

# UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE

## 1. WHAT was already at work in the church in Paul's day?

"For *the mystery of iniquity* doth already work." **2Thessalonians 2:7.**

## 2. What class of men did he say would arise in the church?

"For I know this, that after my departing shall *grievous wolves* enter in among you, not sparing the flock. *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*" **Acts 20:29, 30.**

## 3. Through what experience was the church to pass, and what was to develop in the church, before Christ's second coming?

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.*" **2Thessalonians 2:3.**

## 4. In what was shown the first tangible evidence of this "falling away" from the truth of God?

The adoption of heathen rites and customs in the church.

**NOTE** — "The bishops augmented the number of religious rites in the Christian worship, by way of accommodation to the infirmities and prejudices, both of Jews and heathen, in order to facilitate their conversion to Christianity. . . . For this purpose, they gave the name of mysteries to the institutions of the gospel, and decorated particularly the holy sacrament with that solemn title. They used in that sacred institution, as also in that of baptism, several of the terms employed in the heathen mysteries, and proceeded so far, at length, as even to adopt some of the rites and of the ceremonies of which those renowned mysteries consisted." *Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History" (Maclaine's translation), cent. 2, part 2, chap. 4, pars. 2-5.*

## 5. How early was this tendency manifested?

"This imitation began in the eastern provinces; but, after the time of Adrian [emperor 117-138 A.D.], who first introduced the mysteries among the Latins, it was followed by the Christians who dwelt in the western parts of the empire." *Id., par. 5.*

**6. What has been one great characteristic of the Papacy?**

A union of church and state, or the religious power dominating the civil power to further its ends.

**7. When was the union of church and state formed from which the Papacy grew?**

During the reign of Constantine, 313–337 A.D.

**8. What was the character and the work of many of the bishops at that time?**

*“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.” Neander’s “History of the Christian Religion and Church” (Torrey’s translation), Vol. II, page 16.*

**9. What did the bishops determine to do?**

*“This theocratical theory was already the prevailing one in the time of Constantine; and . . . the bishops voluntarily made themselves dependent on him by their disputes, and by their determination to make use of the power of the state for the furtherance of their aims.” Id., page 132.*

**NOTE** — The “theocratical theory” was that of a government administered by God through the church, particularly through the church bishops.

**10. What was the date of Constantine’s famous Sunday law?**

A.D. 321.

**11. When and by whom was the Council of Nice convened?**

By the emperor Constantine, 325 A.D.

**12. Under what authority were its decrees published?**

*“The decrees . . . were published under the imperial authority, and thus obtained a political importance.” Id., page 133.*

**13. What was one principal object in calling this council?**

*“The question relating to the observance of Easter, which was agitated in the time of Anicetus and Polycarp, and afterward in that of Victor, was still undecided. It was one of the principal reasons for*

convoking the Council of Nice, being the most important subject to be considered after the Arian controversy.”

“It appears that the churches of Syria and Mesopotamia continued to follow the custom of the Jews, and celebrated Easter on *the fourteenth day of the moon*, whether falling on Sunday or not. All the other churches observed that solemnity *on Sunday only*, namely; those of Rome, Italy, Africa, Lydia, Egypt, Spain, Gaul, and Britain; and all Greece, Asia, and Pontus.” *Boyle’s “Historical View of the Council of Nice,” page 23, edition 1836.*

#### **14. How was the matter finally decided?**

“Easter day was fixed on the Sunday immediately following the full moon which was nearest after the vernal equinox.” *Id., page 24.*

#### **15. What was decreed by the Council of Laodicea, A.D. 364?**

That Christians should keep the Sunday, and that if they persisted in resting on the Sabbath, “they shall be shut out from Christ.” See Hefele’s “History of the Councils of the Church,” Vol. 11, page 316.

#### **16. What imperial law was issued in A.D. 386?**

“By a law of the year 386, those older changes effected by Constantine were more vigorously enforced; and, in general, civil transactions of every kind on Sunday were strictly forbidden.” *Neander’s “Church History,” Vol. II, page 300.*

#### **17. What petition was made to the emperor by a church convention of bishops in A.D. 401?**

“That the public shows might be transferred from the Christian Sunday and from the feast-days to some other days of the week.” *Ib.*

**NOTE.**— The desired law was secured in 425 A.D. See studies on “The Change of the Sabbath,” and “Sabbath Legislation.”

#### **18. What was the object of the church bishops in securing these Sunday laws?**

“That the day might be devoted with less interruption to the purposes of devotion.” “That the devotion of the faithful might be free from all disturbance.” *Id., pages 297, 301.*

#### **19. How was the “devotion” of the “faithful” disturbed?**

“Church teachers . . . were, in truth, often forced to complain that *in such competitions the theater was vastly more frequented than the church.*” *Id.*, page 300.

**20. What does Neander say of the securing of these laws?**

“In this way the church received help from the state for the furtherance of her ends.” *Id.*, page 301.

**NOTE** — In this way, more perhaps than in any other, church and state were united. In this way the church gained control of the civil power, which she later used as a means of carrying on most bitter and extensive persecutions. In this way she denied Christ and the power of godliness.

**21. When the church had received help from the state to this extent, what more did she demand?**

That the civil power should be exerted to compel men to serve God as the church should dictate.

**22. What did Augustine, the father of this theocratical or church-and-state theory, teach concerning it?**

“Who doubts but what it is better to be led to God by instruction than by fear of punishment or affliction? But because the former, who will be guided only by instruction, are better, the others are still not to be neglected. . . . Many, like bad servants, must often be reclaimed to their Master by the rod of temporal suffering, ere they can attain to

**23. What is Neander’s conclusion regarding this theory?**

“It was by Augustine, then, that a theory was proposed and founded, which, tempered though it was, in its practical application, by his own pious, philanthropic spirit, nevertheless contained the germ of that whole system of spiritual despotism, of intolerance and persecution, which ended in the tribunals of the Inquisition.” “He did not give precedence to the question, What is *right?* over the question, What is *expedient?* But a theory which overlooks these distinctions leaves room for any despotism which would make holy ends a pretext for the use of unholy means.” *Id.*, pages 217, 249, 250.

**NOTE** — It was thus that the union of church and state was formed, out of which was developed “the beast,” or Papacy, of the Apocalypse, which made “war with the saints” and overcame them. A like course cannot fail to produce like

results today. Dr. Philip Schaff, in his work on "Church and State," page 11, well says: "Secular power has proved a satanic gift to the church, and ecclesiastical power has proved an engine of tyranny in the hands of the state."