

and yet no man could clearly define the disputed point over which they wrangled. So great was the controversy that the Council of Nice was called to settle the dispute, and deliver to the church an orthodox creed. The emperor Constantine called the council, and was present in person. At this council the creed of Athanasius was recognized as orthodox, and Arius and his followers were pronounced heretics. (SDP 229.3).

But announcing a creed is one thing, and having it adopted is another. The orthodox creed was published to the world, and then began the fight. In this strife armies fought and much blood was shed. But in spite of the fact that Arianism was heresy, the doctrine spread. It was popular among the barbarian tribes who invaded the western division of the Roman empire. The Vandals, who settled in Africa, were among the followers of Arius, and so also were the Heruli and Ostrogoths who settled in Italy. But while Arianism spread through Africa, Sardinia, and Spain, and was present at times in Italy, the recognized religion of the Roman emperor and the empire itself, the northern kingdom, which now had its seat at Constantinople, was the Catholic faith, as proclaimed at Nice. As Constantinople was the representative of this northern division in his day, so later, between 527 and 565, Justinian became champion of the Catholic cause. (SDP 230.1).

According to the vision of Daniel 7, the Roman kingdom would be divided into ten parts, represented by the ten horns of the fourth beast, and three of these kingdoms should be plucked up by another power. It is this part of the history of the fourth kingdom which is related in Daniel 11, beginning with verse twenty-five. Justinian's reign was the most brilliant period of Byzantine history after the death of Constantine, and historians agree that among his greatest military achievements must be classed his exploits against the south. The success of Justinian was due to the services, throughout the greater part of his reign, of the celebrated general Belisarius. He was the tool in the hands of the emperor for crushing out heresy. (SDP 230.2).

The Vandals were Arians, but Hilderis, the grandson of their chief warrior, the noted Genseric, favored the Catholic faith. The disaffection of his subjects made it possible for Hilderis to be dethroned by Gelimer, who had some title to the Vandal throne. Under pretense of protecting the dethroned Hilderis, the emperor Justinian prepared for a war in Africa. While still undecided as to the advisability of making the attack because of the weakness of the Roman army, and the cost of the undertaking, his purpose was confirmed by the words of a Catholic bishop. Said he in prophetic tones, "It is the will of Heaven, O emperor, that you

should not abandon your holy enterprise for the deliverance of the African church. The God of battles will march before your standard, and disperse your enemies, who are the enemies of his Son." This was sufficient, and the holy war for the extermination of Arianism was undertaken. (SDP 231.1).

A force of Romans, the largest Belisarius could command from the weakened empire, aided by recruits from the east, landed in Africa. The Vandal army numbered 160,000 fighting men. Belisarius was hastened in his march toward Carthage by enemies of Gelimer and friends of the Catholic creed. The armies met near the city, and victory came to the Romans through the folly and rashness of the brother of the Vandal king. Gelimer fled, and Carthage opened her gates, and admitted Belisarius and his army. "The Arians, conscious that their reign had expired, resigned the temple to the Catholics, who rescued their saint from profane hands, performed the holy rites, and loudly proclaimed the creed of Athanasius and Justinian." The Catholic faith had triumphed. Arianism fell, and Sardinia and Corsica surrendered, and other islands of the Mediterranean yielded to the arms and creed of Justinian. "The Arians deplored the ruin of their church triumphant above a century in Africa; and they were justly provoked by the laws of the conqueror, which interdicted the baptism of their children, and the exercise of all religious worship." It is not much to be wondered at that those who remained plotted against the government and the general who represented Justinian. The loss of life was terrible in those wars for the supremacy of one creed above another, and the path to the papal crown was bloodstained. It is stated that five million Africans were consumed by the wars and government of the emperor Justinian (SDP 232.2).

The last contest with paganism was in 508 when the Britons accepted Christianity; the "daily" spoken of in Daniel had been taken away. By 538 the way was clear for the papacy to sit enthroned in Rome. The new capital established by Constantine left Rome that it might be occupied by the head of the church. The new religion-Christianity-we have seen mingled with paganism, which it crushed, and gave birth to the papacy.

*References Haskell, S.N. (1901). The Story of Daniel the prophet. Review & Heralds Publishing Association, Takoma Park.*

## The mystery of *Iniquity* Part 2

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Speaking of the use of the cross, Gibbon says: "This same symbol sanctified the arms of the soldiers of Constantine; the cross glittered in their helmets, was engraved on their shields, was interwoven into their banners; and the consecrated emblems which adorned the person of the emperor himself were distinguished only by the richer materials and more exquisite workmanship."

The standard which was borne before this (Christian) army "supported a crown of gold, which inclosed the mysterious monogram, at once expressive of the figure of the cross, and the initial letter of the name of Christ." The humble followers of Christ, who immediately after his ascension had gone forth "conquering and to conquer," carrying with them his words, the sword of the Spirit, had been replaced by an army with helmet and sword, led by a commander who bound together the emblems of the cross and his own name. (SDP 225.2).

### PAGANISM IN CHRISTIAN GARMENT

The clothing of paganism in Christian garments was never more complete than in the days of Constantine. The mystery of iniquity was hard at work. Constantine conquered the Roman world; he sat as sole monarch of the empire which was tottering in the hands of his predecessors. The Prætorian guard, which had been the terror as well as the protection of other emperors, was forever suppressed by Constantine. The dignity of the senate and people of Rome received a fatal blow, and they were thereafter subject alike to the insults or neglect of their master who resided in the new capital, Constantinople. (SDP 225.3).

The character of Constantine, that first Christian emperor, is aptly described by Gibbon. In discussing the reason why he delayed baptism until he was on his deathbed, he says: "The sublime theory of the gospel had made a much fainter impression on the heart than on the understanding of Constantine himself. He pursued the great object of his ambition through the dark and bloody paths of war and policy; and after the victory, he abandoned himself without moderation to the abuse of his fortune. Instead of asserting his just superiority above the imperfect heroism and profane philosophy of Trajan and the Antonines, the mature age of Constantine forfeited the reputation which he had acquired in his youth. As he gradually advanced in the knowledge of truth, he proportionately declined in the practice of virtue; and the same year of his reign in which he convened the Council of Nice, was polluted by the execution, or rather murder, of his eldest son. . . . The gratitude of the church has exalted the virtues and excused the failings of a generous patron, who seated Christianity on the throne of the

Roman world; and the Greeks, who celebrate the festival of the imperial saint, seldom mention the name of Constantine without adding the title of Equal to the Apostles." These words alone offer a sad commentary on the decline of Christian virtue since the days of Christ. He who claimed the power of Christianity was less virtuous than the heroic pagan Trajan, and such pagan philosophers as the Antonines. (SDP 226.1).

### SUNDAY WORSHIP ESTABLISHED

The first religious laws ever passed by Christians were edicts of Constantine. In 312 the edict of Milan granted universal toleration; in 321 the first law for the worship of Sunday was published; in 325 was convened at Nice the first ecumenical council which formulated a creed for the world. Then began the conflicts which tore the church asunder and exposed it to open shame. About the reign of Constantine cluster events of the greatest interest, not to Rome only, but to the church of God and to the world. It was the first and perhaps greatest object lesson illustrating the effects of the elevation of Christianity in name to the throne of the world. In the wake of this reign follow the years of darkness for all Europe, when the antichrist reigned supreme. He indeed performed that which neither his father nor his father's fathers had performed. He left to his heirs "a new capital, a new policy, and a new religion." No one had before dared to think that Rome could be quitted. Constantine selected the site of Constantinople with more than human wisdom. It is formed by nature to be the center and capital of a great monarchy. It has been the contested point among the nations of Europe since the continent has had nations to contend, and according to the prophecy of Daniel, it will be the bone of contention to the end of time. It is a fact worth noting that the city was founded in the year 330 B. C., exactly three hundred and sixty years, "a time," after the victory of Octavius over Antony at Actium, which placed him as sole ruler on the Roman throne. (SDP 227.2).

### THE UNION OF CHURCH & STATE

The new policy was the outworking of a union of church and state. The kingdoms of the past had followed a policy somewhat similar to one another. Government was with them the central object. This was seen in its strongest light in pagan Rome, but with Constantine the policy changed. Paganism as paganism was laid low, and the "mystery of iniquity" was enthroned. The world was given Christianity, not as it came from the life of Him whose name it bore, but as it was corrupted and polluted by human and satanic minds. Gibbon says that hereafter the historian will describe "political institutions" before relating wars, and that

"he will adopt the division unknown to the ancients of civil and ecclesiastical affairs." That is, future history must deal with church and state, not with kingdoms such as Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. (SDP 228.1).

### HISTORY HAS CHANGED

History has changed. The devil is going about seeking whom he may devour, and the calm, determined plans for conquering the world which marked the nations before the days of Christ, have been replaced by a desperation which means the utter destruction, if possible, of all who serve the God of heaven. Any means is lawful in the hands of the prince of this world, and the greater the number who fall, the lighter the burden which he, the archenemy, must bear in the days of the final reckoning. The acts of Constantine started a series of movements which developed rapidly into the antichrist of the Dark Ages. The council held at Nice was an important gathering alike to the church and the nation, for since the two have joined hands, whatever affects one affects the other. The Christian world was torn asunder by theological factions. Alexandria, the center of all philosophical study, was also the center of theological activity. Here is where the Greek influence was most forcibly felt. Athanasius, the leader of one faction, was archdeacon, and afterward bishop of Alexandria, and his opponent, Arius, was presbyter in the same city. (SDP 229.1).

### MINGLING OF TRUTH AND ERROR

Paganism and Christianity met on the battlefield when Constantine contended for the throne of Rome; paganism and Christianity met in more deadly conflict in Alexandria, where Christian and pagan schools stood side by side. Here it was that such men as Origen and Clement, recognized Fathers of the church, adopted the philosophy of the Greeks, and applied to the study of the Bible the same methods which were common in the study of Homer and other Greek writers. Higher criticism had its birth in Alexandria. It was the result of a mingling of the truths taught by Christ and the false philosophy of the Greeks. It was an attempt to interpret divine writings by the human intellect, a revival of the philosophy of Plato. These teachers, by introducing Greek philosophy into the schools which were nominally Christian, opened the avenue for the theological controversies which shook the Roman world, and finally established the mystery of iniquity. (SDP 229.2).

### INTRODUCTION OF CATHOLICISM

So from this false teaching of the Word in Alexandria came two leaders-Athanasius and Arius. Each had his following,