

The Great Controversy

The Impending Conflict

Lesson #11 for June 15, 2024

Scriptures: Revelation 4:11; 12:3-5,17; 13:1-2,11-18; 14:7,9,12; John 17:17.

1. Our world is becoming more connected, not politically or physically, but through the Internet and through various devices, making it possible to contact almost anyone anywhere almost instantly. There is a medical device called a biochip or a Veri-chip that can be implanted under the skin of a person which contains most of that patient's medical history. Thus, it has been suggested by some that this will eventually become required for everyone; and with that, the government will be able to trace everyone everywhere. Some have thought that the number 666 (See Revelation 13:18.) might apply to the Masonic order, the Illuminati, or some symbol of the United Nations.

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] **The aim of this week's lesson is to reveal the coming conflict over worship.** Satan will challenge God's authority by attempting to undermine God's law. Specifically, **the Sabbath will become the center of a global conflict over worship.** Satan hates the Sabbath because he hates the Creator. He will use coercion, pressure, and force to break our commitment to Christ. There will be a collision of beliefs over the true and false day of worship. God's final appeal is an appeal to faithfulness to Christ despite persecution, an economic boycott, imprisonment, and a death decree. This week's study emphasizes **Jesus' strength to take us through earth's final conflict.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, June 8.^{†‡} [Sunday worship involves rejecting God through evolution, atheism, etc. Worship is a question of what is the most important thing in one's life.][‡]

2. There are some people who feel that the book of Revelation is full of mysteries that no one can understand. However, by a careful reading of the book and if one understands the symbolism from the Old Testament and the New Testament, it becomes clear that the world is coming to a time when the conflict between Christ and Satan, which began in heaven over worship, will come to its final climax. There are about 600 references to the Old Testament in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 14:7-10: ⁷He said in a loud voice, "Honour [*sic*-Br] God and praise his greatness! For the time has come for him to judge. Worship him who made heaven, earth, sea, and the springs of water!"... [Not only does God judge us, but also, we judge God by our daily choices either for or against Him.]

⁹ A third angel followed the first two, saying in a loud voice, "Whoever worships the beast and its image and receives the mark on their forehead or on their hand ¹⁰will themselves drink God's wine, the wine of his fury, which he has poured at full strength into the cup of his anger!"—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Revelation 14:7-10). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].[‡]

3. What evidence do we see in the world around us that there is a growing conflict between God's side as revealed in Scripture and the Devil's side as revealed in rising atheism,

evolution, and modernism. **Remember that the Sabbath comes every week and continues to remind those who worship God of His creative powers. Satan hates that!**

4. Consider the following Scripture passages.

Revelation 12:17: The **dragon was furious** with the woman and went off to **fight** against the rest of her descendants, all those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus.—*Good News Bible*.*†

Revelation 14:12: This calls for endurance on the part of God's people, those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to Jesus.—*Good News Bible*.*

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty**, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. **While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 605.2.†‡

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.2738&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.2738&index=0)‡

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5. As the whole world seems to be following the Devil and his selfish ambitions, as suggested in Revelation 13, a final group of faithful people will have the faith *of* Jesus and be faithful *to* Jesus. (Revelation 14:12) Bible-believing Christians were warned 2500 years ago of what was coming.

Daniel 7:25: "He will speak against the Supreme God and oppress God's people. He will **try to change their religious laws and festivals**, and God's people will be under his power for 3.5 years."—*Good News Bible*.*† [Does this include teachings about evolution?]‡

6. This war between God and Satan over how the universe is going to be controlled has been ongoing, but has been especially since the time of Jesus. When Jesus died that unique and meaningful death, Satan knew that his side would eventually be defeated. However, that certainly has not stopped him from trying to defeat God's side.

7. What are we told in Revelation 13:3-4,7-8?

Revelation 13:1-8: ¹ Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads; on each of its horns there was a crown, and on each of its heads there was a name that was insulting to God. ²The beast **looked like a leopard**, with feet like a **bear's feet** and a **mouth like a lion's mouth**. The dragon gave the beast his own power, his throne, and his vast authority. ³**One**

of the heads of the beast seemed to have been fatally wounded, but the wound had healed. The whole earth was amazed and followed the beast. ⁴Everyone worshipped the dragon [Satan] because he had given his authority to the beast. They worshipped the beast also, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who can fight against it?”...

⁷It was allowed to fight against God’s people and to defeat them, and it was given authority over every tribe, nation, language, and race. ⁸**All people living on earth will worship it** [the beast], **except those whose names were written before the creation of the world in the book of the living which belongs to the Lamb that was killed.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

8. Satan builds up two human organizations to support his cause. Some people have chosen to call this **Satan’s Trinity**. They include: (1) Satan himself, (2) the leopard-like beast from the sea, (Revelation 13) and (3) the lamb-like beast from the earth. (Revelation 12 and 13)
9. Religious persecution is certainly not new. After all, that was why Cain killed Abel! Notice what Jesus Himself, Peter, and Paul said about religious persecution.

John 16:2: “You will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time will come when anyone who kills you will think that by doing this he is serving God.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*} [How could people get things so backwards?][†]

Matthew 10:22: “Everyone will hate you because of me. But whoever holds out to the end will be saved.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

2 Timothy 3:12: Everyone who wants to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will be persecuted.—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

1 Peter 4:12: My dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering, as though something unusual were happening to you.—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

10. We know that the disciples themselves—probably all except John—died the deaths of martyrs! The Roman Empire declared Christianity to be a forbidden religion, and anyone who did not abandon Christianity in favor of worshiping the emperor was to be killed. Times of religious persecution waxed and waned through the Dark Ages. As we read in Revelation 13, that persecution will come to a final climax.

Revelation 13:15-17: ¹⁵The second beast was allowed to breathe life into the image of the first beast, so that the image could talk and **put to death all those who would not worship it**. ¹⁶The beast forced all the people, small and great, rich and poor, slave and free, to have a **mark placed on their right hands or on their foreheads**. ¹⁷**No one could buy or sell without having this mark**, that is, the beast’s name or the number that stands for the name.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

11. **How could Satan possibly get the whole world to worship him?** Remember that **Satan’s main motivation is selfishness**. However, God’s foundation and His government are based on love. As you look at the world today, do you see the people being motivated by love? Or, by selfishness? **God never coerces!**
12. Revelation 13:3 tells us that one of the heads of the leopard-like beast would be wounded; but, then, it would be healed. The prediction was clearly fulfilled when the pope was taken captive in 1798 by Napoleon’s general and then died in prison. The healing occurred in 1929

when Mussolini restored property to the papacy and restored its power to a certain degree.

13. Let us be very clear. As we read earlier, Revelation 13:1-2 tell us from where the power behind these three satanic agencies comes.

Revelation 13:1-2: ¹Then I saw a beast [leopard-like beast] coming up out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads; on each of its horns there was a crown, and on each of its heads there was a name that was insulting to God. ²The beast looked like a **leopard**, with feet like a bear's feet and a mouth like a lion's mouth. **The dragon gave the beast his own power, his throne, and his vast authority.**—*Good News Bible*.*†‡

14. And that vast authority does not end there. We read some of this section of Revelation 13 earlier. Many ancient kings wanted, or even demanded, to be worshiped! Think of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's 3 companions and the fiery furnace.

Revelation 13:11-17: ¹¹Then I saw another beast [i.e., a second beast, a lamb-like beast], which came up out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb's horns, and it spoke like a dragon. ¹²**It used the vast authority of the first beast [i.e., the leopard-like beast] in its presence. It forced the earth and all who live on it to worship the first beast, whose wound had healed.** ¹³This second beast [i.e., the lamb-like beast] performed great miracles; it made fire come down out of heaven to earth in the sight of everyone. ¹⁴And it deceived all the people living on earth by means of the miracles which it was allowed to perform in the presence of the first beast. The beast [i.e., the lamb-like beast] told them to build an image in honour [*sic-Br*] of the beast [i.e., the leopard-like beast] that had been wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵The second beast [i.e., the lamb-like beast] was allowed to breathe life into the image of the first beast, so that **the image could talk and put to death all those who would not worship it.** ¹⁶The beast forced all the people, small and great, rich and poor, slave and free, to have a **mark placed on their right hands or on their foreheads.** ¹⁷**No one could buy or sell without having this mark**, that is, the beast's name or the number that stands for the name.—*Good News Bible*.*†‡

15. How do you think that authority will be exercised in our day? Could it end up in the Supreme Court of the United States? Or, in the International Court of Justice of the United Nations? How do you think the two sides would be represented at such a hearing? Or, would they? One side would represent Satan; the other side, if allowed, would represent God!
16. Satan correctly interpreted the prophecy that God gave Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15. From that day to this, he has done everything he could and can to prevent the Messiah from coming and to prevent God from succeeding. He tried to destroy the Jewish nation by having all the baby boys killed while they were in captivity and slavery in Egypt. Later, he tried to destroy the Jews in the days of Esther. When the Christ child was finally born, he tried to destroy Him through the work of Herod the Great, killing the Jewish boys in the region of Bethlehem under the age of two.

Revelation 12:3-5: ³Another mysterious sight appeared in the sky. There was a **huge red dragon with seven heads and ten horns** and a crown on each of his heads. ⁴With his tail he dragged a third of the stars out of the sky and threw them down to the earth. He stood in front of the woman, **in order to eat her**

child as soon as it was born. ⁵Then she gave birth to a son, who will rule over all nations with an iron rod. But the child was snatched away and taken to God and his throne.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

Matthew 2:16-18: ¹⁶ When Herod realized that the visitors from the east had tricked him, he was furious. He gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood [*sic-Br*] who were two years old and younger — this was done in accordance with what he had learned from the visitors about the time when the star had appeared.

¹⁷ In this way what the prophet Jeremiah had said came true:

¹⁸ “A sound is heard in Ramah,
the sound of bitter weeping.
Rachel is crying for her children;
she refuses to be comforted,
for they are dead.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*‡}

17. So, how and when did the Roman Catholic Church gain its great power?

[BSG:] About this beast power we’re told, “The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority” (*Rev. 13:2, NKJV*). This prophecy was precisely fulfilled hundreds of years later when the Roman emperor Constantine moved his capital from Rome to [Byzantium became Constantinople and now renamed as Istanbul] what came to be called Constantinople [*sic*], in modern-day Turkey. This left a power vacuum at the former throne or seat of the caesars, the imperial city of Rome. Thus, pagan Rome gave the beast its seat, or capital city.

Isaac Backus stated, “By removing the seat of the empire to Constantinople, . . . Constantine made way for the bishop of Rome to exalt himself above all men upon earth, and above the God of Heaven.”—*The Infinite Importance of the Obedience of Faith, and of Separation from the World*, p. 16, quoted in Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 3, p. 213. According to Thomas Hobbes, “**the Papacy is no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof.**”—*Leviathan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 386.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, June 11.^{†‡§}

18. What identifying marks can we find in Revelation to describe the leopard-like beast?

Revelation 13:1,6: ¹Then I saw a beast [i.e., the leopard-like beast] coming up out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads; on each of its horns there was a crown, and on each of its heads there was a name that was insulting to God....

⁶**It began to curse God, his name, the place where he lives, and all those who live in heaven.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*‡}

19. How could the Roman Catholic Church be accused of cursing the name of God? Look at John 10:33 and Luke 5:22 to see the Bible’s definition of *blasphemy*.

John 10:33: They replied, “We do not want to stone you [Jesus] because of any good deeds, but because of your blasphemy! You are only a man, but you are trying

to make yourself God!”—*Good News Bible*.*† [Thus, the biblical definition of *blasphemy* is someone who claims to make himself God.]‡

Luke 5:21: The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees began to say to themselves, “Who is this man who speaks such blasphemy! God is the only one who can forgive sins!”—*Good News Bible*.* [Thus, the biblical definition of *blasphemy* is anyone other than God who claims to forgive sins.]‡

20. The Roman Catholic Church has two interesting doctrines that the Bible calls blasphemy: (1) It claims that its priests have the power to forgive sins in a “confession” booth; and (2) It claims that the pope has the prerogatives of God on earth. Are those blasphemous claims?
21. For many years from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798, the papacy exercised great authority over most of the Western world. When the pope was taken captive and placed in prison by Napoleon’s general, Berthier, it seemed like the papal authority was gone.
22. But, today, the pope is looked to by many as a possible world leader who could pull all the conflicting elements of our world together. Pope Benedict XVI declared in a speech on June 6, 2012, to more than 15,000 people gathered in St. Peter’s Square in Rome:

[BSG (quoting Pope Benedict XVI):] “Sunday is the day of the Lord and of men and women, a day in which everyone must be able to be free, free for the family and free for God. In defending Sunday we defend human freedom.”—

https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20120606.html (accessed October 10, 2022).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 145.‡

[https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20120606.html]

[See paragraph 14. Accessed April 21, 2024.]‡

23. By contrast, the book *The Great Controversy* by Ellen White tells us a different story.

[EGW:] **Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be denounced as enemies of law and order, as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth....** They will be accused of disaffection toward the government. **Ministers who deny the obligation of the divine law will present from the pulpit the duty of yielding obedience to the civil authorities as ordained of God. In legislative halls and courts of justice, commandment keepers will be misrepresented and condemned.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 592.1.†

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24. To people living in the United States and those who are familiar with its freedom and its First Amendment, it might seem that such a scenario is impossible. However, look how fast our world is changing. Look carefully at what the Bible says about the beast that comes up from the land, the second beast (the lamb-like beast) of Revelation 13. Reading again:

Revelation 13:11-18: ¹¹ Then I saw another beast, which came up out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb’s horns, and it spoke like a dragon. ¹²It used the vast authority of the first beast in its presence. It forced the earth and all who live on it to worship the first beast, whose wound had healed. ¹³This second beast [i.e.,

the lamb-like beast] performed great miracles; it made fire come down out of heaven to earth in the sight of everyone. ¹⁴And it deceived all the people living on earth by means of the miracles which it was allowed to perform in the presence of the first beast. The beast told them to build an image in honour [sic-Br] of the beast [i.e., the leopard-like] that had been wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵The second beast [the lamb-like beast] was allowed to breathe life into the image of the first beast, so that the image could talk and put to death all those who would not worship it. ¹⁶The beast forced all the people, small and great, rich and poor, slave and free, **to have a mark placed on their right hands or on their foreheads.** ¹⁷No one could buy or sell without having this mark, that is, the beast's name or the number that stands for the name.

¹⁸ This calls for wisdom. Whoever is intelligent can work out the meaning of the number of the beast, because the number stands for a human name. Its number is 666.—*Good News Bible*.*†‡

[BSG:] The first beast rose out of the sea; the second beast comes “up out of the earth” (*Rev. 13:11, NKJV*). **The sea represents “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues”** (*Rev. 17:15, NKJV*). **The earth, then, represents a sparsely populated area of the world.** This second beast arises near the close of the prophetic period during which the first beast exercises authority (*Rev. 13:5*). That is, it rises to prominence around A.D. 1798.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, June 13.†‡§

Revelation 17:15: The angel also said to me, “**The waters you saw, on which the prostitute is sitting, are nations, peoples, races, and languages.**”—*Good News Bible*.*†

[BSG:] **The United States precisely fits this description.** It declared its independence in A.D. 1776, adopted its constitution in A.D. 1789, and was recognized as a world power by the late nineteenth century.

John continues, “He had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon” (*Rev. 13:11, NKJV*). **Horns in Bible prophecy symbolize power.** Unlike the first beast, this beast has no crowns on its horns, suggesting it is not a monarchy. **The two horns represent the two primary governing principles that are the source of the United States' power and success—political and religious liberty.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, June 13.†‡§

25. ***Is it really possible that the lamb-like beast could speak like a dragon? What kind of change does that suggest? Is it really possible that the apostate Protestant churches of the United States could form a union with the United States government to try to force everyone in the world to worship the papacy? And the Devil? Is that possible?***

26. In Daniel 3, we read the story of the three faithful young men who refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's statue. If his deceit and pleadings are ignored, the Devil will eventually use force. However, **God never uses force.** Notice these comments.

[EGW:] God never forces the will or the conscience; but Satan's constant resort—to gain control of those whom he cannot otherwise seduce—is compulsion by cruelty. Through fear or force he endeavors to rule the

conscience and to secure homage to himself. To accomplish this, he works through both religious and secular authorities, moving them to the enforcement of human laws in defiance of the law of God.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 591.2.†

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[In a democracy, “truth” is decided by majority rule. In religious matters, truth is decided by the Bible alone! This will lead to conflict!]†

[EGW:] ... In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word [*sic*]; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. **None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 593.2.††

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[EGW:] But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. [That was the rallying cry of the reformers!] **The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain “Thus saith the Lord” in its support.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 595.1.††

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[BSG:] Biblical prophecy forewarns that the long cosmic conflict between the two opposite, irreconcilable forces, God and the devil, is drawing to a close and will culminate in a final battle. **This last battle will be over issues of authority and worship:** who shall sit on the throne of the universe, and who will receive the glory due the Creator, the Provider, and the Savior. **For these reasons, the conflict will involve the Sabbath, God’s symbol of all His power as Creator, Provider, and Savior.** The rebellious force will be led by Satan himself. While Satan has tirelessly worked throughout history to recruit adherents, his main focus has been the church. Unfortunately, **the traditional church compromised and became Babylon, symbolized by the beast from the sea.** Satan gave this beast its seat of authority and its power, and it stands on Satan’s side in the final battle. [See Revelation 12:14 and Revelation 17:3-6. What happened to the “woman” who represents the church?]

In the end times, the dragon also will succeed in attracting to his side the most prosperous nation on earth, the United States of America. This nation, born out of the centuries-long yearning of persecuted Christians to find a place of religious safety and freedom, will compromise, as did the papal church before it in the Old World. **Thus, America will fulfill its prophetic role as the beast from the earth, becoming a global leader in the final battle.**

But God has never been without a people in the great controversy. To the end of the conflict, He always will have a people, a faithful remnant church. God’s

remnant church always has acknowledged Him as King, worshiped Him, and kept the commandments and the principles of His kingdom. God's faithful remnant people will reverence the Sabbath and honor Him as Creator and King of the universe. The end-time remnant not only will worship God as their personal Savior but also will expose the confederacy of evil publicly. The remnant church will call the entire human race to return to God and worship Him. Despite the efforts of the dragon and the beasts from the earth and the sea, the victory will belong to God.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 145.††

27. How can we identify the beasts and clarify the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

[BSG:] Some theologians have claimed that the first Adventist pioneers' identification of the beast from the sea with the Roman Catholic Church and of the beast from the earth with the United States were conclusions dictated by their sociopolitical contexts. **Some of these theologians, then, call for Adventists to move away from these initial positions and find other more relevant spiritual, or political, forces in our own times that would better fit the descriptions of the beast from the sea and/or the beast from the earth.**

However, we need to emphasize two important points. **First**, while the Adventist pioneers did look at the fulfillment of prophecy within their historical contexts, they consistently followed historicist principles of prophetic interpretation [that is, interpreting prophecy by associating symbols with historical events, people, or nations]. They also identified the fulfillment of the prophecies in harmony with a wholistic biblical system of teaching.

Second, as God's prophet for the remnant church, Ellen G. White clearly has warned us against abandoning our original prophetic interpretations regarding the two beasts of Revelation 13. She was especially concerned that Adventists would fall into the trap of thinking that the Roman Catholic Church has now changed and is no longer the tyrannical beast from the sea, thus necessitating the search for another candidate for this post. The following quotations from her monumental book *The Great Controversy* are remarkable and clearly militate against such a course of action.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 145-146.†‡§

28. The Bible study guide then quotes Ellen White from several pages of *The Great Controversy*.

[EGW:] Romanism is now regarded by Protestants with far greater favor than in former years. In those countries where Catholicism is not in the ascendancy, and the papists are taking a conciliatory course in order to gain influence, **there is an increasing indifference concerning the doctrines that separate the reformed churches from the papal hierarchy**; the opinion is gaining ground that, after all, we do not differ so widely upon vital points as has been supposed, and that a little concession on our part will bring us into a better understanding with Rome....

The defenders of the papacy declare that the church has been maligned, and the Protestant world are inclined to accept the statement. **Many urge that it is unjust to judge the church of today by the abominations and absurdities**

that marked her reign during the centuries of ignorance and darkness. They excuse her horrible cruelty as the result of the barbarism of the times and plead that the influence of modern civilization has changed her sentiments.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 563.1-2.†‡

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[EGW:] But Romanism as a system is no more in harmony with the gospel of Christ now than at any former period in her history. The Protestant churches are in great darkness, or they would discern the signs of the times. The Roman Church is far-reaching in her plans and modes of operation. **She is employing every device to extend her influence and increase her power in preparation for a fierce and determined conflict to regain control of the world, to re-establish persecution, and to undo all that Protestantism has done.** Catholicism is gaining ground upon every side. See the increasing number of her churches and chapels in Protestant countries. Look at the popularity of her colleges and seminaries in America, so widely patronized by Protestants. Look at the growth of ritualism in England and the frequent defections to the ranks of the Catholics. These things should awaken the anxiety of all who prize the pure principles of the gospel.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 565.4-566.0.†‡

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[EGW:] The Roman Church now presents a fair front to the world, covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties. **She has clothed herself in Christlike garments; but she is unchanged.** Every principle of the papacy that existed in past ages exists today. The doctrines devised in the darkest ages are still held. 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 not without reason that the claim has been put forth in Protestant countries that Catholicism differs less widely from Protestantism than in former times. There has been a change; but the change is not in the papacy. **Catholicism indeed resembles much of the Protestantism that now exists, because Protestantism has so greatly degenerated since the days of the Reformers.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 571.1-3.†‡

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29. ***Are we prepared for this final conflict in the great controversy? If not, what should we be doing to prepare?***

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Email: Info@theox.org