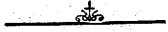



The  
MARK OF THE BEAST

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OF WHAT DOES IT CONSIST  
AND  
WHEN IS IT RECEIVED?

  
G. A. Irwin  


"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not  
according to this word, it is because there is no light  
in them." Isa. 8: 20.

"To receive this mark means to come to the same conclusion as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the word of God."

## The Mark of the Beast

Because of charges recently made by some who have apostatized from the faith, that the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination is "hedging" on the question of Sunday labor, and by following the instruction recently given through the Spirit of Prophecy in Vol. 9 relative to Sunday labor, they are surrendering a vital principle of truth and are receiving the Mark of the Beast,—the minds of some of our people have become confused. To set such individuals straight, and to prove to all fair-minded people that the Denomination stands upon this question just where it has always stood, and that it is not "hedging" or surrendering any vital principle of truth, when following the instruction given in Vol. 9 of the Testimonies, is the object of this leaflet.

It might be well just at this point to take occasion to say that the belief and teaching of the Denomination upon this question should not be taken from the statements and writings of a few over zealous individuals who have been repeatedly reprovved for their extreme views, positions, and unwise advice, but from the light and instruction given through the Spirit of Prophecy, which the Denomination has always recognized and acknowledged as the true light, and endeavored to follow. It is from the standpoint of light that has come through the Spirit of Prophecy that the question will be considered, believing as we do that the Spirit of Prophecy is the only infallible interpreter of Bible principles, since it is Christ through this agency giving the real meaning of his own words.

In answer to the first part of the compound question that is the title of this leaflet,—“OF WHAT DOES THE MARK OF THE BEAST CONSIST?—” we have been told repeatedly and by different forms of expression that Sunday-keeping is the mark of the Beast. On page six of a leaflet bearing the title of “Special Testimonies to Battle Creek Church,” dated Jan. 11, 1897, the following definite statement is made: “The sign or seal of God is the observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath, and the Lord’s Memorial of his work of creation. . . . . The Mark of the Beast is the opposite of this, the observance of the first day of the week.” In the same leaflet, under the sub-head of “True Education in our Churches,” the question is stated thus: “John was called to behold a people distinct from those who worship the Beast or his Image by keeping the first day of the week. The observance of this day is the Mark of the Beast.” In a manuscript bearing date of 1899 these words occur: “It is for the interest of all to understand what the Mark of the Beast is, and how they may escape the dread threatenings of God. Why are men not interested to know what constitutes the Mark of the Beast and his image? It is in direct contrast with the Mark of God.” Reference is then made to Ex. 31:2-17, which shows that the Sabbath is the Sign or Seal of God. Numerous other references might be taken from Sister White’s writings that state the same fact by inference, if not in such plain terms as the foregoing. So that her position on the question of what constitutes the Mark of the Beast is clear and plain. And this is the position that was taken by the pioneers in this message

after a careful study of the Prophecies, and to which the Denomination has held all the years of its existence, and still holds.

This brings us to the consideration of the second question, “WHEN IS THE MARK RECEIVED?” This is where the confusion comes in, and the minds of men are led to different conclusions. But this part of the question is just as plain as the first, when all that has been written upon the subject is taken as it is written, and not as garbled sentences and parts of sentences taken from the middle of paragraphs and out of their connection and setting and made the premise of an argument and opinion.

In a communication written in Australia, and bearing the date of Nov. 20, 1895, the statement is made that “refraining from work on Sunday is *not* receiving the Mark of the Beast; and when this will advance the interests of the work, it should be done.” Elsewhere in the same communication this statement is made, “At present *Sunday-keeping is not the test.*” About the time this communication was written, Sunday Laws were being rigidly enforced in Tennessee, and some of our brethren were in jail for working on Sunday. Those in charge of the Religious Liberty Work at that time were teaching that to refrain from work on Sunday, because of the Law, was receiving the Mark of the Beast. During the agitation a letter was sent to Sister White to inquire if she had any light on the question, and the communication referred to came in reply. The communication was accepted by all at that time as light from God.

Following the statement that “At present Sunday keeping is not the test,” she says,

"The time will come when men will not only forbid Sunday work, but they will try to force men to labor on the Sabbath. And men will be asked to renounce the Sabbath, and to subscribe to Sunday observance or forfeit their freedom and their lives."

In the year 1861, 34 years prior to the foregoing date, a similar statement was made, and can be found in Vol. 1, page 354. It reads as follows: "The decree will go forth that they must disregard the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment, and honor the first day, or lose their lives." In the communication bearing the date of 1895 this statement occurs: "The final issue of the Sabbath question has not yet come, and by imprudent actions we may bring on a crisis before the time." "The time has not yet come for us to work as though there were no prejudices. Christ said, 'Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves.' If you see that by doing certain things which you have a perfect right to do you hinder the work of the truth, refrain from doing those things. Do nothing that will close the minds of others against the truth. There is a world to save, and we gain nothing by cutting loose from those we are trying to help. All things may be lawful, but all things are not expedient [or wise]. . . . On Sunday there is the very best opportunity for those who are missionaries to hold Sunday schools, and come to the people in the simplest manner possible, telling them of the love of Jesus for sinners, and educating them in the Scriptures." Seven years later, when a crisis in the enforcement of Sunday laws in Australia seemed imminent, the same counsel was given;

"The light given me by the Lord at a time when we were expecting just such a crisis as you seem to be approaching was, that when the people were moved by a power from beneath to enforce Sunday observance, Seventh-day Adventists were to show their wisdom by refraining from their ordinary work on that day, devoting it to missionary efforts.

"To defy the Sunday laws will but strengthen in their persecution the religious zealots who are seeking to enforce them. Give them no occasion to call you lawbreakers. If they are left to rein up men who fear neither God nor man, the reining up will soon lose its novelty for them, and they will see that it is not consistent nor convenient for them to be strict in regard to the observance of Sunday. Keep right on with your missionary work, with your Bibles in your hands, and the enemy will see that he has worsted his own cause. *One does not receive the Mark of the Beast because he shows that he realizes the wisdom of keeping the peace by refraining from work that gives offense, doing at the same time a work of the highest importance.*" Vol. 9, p. 232.

The following statement, taken from the "QUESTION CHAIR," Review and Herald of March 9, 1897, so fully accords with the foregoing instruction, that it fits in right here and shows that our Church paper under the able editorship of Elder Uriah Smith, stood for the same views relative to the Mark of the Beast, as those enunciated by Sister White in all her writings where this subject is under consideration.

Ques. "Is Sunday-keeping the mark of the beast independently of its enforcement by the two-horned beast?"

Ans. "An institution may have an inherent nature in itself, and yet be clothed with a new significance, or assume a new character, by special circumstances connected with it. We take this to be the case with Sunday-keeping. It is a child of the papacy, with paganism as its fosterfather. It grew to such a position of prominence that the papacy adopted it as an emblem of its authority and a badge of its power. Ever since that time it has been in its inherent nature, 'the mark of the Beast.' But multitudes have been led into its observance with no idea that it is an institution of the church, or that it is claimed by Roman Catholics as such. This may be said, perhaps, of the entire Protestant Church. But in the last great conflict between truth and error, when those who are coming up to the condition of translation and are to be purged from every relic of the apostasy, the fact that this institution is the banner and mark of that power symbolized by the beast, is to be brought out in great distinctness, and when the issue is thus clearly made, every one, by his attitude toward this institution, will show whether his allegiance is to the human or the divine. Then the observance of Sunday will have a new significance; it will then have a new character. It will then be, in the *prophetic sense*, the mark of the beast, as *opposed to the mark, or seal of God*. And until it reaches this stage, prophecy does not take cognizance of it as the mark of the beast. And it is only in this sense in which it is used in prophecy, that we have to do with it."

It may be helpful to the reader to summarize the foregoing statements and connect them with others that are so definite and clear that any one that has an honest desire to know the truth on this subject need no longer be in doubt, or hereafter be deceived by persons whose aim is to cast contempt upon the Spirit of Prophecy, and bring it into disrepute among this people.

In the final issue, Sunday-keeping will constitute the Mark of the Beast.

But the final issue of the Sabbath question has not yet come."

"At present Sunday is not the test."

Refraining from work on Sunday from expediency, after having observed the Sabbath of the Lord, is *not* receiving the Mark of the Beast.

"It is our work to magnify and exalt the law of God. The truth of God's holy word is to be made manifest. We are to hold up the Scriptures as a rule of life. In all modesty, in the spirit of grace and in the love of God, we are to point men to the fact that the Lord God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.

"In the name of the Lord we are to go forward, unfurling His banner, advocating His word. When the authorities command us not to do this work, when they forbid us to proclaim the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, then it will be necessary for us to say as did the apostles: 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' Acts 4:19, 20."

When the time comes that men "not only forbid Sunday work, but will try to *force* men to labor on the Sabbath, and men will be asked to renounce the Sabbath and to subscribe to Sunday observance or forfeit their freedom and their lives, *then* whoever yields obedience to the mandate will receive the Mark of the Beast."

"Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought. The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that all, 'both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,' shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath. All who refuse compliance will be visited by civil penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death. On the other hand, the law of God enjoining the Creator's rest-day demands obedience, and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts.

*"With the issue thus clearly brought before him, whoever shall trample upon God's law to obey a human enactment, receives the mark of the beast; he accepts the sign of allegiance to the power which he chooses to obey instead of God."* Great Controversy, p. 604.

"But Christians of past generations observed the Sunday, supposing that in so doing they were keeping the Bible Sabbath; and there are now true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their integrity before Him. But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, *then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honor popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome, and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshipping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution*

which God has declared to be the sign of his authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome—"the mark of the beast." *And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive 'the mark of the beast.'*

"The time has come for the true light to shine amid moral darkness. The third angel's message has been sent forth to the world, warning men against receiving the mark of the beast or of his image in their foreheads or in their hands. *To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the word of God.* . . . . If the light of truth has been presented to you, revealing the fourth commandment, and showing that there is no foundation in the word of God for Sunday observance, and yet you still cling to the false Sabbath, refusing to keep holy the Sabbath which God calls 'My holy day,' you receive the mark of the beast. When does this take place? — *When you obey the DECREE that commands you to cease from labor on Sunday and worship God, while you know that there is not a word in the Bible showing Sunday to be other than a common working-day, and you consent to receive the mark of the beast, and refuse the seal of God*"

"The decree will go forth that they must disregard the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and honor the first day, or lose their

lives; but they will not yield, and trample under their feet the Sabbath of the Lord, and honor an institution of papacy." *Testimonies* Vol. 1, pp. 353-354.

Very much more might be written and quoted that has a direct bearing upon the question under consideration, but it has been our aim to present only sufficient to make the matter so plain that the dullest mind can readily comprehend what constitutes the Mark, and when and only when Sunday observance can be said to be, and really becomes, "The Mark of the Beast." Instead of allowing ourselves to be deceived at this time with man-made tests, every loyal Seventh-day Adventist should, to the extent of his ability and opportunity, be giving the warning contained in the prophecy against the worship of the Beast and his Image. The whole world must be enlightened on this subject before the test can come, but the real test will come soon enough without our taking a course to bring on the time of trouble before it is due. It is not our business to anticipate or worry about the future, but in humility to keep the word of His patience, and then He will keep us when the hour of temptation finally comes upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.

