

THE FALLING AWAY

REVIEW QUESTIONS – (a) What is meant by "fear God"? (b) What is giving glory to God? (c) What must always be included in truest worship?

1. What was the church of Christ in the apostolic age declared to be? Eph. 2:19-22.

2. Who was the head of the church ? Eph. 1:22, 23.

3. By what other relation is the union between Christ and His church symbolized? 2 Cor. 11:2.

4. By what means was the work of the church to be promoted or built up? Acts 20:32.

5. What was the result of the use of this means ? Acts 2:41, 42, 46, 47.

6. As long as the church was fed upon the pure word of God, who was her leader? John 10:3, 4.

7. What was thus manifested to the world? Col. 1:26, 27.

8. What did the apostle declare would take place? Acts 20:29, 30. See Note 1.

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9. What does the apostle term this turning away from Christ to men? 2 Thess. 2:7.

10. How does the apostle speak of the full development of this power? Verses 3, 4.

11. Why was the mystery of iniquity not fully revealed in the apostle's day? Verse 7.

12. In what was shown the first evidence of falling away?
Ans.— Following men instead of Christ. See Acts 20:30.

13. To what did this lead?

Ans.—Following men, instead of Christ, led to the adoption of heathen ceremonies and customs, advocated by so-called philosophers and wise men. Says Mosheim, "There is good reason to suppose that Christian bishops multiplied sacred rites for the sake of rendering the Jews and the pagans more friendly to them." The half-converted pagans were allowed, "at the sepulchres of the martyrs on their feast days, to dance, to use sports, to indulge conviviality, and to do all the things that the worshipers of idols were accustomed to do in their temples on festival days." "The Christians . . . not only applied the terms used in the pagan mysteries to Christian institutions, particularly baptism and the Lord's Supper, but they gradually introduced also the [pagan] rites which were designated by those terms. . . . A large part, therefore, of the Christian observances and institutions, even in this century, had the aspect of the pagan

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mysteries."— *Murdock's Translation, book 1, century 2, part 2, chap. 4, sections 2 (with footnote) and 5.*

14. What was the most widely prevalent heathen worship?

Ans.— Sun worship.— "The oldest, the most widespread, and the most enduring of all the forms of idolatry known to man, viz., sun-worship."— Talbot *W Chambers, D. D., in Old Testament Student, January, 1886.*

15. What day was especially devoted to sun worship?

Ans.— The great day dedicated to this worship was the first day of the week — Sunday. See Webster, Worcester, Century, or Standard Dictionary.

16. How early was the tendency to adopt heathen customs manifested on the part of the professed church? *Ans.* — It was manifested in the apostle's day. See note 2.

17. In respect to what and by whom was the arrogance of the mystery of iniquity first manifested?

Ans.— The first arrogant claim of which we have record was made by Victor, bishop of Rome (A. D. 193-202), in behalf of Sunday. Rome had begun to celebrate the Passover, or the heathen feast of Easter, on Sunday, and "Victor, bishop of Rome, thought it necessary that the Asiatic Christians should be compelled by laws and decrees to follow the rule adopted" by the Western church. He, therefore, wrote them an "imperious letter" admonishing them to follow the example of other Christians in keeping Easter, to which

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they replied with spirit, "that they would not depart from the holy institution of their ancestors." Victor, therefore, in wrath "excluded them from his communion and from that of his church (Rome)." — *Id.*

18. In thus turning to the word of men instead of the word of God, what did the church do?

Ans.— It erected another standard than the word, and finally set up creeds and decrees of councils as the rule of faith.

19. In what did this result? *Ans.*— In erecting as standards the creeds of men, inevitable confusion and strife resulted.

20. By what term in the Scriptures is this confusion characterized? Rev. 14:8.

21. To what did the adoption of worldly standards lead?

Ans.— When worldly standards were erected by the church, she could no longer plead God's word and power, and, therefore, she turned to the world to obtain power.

22. When was this union of the church with the state formed? *Ans.*— In the reign of Constantine, A. D. 313-337.

23. What is said of the bishops at that time?

Ans.— "Worldly-minded bishops, instead of caring for the salvation of their flocks, were often but too much inclined to travel about, and entangle themselves in worldly concerns."

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"This theocratical theory of government was already the prevailing one in the time of Constantine; and . . . the bishops voluntarily made themselves dependent on him by their disputes, and by the determination to use the power of the state for the furtherance of their aims."—*Neander's History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. 2, sec. 2, part z, division 1, par.* The outcome of all this was foretold in 2 Thess. 2:3, 4.

24. To what did this man-made theocracy inevitably lead?

Ans.—To deifying man and putting him in the place of God.

25. What did the apostle predict concerning this? 2 Thess. 2:3, 4.

NOTES

1. **MARK** that in the very church itself should "men arise, speaking perverse things [things contrary to the truth of God's word], to draw away disciples after them." Self-exaltation is the object of the promoter of error, as it is the very foundation of the mystery of iniquity. The true minister points the disciple to Christ; the minister of Satan draws the disciple after himself.

2. **NOTE** that, (1) The great mass of the world in Paul's day were heathen. (2) The greatest universal heathen worship was sun-worship. (3) The great and universal day of sun-worship was Sunday, besides other monthly and yearly feasts. (4) The Galatian Christians were converted heathen.

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Gal. 4:8. (5) In their backslidings they turned back to the beggarly elements of the world, to which they were in bondage before they knew Christ. Verse 9. (6) One great evidence of this was that they returned to observing times and days. Verses 10, 11. (7) The only obvious inference is that these days were heathen days and times (Lev. 19:26) and would naturally include among them the Sunday. See "The Lord's Day," pp. 33-41, 87-91.