

The Lamb-like Beast.

[A SERMON DELIVERED BY REV. W. E. COPELAND, OF THE UNITY CHURCH, SALEM, ORE.]

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon."

Here we are again, at the book of Revelations. Those, who make it their business to explain the book of last things, tell us, that the lamb-like beast is the protestant church of America, which is like the lamb, claiming to be truly christian, but having a voice like a dragon. This church claims to be a reformed church, yet seeks to unite church and state as did the dragon. This lamb-like beast causeth all great and small, rich and poor, free and bond to receive a mark in their right hands and in their foreheads, that no man might buy or sell save him that had the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name.

The Second Adventists declare that this beast has already come into the United States, and is trying to do what the dragon could not accomplish, that is, to unite church and state and bring about a condition of affairs where only members of the churches, marked with the mark of the beast, shall have any civil rights. The God amendment party and all people, who sympathize with it, and its purposes, are the beast and those who have his mark. The purpose of these fanatics is, to make this a christian nation by law; Jesus is to be the ruler of the people and the bible the supreme law of the land; Jehovah is to be acknowledged as God by an amendment to the constitution of the United States. This beast has gained great power in the last ten years. Several times the amendment has very nearly passed the United States Senate. President Cleveland seems to be in entire sympathy with the beast and more distinctly than any president, gives the idea in his public document, that this is a christian nation, and in some private speeches seems to favor the amendment. There has been a notable increase in the number of those who have received the mark of the beast. Beginning with only a few, more and more have joined, until the meetings of the God amendment people are largely attended and men of prominence take part in their deliberations.

But the beast is not left to have his own way; three bodies of people are organized to destroy him, so utterly unlike one another that one cannot understand how they can work together. It is another instance of how the lion and the lamb lie down together, or how the lamb inspired with courage fights side by side with the lion. No three collections of people can be more unlike than the Seventh Day

Baptists, the Secularists and the A. P. A. One takes the bible almost literally, the second does not accept it as having any authority, and the third expresses no opinion. One believes in prayer, the second rejects prayer, and the third has no opinion on the subject. The first people are acknowledged to be earnest christians, the second repudiate christianity; the third while being, for the most part christians by profession, are more interested in politics than in religions. All are earnest in fighting the beast. Had it not been for a leading Seventh Day Baptist and a Secularist, we should have had the God amendment submitted to the several states for a vote, and quite a number would have adopted it. Now the A. P. A., ever increasing in power, comes to the help, or seems to, for one cannot be exactly sure what position this society would take, could it be assured that the Protestant church would control. It's fight is mainly against Romanism, which once well out of the way, it might possibly join hands with the God amendment people and fasten around our necks a protestant yoke of conformity, equally galling with the Romanist yoke. It matters but little what church is united with the state; one will be as harsh, tyrannical and despotic as another; indeed the Roman yoke would be easier to wear, because the priests by long experience have learned how to make it comfortable.

In the ranks of those who are fighting the beast are to be found besides the leaders, Spiritualists, Unitarians; some Baptists not Seventh Day, the Jews and others of various names and beliefs—a rather heterogeneous mixture; but all prizing above creed, religious and civil freedom; all ready to do valiant service against the beast and his followers, all willing to make some sacrifices for the sake of firmly establishing religious freedom, which is really endangered. For instance in the hurry of closing the Senate, a god amendment could be smuggled through; many Senators would not know for what they were voting, others would vote for it so as to secure the passage of some bill which they wanted passed, the President might sign it, saying to himself the State Legislature will kill it. But the same tactics could be used in the State Legislatures and before we knew it, the yoke would be fastened about our necks and the beast would be triumphant.

I have taken this topic for my subject this morning; because Miss Nettie A. Olds Vice President of the Oregon State Secular Union, speaks in this church tonight and tomorrow night. With the main purposes of the Secular Union I most heartily sympathize and I expect that most of the members of this society do also

agree to oppose the beast. I do not know how extensively the speaker will go into the explanation of the purpose, of the Secular Union, or how loud she will sound the alarm which shall arouse all thinking people to a knowledge of the danger which threatens, a danger friends, not so far off as some imagine. The blindness of the many is surprising, the ignorance of the real purpose of the God amendment is alarming. This means a union of church and state, which once accomplished, this church would be speedily closed. All must observe a Puritan Sabbath; soon only christians would be allowed to vote, and then only those who had the mark of the beast could buy and sell. The recent Presidential election has shown to what extremes men will proceed when animated by party spirit, but replace this spirit with religious fanaticism, let one candidate for president have the mark of the beast, which the other did not possess and the law would be invoked to seat the beast candidate by a persecution of his opponents which would rival any persecution that christians have ever suffered. Inevitably, were such an amendment to pass, a definition of christianity, a resume of bible teaching would be agreed upon; and all who could not conform would suffer the consequences.

You say that these things are impossible, but you would have said 25 years ago that it was impossible for the United States Senate to even consider the God amendment and yet they nearly passed it; you would have said that no political party would listen to any priest or clergyman, yet it is notorious that a Roman Catholic Archbishop caused a political party to alter its platform. You would have said that no president of the United States would antagonize a large part of the people by utterances distinctively and offensively evangelical; yet president Cleveland did just this thing. You would have said, no United States senator would advocate so monstrous a proposition as that this nation should be by law a christian nation; yet not only one but enough senators almost to adopt the amendment were found. You would have said that the great protestant denominations would have opposed such a return to the Dark Ages, yet the denominations as a whole, maintained a profound silence or openly encouraged the movement, each hoping that were the amendment passed, it would be strong enough to be known as the christian church. Unitarian and Seventh day Baptists being exceptions.

Amid all the troubles pressing upon us at this close of the 19th century, perils of poverty, of famine, among all the problems de-

manding solution, we must not put aside the grave perils of a Union between church and state; which grows more threatening with every year. Once accomplished and we have lost all for which the fathers toiled so hard. That which brought the most of the settlers to the United States, liberty to worship God after the dictates of their conscience is imperilled. You say, oh, there is no danger, we shall always retain entire freedom in religion. In some states it is already gone, in Tennessee honest upright citizens, who work hard and pay their debts and are well educated, are chained side by side with the lowest criminals, because they worked on Sunday after worshipping on Saturday. Ingersoll was arrested in Delaware because he did not agree with the dominant theology. In a number of States, old laws are revived and good citizens put in peril of liberty and property, because they do not agree with the prevailing theology. I tell you, judging from the lessons of history that were such an amendment to the constitution of the United States adopted, Sunday would be the Sabbath, and Sabbath laws would be rigidly enforced, only churches which agreed with evangelical christianity could be opened, and no Freethought lectures would be tolerated. You know very well that there are those in Salem today, who had they the power, would place your speaker in prison or in the insane asylum, and would gladly close this church.

We have in the United States a large number of good citizens, who are not christians, many of them hold office and have done good service to the Republic. Let the beast control and they will be disfranchised. What the bible means, what is the nature of God, what day is the Sabbath, all these are disputed questions. Once pass the God amendment and it will be in order to pass other laws defining these questions, when some now in favor of such legislation will find themselves disfranchised.

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance, and unless we would lose our religious freedom, we must be awake to this great danger which threatens us from the followers of the beast. Not only must we be vigilant, but we must educate the people until they prize above all else freedom to worship God after the dictates of their own consciences. Were the amendment, of which I have been speaking, once adopted, something worse than religious despotism would be established, and that is Phariseeism, hypocrisy and decay of morality. Men would be content to proclaim allegiance to the creed established by the beast and would let go such unimportant matters as righteousness, brotherhood, love and mercy. Always when you have a union of church and state, so much attention is paid to the external, that the internal, the spiritual is entirely starved out. Tithe of anise and cummin are scrupulously paid, but the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith have been omitted.