



*"Watchman,  
what of the night?"*

*The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye w.  
enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12*

# THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

## "If Any Man Worship the Beast and His Image"

In studying or presenting the Third Angel's Message, we often dwell on the results - the reception of "his mark" - rather than on what the message is really warning us about. Because of this we have difficulty in understanding the counsel which came to the Church regarding the 1888 Message of Righteousness by Faith through Elders A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner. Ellen G. White answered an inquiry concerning the message by stating - "the message of justification by faith. . . is the third angel's message in verity." (SM, bk i, p. 372) The "testimony" of these brethren was declared to be "the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the third angel's message, in clear, distinct lines." (TM, p. 93)

How do we get the Mark of the Beast into a positive presentation of Justification by Faith? We don't! It is the result which will follow a rejection of the warning of the Third Angel. The cry of the Third Angel is against the "worship of the beast and his image." What does this mean? Who is the beast? "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man." (Rev. 13:18) Thus to worship the beast is to worship a man, and the image is merely the image of a man. The outcome or results lead to a "number" and a "mark." In this essay, these results will only be inci-

dental to the general theme. We want to go to the heart of the warning as given in the Third Angel's Message.

True worship constitutes the reverence and respect we pay to the God of Heaven. A blasphemous worship is reverence and respect we pay to a human being as a god, or to one we place between ourselves and God. Such worship is clearly a violation of the First Commandment - "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." (Ex. 20:3) In meeting the temptation suggested by Satan to violate this commandment, Jesus resolutely declared - "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. 4:10) We may fellowship together as brothers and sisters in Christ; we may enter into the intimate fellowship that marks the home; we may work together in fulfilling the great commission; but in all of these relationships, we are to worship and serve only God. When we in any of these relationships of life, honor a fellow man before duty to God and truth, we become a candidate for the mark of the beast.

There is much more to the first great line prophecy of Daniel than we have perceived. The story of the nations from Daniel's day to the final hour of human history is all enfolded in one image - the image of a man. All that man devises and accomplishes ultimately becomes dust "like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors." (Dan. 2:35) All the kingdoms - represented by the gold, silver, brass, and iron - were built by the prowess of men. To accomplish their objectives, the men who established these kingdoms

of earth demanded of their subjects - fellow man - devotion, loyalty, and worship. Being themselves formed from the dust of the ground, they and all with them have or will return to dust. Thus the lesson of Daniel 2 is but an illustration of the words of the Lord to Jeremiah - "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." (Jer. 17:5)

The only thing that will stand forever is the stone cut out "without hands" - not of human prowess. This is the stone which the builders rejected, and upon whomever it falls, it will grind to powder. (Matt. 22:44) But whoever falls upon this rock and is "broken" the same shall find life. This is justification by faith as portrayed in the symbolism of parable and prophecy - the Third Angel's Message in verity.

As the prophetic messages of Daniel continue to unfold, there is pictured the beasts of Daniel 7. But "the saints of the most High" ultimately possess the kingdom. It is given to them. (Dan. 7: 22, 27) They have declared their citizenship in harmony with the One who justifies them in Judgment before the Ancient of Days. Their's and His kingdom is not of this world. (John 18:36) Not only are the "saints" other worldly in their attitude toward material things, but they are other worldly in their belief and worship. They worship only God - not man. They possess the truth as it is in Jesus. This truth was emphatically stated in a question Jesus asked - "How can ye believe (The basis of Justification by Faith) which receive honor one from another, and seek not that honor that cometh from God only." (John 5:44) We miss the First Angel's Message - "Fear God and give glory to Him" - we condition ourselves to reject the Third. So long as we are looking to men, to seek their guidance, follow their leadership, instead of seeking to glorify God, believe and follow His truth, we cannot perceive nor believe in righteousness by faith. The prophet declared - "Cease ye from men, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. 2:22) When we are willing to do this, then we are ready to turn to our only source of help - God alone.

How is all this related to Justification by Faith? I recognize my need. I am a sinner. Neither the works of my hands - the deeds I do - will justify me before God for "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight." (Rom. 3:20) Thus I cannot rely upon myself - a man. To believe that there are things which I can do which will merit me the favor of God and heaven, is to receive the mark of the beast. To trust in some man to get me through is equally disastrous. There is only one mediator between God and man, and that is the Man, Christ Jesus. (I Tim. 2:5)

Those who are justified by faith - wherein the glory of man is laid in the dust, and God does for him what he cannot do for himself - receive from God His seal, not the mark of a man. That seal is "the sign of the cross of Calvary." (Letter 26, 1898: 7BC:978) It means simply that we have fallen on the Rock and have been "broken." A man with his "bones" broken can do little. He is totally dependent.

It is at the Cross, and over the Cross that the great struggle concerning justification is centered. In the Cross is gathered all aspects of travail resultant from sin. To refuse to follow the enemy of God brings stigma and reproach - the Cross. To surrender to the call of the Cross, means death to self, and all that self desires to do - even to merit salvation. To behold the Cross is to see God's wrath against sin. But to take our cross is to find life. Jesus said - "If any man will come after Me - [not the beast] - let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will loose his life shall find it." (Matt. 16:24-25)

What has been the story of the Church in its rejection of the message of Justification by Faith? What is the story today? "Now it has been Satan's determined purpose to eclipse the view of Jesus, and lead men to look to man, and trust to man, and be educated to expect help from man. For years the church has been looking to man, and expecting much from man, but not looking to Jesus, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. Therefore God gave to His servants [Jones and Waggoner] a testimony

that presented the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the third angel's message, in clear, distinct lines." (TM, p. 93)

The present crisis in the Church has produced two distinct groups. One is identified by their advocacy of neo-Adventism. These can best be described by a paraphrase on the words of a well-known hymn:

Nothing in my hands I bring,  
But to Thy Cross, I shun to cling;  
Tho' in many songs, I of it sing.

These still want the world and all that the world offers. They seek to preach Paul, but forget that Paul confessed - "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14)

Due to the emphasis on what is termed, "cheap grace" - a reactionary group has galvanized which also sing the same tune, but with different words:

Very much in my hands I bring  
For Lord wherein else could I sing  
Of all the works I do for Thee;  
But the Cross, from it, excuse Thou,  
me.

In between stands "the bleeding Lamb, our Saviour" - with hands outstretched, still pleading:

"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light." (Matt. 11:28-30)

He is the essence of the Third Angel's Message. Our faith and our confidence is not in the "beast" - man - but in God manifest in the flesh, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification." (Rom. 4:25) We today who are willing to take up our cross will follow Him to where His cross was placed. "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." (Heb. 13:12-13)

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## MARK OF THE BEAST

Leif Kr. Tobiassen

Editor's Note:- The following is taken from The Journal of True Education, February, 1955. It consists of "selections from a baccalaurette sermon delivered at Southern Missionary College, May 15, 1954." While the philosophy of the world concerning which Dr. Tobiassen warned the graduating class has not changed, it has engulfed the Church, and so what was said concerning the mark of the beast is now very apropos within the Church.

Dr. Tobiassen is now in semi-retirement in his native Norway still serving at Trodheim University, where he had been Academic Dean for many years. I am indebted to Dr. Tobiassen for the tools which he gave me during a class in Research and Bibliography. Not only did we learn facts and techniques but we were also challenged during each session of the class to think deeper, and to rightly evaluate the issues which were becoming more pronounced in the Church. This was ten years after the baccalaurette address when Dr. Tobiassen was teaching at Andrews University.

Religious freedom, or any sort of freedom, is a plant that can thrive only in a certain climate. A hundred and seventy years ago, here in America and over in France and elsewhere, men, building upon achievements of the British people through centuries, staked their lives to create a climate favorable to individual freedom. And on this continent, under God, they succeeded. You and I now live comfortably as Seventh-day Adventists on the heritage they carved out to provide scope for the full measure of individual judgment and distinctive decision. In the providence of God this Advent Movement grew in America, not so much because here was money, but primarily because on this continent was a climate of individualism, independence of thought, and freedom for peculiarity. In this climate Adventism has grown strong. In no other climate can Adventist live long. Yet today, around us and among us, this climate is changing.

Although some may be inclined to deny this ominous change, it is, of course, no surprise to the student of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation. The unerring pen of prophecy predicted it. Only

the willfully blind can fail to see how radical and comprehensive is this change, and how far it has already crept, among even the very elect.

My concern is for you who are today graduating from this Adventist college. Will you be among the many who will obediently line up behind the two eloquent question marks in the fourth verse of Revelation 13? - "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" Are you?

One of the most dangerous mistakes that could be made in our preaching would be to mislead our congregations into thinking that this last great war will be over theological interpretations or doctrinal disputes. This is a war over your individual attitude - your attitude toward freedom of opinion and judgment.

It must be admitted that many of your fellow men are ill equipped to fight in this war. By and large they have been molded in an educational system, and under an educational philosophy, in which personal adjustment to the social environment has been set forth as the cardinal virtue. Your fellow men have grown up in a society that worships personal popularity more fervently than any other pagan idol has been worshiped.

Your fellow men have been brought up in an environment that puts the chief premium on the individual's identity with the crowd. Your fellow men are living today in a society in which the cardinal commandment is, Be like the others.

Your fellow men, are indeed, many of them, ill equipped for the fight against the beast. They can but shrug their narrow shoulders and ask helplessly, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"

Are you better equipped than they? Has this Adventist college forged around your soul that personal armor in which you can confidently take up the desperate battle with the beast? - the beast of uniformity - the beast of acquiescence - the beast of conformity. What did you do here these four years? And what did we do to you and for you? What quality of genuine steel have we planted in your spiritual spines?

The penetrating influence of the devil

has long and skillfully prepared the mental attitudes of our generation. You and I have been born into an age in which all are supposed to think alike, look alike, act alike, and be alike. We have been born into an age that despises dissent and rewards conformity. We live in an age, you and I, in which a firm decision is the rarest thing. The organizational policies of government, business, and even the church have been so adapted that there is always someone else's lap into which we can cleverly deposit the hot potato. In the war against which we shall each have to stand alone and take our individual positions, how, then, can we, you and I, fight the beast?

Your fellow men have been carefully conditioned to avoid just such a fight. The profoundest respect for company dogma is instilled into every junior executive who hopes to advance. The fear of disagreement and dissent is spread over the radio and TV networks. The horror of being found in the frightful company of the dissenting minority is felt in the laboratories and libraries. The fear of controversy is topped only by the hysterical fear of being controversial.

The prophecy of Christ that the time would come when the stout hearts of men would fail them for fear, is today being fulfilled all about us. The fear of being different is dwarfing our youngsters. The fear of losing face, the fear of debate, the fear of not being told what to think, the fear of holding outstanding or conspicuous opinions, the fear of voting against the mighty majority - these pagan and primitive fears are today tightening their malignant grip on the souls of our people, preparing them to go along with the millions rather than to fight the beast.

For a hundred years we have preached that the mark of the beast is the willing adherence to an un-Scriptural application of one of the Ten Commandments. That emphasis should, of course, never be weakened. But let not the great deceiver subvert us into thinking that the issue over the mark of the beast is primarily theological, or even doctrinal. The issue over the mark of the beast is psychological - a question of mental and social

attitude, a question of intellectual habit.

To take the mark of the beast is to decide to follow the crowd. To take the mark of the beast is to seek the popularity of conformity rather than to fight for the dignity and integrity of truth. To take the mark of the beast is to abdicate that state of human individuality to which it is the aim of God's plan of salvation to restore us.

To wear the mark of the beast is to deny that independence of mind and spirit with which it is God's eager concern to equip each saint. To accept the mark of the beast is to refuse our position with those who fight and fast and pray and witness, and to join those who acquiesce and adjust and give in and go along.

"Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"

These issues are inescapable. Numerically the forces of the beast are today mightier than ever. Only in conformity is there safety. If safety is what you seek, conform; be like the others.

But God calls you graduates to something much higher. . . God appoints you this day to something more divine than being obedient followers of conformity. . . He has something much more valuable, much more worthwhile.

I wish that you and I could visit the place where I was born. It is a place on the North Sea, neither famous nor particularly beautiful. The ocean pushes heavily upon the land. Year in and year out, wave after wave has hurled itself on the shore with terrific impact. The pressure is gigantic, but the shore never moves. For 4,500 years it has yielded not an inch.

Why not?

Because the shore is surrounded by a sturdy chain of tiny rocky islets, under constant attack by the frightening force of the ocean. Often they are submerged under the giant breakers. With tireless fury, day after day, night after night, year after year, century after century, the sea pushes persistently at them. They are mercilessly beaten and battered; nevertheless, they stand defiantly facing the terrible pressure of the sea, fearlessly

scorning the growling sea - constant, resolute, unbending, yielding not an inch in their faithful fight for the land behind them. . .

It is God's hope that against the pressure, against the impact, you will remain constant, unbending, yielding not an inch; that you will refuse to accept the badge of the beast, fearless in your determined fight against it. This is the hope of God, of whose Word I have reminded you. This is the need of the world, which you propose to enlighten gloriously. This is the expectation of the church, in whose congregation you have been growing up these past years.

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## HOW ARE MEN SAVED? FAITH ALONE? BY WORKS? BY FAITH PLUS WORKS?

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:8-10)

In this summary by Paul, we see faith and works related. The salvation resultant upon a past action on the part of God - God's grace - is a free gift. Works have no part, lest a man should boast. We need to simply face the fact that we can do nothing that merits the grace which God has bestowed "in Christ Jesus." All forms of boasting in regard to one's salvation are excluded. (Rom. 3:27) Paul had written to the Galatians - "God forbid that I should glory [Greek - boast; same as Eph. 3:9] save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14) The words of the hymn express it well - "Nothing in my hands, I being; simply to Thy cross, I cling."

There at the cross, recognizing that I am dead because of trespasses and sins, I accept from Him a resurrection and a

life. Then begins the re-creation through Christ Jesus unto good works.

Unless we are willing to understand what happened at Creation and the Fall, we cannot appreciate the objective of God's design for the "works" in which we are to walk. Man was made in the image of God to reflect His character and likeness. (Gen. 1:26) Man, however, chose to listen to the suggestions of a stranger. To this stranger, he yielded his integrity and gave his allegiance by accepting his version of the Tree of Test. Once compromised, man became a slave in the service of that stranger. From that point on, all men born within the human race - save One - either lived out his days in the bondage of sin with no faith in a deliverance, or he became an active agent in the warfare of the stranger against God.

To God, however, the seducer was not a stranger. He had been created by God, but was now leading a rebellion against God. This war was engulfing the universe. Planet Earth became a conquered bastion of Lucifer. From here he could direct his operations against God. Man had declared himself on his side in the rebellion.

As Commander of the Heavenly hosts, Michael chose to enter enemy territory and there fight in close combat with the adversary. Michael conquered; the power of the Messiah was overwhelming. (Rev. 12:7-10) Through His own death, He made certain the final extinction of him who had the power of death because of sin. But the battle was not over. The warfare was to continue. The book of Revelation reveals the acts and the planned action. In the battle when we surrender to the conquering forces of the Lord Jesus Christ, who are under the command of the Holy Spirit, I change sides. (See DA, p. 352) As a traitor, I should be court-martialed and placed before a firing squad. But in the plan of God, a price was paid for my rebellion, and I am extended amnesty. It is a free gift - it is grace - nothing in which I can boast of myself. I only surrendered.

Once on the Lord's side again, I find the warfare has not ceased. I am assigned a duty, either in the front lines, or in a support unit, or given a commissioned responsibility. In whatever assignment,

I work to carry out the will of the "Captain of the Lord's host" with the power and equipment which He supplies. There are the "works" which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

The Scripture abounds in such metaphors: "Fight the good fight of faith." (I Tim. 6:12) "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but. . . against wicked spirits in heavenly places." (Eph. 6:11-12 margin) "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." (II Cor. 10:4)

In realizing the salvation which the Lord has provided, we face two basic problems: 1) We really do not make a surrender on the field of battle. "The Christian life is a battle and a march. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. The field of conflict is the domain of the heart. The battle we have to fight - the greatest battle that was ever fought by man - is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love." (Mount of Blessings, p. 203) And 2) If we surrender then we want to direct our course of life - even the battle - instead of letting the "Captain of the Lord's host" give the orders and assignments.

When we come to the place where we recognize that we are rebels worthy only of the firing squad of God's just vengeance, and then see what that Sovereign love has provided - a ransom for our lives in the Victim of the Cross, works in harmony with God's design will flow in mighty currents from such an appreciation.

When I survey the wonderous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Since I, who was undone and lost,  
Have pardon through His name and  
word.

Forbid it then, that I should boast,  
Save in the cross of Christ my Lord.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a tribute far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my life, my soul, my all.

## WILSON'S LETTER TO FORD

In the April issue of the Thought Paper (p. 6), we quoted Christianity Today, indicating that on January 27, 1983, Elder Neal C. Wilson "telephoned Dr. Desmond Ford that he was giving the Australian Division the go-ahead to revoke Ford's ordination." Wilson followed the telephone call with a letter which is very revealing in the light of the counsel found in the Scriptures. We will copy the letter, and follow it with the Bible reference. You can draw your own conclusions.

Office of the President

February 3, 1983

Dr. Desmond Ford  
7955 Bullard Drive  
Newcastle, CA 95658

Dear Desmond:

I find no pleasure at all in writing this letter to you for I still hold you and Gill in deep Christian regard and will continue to do so. It is only fair, however, that I pass on to you the decision of the General Conference Officers after receiving the report of your meeting at Millbrae, California, with the General Conference group January 14-17, 1983.

Our brethren reported on the cordial atmosphere and the spirit of Christian fellowship which prevailed at the meetings. They also gave a clear picture of your attitudes and the love you feel toward the church and its people and your appreciation of its fellowship.

I was particularly anxious to see if there was some common ground on which we could build to heal the wounds and mend the breaches and come together so as to bring about a full restoration and fellowship with the church which you have publicly professed to be a part of. As you know, there were many who did not fully share these concerns, but I felt we should proceed. In giving thought to the personnel of the committee, I had in mind men who would listen and patiently discuss the issues.

In the choice of topics for the first meeting the concern was to be able to assess as early as possible whether we could move toward understanding. The counsel

which the Lord has given to church leadership in at least one past doctrinal issue was that unless there is ground to hope for a coming together, long discussions are not helpful to either side. From the report our brethren have brought - and they are unanimous in their views - our approaches and presuppositions, yours as the GNU group and ours in the G.C., in the area of eschatology and the understanding of prophecy, are far apart, even further apart than was the case at the time of the Glasier View meeting. We believe from the remarks reported to us that you see this as clearly as do our brethren who were with you.

This being the case, it is clear to us that no constructive purpose would be served by further study sessions. Even in a case like the 457 B.C. date which you suggested as a topic for study, you and we would come with the same presuppositions and approaches we now have. The position you have taken in regard to all Old Testament prophecy meeting its fulfillment in the first century and having no meaning beyond New Testament times except as reinterpreted by the New Testament, is so radically different that it will divide us on almost every point of eschatology and prophetic interpretation.

We do not judge your sincerity or your Christianity. Our "quarrel" is not with you but with what you are teaching. It is unhappily divisive and confusing to many and we are left with no alternative but to advise the Australian Division to proceed to deal with your case as a minister of the church as seems best to them. I repeat that I find no pleasure in this. I feel nothing but the deepest sorrow and regret and wish with all my heart things could have been otherwise. In doing what we feel bound to do, we do not want to cut off communication with you. You and Gill are still persons, precious people whom I love in Jesus Christ.

May the love of Christ constrain you and may His providence lead and guide you in all your future plans and decisions. With kind regards to you, Gill, and each of your colleagues, I am,

Sincerely your brother,  
Neal C. Wilson

Now read - II John 9-11