

VIEW FROM THE TOWER. SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS' FEARS.

Amongst those whom we recognize as God's children, but from whom we differ as to many of the teachings of our Father's Word, is a considerable number of Seventh-Day Adventists. Indeed, not a few from this people have received the present truth, brought to their attention through *Millennial Dawn* and the WATCH TOWER and for the sake of these and others we have on two occasions treated the Sabbath and the Law questions in these columns.

However, their leaders and teachers have woven together so close a net of ingeniously applied but quite mistaken theory based upon the "cleansing of the Sanctuary" (Dan. 8:14) and "the mark of the beast" (Rev. 13), that the majority of their followers, as well as themselves, seem to be hopelessly entangled. Believing that many of them are honest, we feel less disposed to chide them, and more inclined to say to them mildly and kindly, in the Master's words, "Ye do err, not knowing [understanding] the Scriptures."

Believing that the Law given to Israel as the basis of their covenant (See Deut. 5:2-7-21) was not given to them alone, but to all the world, they would enforce upon all the Jewish, seventh-day Sabbath – now usually called Saturday. When we point out to them that the Law which is the basis of the New Covenant is briefly comprehended in one word, Love (– instead of the ten commands, as was the Jewish Covenant), they ask, Well, then, if the newer and fuller expression of the Law be Love, and if love implies that we do not steal, kill, etc., does not this New Covenant have a Sabbath also?

Without waiting for an answer, they proceed to say – we, therefore, should keep the Seventh Day, as did the Jews. No one had a right to change it to Sunday, the first day of the week, when God had specified the seventh. Papacy changed the day; and it is, therefore, "the mark of the beast," etc.; and all who observe Sunday are thus branded or marked, and can have no part among the "overcomers" in the first resurrection.

Few of them are patient enough to hear the answer: – That the seventh-day *rest* (for the word Sabbath merely means *rest*) of the ten commandments is contained in our Law of the New Covenant, just as truly as are the other commands included in that Law of one word – Love. Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not violate the seventh-day rest, and all the other commands of the Decalogue, meet with much grander and fuller expression in our New Covenant and its Law. Thus, if we love God and men, we will not blaspheme, nor kill, nor steal, nor bear false witness; and those who have entered into this New Covenant, and found the *heart-rest* (Sabbath) by faith in Christ and his finished work, so long as they appreciate this rest, can have no desire to break it or even to disturb it by violating any part of their covenant.

This is the *real* and *only* Sabbath (rest) commanded [R1446 : page 276] or provided for under our New Covenant. It was typified in the Jewish Law (which was a *shadow* of the New Covenant Law) by the Seventh Day – because this rest from sin is to be actually observed in the seventh thousand-year day – in the Millennium. The *present* REST of believers, trusting in Christ, is not the complete rest, but merely a *rest of heart by faith*, hoping and waiting for the actual. This the Apostle clearly shows in Heb. 4:2-11 – that although the Jews had observed the Seventh Day, it did not profit them, and they did not really enter into the rest which it typified, because they merely held the outward form or shadow, and did not mix it *with* FAITH so as to discern its

antitype – the rest of heart. He concludes his argument by urging – "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into *that* rest (*Greek* – Sabbath-keeping), lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" – set by the Jews who kept the Seventh Day, but never knew what it meant. The time for *entering by faith* into the real rest came to the Church at Pentecost, when the spirit dispensation began. The time for *entering actually* into the real rest is just at hand, at the ushering in of the New Dispensation.

As for the claim that no one had *a right to change* or substitute the First Day for the Seventh Day, that is true. Our Lord and the apostles never authorized any such *change*: they declared the Jewish Law (which included the Seventh Day) ended at the Cross, and the new and more comprehensive law of the New Covenant thereafter in operation toward all who accepted Christ. The apostles used the Seventh Day as a time for preaching Christ, as they used every day in the week, and especially because on that day the Jews, their most hopeful hearers, met for worship and study. But the apostles nowhere recognized the seventh-day Sabbath as a day of rest, as the Jewish Law Covenant enforced it. On the contrary, they taught (Rom. 14:5-8) that any and all days are acceptable for good works done in the service of God and for the benefit of fellow men.

It is a mistake, too, to claim that the Christian Sabbath was started by an edict of one of the popes. It had its start in the fact that it was on the First Day of the week that our Lord arose from the dead; and that upon that day and evening he *met* with his disciples, and expounded unto them the Scriptures, until their hearts burned within them. What wonder that, without any *command* to do so, they thereafter loved so to meet together frequently, and to repeat the simple meal, the giving of thanks and the breaking of bread; recounting one to the other the gracious promises of God through the prophets, and the explanations of some of these which the Lord had given in

person, and seeking yet fuller understanding of the same under the leading of the holy Spirit (Christ's representative), operating to guide them into all truth as it became due.

It was some little time, evidently, from the account, before they realized that the Law Covenant which had so long ruled them was dead (Rom. 7:2-6), and that thus they were free from any obligation to any formal observance of the Seventh Day – that thenceforth all days were alike to them: all to be used in God's service in doing good, and none to be used for any other purpose.

For a time the two days were observed by Christians, the Seventh-Day from Jewish custom (and because it furnished the best opportunity for devout people likely to be interested in the Gospel) and the First-Day in commemoration of our Lord's resurrection. Ignatius, A.D. 75, in his writings mentions some approvingly as "no longer Sabbatizing, but living in observance of the Lord's-Day, on which also our life sprang up again."

The earliest record of the use of the name Lord's-Day for the first day of the week found in Scripture is in Rev. 1:10 (A.D. 96). And says *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (first-class authority) "by that name it is almost invariably referred to by all writers of the century immediately succeeding apostolic times....The first writer who mentions the name of *Sunday* is Justin Martyr: this designation of the first day of the week, which is of heathen origin, had come into general use in the Roman world shortly before Justin wrote. (Second century A.D.)...As long as the Jewish-Christian element continued to have any prominence or influence in the Church a [R1446 : page 277] tendency more or less strong to observe Sabbath as well as Sunday would of course prevail. ...The earliest recognition of the observance of Sunday *as a legal duty* is a Constitution of (the Emperor) Constantine, 321 A.D., enacting that all courts of justice, inhabitants of towns and

workshops were to be at rest on Sunday, with an exception in favor of those engaged in agricultural labor."

So, then, it is a misstatement of fact for our Seventh-Day friends to say that Pope Gregory or any other Pope first by decree instituted Sunday or the Lord's-Day as taking the place of the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath. Consequently, Sunday-keeping could not be "the mark of the beast," as they claim. The Decretals of Gregory do enjoin Sunday-keeping, saying, "We decree that all Sundays be observed, from vespers to vespers, and that all *unlawful work* be abstained from, so that in them trading or legal proceedings be not carried on." But it will be noted that the Emperor Constantine's [R1447 : page 277] decree was in 321 A.D., while Gregory did not become a pope until 590 A.D. And Gregory refers to the fact that the work prohibited was already *unlawful*: hence his decree is merely confirmatory of the laws of Constantine and other civil rulers preceding him.

The Roman Catholic church does not now and so far as we know never did insist upon a strict observance of Sunday. In Catholic countries to-day priests and people attend service in the forenoon, and give up the afternoon to various forms of pleasure – in beer gardens, parks, etc.

As for ourselves, we delight in the Lord's work any and every day; and could and would cheerfully accommodate ourselves to any day of the week appointed by any government under which we might be living, to meet specially to study God's Word and to render him worship; because under the New Covenant no single day is specified, but every day is alike. As it is, we rejoice that one day in the week is so generally observed (no matter what may be the world's object or thought in its observance), because it affords the world a day of recreative rest and the true *believers* an opportunity for union and communion of heart and voice. And we are specially pleased that the day set

apart by the government under which we live is the First Day of the week, because of the same blessed memories and associations which gave it a special sacredness to the Church in the days of the apostles.

But our friends, the Seventh-Day Adventists, are scaring themselves with the ghosts of certain misapplied symbols of Revelation relative to the Mark of the Beast, etc. They have the Seventh Day "on the brain" to such an extent that they can see nothing else clearly because of the false-importance they give to that subject. Noting the fact that religious people, seeing the growing tendency here toward a European Sunday (which means a *Roman Catholic* Sunday, spent in part at least in concert and beer gardens), are moving together for uniform laws enforcing present and past prevailing customs for the suspension of business on that day, our Seventh Day friends jump at the conclusion that soon their adherence to the Seventh Day will lead them to the stake, etc. They are getting greatly agitated and attempting to point to these things as fulfilments of their misapplications of Revelation, 12th and 13th chapters. We quote from one of their journals as follows: –

"IT HAS SPOKEN."

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." – Rev. 13:11.

"For many years Seventh-day Adventists have been keeping their eyes upon this prophecy, predicting on the strength of their view that the United States Government would oppress and persecute those who were striving to walk conscientiously before God, as did the "dragon"-spirited powers of earth in by-gone days. Recently it has become manifest that a spirit of intolerance and oppression existed and was growing in this Government, but within the last week an event has taken place which is of the

utmost significance in connection with the fulfilment of the words of this text. The Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States have united in saying to this country, and to the world, that the World's Columbian Exposition shall have joined to it the institution of the Sunday Sabbath. They have declared, speaking with the voice of the Nation, that here in this hitherto free land a religious institution shall be enforced by law; for legislation always means compulsion. [R1447 : page 278]

"We are no longer waiting to hear the sound which shall herald the fulfilment of this prophecy. THE DRAGON VOICE HAS SPOKEN! And how long will it be ere it will speak again?"

This is very absurd. The action of Congress in deciding, when appropriating money for the World's Fair, that the money should be given subject to the restriction, that the Fair be closed to the public on Sunday, does not mean "*that here, in this hitherto free land, a religious institution shall be enforced by law.*" Only a mind distorted on this subject could so imagine. It is not an interference with personal liberty. At very most it was a refusal of the government to spend the money collected from the people to forward certain opportunities for pleasure, of which the majority of tax payers did not approve. No fair mind has a right to object to this course. As for the writer's own opinion, it is that it would have been better to open on Sundays certain departments of the Fair – the flower and art displays at least – leaving closed those portions which would have necessitated human labor, that all might have like opportunities for rest. And no doubt Congressmen generally would have taken as liberal a view of the case had they expressed their own sentiments; but in spending the money did they err seriously in deciding that it should *not be used* contrary to the consciences of the majority whose tax the money chiefly represented?

Those who ask for Sunday observance are not persecuting the minority. The *minority*, be it a denomination or an individual, is left perfectly *free to observe any day* in worshiping God. So far as the writer is concerned he could not conscientiously make any law regarding Sunday observance for the worldly, believing as he does that God made no such law, and that its observance is acceptable to God merely as a volunteer exercise of Christian liberty. But we see no reason why it should be considered *persecution* for a majority of three-fourths of the people of the land (who believe Sunday to be of divine ordination) to make laws prohibiting labor on that one day of the week which they consider to have the divine approval and command.

The fact of the matter is that our Seventh-Day friends are fanatically anxious for persecution, believing that it is to be the portion of all the faithful. We also believe that whosoever will live Godly (*i.e.*, according to the divine will) shall suffer persecution. But we find plenty of persecution without hunting it; and we remember also the holy words, "Let none of you suffer as...an *evil-doer*, or as a *busy-body* in other men's matters." – 1 Pet. 4:15.

If we say to them, How are you persecuted? How are your consciences interfered with, when you attempt to observe Saturday as a Sabbath or rest-day? They reply, Oh! it is not in that way that we are *persecuted*: we have full liberty to meet and worship, sing and pray and rest, all day Saturday. It is when Sunday comes and we begin to do our work as upon other days. Then the officers of the law pounce upon us as law-breakers and persecute us.

Well, we answer: If you have the liberty to worship how you please on the Seventh Day, you cannot claim that your consciences are interfered with. You should *obey the law* – be "subject to the powers that be" – whenever it does not require you to violate God's

law – *as in this case*. To refrain from work on the First Day of the week surely violates no command of God; and hence you should obey the law; otherwise you are a law-breaker, and instead of suffering persecution for righteousness' sake you are violating the Apostle's command, But let none of you suffer as an evil-doer or a busy-body.

But so anxious are they for some suffering, and so fanatical is their method of reasoning, that many of them will reply – Oh, yes! To be idle on Sunday would violate our consciences, because the Scriptures say: "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work." How can we *labor six days*, if we must rest two days in the week, one on the command of the laws of the land, the other on what we believe to be the command of God.

Thus they pervert language to get persecution. If each of the six days contains twenty-four hours (thus they reckon the Seventh Day – from 6 P.M. of Friday until 6 P.M. of Saturday), then, to take the command literally, as they *rest* twenty-four hours for the Seventh Day, they should *labor* twenty-four hours a day during [R1447 : page 279] the other six days. ("Ye that desire to be under the Law, do ye not hear the Law?" – Gal. 4:21.) But every one of unprejudiced mind knows that the command never meant that more than one day might not be spent in rest, but merely that the Jews must rest during the Seventh Day, while during the other six they might labor for their own interests. Thus seen, the cry of persecution for keeping the Seventh Day as a Sabbath is nonsense.

As for the true interpretation of Revelation, 12th and 13th chapters: we gave what we considered to be such in the TOWER issues of January and February, 1883. But as the supply of these is long since exhausted, we purpose soon republishing those explanations in the TOWER.
