

BABYLON THE GREAT

REVIEW QUESTIONS. — (a) On what two great principles was the Reformation based? (b) Who was the author of these principles? (c) In the setting forth of these principles, what did the Protestant Reformation preach to the world? Rev. 14:6. (d) If these principles had been faithfully carried out, to what would they have led? Ans.— To unity in Christ, such as was manifest in the days of the apostles.

1. Did the Protestant Christians continue to hold to the Bible, and the Bible alone?

Ans.— They did not; they felt that creeds were necessary, that the Bible alone was not sufficient, and, therefore, creeds were formed. German Christians went no farther than Luther and Melancthon; Swiss Christians, no farther than Zwingli; the English divided between the thirty-nine articles and the Calvinistic Confession of Faith. Many other creeds have been formed since; and these creeds have, when practical tests came, been made the standard instead of God's word. This wrought confusion — Babylon.

2. Did the various churches continue to protest against "the intrusion of the civil magistrate," or a union of church and state?

Ans.— On the contrary, the principal bodies united with the state. The Lutheran Church became the state church in

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Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, etc. State churches were established in Switzerland, France, England, and Scotland, in consequence of which many of those who were once persecuted became persecutors.

3. What does the historian say of the church previous to the Reformation?

Ans.— "If there is any doctrine that distinguishes Christianity from every other religion, it is its spirituality. A heavenly life brought down to man — such is its work; thus the opposition of the spirit of the gospel to the spirit of the world was the great fact which signalized the entrance of Christianity among the nations. But what its founder had separated, had come together again; the church had fallen into the arms of the world; and by this criminal union it had been reduced to the deplorable condition in which we find it at the era of the Reformation."— *D' Aubigne, History of Reformation, book 14, par. 2.*

4. What does he say of the Protestant churches, should they prove untrue to their principles?

Ans.— "If the Reformation, having attained a certain point, became untrue to its nature, began to parley and temporize with the world, and ceased thus to follow up the spiritual principle that it had so loudly proclaimed, it was faithless to God and to itself. Henceforth its decline was at hand. It is impossible for a society to prosper if it be unfaithful to the principles it lays down. Having abandoned what constituted its life, it can find naught but death."— *Id., par. 4, 5, 6.*

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5. What did he say of the Protestant churches after the Reformation began?

Ans. — "One portion of the reform was to seek the alliance of the world, and in this alliance find a destruction full of desolation. Another portion, looking up to God, was haughtily to reject the arm of the flesh, and by this very act of faith, secure a noble victory. If three centuries have gone astray, it is because they were unable to comprehend so holy and so solemn a lesson."— *Id.*, par. 8, 9, 10.

6. What does the Bible say of the condition of professed Christians in the last days? 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

7. What does it say of their relation to the world? James 4:4.

8. What have we learned in past lessons concerning the divided condition of professed Christians? See lesson 6 and Note.

9. What testimony do eminent men in the professed churches bear as to the spiritual condition of modern Babylon?

Ans. — "Many of our congregations are conducted on the basis of social clubs. They are made centers of social influence. Membership is sought in order to advance one's prospects in society, business, or politics. Preachers are called who know how to

'Smooth down the rugged text to ears polite,
And snugly keep damnation out of sight.'

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The Sunday services are made the occasion of displaying the elegances of apparel in the latest fashions. If the rules are read, it is to comply with the letter of the law whose spirit has long since fled. The class-books are filled with names of unconverted men and women. Official members may be found in box, dress circle, and parquet of opera and theater. Communicants take in the races, and give and attend card parties and dances. The distinction between inside and outside is so obscure that men smile when asked to unite with the church; and sometimes tell us that they find the best men outside. The enforcement of the unmistakable letter of the discipline for a single year would cut our membership in half, bankrupt our missionary society, close our fashionable churches, paralyze our connectional interests, and leave our pastors and bishops unpaid and in distress. But the fact remains that one or two things must happen – the discipline must purge the church, or God's Holy Spirit will seek other organized agencies. The ax is laid at the root of the tree. The call is to repentance. God's work must be done. If we are in the way, He will remove us." – *Bishop Moore, Editor of Western Christian Advocate (M. E.), Cincinnati, July 59, 1893.*

"Are there no evidences at hand that seem to confirm the impression that the history of the church in the Roman Empire, in the fourth century, is repeating itself in the United States to-day? . . . The blandishments of the world are too much for human nature to withstand, and we see the sad spectacle of the great moral and religious activities

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of the church, drop down into the rut of the ordinary routine of business affairs, while her beautiful and glorious life is shorn of its spiritual power." — *The Hallowed Day, by Rev. George Guirey (Baptist), p. 20, Baker & Taylor Co., New York.*

Many other testimonies might be given. The above are characteristic of many more.

10. What prominent unscriptural dogma is held by all these professed churches? *Ans.*—The Sunday "Lord's day," or sabbath.

11. What acknowledgment is made as to its origin?

Ans.—The following admission from the *Christian Work*, (Presbyterian), is characteristic of what many others have said, who, as the *Christian Work*, hold to Sunday as the Sabbath, such as Mr. Gladstone., Canon Eyton, the late Dr. R. W. Dale, Prof. J. Henry Thayer, and others:—

"The church has set apart Sunday; but it might have utilized another day had it chosen to. Certainly it is futile to attempt to place Sunday, as we now have it, on a New Testament basis. Sunday did not become the definite worship day in which all work was forbidden until in the fourth century it was made so by government authority in conformity with the sentiment of the church."— *Christian Work, July 11, 1895.*

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22. To what source, then, must the professed Protestant churches seek in order to establish the Sunday sabbath?

Ans.— Obviously to the state, the governments of earth.

13. Has the church appealed to the state for this purpose?

Ans.— It has repeatedly, through the American Sabbath Union, and other religio-political bodies. See "Rights of the People," part 2, chap. 10.

14. What does the historian truthfully say will follow when the church forsakes the principles on which she was founded? See answer to question 4.

15. In turning from the word of God to the state, whom did Babylon forsake?

16. What follows her unlawful union with the governments of earth? Rev. 14:8. See Note.

17. What does the Lord say of those who thus forsake Him? Isa. 30:1, 2.

18. What is the sure result of such union? Isa. 30:3; 31:3.

19. To whom, instead of Christ, does it give place in the temple of God? 2 Thess. 2:3, 4.

20. What lesson should we learn from this? 1 Cor. 10:12; Rom. 11:20, last clause.

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NOTE

THE second angel speaks of the professed people of God not as individuals, but as a body — Babylon — which has fallen, because of fornication with the world. The message comes *to* individuals, but *of* Babylon. This is the last part of the threefold fall of Babylon. When the early church departed from God and imbibed pagan errors, she became Babylon. When she united with the state, she fell, and, as an organization, was the body of Christ no longer. While the Reformation churches held fast to the word, Christ was with them. When they crystallized their various errors into creeds and endeavored thus to confine God's word, they made themselves daughters of Babylon. When some of them united with the state, they fell, and God had to use other people, called out of Babylon to carry forward His work. Now among these very churches which came out of the second Babylon, confusion reigns; and now great Babylon, including the later daughters, is in adulterous union with the kings of earth, and is endeavoring to make that union stronger. God calls no church Babylon which holds to His word, and follows the light that shines from it, even though there are in its membership many who do not know Christ. When the controlling influence of a church is downward, it erects some other standard besides God's word.