

“Francis I had gloried in being a leader in the great movement for the revival of learning which marked the opening of the sixteenth century. He had delighted to gather at his court men of letters from every country. To his love of learning and his contempt for the ignorance and superstition of the monks was due, in part at least, the degree of toleration that had been granted to the reform. But, inspired with zeal to stamp out heresy, this patron of learning issued an edict declaring printing abolished all over France! Francis I presents one among the many examples on record showing that intellectual culture is not a safeguard against religious intolerance and persecution.

“France by a solemn and public ceremony was to commit herself fully to the destruction of Protestantism. The priests demanded that the affront offered to High Heaven in the condemnation of the mass be expiated in blood, and that the king, in behalf of his people, publicly give his sanction to the dreadful work.

“**The 21st of January, 1535**, was fixed upon for the awful ceremonial. The superstitious fears and bigoted hatred of the whole nation had been roused. Paris was thronged with the multitudes that from all the surrounding country crowded her streets. The day was to be ushered in by a vast and imposing procession. ‘The houses along the line of march were hung with mourning drapery, and altars rose at intervals.’ Before every door was a lighted torch in honor of the ‘holy sacrament.’ Before daybreak the procession formed at the palace of the king. ‘First came the banners and crosses of the several parishes; next appeared the citizens, walking two and two, and bearing torches.’ The four orders of friars followed, each in its own peculiar dress. Then came a vast collection of famous relics. Following these rode lordly ecclesiastics in their purple and scarlet robes and jeweled adornings, a gorgeous and glittering array.

“‘The host was carried by the bishop of Paris under a magnificent canopy, . . . supported by four princes of the blood. . . . After the host walked the king. . . . Francis I on that day wore no crown, nor robe of state.’ With ‘head uncovered, his eyes cast on the ground, and in his hand a lighted taper,’ the king of France appeared ‘in the character of a penitent.’—*Ibid.*, b. 13, ch. 21. At every altar he bowed down in humiliation, not for the vices that defiled his soul, nor the innocent blood that stained his hands, but for the deadly sin of his subjects who had dared to condemn the mass. Following him came the queen and the dignitaries of state, also walking two and two, each with a lighted torch.

“As a part of the services of the day the monarch himself addressed the high officials of the kingdom in the great hall of the bishop’s palace. With a sorrowful countenance he appeared before them and in words of moving eloquence bewailed ‘the crime, the blasphemy, the day of sorrow and disgrace,’ that had come upon the nation. And he called upon every loyal subject to aid in the extirpation of the pestilent heresy that threatened France with ruin. ‘As true, messieurs, as I am your king,’ he said, ‘if I knew one of my own limbs spotted or infected with this detestable rottenness, I would give it you to cut off. . . . And further, if I saw one of my children defiled by it, I would not spare him. . . . I would deliver him up myself, and would sacrifice him to God.’ Tears choked his utterance, and the whole assembly wept, with one accord exclaiming: ‘We will live and die for the Catholic religion!’—*D’Aubigne, History of the Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin*, b. 4, ch. 12.

“Terrible had become the darkness of the nation that had rejected the light of truth. The grace ‘that bringeth salvation’ had appeared; but France, after beholding its power and holiness, after thousands had been drawn by its divine beauty, after cities and hamlets had been illuminated by its radiance, had turned away, choosing darkness rather than light. They had put from them the heavenly gift when it was offered them. They had called evil good, and good evil, till they had fallen victims to their willful self-deception. Now, though they might actually believe that they were doing God service in persecuting His people, yet their sincerity did not render them guiltless. The light that would have saved them from deception, from staining their souls with bloodguiltiness, they had willfully rejected.

“A solemn oath to extirpate heresy was taken in the great cathedral where, nearly three centuries later, the Goddess of Reason was to be enthroned by a nation that had forgotten the living God. Again the procession formed, and the representatives of France set out to begin the work which they had sworn to do. ‘At short distances scaffolds had been erected, on which certain Protestant Christians were to be burned alive, and it was arranged that the fagots should be lighted at the moment the king approached, and that the procession should halt to witness the execution.’—Wylie, b. 13, ch. 21. The details of the tortures endured by these witnesses for Christ are too harrowing for recital; but there was no wavering on the part of the victims. On being urged to recant, one answered: ‘I only believe in what the prophets and the apostles formerly preached, and what all the company of saints believed. My faith has a confidence in God which will resist all the powers of hell.’—D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin*, b. 4, ch. 12.

“Again and again the procession halted at the places of torture. Upon reaching their starting point at the royal palace, the crowd dispersed, and the king and the prelates withdrew, well satisfied with the day’s proceedings and congratulating themselves that the work now begun would be continued to the complete destruction of heresy.

“The gospel of peace which France had rejected was to be only too surely rooted out, and terrible would be the results. **On the 21st of January, 1793, two hundred and fifty-eight years from the very day that fully committed France to the persecution of the Reformers, another procession, with a far different purpose, passed through the streets of Paris.** ‘Again the king was the chief figure; again there were tumult and shouting; again there was heard the cry for more victims; again there were black scaffolds; and again the scenes of the day were closed by horrid executions; Louis XVI, struggling hand to hand with his jailers and executioners, was dragged forward to the block, and there held down by main force till the ax had fallen, and his dissevered head rolled on the scaffold.’—Wylie, b. 13, ch. 21. Nor was the king the only victim; near the same spot two thousand and eight hundred human beings perished by the guillotine during the bloody days of the Reign of Terror.

“The Reformation had presented to the world an open Bible, unsealing the precepts of the law of God and urging its claims upon the consciences of the people. Infinite Love had unfolded to men the statutes and principles of heaven. God had said: ‘Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ Deuteronomy 4:6. When France rejected the gift of heaven, she sowed the seeds of anarchy and ruin; and the inevitable outworking of cause and effect resulted in the Revolution and the Reign of Terror.” *The Great Controversy*, 227–230.

“God’s faithful witnesses, slain by the blasphemous power that ‘ascendeth out of the bottomless pit,’ were not long to remain silent. ‘After three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.’ Revelation 11:11. **It was in 1793 that the decrees which abolished the Christian religion and set aside the Bible passed the French Assembly.** Three years and a half later a resolution rescinding these decrees, thus granting toleration to the Scriptures, was adopted by the same body. The world stood aghast at the enormity of guilt which had resulted from a rejection of the Sacred Oracles, and men recognized the necessity of faith in God and His word as the foundation of virtue and morality. Saith the Lord: ‘Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel,’ Isaiah 37:23. ‘Therefore, behold, I will cause them to know, this once will I cause them to know My hand and My might; and they shall know that My name is Jehovah.’ Jeremiah 16:21, A.R.V.” *The Great Controversy*, 287.

“The work of God in the earth presents, from age to age, a striking similarity **in every great reformation or religious movement. The principles of God’s dealing with men are ever the same.** The important movements of the present have their **parallel** in those of the past, and the experience of the church in former ages has lessons of great value for our own time.” *The Great Controversy*, 343.

“The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure.” *Selected Messages*, book 1, 205.

“But Satan was not idle. He now attempted what he has attempted in every other reformatory movement—to deceive and destroy the people by palming off upon them a counterfeit in place of the true work. As there were false Christ’s in the first century of the Christian church, so there arose false prophets in the sixteenth century.” *The Great Controversy*, 186.