

The Impending Conflict

Sabbath Afternoon, June 8

Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.
Psalm 119:127.

In these days of peril shall we show less devotion to the truth of God, and less fervent attachment to His law, than in former years? . . . Now is the time for Christ's chosen to show their devotion to His service,—the time for all His followers to bear the noblest testimony for their Master by standing firm against the prevailing current of evil. . . .

When the divine law is set aside, the greatest misery will result, both to families and to society. Our only hope of better things is to be found in a faithful adherence to the precepts of Jehovah. . . . [T]he surest way to undermine the foundation of order and government, is to set at naught the law of God. —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 54.

Since his fall from Heaven, it has been Satan's only joy and constant employment to thwart the plan of God by preventing the salvation of perishing men. He has carried on this work with marked success, and will continue it until Christ shall bring his career to an end. He has tried to induce men to aid him in treading the honor of God into the dust, and many have become co-laborers with him, and have encouraged his rebellion. Those who do this, who glory in their skepticism, and lead others to despise the law of Jehovah, place themselves in the ranks of the enemies of Christ, and use their influence to destroy rather than to save souls. They second Satan in his efforts to undermine the law of God by assuring the sinner that he will be saved while transgressing that law. They serve Satan, and will share his terrible fate. —*The Signs of the Times*, April 3, 1884, par. 8.

It is the Christian's duty not to permit surroundings and circumstances to mold him; but to live above surroundings, fashioning his character according to the divine Model. He is to be faithful in whatever place he is found. He is to do his duty with fidelity, improving the opportunities given him of God, making the most of his capabilities. With an eye single to the glory of God, he is to work for Jesus wherever he may be. We are to surrender the will, the heart, to God, and become acquainted with Christ. We must deny self, take up the cross, and follow Jesus. Not one of us can reach heaven, save by the narrow, cross-bearing way. But how many wear the cross as an ornament on the person, but fail to bear the cross in practical, everyday life. . . .

The thing essential for successful work is a knowledge of Christ; for this knowledge will give sound principles of right, impart a noble, unselfish spirit, like that of our Saviour whom we profess to serve. Faithfulness, economy, care-taking, thoroughness, should characterize all our work, wherever we may be, whether in the kitchen, in the workshop, or wherever we may be stationed in the vineyard of the Lord. —*Lift Him Up*, p. 245.

Revelation's Final Conflict

Says the psalmist: "Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves." "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker" (Psalm 100:3; 95:6). And the holy beings who worship God in heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things" (Revelation 4:11).

In Revelation 14, men are called upon to worship the Creator; and the prophecy brings to view a class that, as the result of the threefold message, are keeping the commandments of God. One of these commandments points directly to God as the Creator. The fourth precept declares: "The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:10, 11). Concerning the Sabbath, the Lord says, further, that it is "a sign, . . . that ye may know that I am the Lord your God" (Ezekiel 20:20). . . .

So long as the fact that He is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so long the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial. —*Lift Him Up*, p. 51.

There are only two parties upon this earth—those who stand under the bloodstained banner of Jesus Christ and those who stand under the black banner of rebellion. In the twelfth chapter of Revelation is represented the great conflict between the obedient and the disobedient. . . .

. . . Satanic agencies have made the earth a stage for horrors, which no language can describe. War and bloodshed are carried on by nations claiming to be Christian. A disregard for the law of God has brought its sure result.

The great conflict now being waged is not merely a strife of man against man. On one side stands the Prince of life, acting as man's substitute and surety; on the other, the prince of darkness, with the fallen angels under his command. —Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 974.

The work of conquering evil is to be done through faith. Those who go into the battlefield will find that they must put on the whole armor of God. The shield of faith will be their defense and will enable them to be more than conquerors. Nothing else will avail but this—faith in the Lord of hosts, and obedience to His orders. . . . Living faith alone will make them invincible and enable them to stand in the evil day, steadfast, unmovable, holding the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end. —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 182.

Monday, June 10

The Coming Crisis

They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. John 16:2.

Every individual in our world will be arrayed under one of two banners.

The two armies will stand distinct and separate, and this distinction will be so marked that many who shall be convinced of truth will come on the side of God's commandment-keeping people. When this grand work is to take place in the battle, prior to the last closing conflict, many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ's sake in standing in defense of the truth.

By the decree enforcing the institution of the papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation [the United States] will disconnect herself fully from righteousness. —*Maranatha*, p. 199.

As we approach the perils of the last days, the temptations of the enemy become stronger and more determined. Satan has come down in great power, knowing that his time is short; and he is working "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." The warning comes to us through God's Word, that, if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect.

Wonderful events are soon to open before the world. The end of all things is at hand. The time of trouble is about to come upon the people of God. Then it is that the decree will go forth forbidding those who keep the Sabbath of the Lord to buy or sell, and threatening them with punishment, and even death, if they do not observe the first day of the week as the Sabbath. . . .

Could our eyes be opened, as were those of the servant of Elisha at Dothan, we should see evil angels all around us, urging their presence upon us, and watching for an opportunity to tempt and overthrow us; we should also see holy angels guarding us, and with their light and power pressing back the evil angels. —*Historical Sketches*, pp. 155, 156.

In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off. Because they refuse to break His law in obedience to earthly powers, they will be forbidden to buy or sell. It will finally be decreed that they shall be put to death. See Revelation 13:11-17. But to the obedient is given the promise, "He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." Isaiah 33:16. By this promise the children of God will live. When the earth shall be wasted with famine, they shall be fed. "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." Psalm 37:19. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 121.

Identifying the Beast: Part 1

The line of prophecy [which] begins with Revelation 12, [reveals] the dragon that sought to destroy Christ at His birth. The dragon is said to be Satan (Revelation 12:9); he it was that moved upon Herod to put the Saviour to death. But the chief agent of Satan in making war upon Christ and His people during the first centuries of the Christian Era was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion. Thus while the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome. —*The Great Controversy*, p. 438.

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

God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated. Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution. —*The Great Controversy*, p. 581.

Let none deceive themselves. The papacy that Protestants are now so ready to honor is the same that ruled the world in the days of the Reformation, when men of God stood up, at the peril of their lives, to expose her iniquity. She possesses the same pride and arrogant assumption that lorded it over kings and princes, and claimed the prerogatives of God. Her spirit is no less cruel and despotic now than when she crushed out human liberty and slew the saints of the Most High. . . .

It is a part of her policy to assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose; but beneath the variable appearance of the chameleon she conceals the invariable venom of the serpent. —*The Great Controversy*, p. 571.

Identifying the Beast: Part 2

The apostle Paul warned the church not to look for the coming of Christ in his day. "That day shall not come," he says, "except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed." 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Not till after the great apostasy, and the long period of the reign of the "man of sin," can we look for the advent of our Lord. The "man of sin," which is also styled "the mystery of iniquity," "the son of perdition," and "that wicked," represents the papacy, which, as foretold in prophecy, was to maintain its supremacy for 1260 years. This period ended in 1798. The coming of Christ could not take place before that time. Paul covers with his caution the whole of the Christian dispensation down to the year 1798. It is this side of that time that the message of Christ's second coming is to be proclaimed. —*The Great Controversy*, p. 356.

Satan as a powerful general has taken the field, and in this last remnant of time he is working through all conceivable methods to close the door against light that God would have come to his people. He is sweeping the whole world into his ranks, and the few who are faithful to God's requirements are the only ones who can ever withstand him, and even these he is trying to overcome.

Go to God for yourselves; pray for divine enlightenment, that you may know that you do know what is truth, that when the wonderful miracle-working power shall be displayed, and the enemy shall come as an angel of light, you may distinguish between the genuine work of God and the imitative work or the powers of darkness.

A world is to be warned, and when the third angel's message goes forth with a loud cry, minds will be fully prepared to make decisions for or against the truth. —*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 389.

The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord there will exist a state of religious declension similar to that in the first centuries. "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Timothy 3:1-5. . . . Satan will work "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." And all that "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," will be left to accept "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. When this state of ungodliness shall be reached, the same results will follow as in the first centuries. —*The Great Controversy*, p. 444.

The Beast From the Earth

As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament Scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand. Satan has blinded the minds of many so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the Revelation their study. But Christ through His servant John has here declared what shall be in the last days; and He says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." . . .

The perils of the last days are upon us, and in our work we are to warn the people of the danger they are in. Let not the solemn scenes which prophecy has revealed be left untouched. If our people were half awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed in the Revelation, a reformation would be wrought in our churches, and many more would believe the message. We have no time to lose; God calls upon us to watch for souls as they that must give an account. . . . Let Daniel speak, let the Revelation speak, and tell what is truth. But whatever phase of the subject is presented, uplift Jesus as the center of all hope, "the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 116, 118.

In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends.

The "image to the beast" represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas. . . .

Although church and state will unite their power to compel "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond" (Revelation 13:16), to receive "the mark of the beast," yet the people of God will not receive it. The prophet of Patmos beholds "them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Revelation 15:2, 3. —*Maranatha*, p. 169.

Heretofore those who presented the truths of the third angel's message have often been regarded as mere alarmists. Their predictions that religious intolerance would gain control in the United States, that church and state would unite to persecute those who keep the commandments of God, have been pronounced groundless and absurd. It has been confidently declared that this land could never become other than what it has been—the defender of religious freedom. But as the question of enforcing Sunday observance is widely agitated, the event so long doubted and disbelieved is seen to be approaching, and the third message will produce an effect which it could not have had before. —*The Great Controversy*, p. 605.

Friday, June 14

For Further Reading

From Heaven With Love, "Satan Remains a Defeated Foe," pp. 79, 80;
Maranatha, "Wisdom Needed by Sabbathkeepers," p. 177.