opposition to beast worship must yield or meet a terrible penalty. Verses 11-17. But at this very juncture a solemn warning from God is heard sounding to all the nations: "Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev. 14:6, 7.

The necessity for this message is made plain in its proclamation. It announces positively that the hour of God's judgment has arrived. This being true, the cases of all people must then be in the balance, at the very point of decision for eternity. They can not, either in justice or mercy, be transferred to God's kingdom while in the act of serving the determined enemy of His government. It is therefore the right thing on God's part to warn the world of the nearness of the judgment, and plead with all to turn from the worship of the beast to that of the living God—the Creator of heaven and earth, and all things therein.

The test of loyalty to God's government is obedience to His law, the seal of which is the Sabbath commandment. In the closing struggle between the forces of God and Satan, the patience of the saints will therefore be known by their adherence to all the commandments of God, combined with the faith of Jesus. Verse 12. Inasmuch as all the world keeps within the bounds of morality as defined by *civil law*, these patient, waiting ones must present the distinctive sign of conscientious adherence to *God's law* which is found only in the observance of God's day of rest. This, of course, excites the wrath of Satan, who stirs up the civil powers to make war upon the remnant members of the church, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Rev. 12:17.

But in their adherence to heavenly order, these faithful ones keep in constant touch with the Holy Spirit, whose power is increased upon them according to their needs, and they are thus sealed with the Father's name,

which is His character, and so are prepared to stand with the Lord on Mount Zion, at His coronation, with no fault upon them, and no word or guile in their mouths. Rev. 14:1-5.

Two Classes of Character.

But the other class maintain to the end the mark of the beast, which is the mark of his name (Rev. 14:11), and so have no rest of mind at the coming of the Lord. As the mark of God's name is His character, and is impressed on men by the Spirit of God, so the mark of the beast's name must be his character of hatred for the right, which does despite unto persecution of all who follow the right. As the character of God impressed upon His worshipers leads them to maintain His day of rest as an outward sign of loyalty, so the character of Satan impressed upon his followers, by his spirit which they entertain, leads them to observe a counterfeit day of rest as the sign of their adherence to the wrong principles which he has caused to be established in the earth.

The conflict which is to ripen this work has already begun. The demand of the churches for more stringent Sunday laws is becoming strongly urgent, and many influential persons are advocating a surrender of the state to the requirements of the churches, on account of the influence these organizations have in political affairs. But when this step is taken, it is but the first of a series which must naturally follow. Let the state once give way to a demand for religious legislation, and there will be no end to the concessions it must make in the same direction. It was just in this way that the early church

developed the Papacy and the Inquisition with all its attendant horrors.

This is the issue now before the world, and its closing scenes are rapidly coming forward, in which Satanic power will be increased as he sees that the time draws on for his career to close. But though the conflict sharpens all the way, victory is sure to perch on the Lord's banner, and those who triumph over the beast, and his image, through the power of the Holy Spirit, will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb upon the sea of glass. Rev. 15:2, 3. In this song will be chanted praises of Him who is the "Lord God Almighty," the righteousness of whose ways has provided the victory of His saints over the beast and his image, and over the mark of his name.

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