

Anti-Semitism

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It is time to end anti-Semitism in the church.

Part 1

Why do some people hate Jews? That's hard to say. Perhaps it is jealousy. After all, the Jews were God's chosen people. God just arbitrarily picked Abraham and blessed his descendants. That might seem unfair, and cause some resentment. Certainly there are many very successful Jews in the business, finance, and entertainment industries, so God seems to have especially blessed them. Some people might be envious of that.

But if that is the reason, nobody wants to admit it. So, the public reason for hating the Jews is, "They killed Christ." Not only is this more socially acceptable than, "I hate Jews because I am jealous of them," it masquerades as a noble cause. The Jews killed Christ, so I am going to take revenge on them in His behalf. Well, maybe that doesn't sound so noble after all.

But at least there is some Biblical support for that reasoning. When Pilate was trying to let Jesus go free, the Jewish leaders would not let him. Matthew Chapter 27 tells us,

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!" (Matthew 27:24-25)

The Jews cursed themselves. So, Christians are justified in punishing the Jews to fulfill the curse. Really?

It is true that the Bible supports punishing children for the sins of the parents. We read in Exodus 34, verses 5, 6, and 7,

Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." (Exodus 34:5-7)

But notice, there was a generational time limit. Children aren't to be punished forever. The punishment lasts only until the third or fourth generation. There have certainly been more than four generations of Jews since the crucifixion, so even if the Jews did curse their children for their own murderous activities, the curse would have expired many generations ago. Unless, of course, God forgave them even sooner. God can certainly do that if He wants.

Remember the words of Christ on the cross.

Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. (Luke 23:34)

Who did Jesus want to be forgiven? Certainly He was asking forgiveness for the soldiers who were nailing Him to the cross and gambling for His clothes. They were just ignorantly following orders. But what about the Roman officers who ignorantly ordered the soldiers to do it? What about the mob who ignorantly cried out for His crucifixion? It isn't consistent with Jesus' character to forgive some of the people who ignorantly crucified Him while not forgiving others who did the same. If Jesus was willing to forgive some, it is reasonable to assume He was willing to forgive all.

But we don't have to rely upon any assumption—we have the Word of God. We see from Paul's letters that whenever he entered a new territory, he preached to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles. The main point of Paul's letter to the Ephesians is to assure the Gentile converts that they are every bit as good Christians as the Jewish converts are. If there had been some sort of curse on the Jews and their children, Paul never would have addressed the notion that the Jews were somehow better than the Gentiles.

Clearly there wasn't any anti-Semitism in the apostolic church. So, when did this notion that Christians should hate Jews because they killed Christ begin? I'm not sure; but I know it was in full force by the time Constantine became emperor of Rome. In 321 A.D. he made it a crime to worship on the Jewish Sabbath, ordering all people to worship on Sunday, “the venerable day of the Sun.”¹ That's sun with a U, not sun with an O. Sunday is a venerable day because it is dedicated in honor of the sun that rises every morning, not in honor of the Son of God who rose on Resurrection Sunday. A few years later, Constantine convinced the Council of Nicaea to officially change the Christian day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday. Listen to the reason he gave.

Constantine Augustus, to the churches.

...
*At the council we also considered the issue of our holiest day, Easter, and it was determined by common consent that everyone, everywhere should celebrate it on one and the same day. For what can be more appropriate, or what more solemn, than that this feast from which we have received the hope of immortality, should be kept by all without variation, using the same order and a clear arrangement? And in the first place, **it seemed very unworthy for us to keep this most sacred feast following the custom of the Jews, a people who have soiled their hands in a most terrible outrage, and have thus polluted their souls, and are now deservedly blind.** Since we have cast aside their way of calculating the date of the festival, we can ensure that future generations can celebrate this observance at the more accurate time which we have kept from the first day of the passion until the present time. Therefore **have nothing in common with that most hostile people, the Jews.** We have received another way from the Savior. In our holy religion we have set before us a course which is both valid and accurate. Let us unanimously pursue this. Let us, most honored brothers, **withdraw ourselves from that detestable association.** It is truly most absurd for them to boast that we are incapable of rightly observing these things without their instruction. **On what subject are they competent to form a correct judgment, who, after that murder of their Lord lost their senses, and are led not by any rational motive, but by an uncontrollable impulsiveness to wherever their innate fury may drive them?** ... [Y]ou should still be careful, both by diligence and prayer, that your pure souls should **have nothing in common, or even seem to do so, with the customs of men so utterly depraved.***

...

¹ <http://www.remnantofgod.org/321AD.htm>

*So first, it was desirable to change the situation so that **we have nothing in common with that nation of father-killers who slew their Lord.** Second, the order which is observed by all the churches of the western, southern, and northern parts, and by some also in the eastern is quite suitable. Therefore, at the current time, we all thought it was proper that you, intelligent as you are, would also cheerfully accept what is observed with such general unanimity of sentiment in the city of Rome, throughout Italy, Africa, all Egypt, Spain, France, Britain, Libya, the whole of Greece, and the dioceses of Asia, Pontus, and Cilicia. I pledged myself that this solution would satisfy you after you carefully examined it, especially as I considered that not only are the majority of congregations located in the places just mentioned, but also that we all have a most sacred obligation, to unite in desiring whatever common sense seems to demand, and what has **no association with the perjury of the Jews.** But to sum up matters briefly, it was determined by common consent that the most holy festival of Easter should be solemnized on one and the same day; for it is not at all decent that there should be in such a sacred serious matter any difference. ... Since these things are consistent, gladly receive this heavenly and truly divine command. For whatever is done in the sacred assemblies of the bishops can be traced to Divine will. Therefore, once you have demonstrated the things which have been prescribed to all our beloved brothers, it would be good for you to make public the above written statements and to accept the reasoning which has proved itself to be sound, and to establish this observance of the most holy day. In this way, when I arrive to check on your condition, which I have desired earnestly for some time, I will be able to celebrate the sacred festival with you on one and the same day, and will rejoice with you for all things, as I see that through our efforts divine power is frustrating Satan's cruelty, and that your faith, peace, and unity are flourishing everywhere.*
*May God preserve you, beloved brothers.*²

It is clear from history that Resurrection Sunday was changed to Easter Sunday, and the day of worship was changed from Saturday to Sunday, in the fourth century as a way to unite Christianity with paganism in order to unify the Roman Empire, and anti-Semitism was used to do it. The Jews would not worship Emperor Constantine as a god. The Jews would not obey his command to keep Sunday instead of Sabbath. It is no wonder that Constantine hated the Jews. He managed to get Christians to hate their Jewish brothers by blaming them for killing Christ (as if Rome had nothing to do with it).

There are many Christians who sincerely believe that the Christian church has always worshipped on Sunday in honor of the resurrection, and that Easter is a uniquely Christian holiday. They have been told that Jesus changed the Sabbath, and the apostles celebrated Easter, or something like that. But that is not consistent with secular history, and it is clear from sacred history that Jesus didn't do that.

Jesus clearly foretold that He would be crucified, and rise on the third day; but He didn't foretell that the Sunday He rose upon would happen to coincide with the pagan Easter celebration, or that Christians should celebrate His resurrection on a holiday named in honor of a pagan fertility goddess in order to unite the church with paganism. Jesus didn't want His resurrection associated with colored eggs, chickens, rabbits, and other fertility symbols, as a way of uniting Christianity with paganism. Jesus didn't say He was going to change the Fourth Commandment so that Christians could worship on a day honoring a pagan god so as not to be associated with the Jews.

In the sixteenth century, didn't the Protestant Reformers know all this? Didn't they know that these errors had crept into the church and should be reformed? Apparently they did. The Augsburg Confession of Faith is the founding document of the Lutheran Church, the first Protestant denomination. The writers of the Augsburg Confession struggled with the issues of Easter and Sunday. That's probably why they didn't address them until the last article. The first 27 articles of the Augsburg Confession consistently

² Wisconsin Lutheran College website, <http://www.fourthcentury.com/index.php/urkunde-26>

assert that Christians are bound to follow the Bible rather than church traditions. The church does not have the authority to change God's Holy Word, or institute new festivals as a means of obtaining salvation. But they knew that the church fathers had changed the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday, and had adopted the pagan fertility festival Easter for purely anti-Semitic reasons. What should they do about it?

But by this time, Sunday and Easter were so rooted in the culture, it would be difficult, perhaps even impossible, to reform them. So, they punted. Here's what they said in Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession:

Moreover, it is disputed whether bishops or pastors have the right to introduce ceremonies in the Church, and to make laws concerning meats, holy-days and grades, that is, orders of ministers, etc. ... They refer to the Sabbath-day as having been changed into the Lord's Day, contrary to the Decalog, as it seems. Neither is there any example whereof they make more than concerning the changing of the Sabbath-day. Great, say they, is the power of the Church, since it has dispensed with one of the Ten Commandments! But concerning this question it is taught on our part (as has been shown above) that bishops have no power to decree anything against the Gospel.

...

What, then, are we to think of the Sunday and like rites in the house of God? To this we answer that it is lawful for bishops or pastors to make ordinances that things be done orderly in the Church, not that thereby we should merit grace or make satisfaction for sins, or that consciences be bound to judge them necessary services, and to think that it is a sin to break them without offense to others.³

The Reformers knew the Church took credit for instituting Sunday and Easter, ignoring the fact that Emperor Constantine ordered them to do it. They specifically stated that substituting Sunday, "the Lord's Day," for Sabbath is contrary to the Ten Commandments, and that the Church had no right to do it. But then they said it doesn't matter, because it is good to have unity and order in the church. So, in this case, peace and harmony trump the scriptures. How sad!

But it is hard to be too critical of the Lutheran Reformers because they stood for the truth so courageously on so many other issues. We are greatly indebted to them. But they were only human. They reformed as much as they could at the time when they were living. Later reformers tried to purge the church of Easter, with only limited success. The Seventh-day Baptists discovered the Sabbath truth, but relatively few Christians have followed their lead.

Easter and Sunday worship certainly have their roots in paganism and anti-Semitism; but that doesn't mean that modern Christians who observe Easter and worship on Sunday are pagans or anti-Semitic. They are just following a tradition that was instituted to bring unity into the church. Is that so wrong? The church has been observing Easter and keeping Sunday for about 1700 years. Why change now?

We will answer those questions right after this break.

[music – Dave and Sue Pogge, "Lord of the Sabbath"]

³ <http://www.projectwittenberg.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/concord/web/augs-028.html>

Part 2

Before the break we saw that celebrating Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday instead of Resurrection Sunday, and worshipping on Sunday instead of Sabbath, have their roots in anti-Semitism. There was a dark period in church history when Christians hated the Jews so much that they would rather associate Jesus' resurrection with a pagan spring equinox fertility festival than with the Passover, and would rather worship alongside pagan sun worshippers than Jews. These pagan practices, although recognized by the Protestant Reformers, were allowed to remain in the church because the tradition was too well established by that time.

These pagan traditions are no weaker today than they were at the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Even after realizing that Christ's resurrection should be celebrated in the context of Passover, demonstrating God's deliverance of His people, rather than celebrating with brightly colored eggs and other pagan symbols of new birth, it is hard for many Christians not to celebrate Jesus' resurrection on a day named in honor of a pagan fertility goddess. Even though God clearly commands us to dedicate the entire Sabbath day to Him, from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday, many people find it too inconvenient to do in today's society. Sunday worship is traditional. It has become a symbol of God's grace and, ironically, freedom from God's laws.

Why change now?

Well, the hypocrisy of Sunday worship can certainly make evangelism difficult. How can one preach the importance of keeping the Ten Commandments when one intentionally breaks the Fourth Commandment every week just to conform to tradition and worldly customs? The argument that we don't need to keep the Fourth Commandment because we are saved by grace, not by keeping the law, could easily be extended to other commandments. We can commit adultery all we want because we are under grace, not under the law. We can steal whatever we want because we are under grace, not under the law. We can kill anyone we hate because we are under grace, not under the law. God forgives all sins, so why bother to keep the commandments?

If our evangelists say that only nine of the commandments need to be kept, potential converts might certainly question why it is OK to violate one and not the others.

But that has always been a problem for the Protestant church. What is it about NOW that demands we should make this needed reform and worship on Sabbath instead of Sunday? Why should Protestant denominations dispense with these human traditions and return to the Bible as the only rule of faith NOW? Why isn't "But we've always done it that way!" a good enough reason for worshipping on Sunday any longer?

The difference is that now we are living in the last days. Jesus is about to return. The latter rain is going to be poured out on Christians. There will be a great revival, and great tribulation, just before Jesus returns. Time is running out.

Do you really think God will pour out His Spirit on a congregation that intentionally breaks the Fourth Commandment every week?

But if God does pour out His Spirit on such a disobedient congregation, don't you think the first thing that Spirit will do is to complete the Protestant Reformation by causing that congregation to reestablish

Sabbath worship? Is the Holy Spirit really going to work through a congregation that stubbornly persists in sin by breaking the Fourth Commandment every week, even after receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit?

The book of Revelation clearly says that the people who will be saved at the second coming will have the seal of God; but those who are lost will have the mark of the beast. What is the seal of God; and what is the mark of the beast? Many Bible scholars believe that keeping all of God's commandments (not just nine of them) will be a distinguishing characteristic of God's redeemed. They also think that the mark of the beast is an indication of allegiance to some religious authority other than God. Sunday worship, a tradition rooted in anti-Semitism, certainly seems like it could be the mark of the beast.

Sooner or later, God's people are going to have to make a choice. They are going to have to stand up for God or submit to another power. It is difficult to predict exactly what form that other power will take, and when it will arise—but we don't need to predict it as long as we are faithful to God now and in the future, no matter whatever powers try to compel us to do otherwise.

Christians aren't (or should not be) anti-Semitic any more, so there is no need for Christians to distance themselves from Sabbath or the Passover by worshipping on Sunday and celebrating Easter. There is no law that says Christians must worship on Sunday—at least, not yet. That could easily change given the political events taking place right now; but let's put that aside for the moment. As hard as it is to reform the day of worship, it isn't impossible, and it certainly isn't likely to get any easier during the tribulation that immediately precedes Jesus' return.

If you have truly surrendered your whole life to God, why aren't you keeping His Sabbath commandment? You don't need to answer that question to me—you need to answer it to God. Are you going to tell God you didn't know it was a commandment? If so, He might ask, "Didn't you read the Bible? If you love me as much as you say, why didn't you read the Bible?" If you try to tell God you don't think He cares what day you keep, what do you think He will say? If God doesn't care which day you keep, why did He command you to keep a particular one?

It is easy to say, "I love God and have surrendered my whole life to Him." Talk is cheap; but what do your actions say? Are your actions saying, "I like to tell people how much I love God, and that He is the master of my life; but I pretty much do what I want. Sabbath is a burden that I just don't want to carry it."

The good news is that it doesn't matter how many years you have been ignoring the Fourth Commandment. God forgives past sins if you truly repent. But if you keep on worshipping on Sunday, knowing that it is an outdated, anti-Semitic tradition that violates God's law, and could possibly be the mark of the beast, you can't expect God to forgive that continual, intentional sin.

We are living in the last days. The Elijah message has been given. Jesus is about to return. The Latter Rain is about to fall upon God's people. Shouldn't you and your congregation be living in accordance with God's laws, ready to receive the power of the Holy Spirit when that happens?

While you think about that, let's take another break, and listen to the Ridgecrest United Methodist Church Choir sing, "Days of Elijah." Then, when we come back, we will discuss Sabbath observance in the light of current events.

[music – RUMC Choir, "Days of Elijah"]

Part 3

In the first segment, we showed that Sunday worship was instituted in place of Sabbath purely because of hatred for the Jews. Now that anti-Semitism has largely disappeared from American society (at least, we hope it has), there is no reason any longer to avoid association with the “Jewish” Sabbath at the cost of violating the Fourth Commandment.

In the second segment, we tried to make the case that now is the time to dispense with anti-Semitism. If we truly want to be ready for the latter rain to fall upon us, we will make every effort to purge our church of anything that contradicts God’s laws. Breaking the Fourth Commandment every week certainly violates God’s laws. The hypocrisy of Sunday worship makes evangelism difficult in these last days before Jesus returns.

So, since we have looked at how anti-Semitism has affected the church in past, and is affecting the church in the present, let’s continue now by considering how anti-Semitic disrespect for the Sabbath might affect Christianity in the future. There are relevant political events that Ellen White foresaw in the 19th century which appear to be about to be fulfilled in the near future. The rise of militant Islam, coupled with disregard for the U.S. Constitution in regards to illegal immigration, health care, and states rights, make Ellen White’s concerns even more frightening today.

Public reactions against Islam and atheism, coupled with the increasingly unfettered power of the Federal Government, make the possibility of national Sunday laws more likely now than ever before. Here are some of Ellen White’s thoughts about the implications of Sunday laws from Chapter 36 of her book, The Great Controversy.

From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it has been Satan's purpose to overthrow the law of God. It was to accomplish this that he entered upon his rebellion against the Creator, and though he was cast out of heaven he has continued the same warfare upon the earth. To deceive men, and thus lead them to transgress God's law, is the object which he has steadfastly pursued. Whether this be accomplished by casting aside the law altogether, or by rejecting one of its precepts, the result will be ultimately the same. He that offends "in one point," manifests contempt for the whole law; his influence and example are on the side of transgression; he becomes "guilty of all." James 2:10.

In seeking to cast contempt upon the divine statutes, Satan has perverted the doctrines of the Bible, and errors have thus become incorporated into the faith of thousands who profess to believe the Scriptures. ... God's holy word, which has been handed down to us at such a cost of suffering and blood, is but little valued. The Bible is within the reach of all, but there are few who really accept it as the guide of life. Infidelity prevails to an alarming extent, not in the world merely, but in the church. Many have come to deny doctrines which are the very pillars of the Christian faith. The great facts of creation as presented by the inspired writers, the fall of man, the atonement, and the perpetuity of the law of God, are practically rejected, either wholly or in part, by a large share of the professedly Christian world. Thousands who pride themselves upon their wisdom and independence regard it as an evidence of weakness to place implicit confidence in the Bible; they think it a proof of superior talent and learning to cavil at the Scriptures and to spiritualize and explain away their most important truths. Many ministers are teaching their people, and many professors and teachers are instructing their students, that the law of God has been changed or abrogated; and those who regard its requirements as still valid, to be literally obeyed, are thought to be deserving only of ridicule or contempt.

In rejecting the truth, men reject its Author. In trampling upon the law of God, they deny the authority of the Law-giver. It is as easy to make an idol of false doctrines and theories as to fashion an idol of wood or stone. ... With many, a philosophical idol is enthroned in the place of Jehovah; while the living God, as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, and in the works of creation, is worshiped by but few. Thousands deify nature while they deny the God of nature. Though in a different form, idolatry exists in the Christian world today as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah. The god of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists--the god of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, even of some theological institutions--is little better than Baal, the sun-god of Phoenicia.

No error accepted by the Christian world strikes more boldly against the authority of Heaven, none is more directly opposed to the dictates of reason, none is more pernicious in its results, than the modern doctrine, so rapidly gaining ground, that God's law is no longer binding upon men. ...

It would be far more consistent for nations to abolish their statutes, and permit the people to do as they please, than for the Ruler of the universe to annul His law, and leave the world without a standard to condemn the guilty or justify the obedient. Would we know the result of making void the law of God? The experiment has been tried. Terrible were the scenes enacted in France when atheism became the controlling power. It was then demonstrated to the world that to throw off the restraints which God has imposed is to accept the rule of the cruelest of tyrants. When the standard of righteousness is set aside, the way is open for the prince of evil to establish his power in the earth.

Wherever the divine precepts are rejected, sin ceases to appear sinful or righteousness desirable. Those who refuse to submit to the government of God are wholly unfitted to govern themselves. Through their pernicious teachings the spirit of insubordination is implanted in the hearts of children and youth, who are naturally impatient of control; and a lawless, licentious state of society results. While scoffing at the credulity of those who obey the requirements of God, the multitudes eagerly accept the delusions of Satan. They give the rein to lust and practice the sins which have called down judgments upon the heathen.

Those who teach the people to regard lightly the commandments of God sow disobedience to reap disobedience. ... If the law were not binding, why should any fear to transgress? Property would no longer be safe. Men would obtain their neighbor's possessions by violence, and the strongest would become richest. Life itself would not be respected. The marriage vow would no longer stand as a sacred bulwark to protect the family. He who had the power, would, if he desired, take his neighbor's wife by violence. The fifth commandment would be set aside with the fourth. Children would not shrink from taking the life of their parents if by so doing they could obtain the desire of their corrupt hearts. The civilized world would become a horde of robbers and assassins; and peace, rest, and happiness would be banished from the earth.

Already the doctrine that men are released from obedience to God's requirements has weakened the force of moral obligation and opened the floodgates of iniquity upon the world. Lawlessness, dissipation, and corruption are sweeping in upon us like an overwhelming tide. ... The whole system of religious principles and doctrines, which should form the foundation and framework of social life, seems to be a tottering mass, ready to fall to ruin. The vilest of criminals, when thrown into prison for their offenses, are often made the recipients of gifts and attentions as if they had attained an enviable distinction. Great publicity is given to their

character and crimes. The press publishes the revolting details of vice, thus initiating others into the practice of fraud, robbery, and murder; and Satan exults in the success of his hellish schemes. The infatuation of vice, the wanton taking of life, the terrible increase of intemperance and iniquity of every order and degree, should arouse all who fear God, to inquire what can be done to stay the tide of evil.

...

Now that Satan can no longer keep the world under his control by withholding the Scriptures, he resorts to other means to accomplish the same object. To destroy faith in the Bible serves his purpose as well as to destroy the Bible itself. By introducing the belief that God's law is not binding, he as effectually leads men to transgress as if they were wholly ignorant of its precepts. And now, as in former ages, he has worked through the church to further his designs. The religious organizations of the day have refused to listen to unpopular truths plainly brought to view in the Scriptures, and in combating them they have adopted interpretations and taken positions which have sown broadcast the seeds of skepticism. ... [M]any popular teachers declare that the law of God is no longer binding. Thus they cast away the law and the Sabbath together. ... [T]his rejection of the divine law to avoid the claims of the fourth commandment will become well-nigh universal. The teachings of religious leaders have opened the door to infidelity, ... and to contempt for God's holy law; and upon these leaders rests a fearful responsibility for the iniquity that exists in the Christian world.

Yet this very class put forth the claim that the fast-spreading corruption is largely attributable to the desecration of the so-called "Christian sabbath," and that the enforcement of Sunday observance would greatly improve the morals of society. ... The leaders of the Sunday movement may advocate reforms which the people need, principles which are in harmony with the Bible; yet while there is with these a requirement which is contrary to God's law, His servants cannot unite with them. Nothing can justify them in setting aside the commandments of God for the precepts of men.

The line of distinction between professed Christians and the ungodly is now hardly distinguishable. Church members love what the world loves and are ready to join with them, and Satan determines to unite them in one body ...for he can thus divert the minds of the people from the work of preparation to stand in the day of God.

... [T]he Christian world [has] shown contempt for the law of Jehovah; and the Lord will do just what He has declared that He would--He will withdraw His blessings from the earth and remove His protecting care from those who are rebelling against His law and teaching and forcing others to do the same.

...

As the Protestant churches reject the clear, Scriptural arguments in defense of God's law, they will long to silence those whose faith they cannot overthrow by the Bible. Though they blind their own eyes to the fact, they are now adopting a course which will lead to the persecution of those who conscientiously refuse to do what the rest of the Christian world are doing, and acknowledge the claims of the [Sunday worship].

The dignitaries of church and state will unite to bribe, persuade, or compel all classes to honor the Sunday. The lack of divine authority will be supplied by oppressive enactments. Political

corruption is destroying love of justice and regard for truth; and even in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance. { While Satan seeks to destroy those who honor God's law, he will cause them to be accused as lawbreakers, as men who are dishonoring God and bringing judgments upon the world. ...

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. Their conscientious scruples will be pronounced obstinacy, stubbornness, and contempt of authority. 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. A false coloring will be given to their words; the worst construction will be put upon their motives.}* Liberty of conscience, which has cost so great a sacrifice, will no longer be respected. In the soon-coming conflict we shall see exemplified the prophet's words: "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17. ⁴

Christian reaction against Islam or atheism might result in laws intended to promote Christianity by forcing Sunday observance. Although their intentions are good, they are misguided. Forcing Sunday worship causes people to break the Fourth Commandment by worshipping on a day that has its origins in anti-Semitism. When God pours out His Spirit just before the second coming, there will be no doubt that Saturday is God's Holy Sabbath. Then you will be forced to choose between obeying God or men.

But until then, are you content to continue to worship on Sunday, knowing its anti-Semitic origin, just because it has become a Christian tradition, and you want to go along with the crowd? Which does Jesus want you to obey, the commandments of God, or the traditions of men?

* This section was moved from its place earlier in the chapter to this position for clarity.

⁴ Ellen White, The Great Controversy, Chapter 36, "The Impending Conflict", <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/gc/gc36.html>