

GOD'S HOLY DAY

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The fourth commandment of the Decalogue written by God and delivered to Moses on two tables of stone is given more emphasis than any other of the nine commandments. But the Christian world is divided as to the obligation of its literal observance. This book answers the pertinent question, "Which day shall I keep, and why?" It is a brief but comprehensive review of the history of the Sabbath from Creation to the present time, showing when it was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, and pointing out the unscriptural authority for that change. The New Testament texts often presented for Sundaykeeping are shown to have no validity, and the reader finishes the book with the conviction that the seventh-day Sabbath is indeed God's sign and seal.

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THE SABBATH

THE SABBATH is one of God's choicest gifts to man. It was brought to earth by God Himself, as the crown and glory of the finished creation. Wondrous in beauty must that first Sabbath have been as God, at the end of the six days, rested from all His works which He had made. The heavens were studded with jewels, and the earth was filled with a thousand delights. Earth, sea, and sky proclaimed the glory, power, and love of God.

It would seem that love could do no more than God had done for His own.

And yet God was not satisfied. He had given the earth to the children of men; now He added a bit of heaven. Once a week the Sabbath was to come to earth; once a week God would in a special manner meet with His children; once a week heaven's peace would rest on the whole creation. Coming down from God out of heaven, the Sabbath would descend with healing in its wings, bringing to man rest, peace, and blessing, yea, God Himself. Thrice blessed, it was the golden clasp that bound earth and heaven together, the golden chain that bound the soul to God. As God and man communed together that first Sabbath on earth, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38:7).

But sin and sorrow came in and marred God's perfect creation. Long has evil prevailed, and at times it has seemed that God has forsaken man and left him to his own folly and destruction. From the anguished hearts of millions has ascended the cry to God, "How long, O Lord, how long!" Yet God has not left the earth, nor man. He still meets with His own; He still sends them the holy Sabbath with balm for the weary, quiet for frayed nerves, comfort for distressed hearts, peace for anxious and troubled souls. God is still on the throne. At the determined time He will speak, and will not keep silence. Men shall still hear his voice.

If ever the Sabbath was needed, it is needed now. Amid the tumult of nations, amid the clash of arms, God's voice is heard calling men to worship, to communion, to the Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God. The time has come, and is long overdue, for a Sabbath restoration and reformation. The evil one has almost succeeded in depriving men of God's Sabbath gift, and the church is apathetic. It is time for the Christian, for the church, to awake, and go out to battle for the faith once delivered to the saints. It is time for all to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

THE SABBATH

The Sabbath commandment, by its very nature, underlies all the other commandments; in fact, it is fundamental to religion itself. It is the one commandment which provides time for worship, for contemplation, for communion with nature and with God.

Were there no Sabbath, every day would be a day of labor, and life a continuous round of secular pursuits. Nature, as such, knows no Sabbath. The corn grows every day, so do weeds. The storms, rains, hail, observe no Sabbath. Disasters occur, fires rage, accidents happen, regardless of the day of the week. Multitudinous secular duties call for constant attention, and even seven days a week at times seem not enough to do all the work that demands to be done. Were it not for the Sabbath, men would labor every day and yet not get their work done.

But God recognises the need of rest, spiritual and physical. In the midst of life's pressing demands He calls a halt and bids men cease their activity and give attention to the things of the spirit. To their astonishment, men find that taking time for spiritual duties does not hinder but rather helps in temporal affairs; that the physical rest on the Sabbath does not delay the work but gives them added zest and strength for their common pursuits on the other days of the week. They have found that resting on the Sabbath enables them to do as much work in six days as they formerly did in seven. But over and above any physical gain is the invigoration that comes to the soul through time spent in contemplation, as man in worship comes face to face with himself and with his Maker, and considers the vital themes of life — death, heaven, eternity, duty, and privilege — and probes the depth of his own existence as related to the plan of God.

SPIRITUAL SERVICE

The Sabbath raises man from the level of earthly existence to the plane of the spirit. Six days man toils to provide the needed food, clothing, shelter, and protection against possible contingencies. On the Sabbath he is lifted above all earthly considerations, and communes with his God. On that day he takes his rightful place in creation, lifts his mind to things above, lays aside all that binds him to earth, and enters into the heavenly rest. He meets with those of like precious faith, partakes of the bread which came down from heaven, sits at table with his Lord, and receives His parting blessing as he turns again to his earthly pursuits for another week.

The Sabbath provides the occasion for spiritual service and contemplation. On that day man may consider the marvelous things out of God's law; he may view the glory of God in the heavens above and the earth beneath; he may commune with God and his own soul. Were it not for the time thus provided, man would sustain an irreparable spiritual loss. The Sabbath gives the needed time for contemplation of life and its duties, for God, heaven, and religion. Take the Sabbath away, and the foundation of the other commandments is removed; there would be no stated time for worship, no time dedicated to the consideration of our responsibilities to God and man. Without the Sabbath life would be an endless round of duties and labor, spiritual things would be neglected, and man's highest end would not be attained. If there is to be religion at all, God must provide time for it. This God has done.

The Sabbath command is central in the law of God, the most precious document in the possession of mankind. This law was spoken by God Himself in majesty upon Mount Sinai, confirmed by Christ while on earth, and given to the church and the world as a guide of life and standard of conduct. Its clear, crisp, decisive commands comprehend the whole duty of man. In its original form it is the constitution of the universe; as adapted to man it defines his every duty. It is the foundation of all human law, the bulwark of society and civilization, the protector of liberty, the guardian of morality, the preserver of the home, the security of the state. Obeyed, it brings happiness, prosperity, and peace; disobeyed or ignored, it brings sorrow, disaster, and chaos. Men and nations have disregarded it; pew and pulpit have attempted to disannul it; evil men and seducers have violated it; society has flouted it; yet it remains the one accepted standard of conduct. It is a builder of character, a reprover of sin, a guide of life.

THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT

“REMEMBER THE Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:8-11.

The first word in this commandment, “remember,” sets it apart from the other commandments and lends it distinction. When God gave the Sabbath to man He knew the great value of His gift, and He also knew of the widespread disregard into which it would fall. He knew that Satan would use this commandment as his special point of attack upon the church, and would do everything in his power to cause men to forget the Sabbath. He knew that in time men would lose the sense of the sacredness of the day, and ignore its binding obligation. For these reasons God called special attention to the Sabbath when He announced the law at Sinai, and asked that it be particularly kept in mind. All the commandments of God are vital, and none is to be neglected. But to one He gave distinction above the rest, asking His people not to forget it.

Because of its unique character this commandment has been broken — by saint and sinner alike — more than any other commandment. Men who would never think of being dishonest or telling a falsehood, who would never knowingly break any of the other commandments, think nothing of breaking the Sabbath of the Lord. They ignore entirely the fact that the Lord blessed this day above other days, that He made it for man, and that He has never revoked the blessing with which He once invested it, nor has He taken back His gift. Men forget that in rejecting the gift, they wound the giver.

Breaking the fourth commandment is not like breaking some of the other commandments. A man may kill another in a fit of anger; he may rashly take the name of God in vain; or he may suddenly be overcome by a great passion. But not so with failure to keep the fourth commandment. Sabbathbreaking does not have the excuse of sudden passion or of inordinate desire. It is not like a great sin or a destructive habit. It is rather a symptom of spiritual decline, of departure from God, of estrangement from the promise, of a sickly Christian experience. Let this be emphasized: it is a symptom indicative of disease, and reveals an inward condition of apostasy from God.

He who takes the Sabbath away, takes worship away, closes one of the doors of heaven and greatly impoverishes spiritual life. The Sabbath stands for worship, meditation, reflection, study, prayer, communion, fellowship. If these are neglected or seriously interfered with, religion ceases to be effective, and worldliness takes the ascendancy. For this reason Satan considers the overthrow of the Sabbath one of his best means of causing men to forget God, and of lowering the spiritual tone of the people. As men forget the Sabbath they forget God. As they become careless in Sabbathkeeping they become careless in other religious duties. Sabbathkeeping is an accurate barometer of spiritual life.

THE PLACE OF THE SABBATH

The Sabbath commandment occupies an interesting position in the law of God. Three great commandments that deal with God precede it, and six that deal with man follow it. The Sabbath command belongs to both tables of the law and partakes of the nature of both. It has a Godward and a manward aspect. It is God's Sabbath, but we, men, are to keep it. It combines in a unique way the sacred and the common, outlining our duty to God and man. It divides all time into secular and holy time, and defines man's duty to each. It commands labor and it commands rest, giving to each its allotted share in the plan of God.

Men need a Sabbath. The world is too much with us. We are rushed with so many things that we fail to take time to think. We have no leisure, no time for spiritual exercise, no time for study, reflection, or meditation, only as we deliberately set aside a time for it. This God wants us to do. And

He wants us to choose the time He has chosen. He wants us to “remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

As it would be quite impossible for a little girl to keep her dress clean if she should play in the mud and get her hands soiled, so it is quite impossible for us to keep the day holy unless we refrain from sin and evil and all that defiles. If her little hands were soiled, it would not be long until her dress would be soiled. The only hope of keeping her dress clean would be to stay away from all that is unclean — all that defiles. Only as she kept herself clean could she keep her garments clean.

The parallel is plain. God's Sabbath day is holy. It is a sanctified day. It is God's holy rest. We are not to regard it lightly. We are not to trample it underfoot. We are not to do our own pleasure on it. We are not to speak our own words. We are not to pollute it. We are to keep it holy (Isaiah 58:13; Ezekiel 20:13, 21). This can be done only as we ourselves are holy and keep away from all that defiles and pollutes.

SABBATH REST

Read again the fourth commandment quoted at the beginning of this chapter:

“Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: *but* —” Note that “*but*.” It is well to work, *but*. Some are so interested in work that they cannot stop. Work is their life. From early morning till late at night they work. They hardly take time to eat or sleep.

To such God Says: “It is well that you work, *but* you must not forget that I have other claims upon you. Work is not all. I have appointed a day upon which you are not to do your own work. On that day you are to rest and refresh yourself. You are to turn away from secular things and commune with Heaven. You are to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. It is My day, and I want you to share My rest.”

The reason given in the commandment for observing the Sabbath is not that of our physical well-being, as is popularity supposed. It is true that man requires physical rest to refresh his body. But needful as such rest may be, *that* is not the reason given in the commandment. The reason there given is the example of God. He rested, and so we are to rest. Note the wording: “Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, . . . and rested the seventh day.” That is: God worked, and therefore we are to work; God rested, and therefore we are to rest. It is a matter of example; only later did it become a matter of command. Example is enough; that is what Adam had in the Garden of Eden. Later, because of laxity, it became necessary to add the command.

The Sabbath command is the only commandment in the observance of which God can join man. It would be highly improper to speak of God as keeping the first commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” So it is with the second and the third. Again, it would be highly irreverent to speak of God as keeping the last six commandments. A moment's reflection will make this clear. Stealing, lying, adultery — all these have no place with reference to God. But there is one commandment in the observance of which God can join man: the Sabbath commandment. Man can keep it; God can keep it. Thus the Sabbath is the meeting place of God and man. In the Garden of Eden divinity and humanity joined in its observance. It was the golden clasp that united heaven and earth then; it will again serve that purpose in the earth made new. When God deigned to come to this earth and meet with Adam and Eve, He instituted the Sabbath, blessed and sanctified it, and gave it as a gift to man. The Sabbath is a bit of heaven, God's own gift. Let us take heed, lest we refuse this blessed gift of God.

“The Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27), and is called “a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them” (Ezekiel 20:12). On this basis He invites us to join Him in His regard for the Sabbath, and promises that those “that keep My Sabbaths, and choose the things that please Me, and take hold of My covenant; even to them will I give in Mine house and within My walls a place and a name better than of dons and daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off” (Isaiah 56:4,5). No promise could be of wider import or of greater significance. It indicates strongly what has been mentioned before, that true Sabbathkeeping is indicative of holiness of life, of sanctification, of communion with God, and that the Lord considers it a sign of union with Him.

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH

In regard to the outward observance of the Sabbath, what does the Lord require? First, “In it thou shalt not do any work.” This is defined to refer to our own work and pleasure. “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Isaiah 58:13, 14). Note the words: “Nor doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.” This, then, forbids selfish observance of the day; it forbids using it as a day to please ourselves. This is the negative side of the commandment.

For the positive observance of the day, we must go to the example of our Lord and Saviour when He was here on earth. Christ is “Lord also of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28). “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). “If “all things” were made by Christ, if the Sabbath “was made” (Mark 2:27), then Christ made it. Being thus closely connected with it, He knows how it should be observed, and we may safely follow His example. He will not lead us astray.

CHRIST'S SABBATHKEEPING

How did Christ observe the day? “As His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read” (Luke 4:16). Christ went to church on the Sabbath. This was no spasmodic or occasional attendance. It was “His custom” to do so. He had a part in the service. He “stood up for to read.” It was the custom in those days to invite those who were capable of reading or speaking to lead out in the service. Christ did not draw back when He was so invited. He stood up to read.

But Christ did more than just go to church on the Sabbath. He went about doing good. Often, upon coming out of the synagogue, He would accept an invitation to go to a home, as in the instance recorded in Luke 4:38, 39. On that occasion “He arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon’s house.” Here He found one sick, “taken with s great fever. . . .And He stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her.”

At times this healing was done in the synagogue itself. On one occasion there was a man with a withered hand, and His enemies “watched . . . whether He would heal him on the Sabbath day” (Mark 3:1-5). They did not have long to wait. To the man he said, “Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.”

It was at this time that Christ asked a question which throws light on the meaning of true Sabbathkeeping. the Pharisees were watching Him. He knew that they were ready to take “counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him” (Mark 3:6). But He had a work to do. He must be true to Himself and to His heavenly Father, though it might mean losing His life. So “He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life or to kill? But they held their peace.”

The Sabbathkeeping of the Pharisees was mostly negative. They had numerous rules in regard to what must not be done. With them it was always, You must not do this; you must not do that. Christ was positive. His conclusion was, It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day.

When we sum up what we know concerning the manner in which Christ spent the Sabbath, we find that He went to church, that He preached and healed, that He took walks in the fields, that He studied, prayed, and meditated. Christ was not a recluse, keeping to Himself and withholding from the world His presence and His service. He loved to mingle with other people. He even accepted invitations on the Sabbath to dine with Pharisees where others were present, and He used these occasions to bring out some of His most pertinent lessons for them and for all.

As we understand it, Sabbath observance is to be a demonstration of the gospel in operation. When God commands us to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, He is in that command providing not only for the observance of a day for our benefit, but also for giving the world an object lesson in applied Christianity. The Sabbath was given not only *to* man but *for* man. Rightly observed

and used, it is a mighty means for the proclamation of the true gospel in a way that all can understand. As Christ was the word made flesh, so the Sabbath is heaven transplanted, a day given to man as a reminder of that which once was and which again shall be. It came from God, and it is to be given back to Him again in service.

As we review the Sabbath commandment we notice that its chief demand is holiness. “Remember the Sabbath day to *keep it holy*.” Cessation from labor is commanded, but this is by no means all. He who abstains from work does not by that fact become a Sabbathkeeper and an heir of the promise. He may not do any work on God’s day, but this merely and at best a negative virtue. He is to keep the day *holy*. This means positive goodness. To the writer of Hebrews it means that man is to cease “from his own works, as God did from His” (Hebrews 4:10). The man who ceases from his own works, ceases from sin. Only such a man can keep the Sabbath as God wants it kept. Only he who is truly holy can keep the Sabbath holy.

THE FIRST SABBATH

THE FIRST sunset Adam ever saw was a Sabbath sunset. Thousands of years have passed since then, and tens of thousands of sunsets have testified to the fact that our God is a lover of glory and beauty. Men have again and again witnessed the miracle of night turning into day, and day into night, and have marveled at the exquisite beauty of the scene. They have, in the sunset, seen the wonder, the terror, the majesty, of Sinai; they have seen a replica of Golgotha as heavy clouds gathered about one space of clear, settled glory; they have seen the heavens bathed in the seraphic, wondrous beauty of Paradise as the color harmonies slowly changed from glory into glory, recording in the heavens a picture of unsurpassed loveliness and harmony, and in the soul a token of that peace which passes understanding. Yet with all this it is doubtful that there has ever been a sunset comparable to that first sunset, when God and man together witnessed the ushering in of the first Sabbath on earth.

God could have done many things differently, had His purpose in creation been merely utilitarian. When men want light or darkness they turn a switch on or off, and the desired effect is immediately accomplished. God could have done the same. But He chose another way, the slower way, the way of beauty and wonder. Slowly He caused the light to fade, and the heavenly Artist shows what can be done with the dust of the earth, the mists of heaven, and the light from His appointed luminaries, as He mixes these ingredients in His laboratory and displays the result to man in the sunset. The God who causes a million flowers to bloom unseen, who places the pearl in the ocean and the amethyst among the rocks, must be a lover of beauty. Whatever God does he accomplishes in the most exquisite and beautiful way. No wonder that man is asked to worship him not only in holiness but “in the *beauty* of holiness” (Psalms 29:2).

Men have sinned and defaced the image of God. The earth itself is gradually being transformed, by the wickedness of men, from its original beauty into a shambles of horror and ugliness. But still “the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun” (Psalms 19:1-4).

Desolation may reign in the earth, death may stalk the highways, but God still speaks in and through nature, the heavens still declare the glory of God, and the sunsets still call men to worship the God of beauty, of peace, of love.

“The Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27). It was made differently, however, from the way in which other things were made. Of the rest of creation it is stated, “He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” By divine fiat the world and the things that are therein were called into existence. But no so with the Sabbath. God did not say, “Let there be a Sabbath,” and there was a Sabbath. The Sabbath was not made in a minute, or by divine fiat only. Three distinct acts of God are recorded as being requisite to the making of the Sabbath.

THE FIRST STEP

“On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made” (Genesis 2:2,3).

First, God rested. this rest was a matter of example, for, as already noted, God was not weary. Yet resting was a necessary part in the making of the Sabbath. As God's rest was an example for man to follow; it was necessary that He rest as long as He expected man to rest; that is, not merely part of the day, but the whole day. Hence the statement is made that God rested not merely *on* or *in* the seventh day, but that He “rested *the* seventh day” (Exodus 20:11).

If God rested the seventh day, how are we to understand the statement that “on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made” (Genesis 2:2, 3)? Should not the record read that God

ended His work on the *sixth* day rather than on the *seventh*? We think not. The statement that the heavens and the earth were finished in six days is true; and so is the statement that God ended His work on the seventh day. The heavens and the earth were indeed finished, but God's work was not ended. He had yet to make the Sabbath, and this he could only do on the Sabbath. And so God made the Sabbath on the Sabbath, and He made it by resting. That *ended* His work. The Sabbath was the finishing touch. Only when He had made the Sabbath was His work done.

It is eminently fitting that God should end His work on the seventh day, thus making the Sabbath a definite part of creative, a part which cannot be detached or separated from the rest. Had God ended His work on the sixth day, some might think that the Sabbath was not part of God's original plan, and that hence it might safely be ignored. Whoever believes in a finished creation must of necessity believe in the Sabbath; and conversely, whoever does not believe in the Sabbath does not believe in a finished creation of God. To this the writer of Hebrews has reference when he speaks of the seventh day, and notes that "the works were finished from the foundation of the world." (Hebrews 4:3). God completed His work of creation on the seventh day by making the Sabbath on that day. The record reads, "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it" (Genesis 2:3).

God did not bless the Sabbath in *general*, nor did He bless *a* Sabbath, or even *the* Sabbath, but the Sabbath *day*, and this Sabbath day is the *seventh* day. Doubtless these statements are so very precise and definite for a reason. God wanted no misunderstanding or dispute in regard to what He said or meant. He has done all that could be done to make the matter clear. He could not have been more specific.

THE SECOND STEP

We can understand how God can bless human beings. We can even understand how He can bless animals and give them their work to do in carrying out God's purpose; but how can God bless a *day*, a division of time, neither animate nor inanimate, not alive or dead, a thing without substance, a conception rather than a reality; time, which defies definition, though all mankind is aware of its existence and reality? How can time be blessed so as to be a blessing to man?

Though time and space are beyond human comprehension, each is helpful in understanding the other. Our conception of space helps us to understand time better, and how it is possible for God to bless time.

We go to church to worship God, and enter the edifice dedicated to Him. The church building is merely four walls enclosing a part of space. The space within the walls does not appear different from the space outside. And yet there is a difference. Something has happened to it. It is holy space, space dedicated to the service of God. He is present in the building in a sense in which He is not present outside. God has divided space from space — one is holy; the other is not.

As God can set aside a part of space where He chooses to reveal Himself in a special manner, so God can set aside time. Out of the vast ocean of time, as out of space, He chooses a portion, blesses it, and turns it over as blessed time for man to use as He directs. It appears to be the same kind of time as other time, but it is not. It is blessed time, and is not to be used for common purposes though these in themselves may be worthy. As we would not use a dedicated cathedral for common business purposes, so we are not to use God's holy time for common pursuits, however legitimate they might be in themselves. When God's true worshipers meet together on the Sabbath, they are thrice blessed: they worship a holy God at a holy time in a holy place.

THE THIRD STEP

"God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." The sanctification of the seventh day is the third step in the making of the Sabbath.

Genesis 2:3 states that God "blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." We notice that the reason given for God's blessing and sanctifying the seventh day is "*because* that in it He had rested." Man is not here mentioned. Man had not worked; he had been brought into existence on the sixth day, and had no opportunity to work. But God had worked. He had worked six days, and had rested the seventh. Having finished both His labor and His rest, He blessed and sanctified the Sabbath.

There can be no purpose in God's blessing a day for His own use. His blessing and sanctification must of necessity be for someone else's sake. God is holy; He is always holy; He is no more holy at one time than at another. His holiness does not admit of degrees. But this is not so with men and places. They are holy in proportion to their nearness to God.

To sanctify, according to Webster, means "to make sacred or holy; to set apart to a sacred office or to religious use; . . .to hallow." As it is impossible to impart moral qualities to insensate things, sanctification, as applied to the seventh day, must mean the same as sanctification in the case of the tabernacle and its furniture: set apart, dedicated to a holy use.

As a religious edifice is dedicated and set apart for religious purposes, so the Sabbath was dedicated, sanctified, and set apart. The sanctification, of course, had reference to the future, and not to the past. The dedication of a church edifice takes place at a definite time, but its effect is pointed toward the future. The ordination of a minister to the sacred work of God is a definite act looking to his future usefulness in God's cause, and so the sanctification of the Sabbath was a forward-looking act, having the good of mankind in view.

I emphasize this matter, which indeed is self-evident, for the reason that there are those who insist that the blessing and sanctification of the seventh day had reference to the original Sabbath, and to that Sabbath only, and not to succeeding ones. Such a statement seems altogether unwarranted, and even absurd. As well claim that the dedication of a church, the sanctification of holy utensils, the setting apart of a man to the holy work of the ministry, are acts that refer to that particular moment only, and immediately thereafter become of none effect.

THE SABBATH MADE FOR MAN

"The Sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27). It was not made for God or for the angels, good or bad; it was not made for any particular class or race of men, not made for Jew or Gentile; it was made for man, mankind, the whole human race. Adam and Eve constituted the whole of mankind in the beginning; hence the Sabbath was made for them, for their children, and for their children's children. Only in this way could the Sabbath be said to be made for man.

If only the original creation Sabbath was blessed and sanctified, there would be little point to the statement that the Sabbath was made for man; not could it in any way be a blessing to man. It would merely be a historical fact, a constantly receding point in time, ever growing smaller.

One time Christ and the disciples were walking through the fields on the Sabbath day. The disciples were hungry and plucked some of the corn, an act which was considered lawful on other days, but which the Pharisees did not permit on the Sabbath. Always on the alert to find some cause for complaint against Christ, the Pharisees immediately went to Him, saying, "Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?" (Mark 2:24).

Christ was not slow in defending what they had done. He told the Pharisees that the Sabbath was intended to be a blessing to mankind, not a burden or a yoke. It was lawful to do well on the Sabbath; it was lawful to minister to the needs of mankind; and, citing David, He tells them that it was lawful to do what the disciples had done. Then He announces the true principle of Sabbathkeeping: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). To this He adds the significant words, "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (verse 28).

Christ had a particular reason for declaring Himself Lord of the Sabbath. He considered the Sabbath a vital factor in religion, directed its proper observance, and proclaimed Himself Lord of it. To Him it was more than a historical fact. He considered it a living reality, an institution to be defended from Pharisaical intrusion, an institution of which He was Lord.

The Hebrew word for *sanctify* is generally so translated throughout the Old Testament. There are a few exceptions, however. Two of these we notice as we close this study.

When the cities of refuge were selected as places to which a manslayer might flee to escape the wrath of the avenger of blood, "they appointed Kedesh in Galilee" (Joshua 20:7). The word here translated "appointed" is the same word that is elsewhere used for *sanctify*, as the marginal reading confirms.

The other translation of the word is found in 2 Kings 10:20, where "proclaim" is found. "Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal."

From these Biblical uses of the word we are warranted in affirming that when God sanctified the seventh day He set it apart for a holy use, He appointed it as the Sabbath. He proclaimed it a holy day. As Lord of the Sabbath, Christ announced that He made it for man, to be a blessing and a help to him, to serve as a reminder of creation and His love to man. It is His special gift to mankind, who need it even more than did the holy pair in the Garden.

THE SABBATH AT SINAI

WHEN GOD had delivered His people from Egyptian bondage and brought them into the wilderness, He made known to them the conditions upon which they might expect His continued blessing and protection. Said God: “If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.” (Exodus 15:26). This promise was given to them on the condition that they “give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes.”

The bread which the people had brought with them from Egypt did not last many days, and they soon became hungry and began to murmur. “Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” (Exodus 16:3). The Lord quickly answered them, “I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, *that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.*” (verse 4).

Moses now called the people together and instructed them. “This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. (verse 23). They were each day to gather manna for one day, but on the sixth day they were to gather a double portion, for Moses had announced to them that no manna would fall on the Sabbath. Friday they were to do all their cooking, and on the Sabbath they were to eat that which they had prepared.

On the Sabbath, Moses said to them, “Eat that today; for today is a Sabbath unto the Lord: today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none.”

Despite all that God had said, “there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather” (verse 27). They had had definite instruction. There could be no misunderstanding. They knew just what they should do and what was expected of them; yet some “went out . . . on the seventh day for to gather.” “And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day” (verses 28-30).

THE SABBATH NOT A NEW INSTITUTION

The Sabbath is not here presented as a new institution that is now being introduced for the first time. Rather, it was well known. Nor was the law new to them. God speaks familiarly to them of the law, and promises them freedom from sickness if they will “give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes” (Exodus 15:26). This phraseology is practically the same as that used of Abraham many years previously, “Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws” (Genesis 26:5).

From this we know that God's commandments, statutes, and laws were known to Abraham, that he kept them, and that he taught his children to keep them (Genesis 18:19). Isaac and Jacob were his son and his grandson, being respectively seventy-five and fifteen years old at the death of Abraham. It was Jacob who later went to Egypt. We are therefore assured that the children of Israel in Egypt knew of God's law and His statutes, and that when God spoke to them of keeping His commandments, they knew exactly what He meant.

Those who hold that the law of God and the Sabbath were not known before Moses and Sinai are not well informed. Abraham knew of God's commandments, statutes, and laws, and he taught his children after him. God Himself observed the seventh-day Sabbath in the Garden of Eden; therefore,

Adam and Eve were acquainted with the Sabbath. And now God decided to prove whether Israel would keep His law, or no.

Israel was in the wilderness, where there was no opportunity to till the land or have large flocks of cattle as they had had in Egypt. Unless food was provided for them in some supernatural way, they would starve. God therefore proposed to feed them with bread from heaven, and to give them an object lesson in Sabbathkeeping.

God caused the manna to fall six days of each week. God could have let manna rain down from heaven every other day, had He so desired, or every third day, or one day a week only, or seven days a week. But God chose to let the manna fall six days, and to let none fall on the seventh day. To make up for this loss, He let twice as much fall on the sixth day as fell on the other days, so that there would be sufficient for all needs on the seventh day. This would be an effective way to teach Israel two important things: to work six days and to rest on the seventh.

But God did more than this. He so arranged matters that the manna would keep sweet only one day, and after that it would spoil. This made it doubly necessary for the people to gather every day; that is, to work six days. God could just as well have arranged it so that the manna would keep two days, or seven, or any other number of days. When He made it keep only one day He did it for a purpose, as already noted.

But what about the Sabbath, when no manna fell? That in itself would make the Sabbath stand out above the other days. Could He do anything else to impress upon the minds of the people the sacredness of the Sabbath? Yes, if God should miraculously preserve the manna from spoiling on the Sabbath, that would be an added lesson in Sabbathkeeping. And so God decided that during the week He would keep the manna sweet only twenty-four hours, but that in honor of the Sabbath He would keep Friday's manna sweet on the Sabbath also. The first was a lesson in working six days; the second, a lesson in keeping holy the Sabbath.

The falling of the manna was thus a national lesson in Sabbathkeeping as related to the seventh day. Had this lesson been given once, it would then have been of tremendous significance in regard to God's estimate of the Sabbath. Had it been repeated twice, there could have been no doubt regarding God's intent. Had it been repeated week after week for a year, all would know that God wanted to impress the lesson of the Sabbath upon Israel so deeply and thoroughly that they would never forget it. What shall we say, then, when this lesson was repeated not once or twice or ten times, but more than two thousand times; that is fifty-two times a year for forty years! If Israel had not learned the lesson by that time, there could be no reason for continuing the lesson.

THE SABBATH AT SINAI

In the third month after Israel departed out of Egypt, they came into the Wilderness of Sinai. Never had a people seen the power of God manifested in such a striking way as had Israel during those two months. Now they were to witness the climax. They were to hear God Himself speak from heaven.

At the time God had appointed to meet with Israel all the people were gathered around the mount, which was fenced off, so that neither man nor animal might unwittingly trespass on holy ground. "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. Exodus 19:18, 19. God then came down upon Mount Sinai and spoke to them the Ten Commandments, as recorded in Exodus.

THE LAW OF GOD

"God spake all these words saying,

"And God spake all these words, saying,

"I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

1. "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me."

2. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

4. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

5. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."

6. "Thou shalt not kill."

7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

8. "Thou shalt not steal."

9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

10. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's". Exodus 20:1-17.

THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT

In the law proclaimed on Sinai the Sabbath commandment looms large. Before this, God had given Israel a visual demonstration of His high regard for the Sabbath. In fact, the very week the commandment was announced from Mount Sinai, the manna fell copiously on the sixth day, and on the Sabbath none fell, a reminder of God's desire in regard to the day of rest. Of all the commandments, this was the one that was emphasized, for the Sabbath was the day in which Israel would have time to instruct their children in the ways of God. The keeping of this commandment would affect the keeping of all others. It was the one and only commandment that provided time for the contemplation of God and His works.

Is the ten-commandment law meant to apply to the whole world, or is it applicable to Israel only, and of no concern to Christians? This is an important question. There is little dispute about the nine other commandments; the question really concerns the fourth only. Are Christians to keep the fourth commandment? Is this a moral commandment?

This question will be discussed more fully as we consider the New Testament aspects of the Sabbath, but it may be well at this time to make some general observations on the law, often called the moral law.

The Ten Commandments have all the earmarks of a universal law. In fact, I doubt that the question of universality of the law would ever be raised were it not for the fourth commandment. All agree that the commandments that deal with stealing, swearing, killing, coveting, and worshipping God are moral commandments, applicable to all classes and nations of men. Their universal application is admitted, and I feel under no obligation to convince a man who thinks otherwise. I consider that point settled. This brings us back to the question of the Sabbath commandment. Does this commandment belong to the moral law; and is it binding on all men? The preponderance of evidence is in favor of the Sabbath commandment's being of the same nature as the other commandments.

The Sabbath commandment is a moral commandment on a level with the others; in fact, it underlies them all.

The first three commandments deal with God and His worship. We are to have no other gods before Him. We are not to make any image or any likeness of anything in heaven and earth, and worship it. We are to be reverent and respectful, and not take the name of the Lord in vain. Then comes the Sabbath commandment, which defines the time when we are to worship God and attend to

the things of the spirit. Had this commandment been left out, there would have been no stated time commanded in which to worship. In that case men would of necessity have had to supply the omission. If God is to be worshipped by His people, if there is to be any united adoration of the most high God, if there is to be any order and system in religion, time must definitely be planned for and given to it. This makes the Sabbath a necessity. Its omission from the Decalogue would be fatal to religion. Let us repeat, If God had not appointed a day, men would have had to do so. A day of worship belongs to religion.

We have noted above and wish to emphasize it, that the Sabbath underlies all the commandments, providing as it does the time needed for the contemplation of man's duty to his Maker and his fellow men. When we consider the plan of God with regard to the Sabbath, that it is this day upon which He depends for the instruction of His children in the ways of God; that this is the time which He Himself has set apart for this most important work; and that unless this time is jealously guarded, God would be deprived of the worship due Him — when we take all this into consideration, it is clear that not only does the Sabbath have a place in the moral law, not only is it a moral commandment in itself, but in a certain sense it is that which binds all the commandments together, that which binds earth and heaven together, provides unity among the people of God, and places the spiritual stamp upon all. Let no one despise or reject the Sabbath of God. Let no one neglect it.

THE SABBATH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

SOME OBJECT to the Sabbath as being a Jewish institution. They maintain that the Sabbath was given to the Jews, and that it is not for the Christians. Granted that it was given to the Jews on Mount Sinai. But so was the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." The one is as much Jewish as the other. In fact, all the commandments were given to the Jews. The Jews were told not to kill, commit adultery, swear falsely, or covet. All these commandments are Jewish, if the Sabbath is Jewish. Christ also was given to the Jews; He was born of a Jewish mother and was reared in a Jewish home. The prophets were all Jews, the apostles were all Jews, the gospel was first preached to the Jews, every one of the books of the New Testament was written by a Jew. Even when we get to heaven we shall see the names of the twelve disciples of Christ, Jews, on the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem; on the gates of the city will be the names of twelve other Jews, the twelve sons of Israel. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all Jews, will be prominent in the kingdom, and Christ will sit upon the throne of His father David, a Jew. Under these circumstances it is better for Christians not to speak sneeringly of the Sabbath of the Lord as being Jewish, as though that were a term of reproach. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; (Romans 2:28, 29).

"The Sabbath was made for man." These words are ever appropriate when the universality of the Sabbath is under consideration. They should forever settle the question of the Sabbath's being only a Jewish institution. Christ made the Sabbath. He says that He made it for man. He knows. Jews are men, and so the Sabbath was made for them. Christians are men; so the Sabbath was made for them. Whoever claims the title and right to the term *man* may know that God made the Sabbath for him. The Sabbath is no more Jewish than are the other commandments.

EZEKIEL'S STORY OF THE EXODUS

Ezekiel lived at the time of the beginning of the Babylonian captivity. Some of the people of Israel had already been carried into captivity, and others would soon follow. This was because of their sins — the same sins of which they had been guilty in Egypt and in the wilderness.

Certain elders came to Ezekiel to inquire of the Lord. This was a common custom in Israel. When there were matters in which they needed special guidance and instruction from God, the elders would appear before the prophet, asking him whether he had any light from the Lord on the subject. In this particular case there was no hesitation in the answer. "As I live, saith the Lord, I will not be inquired of by you." Ezekiel 20:3.

The Lord now proceeds to tell them why He will not be inquired of by them. This leads Him to go into detail about the fathers, and why He did not help them. The inference was that He could not bless Israel now for the same reason that He could not prosper Israel then.

God begins the story by telling of the time when Israel was in cruel bondage in Egypt and prayed for deliverance. As a condition for helping them, God, through Moses, called to them, "Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt:" Ezekiel 20:7.

But Israel would not hear. They wanted to be delivered, but not at such a cost. They rebelled against God and did not cast away their idols. God therefore decided not only that He would not help them, but that He would punish them in the land of Egypt and leave them there. But God, in His mercy and for His name's sake, took pity on them and brought them out of the land of Egypt, that His name "should not be polluted before the heathen" (verse 9).

Through the interposition of God, Israel experienced wonderful deliverance at the Red Sea and came into the Wilderness of Sinai. It might be supposed that they would now be ready to cast away their idols and serve the Lord with all their heart. But they were still rebellious. God bore long with them and patiently instructed them. "I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt," He says, "and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them My judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to

be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them” (verses 10-12).

The Sabbath in its essential nature is a sign of sanctification. A man may be disrespectful of his parents without being guilty of adultery. He may covet his neighbor's goods and yet not make any graven image. He may have great temptation along one line and very little along another line. But not so with Sabbathbreaking.

Violation of the Sabbath commandment is not so much sin, as such, as it is a symptom that reveals an attitude that touches all the commandments. Sabbathbreaking in its essential nature is a rejection of God, a species of rebellion. It is not like killing or stealing or committing adultery. It reveals an inner state of disobedience; and disobedience is basic in all sin.

Contrariwise, obedience to the Sabbath command shows a willingness of spirit that reaches far beyond the specific commandment into the very heart of religion, which in its essence is obedience. The man, therefore, who keeps the Sabbath holy does more than keep one of the commandments of God. He arrays himself on the side of obedience and law, regardless of any ulterior motive, and thus measures up to God's standard of what a man should be.

Israel neither understood nor appreciated the gift which God gave them in the Sabbath. As they had rebelled against God in Egypt, so they rebelled against Him in the wilderness. They did not walk in His statutes, and they did not keep His law and His Sabbath. “They despised My judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and My Sabbaths they greatly polluted” (verse 13).

REBELLION OF ISRAEL

Twice already Israel had rebelled against God: first in Egypt and then in the wilderness. God remonstrated with them, but they would not hear; nor would they cast away their idols. He therefore proposed to destroy Israel and pour out His “fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them,” But again God did not carry out His plan, lest His name “be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out” (verse 14). So God spared them once more.

However, Israel came so far short of God's ideal and purpose, that He determined not to bring them “into the land which I had given them, . . . because they despised My judgments, and walked not in My statutes, but polluted My Sabbaths” (verses 15, 16). As a result of this decision, Israel was left to wander in the wilderness for forty years until the generation died which had come out of Egypt.

Having thus dealt with the fathers whom He had brought out of Egypt, He now addressed the younger generation: “Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols: I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; And hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God. Ezekiel 20:18-20.

But the children had learned nothing from the experience of their fathers. “They walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my Sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness.” Ezekiel 20:21.

God's patience is now at an end, and He proclaims that He will scatter Israel “among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries; because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my Sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols.” (verses 23, 24).

A LESSON FOR ISRAEL IN CAPTIVITY

As noted above, when the elders came to inquire of Ezekiel, many had already been carried captive to Babylon, and the rest would soon follow. They were eager to know God's mind, and for this reason they had sent a deputation to the prophet to hear what God had to say. This gave the Lord an opportunity to rehearse to them the story of the deliverance of their fathers from Egyptian bondage, and their experiences in entering the Promised Land.

Israel was now in a parallel situation. As their fathers were in slavery in Egypt, so Israel was now about to go into captivity in Babylon. As God formerly had delivered Israel out of Egypt, so Israel now asked to be delivered out of Babylon. The sins that afflicted Israel in Egypt were the same

sins that afflicted Israel now, and the conditions of salvation and delivery were also the same. What God asked of Israel of old, He asked of the present Israel.

The charges which God placed against Israel may be listed as follows:

1. They had failed to cast away the abomination of their eyes, and had defiled themselves with the idols of Egypt. This doubtless had reference to the filthy and obscene rites of the impure phallic worship which was at that time prominent in Egypt.

2. They had not walked in God's statutes, but had despised His judgments. This is what is referred to as rebellion, a general state of disinclination to do the will of God as well as of active opposition.

3. They had greatly polluted God's Sabbaths. This is emphasized four times, in Ezekiel 20:13, 16, 21, 24. In addition, the Sabbath is mentioned two times as a sign of sanctification and of the knowledge of God (verses 12, 20).

After God has thus formed the elders of the transgressions of Israel of old, He now tells them that they are no better than their fathers, and that He will not be inquired of by them, but will bring them into "the wilderness of the people," and "purge out from among" them "the rebels," and not permit them to enter the land of Israel (verses 35, 38). On the other hand, those who turn to the Lord, He will accept, "and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen" (verse 41). The failure of present Israel He lays directly on the leaders, the prophets and priests. "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. [28] And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken." Ezekiel 22:26-28.

From Ezekiel we thus get a clear account of the reasons why Israel of old did not please God, why they died in the wilderness, and why the children also failed. They had forsaken the Lord for Egyptian idols, had refused to walk in God's statutes, had despised His judgments, and above all had polluted the Sabbath, which from the very beginning had been God's sign of sanctification.

JEREMIAH'S MESSAGE

Israel had failed miserably in coming up to God's expectation at the time of the Exodus from Egypt. They had now come to the time of another test in their imminent Babylonian bondage. Nebuchanezzar's army had already carried many into captivity, and their beautiful city was soon to be laid to waste.

Again and again God had, through the prophets, sent word to them that if they would turn to the Lord with their whole heart and repent of their evil, the Lord would be gracious to them. He had called their attention to the Sabbath and to the great and wonderful promises given them on condition of obedience.

Hear these words from Jeremiah, one of the messages that came to them before they were finally carried away into captivity.

"Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever. And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD. But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem

on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.” Jeremiah 17:21-27.

SUBSEQUENT HISTORY

From the subsequent history of the Jews it appears that the Babylonian captivity and the remonstrances of the prophets at last made some impression on the people. They appear finally to have understood that their failure to keep the Sabbath had been the cause of their calamities from earliest times. They read the history of God's proving Israel in the wilderness, of how He rained manna from heaven for forty years and taught them concerning the sabbath. They read Ezekiel's account as he repeated to them the history of Israel's later failure. they read of Jeremiah's appeal to them to keep the Sabbath and the blessing that would come to them if they should do so. They learned from this that national greatness would never be theirs unless they kept the Sabbath; but that if they did, kings and princes should come to them, and Jerusalem should stand forever. They knew that God would do just as He said, for had they not been carried into captivity? Had not their city and their Temple been burned, and had not God released them from their captivity at the end of the seventy years, as he promised? From now on they would be faithful; they would do all that God required of them, and especially would they be careful of the Sabbath.

And careful they were. The Babylonian captivity marks a definite change in Israel. Nevermore did they turn to idols; nevermore did they make of the Sabbath a common working day. If it was as important as they were told, they would hedge it about with all kinds of restrictions. If their national existence and the blessing of God depended upon their faithfulness in observing the Sabbath, they would certainly keep it.

The mistake they made now was as fatal as the mistake they had formerly made. They began to consider the Sabbath a means of salvation, both personal and national, instead of a sign of sanctification. God wanted a holy people, and the Sabbath was to be the sign of this. Now they stressed the sign which could only be of little value without the accompanying reality of holiness.

Christ did His best to restore to Israel the Sabbath as God originally had given it to them, to be a blessing rather than a burden. He did not need to stress strictness in the minutiae of Sabbathkeeping, for Israel had already gone too far in that direction. With their new viewpoint the people, and especially the Pharisees, believed Christ to be slack in the observance of the Sabbath. They did not understand that He was attempting to show them its real purpose; that doing good, healing the sick, and committing acts of mercy on the Sabbath were pleasing in the sight of God, rather than mere mechanical observance of the day.

Thus did Israel in the time of Christ fail as completely as had ancient Israel in understanding the true meaning of the Sabbath. They failed in a different way, it is true, but they failed as definitely.

CHRIST AND THE LAW

BY MANY of His contemporaries Christ was considered a radical; especially was this true of the Pharisees, who continually dogged His footsteps, ready to catch any phrase from His lips that might be construed against Him. They hated Him, and were willing to do anything to destroy His influence with the people, for “the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for Him” (Luke 8:40). They had hopes that in the matter of the law they might find the occasion they sought. As the conspirators of old said of Daniel, “We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God” (Daniel 6:5), so these hoped that when Christ declared Himself on the law, he would furnish the occasion that would lay Him open to the charges they were anxious to place against Him.

Christ was never neutral or negative. His statements were unequivocal. They not only could be understood, but they could not be misunderstood. He was straightforward, clear cut, positive, dynamic. People always knew where He stood. He did not attempt to gain popular favor by flattery or lowering standards. Sin was sin to Him, and He called it by that name. It was these traits in Christ that the Pharisees would make it easier for them to find some accusation against Him that would count with the people.

The Jews in the time of Christ were great sticklers for the law. Especially were the Pharisees observant of the letter of the law and intolerant of such as did not or could not measure up to their requirements of observance. They had added many ordinances since God first gave the law, and it was a life study to know what was required. It was impossible for the common people to have this exact and comprehensive knowledge; hence they were unable to reach the standard set. The Pharisees held that the “people who knoweth not the law are cursed” (John 7:49).

Under these circumstances it was of great interest to the Jews, and especially to the Pharisees, to know Jesus' attitude toward the law. As a teacher it was incumbent upon Him to make His position known and tell the people plainly where He stood. It was in this announcement that the Pharisees hoped to entrap Him, for they knew he was outspoken and would not leave them in doubt regarding His position.

Jesus did not disappoint them. In His first recorded sermon He dealt exhaustively with the law, and made His position known. Nine blessings he pronounced upon the poor, the mourners, the meek, the hungry and thirsty, the merciful, the pure, the peacemakers, the persecuted, the reviled; then He said:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:17-19.

Jesus knew what was in men's hearts and what they were thinking. Answering their unspoken thoughts, He said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets.” This was the very thing the Pharisees were thinking. Had they not seen Him do the unprecedented thing of driving out the buyers and sellers from the Temple? Had they not seen Him make a scourge of small cords, overthrow the tables, and scatter the money of the changers? Had He not spoken of the Temple as His Father's house? (John 2:13-17). If He *began* His work this way, what might the end be? Evidently He was a radical that would bear watching. He seemed to have little respect for the Temple appointments. Was He attempting to destroy the law and the prophets? With great interest all had been awaiting His pronouncement on the law. And now they had it. He was not abolishing the law. He was standing by it. Not even a tittle or a jot should fail. He was not destroying it, as some had feared. He was fulfilling it.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.” The law here mentioned is, broadly speaking, the writings of Moses, but specifically the

moral law, the Ten Commandments, from which the writings of Moses primarily derived their name. By “the prophets” are meant the writings of the prophets, in the Old Testament.

Jesus now selects two of the Ten Commandments that show clearly to which law He is referring, and also how He fulfills the law. The Commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” He explains, has a deeper meaning than that of merely taking the life of a man. Whosoever hates his brother has taken the first step in transgression. In saying this, Christ corrects the conception which some had that the keeping of the commandments was merely an outward compliance that did not touch the inward state of the heart. He interprets the law as being spiritual, as having application to the mind and heart, rather than being a mere rule of outward conduct.

This He emphasizes again in His interpretation of the seventh commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Men may transgress this commandment in their minds as well as by an overt act.

From these interpretations we are on sure ground when we hold that the law here mentioned in a specific and definite way refers to the Ten Commandments. So far from Christ's destroying this law, He magnifies it, shows its far-reaching character, and announces that he who transgresses it even in thought “shall be in danger of the hell fire” (Matthew 5:22, R. V.). Christ left no doubt in the mind of any regarding where He stood on the law. He took His stand squarely on the Ten Commandments, saying that “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Whoever should break one of the least of the commandments, and teach men so, should be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; whereas he who should do and teach them should be called great by heaven's inhabitants.

It is incumbent upon every teacher of religion to declare himself on the law. Men have a right to know whether the religion he teaches has a background of law and order, or whether it is one of those irresponsible movements that demand privileges but shun responsibilities. Especially in these days, when lawlessness prevails, should the position of every religious movement on the question of the law be made clear. Christ defined His position at the outset of His career. Every religious teacher should do the same.

If the Pharisees had hoped to find some cause of complaint against Christ in the matter of the law, they were disappointed. If they thought that He had come to destroy it — as seems evident from the form of Christ's pronouncement — or to change or abrogate it, they had entirely miscalculated His purpose. Their evil intent was frustrated, and they themselves stood exposed. Christ believed in the law. As the Pharisees were careful of the smallest matters, so Christ omitted no jot or tittle. If they stood by the law and the prophets, so did He. But in the conception of the nature of the law Christ and the Pharisees were as widely separated as the east is from the west. To the Pharisees the law was a set of rules to direct the outward conduct of man, and by which they might judge others. To Christ the law was a spiritual counselor and friend, a guide, an aid to conscience, a mirror to the soul, a revealer of the will of God, a close ally of the Holy Spirit in convincing men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

Christ did not treat the law as a formal, cold, legal enactment. To Him it was the way of life, and not a series of prohibitions. He believed, as did Paul, that “the commandment . . . was ordained to life” (Romans 7:10). Of a full heart He could say, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart” (Psalms 40:8). He had inspired the Psalmist to say: “I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold;” “and Thy law is my delight;” “O how I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day;” “Thy testimonies are wonderful;” “I will keep the commandments of my God” (Psalms 119:127, 174, 97, 129, 115). This conception was not mere sentiment with Christ, but a living reality.

If we accept Jesus' interpretation of the law as the law of love, we can better understand Paul's statement: “Love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10). God Himself is love. His law is love. Christ says, “If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love” (John 15:10). “Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” “If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:23, 15).

NEED OF A NEW VIEW

We need a new view of the law of God. It is not, as some call it, a yoke of bondage; it is not a hard taskmaster; it is not a bond of restraint. It is a glorious law of liberty, of love, of friendly guidance. It is God ordained, a transcript of His own character, the most precious thing in the sanctuary above, the foundation of the mercy seat and of the glorious plan of salvation. It is kept in the heart of Christ, free from any possible harm that might come to it (Psalms 40:8). It is the perfect embodiment of the will of God, the supreme rule of life. Why should any think lightly of it? It reflects the very heart and mind of the Almighty.

The law of love is the law of life. No man who does not love God can be saved. But “this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” (1 John 5:3). No man can be saved who does not know God. But “he that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4). No man can be saved who continues in sin. And “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). If, therefore, we are to be saved, we must love God and keep His commandments. If we say we love God, we must prove that love in the way God demands. We must cease transgressing the law, for “sin is the transgression of the law.” At the conclusion of His work on earth Christ could say, “I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love” (John 15:10). If we follow Him, we shall not go astray.

With Christ’s definition in mind that the law of God is the law of love, and that on this hang all the law and the prophets, we accept His statement of the law as a way of life. There is no other way. “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8). But to know God is life eternal (John 17:3). If, therefore, we do not know God unless we love, and the knowledge of God is eternal life, and the only way that “we do know that we know Him [is], if we keep His commandments,” and this keeping of the commandments “is the love of God,” we are again shut up to the proposition that the law of God plays a prominent part in our relationship to God (1 John 2:3; 5:3). Only at the peril of our souls can we neglect it. Such was the teaching of Jesus, and, being the teaching of Jesus, it is also the teaching of all who follow Him.

HAS THE SABBATH BEEN CHANGED?

AS CHRISTIANS we are vitally concerned with the teaching of Christ and the apostles. In the final analysis Christ is our example and guide in all Christian duties. Christ is the Saviour of all men, Jew and Gentile alike. There is no other name in heaven or in earth by which we are to be saved. Although Christ lived in Judea, His message is not a Judean message. His love and salvation are all-embracing. To follow Him is life; to reject Him is death. He came to this world that we might have an object lesson in applied Christianity. He came to be the way, the truth, and the life. If we follow Him, we will not go astray. There is no higher authority than Christ's. His word is final on all matters of life and doctrine.

We have already discussed Christ's attitude toward the law. He made it very plain that He had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill and magnify it (Isaiah 42:21; Matthew 5:17-19). The Jews and the Pharisees tried repeatedly to catch Him in word or deed about the law, but were unable to do so. Early in His ministry He made His position clear. He taught that not one jot or tittle of the law should pass. He stood stiffly for the law, and made that known to all. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" He challenged (John 8:46). There was no answer. Christ believed in and kept the law. "I have kept My Father's commandments," Christ says, "and abide in His love" (John 15:10). There can be no dispute concerning this. What about the attitude of His disciples?

The apostles took the same stand on the law as did Christ. That, of course, would be expected. Note how indignantly Paul repels the charge that faith makes void the law. "Do we then make void the law through faith?" he exclaims. "God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31). There were no stronger words of protest that Paul could find than those he used: "God forbid." The charge was so preposterous, so out of harmony with all that he taught and believed, that he burst out in vehement protest at the very thought.

The idea that either Christ or the apostles would attempt to annul the law of God is so strange and amazing that it seems impossible that men who speak thus are aware of the implication of their words. Abolish the law! Abolish the Ten Commandments!

Consider the commandments. Can a Christian look at them and say that they are, or ought to be, abolished? Is the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," abolished? or the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery?" or, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me?" God forbid! Such teaching is from beneath and not from above. Let all Christians forever banish any such idea from the mind. God did not proclaim the law from heaven and announce severe penalties for its transgression, merely to abolish it later. God did not lay down rules for man's conduct, then send His Son to die because men transgressed those rules, and immediately afterward annul the very law that demanded the death of Christ. If the law were to be annulled, it should have been annulled *before* Christ died. This would have saved Him the agony and terror of the cross. To keep the law in force just long enough to exact the penalty of death, and then annul it, is making the cross of none effect and Christ's death a miscarriage of justice.

It is truly amazing that religious teachers can believe in the abolition of the law. What do they mean by it? Surely not that men are now at liberty to disregard the commandments of God, that men may steal, kill, and commit adultery with impunity.

I believe I know what some of them mean. They hold that the day of the Sabbath has been changed from Saturday to Sunday. This, of course, means changing the law. It seems inconsistent to abolish one of the Ten Commandments and only one; and so they abolish all, and re-enact such as they think should remain, which in this case means all but the fourth. This they rewrite as they think it should read. They do not even believe that *all* of the fourth commandment is annulled. They contend that only part of the commandment is annulled which deals with a specific day. They hold that the *Sabbath* has not been abolished, but that the *seventh day* has.

This position brings the controversy out into the open. It is a question between the seventh and the first day of the week. The claim is that the Sabbath has been transferred from the seventh to the first day; that Christ did this in virtue of His being Lord of the Sabbath, or that the disciples made the change.

THE APOSTLES AND THE SABBATH

Let us consider the possibility of the apostles' changing the Sabbath from one day to another.

A law publicly announced cannot be secretly annulled. If a change in the law is desired, the change should be made by an authority as great as the one who first enacted it, and the nature of the change should be made plain.

God Himself led the way in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. He Himself proclaimed it in flaming fire from the mount. He Himself wrote it in enduring stone. Multitudes of God's people were witnesses and heard the proclamation, and myriads of angels were there.

None of these conditions was present at the time when the first day of the week was supposed to have been instituted. Sunday came in unannounced, unheralded, unnoticed, in every way an anticlimax to the original institution and inauguration of the Sabbath of the Lord. If God had anything to do with the first day of the week, we must draw the conclusion that He wanted the change made in the most secret and inconspicuous way possible; for on the first Sunday *nobody knew that any change had been made, not even the disciples*, who some say are supposed to have made it! They were in as complete ignorance as the rest, having locked themselves in a room for fear of the Jews (John 20: 19).

We can see no consistency in God's announcing a law from heaven in the presence of millions of beings from this world and the worlds beyond, a law that is to judge the living and the dead, announcing it with all the glory and majesty at His command, so that the very earth quakes and the mountains tremble, and then abolishing that same law in the most inconspicuous manner, letting men find out years later what He had done. One would almost come to the conclusion that God was ashamed of what He had done. At least we are clear that the disciples had nothing to do with it. They did not even know that Christ had risen.

DID GOD OR CHRIST CHANGE THE SABBATH

God had done everything He could to magnify the seventh-day Sabbath. He honored it by keeping it Himself. He rested upon it; He blessed it; He sanctified it; He proclaimed it in glory from the mount. He did none of these things for the first day of the week.

In view of the fact that God has proclaimed to the world and to angels that "the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord;" in view of the fact that God has announced Himself as "the Lord, I change not;" in view of the further fact that He claims to be the "Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" in view of the still further fact that He has solemnly promised that He will not "alter the thing that is gone out of" His "lips" (Exodus 20:8-11; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Psalms 89:34), would it not be embarrassing for God to announce that despite all these statements and promises, He has done the very thing He said He would not do: that He has changed the day after faithfully promising that He would not alter the thing that is gone out of His lips; that the seventh day which He blessed and pronounced holy is no longer blessed and holy; that it is no longer to be known as "my holy day," the "holy of the Lord, honorable" (Isaiah 58:13); that He has removed the blessing and sanctification with which He once invested the Sabbath, and has demoted it to a common working day; and that while men had formerly been punished for profaning the Sabbath, they could now work all they wanted to on the seventh day, and be guiltless? After such an announcement how could God ever claim to be the One who changeth not, the "Father of lights, with whom is no variableness" or "shadow of turning?"

If there was any justification for God's coming down on Mount Sinai to announce to men the Ten Commandments, there is the same justification for God's coming down the second time should He wish to change His law. God with His own voice spoke the law and commanded men to keep it. God actually wrote the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone and gave them to men, that they might know exactly what He said. Men have a right to expect God to stand by His word. In all fairness, If God wants to change the rules of life, He should ask for the return of the two tables of stone; He should clearly and definitely state the new commandments that men were henceforth to observe; and, if a change of the Sabbath day were in contemplation, He should give the reasons for

such a change as He originally gave reasons for keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. He should, for His own sake, make some explanation why He once asked men to “remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,” and now asks them to forget it. In justice to himself He should make this clear, that men might not err. The only pronouncement that men have so far is God’s words from Sinai. Men have a right to expect God to stand by this pronouncement until He openly repudiates the old and announces the new conditions of life. Men’s sense of fairness demands this; God’s demands much more.

SUNDAY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE FIRST day of the week is mentioned eight times in the New Testament, but at no time is it called the Sabbath. The eight texts are found in the following places: Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1, 2; Mark 16:9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1; John 20:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2.

THE FIRST TEXT

Acts 20:7 records the only religious meeting in the New Testament that was held on the first day of the week:

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”

There are several questions that confront us in this account. First, When was the meeting held? The record shows that it was held in the evening, for there “were many lights in the upper chamber,” and Paul spoke till midnight, and then continued “till break of day.” (Acts 20:8, 11). The question is whether the meeting was held on Saturday or Sunday evening. As is known, the Bible reckons the day from sunset till sunset, while the common present reckoning is from midnight to midnight. When the Bible speaks of the first day of the week the time from sunset Saturday till sunset Sunday is meant. Ordinarily a meeting held in the evening of the first day of the week would mean that it was held Saturday night; but there are indications that it was not always so reckoned.

In the particular case under consideration, commentators are nearly evenly divided, some holding that the meeting occurred Saturday night; others, Sunday night. We are willing to accept either view, as for our purpose it makes little difference. We leave this question for the reader to decide for himself according as he sees best.

Was this a special meeting called because Paul was about to leave on a long journey, and this was the last opportunity he would have to meet with them before the boat sailed? The evidence seems to be in favor of this. It was unusual in those days to hold meetings at night, except in time of persecution, for it was dangerous to be abroad in the dark. Then, too, the gates of the city were closed at sunset, and no one who lived outside the city could conveniently attend such a meeting. We are therefore inclined to believe that this was an unusual meeting.

It is to be noted that the account of the meeting says nothing about the Sabbath. It would have been easy for Luke to insert a word, stating that this meeting was held on the Sabbath. That he does not do this is significant. It seems clear that the reason for the meeting's being recorded in the Bible is the fact that a miracle was performed. A dead man was brought back to life again, and Luke notes this unusual happening. It was not often that such an event took place, and Luke recorded it (Acts 20:9, 10).

There are other questions that call for consideration. If the meeting was held Saturday night — which to many seems likely — then Paul had a long journey ahead of him for Sunday. Would Paul have undertaken such a journey on the new Sabbath? Luke, who is the author of the book of Acts, as well as of the third Gospel, in reporting the events of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, makes note of the fact that the women did not attempt to embalm the body on the Sabbath, but “rested the Sabbath day,” and that this resting was “according to the commandment.” The time of the writing of the book of Luke and that of Acts is not far apart. Is it conceivable that he would not faithfully make a record of such a drastic change as that from Saturday to Sunday, had such a change occurred? If this particular meeting took place on Saturday night, Paul started his journey of eighteen miles at daybreak to get to his boat. This would hardly be an auspicious introduction of the first-day Sabbath, either to the church there or to New Testament readers.

If, on the other hand, this meeting was held Sunday night, then it was not held on the first day of the week at all, for the first day ended at sunset Sunday evening, and this meeting was held later than sunset. Should we even admit of midnight as the beginning of the new day according to our present reckoning, we would still be in difficulty, for the meeting lasted till Monday morning, and the bread was broken after midnight.

From the record of the meeting we learn the following:

The meeting was a special meeting, held because Paul was about to leave on a journey and wanted to break bread with the church once more before they parted.

The meeting was reported by Luke because of the restoration of the young man who fell down and was killed.

There was no great theological or other issue at stake, and Paul's sermon has not been preserved for us, which it would have been had it been of unusual importance.

This last consideration would rule out that the meeting or sermon had anything to do with the Sabbath question. Luke, who was a faithful historian and had a "perfect understanding of all things from the very first," would be quick to detect any variation from the usual procedure (Luke 1:3).

This night meeting, if it had had any relation whatever to the Sabbath question, would have presented an excellent opportunity for the historian, Luke, to record any new development in the teaching since the days of Christ. The fact that he records a meeting held on the first day of the week, coupled with the fact that he conspicuously omits any mention of it as a Sabbath meeting held in honor of Sunday, is conclusive proof that he did not consider it to have any relation to the Sabbath whatsoever. We believe that inspiration purposely recorded a meeting as being held on the first day of the week to give opportunity for the observant reader to note that God does not recognize the first day as the Sabbath.

As noted, this is the only text in the New Testament that records any religious meeting held on the first day of the week. We have found nothing that even remotely connects it with the Sabbath. There is no mention of it as a holy day or of any observance of it. We now turn to the consideration of the second text.

THE SECOND TEXT

This text is recorded in 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

Paul here exhorts the saints to lay by on the first day of the week a sum proportionate to the prospering hand of God. He had ordered the same to be done in the other churches in Galatia.

Some have thought that this refers to a collection to be taken in the churches on Sunday, and that Paul was giving directions in regard to how it should be done. It is to be noted, however, that neither church nor meeting is mentioned. Each man was to lay "by him in store." "By him" means "by himself," or "at home," as it is also translated. "In store" means that he should keep it until it was called for.

Paul knew the value of systematic giving. He was making a collection for the poor saints, and he knew that unless the people laid by a little every week, there would not be much for him to collect when the time came.

Those who use this advice of Paul's as an argument for Sunday sacredness — a most curious use indeed — make several mistakes.

They fail to note that this is not a public collection.

They fail to note that this is not speaking of a church service.

They fail to note that this money is not to be given in a collection to be taken then and there, but is to be kept "in store" until such time as it is called for.

They fail to note that this setting aside of funds is to be done "by him," that is by each person, at home, not in church, not in company, but by himself.

They fail to note that the gift of each is to be proportionate to the prosperity with which God has blessed him, and that this calls for a weekly accounting, to determine the income, and a weekly laying aside according to the amount of income. This might in some cases involve considerable bookkeeping, which would be altogether inappropriate to do on the Sabbath, but which Paul considers to be good work on Sunday.

A careful reading of Paul's advice in the text before us results in the conviction that the text constitutes a sound argument for the sacredness of the seventh-day Sabbath, and a strong argument against Sunday sacredness.

THE THIRD TEXT

This text is found in Matthew 28:1: “In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.” The Revised Version reads, “Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.”

There are differences of opinion among translators in regard to the correct rendering of this text, but for our present purpose we are willing to accept either of the translations given above. The text mentions two days. The one is called the Sabbath; the other is called the first day of the week. The Sabbath is said to come before the first day, and is definitely distinguished from it. There is no intermingling or confusion of days, and no change of the Sabbath day is suggested. We are simply informed that in the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the sepulcher.

It is interesting to note what this text says, and also what it does not say. The Gospel of Matthew was written about thirty years after the death of Christ. By that time the Holy Spirit had ample time to impress upon the hearts of the leading disciples that a new Sabbath had come into existence, if that indeed were the case. It would be most fitting if some reference to this supposed fact had been made when Matthew mentions the resurrection. It would have been easy to make some remark that would indicate that the old Sabbath was superseded by the new. It seems passing strange that thirty years after the resurrection Matthew still calls the seventh day the Sabbath, and fails to improve the opportunity of putting in a word for Sunday.

THE FOURTH AND FIFTH TEXTS

The fourth text reads as follows: “And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.” (Mark 16:1, 2). To this we would add the fifth text found in the same chapter: “Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.” (Mark 16:9).

Verse 9 refers to the same first day mentioned in verse 2. It states that Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene when He arose early the first day of the week. It does not state that the first day of the week is the Sabbath; it merely affirms that on that day Christ met Mary Magdalene.

Verse 2 states that the women mentioned in verse 1 came to the sepulcher on the first day of the week as the sun was rising. We are told that they came to anoint the Saviour, and brought sweet spices with them for that purpose. The statement is also made that “the Sabbath was past” when they started on their errand.

Here again we have the two days placed side by side, the Sabbath and the first day of the week. We are told that the Sabbath is the day that precedes the first day of the week, and that when the first day comes, the Sabbath is past. We again note that inspiration, speaking through Mark as it had through Matthew, thirty years after the resurrection, calls the seventh day the Sabbath, and that the only name given Sunday is the first day of the week.

We would again suggest that it would have been easy for the inspired writer to put in a word for Sunday in this particular place. That he failed to do so is significant. We would further suggest that, if the inspired writer did not wish to exalt Sunday, he might have remained neutral or silent on the question. But he does not. He tells us that the day before Sunday, that is, the seventh day, is the Sabbath. *That* is putting in a good word for the Sabbath. But he does more than that. He tells us that the women did work on Sunday which they would not do on the Sabbath, important as that work was. This is more than neutrality. It favors Sabbath.

The text definitely contrasts Sabbath and Sunday. It says in effect: “Do not work on the Sabbath. Keep that day holy. Do your work on the other days. However necessary it may seem to work on the Sabbath, do not do it. The God who preserved the manna, so that it did not spoil, can easily preserve a body from corruption. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

THE SIXTH TEXT

The sixth text is found in Luke 24:1. “Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.”

This is the same event which the other evangelists record, with some added information. The preceding verses read: “And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.” (Luke 23:54-56).

We learn from this that on the day of preparation, that is, Friday, Christ was crucified, and that He died as the Sabbath was drawing on. We learn also that the women that same Friday prepared spices for His anointing, and that on the following day, Saturday, they rested “according to the commandment.” If we take these verses in connection with Luke 24:1, we find that three days are under review, the day of preparation, the Sabbath, and the first day of the week. We are told that the women worked two of these days, but that on the Sabbath they rested.

There is nothing in these texts that says or suggests that Sunday is the Sabbath. On the contrary, the difference between Sunday and the Sabbath is made very distinct and clear. The women worked on the day of preparation, Friday. On Saturday they did not work; they rested, and this was “according to the commandment.” On Sunday they brought their material to anoint their Lord. This makes a definite contrast between the two days, and makes emphatic that the day which comes between Friday and Sunday is “the sabbath day according to the commandment.” This, then, makes Saturday the Sabbath of the Lord. Nothing is said of Sunday sacredness. The only mention is that on Sunday the women came carrying the material, ready to go to work.

THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH TEXTS

These two texts are found in John 20:1, 19: “The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.”

“Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.”

The first of these texts repeats what the other evangelists have said, and appears to add nothing new or different. The first day is mentioned, but nothing is said of its being the Sabbath. It merely records that Mary Magdalene came early the first day of the week to the grave, which same statement is made by the other evangelists.

The second text mentions that the disciples were assembled that “same day at evening, being the first day of the week,” that is, Sunday evening. We are not told the purpose of their assembly. The doors were shut, bolted, “for fear of the Jews.”

At this time the disciples were in ignorance of the resurrection of Jesus. Because of this ignorance we know that they were not assembled to celebrate the resurrection. Though they knew that Christ was not in the tomb, they simply could not believe that He was risen from the dead. We also know that they were not assembled to celebrate a new Sabbath in commemoration of the resurrection, for the reason just stated, that they did not believe that Christ had risen. All we know is that they were together, and that they were afraid of the Jews and had bolted the doors.

It is not easy to understand how any can see in this account an argument for Sunday sacredness. But inspiration knew that the time would come when men would grasp at any straw to support them in their contention for a first-day Sabbath. As a matter of historical accuracy, it was necessary to make a report of the meeting, for it was an important one, and inspiration must report the truth. But in this case inspiration took special precaution that there be no misunderstanding. God knew that the statement that the disciples were assembled Sunday night would be interpreted by some to mean that it was a religious meeting to celebrate the resurrection, or Sunday, or something. So inspiration makes it plain that the disciples were not meeting to celebrate the resurrection, or to celebrate Sunday. They were gathered for fear of the Jews, and not for the celebration of anything.

SUMMARY

We have now considered every text in the New Testament that mentions the first day of the week. Instead of finding them favorable to the first day of the week as the Sabbath, we find in them strong proof for the seventh-day Sabbath. We sum up the reaching of inspiration as follows:

When inspiration finds it necessary to mention the first day, it takes pains to contrast that day with the Sabbath. Inspiration could have used these opportunities to tell us that the first day henceforth was to be the Sabbath. It does not do so.

Inspiration could have mentioned the first day of the week without bringing it into contrast with the Sabbath. But it purposely makes the contrast prominent.

Inspiration could have referred to the seventh day without calling it the Sabbath. It might have called it the day preceding the first day of the week, thus avoiding calling it the Sabbath and at the same time making Sunday prominent. But it does nothing of the kind.

Inspiration could have avoided stating that the day that comes between Friday and Sunday is the Sabbath according to the commandment, but it does not try to avoid it. It makes that point very prominent.

Inspiration could have recorded the meeting Sunday night without mentioning that the disciples had bolted the doors for fear of the Jews. Had that been omitted, the impression might have been left that it was some kind of celebration meeting. As it is now, we are told that they did not have any faith in the resurrection, and that, of course, spoils any idea of using this text in favor of Sunday sacredness.

I hold, therefore, that the references to the first day of the week in the New Testament have been put there by God Himself for the specific purpose of affirming that the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the new dispensation, and the first day *is not*.

There is one more text that perhaps could be considered in this connection, though it does not speak of the first day. It is the statement found in Revelation 1:10: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Some believe that this has reference to Sunday.

It may be confidently stated that nowhere in the Bible, in either the Old or the New Testament, is the first day of the week ever called the Lord's day; nor is it in any way connected with it. There is only one Lord's day, and that is the day which God calls "my holy day," or the Sabbath of the fourth commandment (Isaiah 58:13; Exodus 20:8-11).

John was "in the isle . . . called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9). As a prisoner he might have been put to work in the copper mines of the island, of which there were many and which were worked by slave and prison labor. Probably, though, because of his age, he was not required to work at all. In any event, on the Lord's day, the blessed day that he so often had enjoyed with the Master, the seventh day of the week, God revealed Himself to John, and gave him those visions that have been the study of God's children ever since.

As stated, there is no Biblical ground whatever for calling Sunday the Lord's day. Such a contention rests on extra-Biblical grounds that no true Protestant can accept. I rest the case there.

SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

HAS THE LAW BEEN ABROGATED?

THE QUESTION as to whether the law has been abrogated has already been partially answered elsewhere. Is there any statement from the mouth of Christ Himself that answers the question? This is important, for it must be clear to all that if the law has been abrogated or changed, then we are entirely out of order in making any argument based on an annulled law. If, on the other hand, the law has not been changed, not even in the smallest particular, then we have every reason to emphasize the Ten Commandments and consider them binding. We therefore ask Christ: Has the law of Ten commandments been abrogated or changed?

The answer comes right back: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. [19] Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:17-19).

These are familiar words. They are understandable. Christ here tells us that not one jot or tittle, not the least word or letter, has been changed. Words could not make this plainer.

To this the apostles agree. We quote from Paul, John, and James;

"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." (Romans 3:31).

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." (1 John 2:2, 3).

'By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.' (1 John 5:2, 3).

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James 1:25).

'If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.'" (James 2:8-12).

From this it is clear that the apostles had no idea of any change of the law; they stand just where Christ stood.

THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THE SABBATH

Here is the second question we have to consider: Did God know that a power should arise that would claim the right to change the commandments of God? If so, should not God have forewarned His people; should not God have said something about it in the Bible, so that we might know that He was not taken by surprise but knew what was coming and had provided for it?

To this the answer is that God knows the future, and that hence He knew about the claims which the Papacy would make to change the law of God. A further answer is that God revealed this audacious plan in the Bible long before Christ came to this world.

First, perhaps we should settle the question of whether the Roman Catholic Church makes the claim that it has power to change the law of God, and in particular, the right to change the Sabbath day. This, of course, is a tremendous claim, even a blasphemous claim. We have noted before that Christ says He is Lord of the Sabbath, indicating clearly thereby that He denies the right of anyone to

tamper with the Sabbath. He knew that there would arise men who would claim the power to change the ordinances of God. In saying that He is Lord of the Sabbath, He deprives any man of the right to touch it in any way.

There is probably no more convincing testimony regarding the guilt of a person than the confession of the person involved. In obtaining such a confession, there must, of course, be no compulsion; it must be a free act, not brought about through - or under duress. If a person who has the use of his faculties is accused of a crime, and of his own free will confesses his part in the transgression, there is every reason to accept the testimony as true.

We shall therefore ask the accused, the Roman Catholic Church, some very definite questions, or rather and better, we shall let the church ask its own questions and answer them.

THE CLAIMS OF THE PAPACY

“Q. — *Which is the Sabbath day?*

“A. — Saturday is the Sabbath.

“Q. — *Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?*

“A. — We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church [in the Council of Laodicea A. D. 336] transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.” — REV. PETER GEIERMANN, C.S.S.R., *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (1946), p. 50.

“*Question.* — Has the [Catholic] church power to make any alterations in the commandments of God?

“*Answer.* — . . . Instead of the seventh day, and other festivals appointed by the old law, the church has prescribed the Sundays and holy days to be set apart for God's worship; and these we are now obliged to keep in consequence of God's commandment, instead of the ancient Sabbath.” — RT. REV. DR. CHALLONER, *Catholic Christian Instructed*, p. 211.

“We Catholics, then, have precisely the same authority for keeping Sunday holy, instead of Saturday, as we have for every other article of our creed; namely, the authority of ‘the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth’ (1 Timothy 3:15); whereas, you who are Protestants have really no authority for it whatever; for there is no authority for it in the Bible, and you will not allow that there can be authority for it anywhere else. Both you and we do, in fact, follow tradition in this matter; but we follow it, believing it to be part of God's word, and the church to be its divinely appointed guardian and interpreter; you follow it denouncing it all the time as a fallible and treacherous guide, which often ‘makes the commandment of God of none affect.’ “ — “A Question for All Bible Christians,” *Clifton Tracts*, vol. 4, page 15.

“*Question.* — Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?

“*Answer.* — Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her, — she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.” — REV. STEPHEN KEENAN, *A Doctrinal Catechism* (1851), page 174.

“*Question.* — By whom was it [the Sabbath] changed?

“*Answer.*— By the governors of the church, the apostles, who also kept it; for St. John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day (which was Sunday). Apoc. 1:10.

“*Ques.*— How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days?

“*Ans.* — By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church.

“*Ques.* — How prove you that?

“*Ans.* — Because by keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the church's power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin; and by not keeping the rest [of the feasts] by her commanded, they again deny, in fact, the same power.” — REV. HENRY TUBERVILLE, D.D. (R. C.), *An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine* (1833), page 58.

How will a Protestant answer this challenge?

“You will tell me that Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, but that the Christian Sabbath has been changed to Sunday! but by whom? Who has authority to change an express commandment of Almighty God? When God had spoken and said, Thou shalt keep holy the seventh day, who shall

dare to say, Nay, thou mayest work and do all manner of worldly business on the seventh day; but thou shalt keep holy the first day in its stead? This is a most important question, which I know not how you can answer.

“You are a Protestant, and you profess to go by the Bible and the Bible only; and yet in so important a matter as the observance of one day in seven as a holy day, you go against the plain letter of the Bible, and put another day in the place of that day which the Bible has commanded. The command to keep holy the seventh day is one of the ten commandments; you believe that the other nine are still binding; who gave you the authority to tamper with the fourth? If you are consistent with your own principles, if you really follow the Bible and the Bible only, you ought to be able to produce some portion of the New Testament in which this fourth commandment is expressly altered.” — *Library of Christian Doctrine: Why don't You Keep Holy the Sabbath Day?* (R.C.), pages 3, 4.

These statements from recognized Catholic sources are sufficient to prove the point made, that the Roman Catholic Church not only claims to have changed the law of God as regards the Sabbath commandment, but is proud of the fact, and claims that it has done so by divine authority. The church chides Protestants for keeping the first day of the week, for which there is no scriptural authority but only the edict of the Catholic Church, while the Protestants claim to accept the Bible and the Bible only.

WHAT PROTESTANTS SAY

It might at this point be interesting to hear what Protestant denominations have to say on this question. Do they recognize the situation as presented by the Roman Catholic Church? Do they know of the claims made, and do they acknowledge them? As long ago as the Protestant Reformation, this was incorporated in the Augsburg Confession:

“They [the Catholics] allege the Sabbath changed into Sunday, the Lord's day, contrary to the decalogue, as it appears; neither is there any example more boasted of than the changing of the Sabbath day. Great, they say, is the power and authority of the church, since it dispensed with one of the ten commandments.” — *Augsburg Confession*, Art. 28.

We shall now append quotations from writers who belong to different denominations. They all present the same testimony.

“It is quite clear that, however rigidly or devoutly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath. . . . The Sabbath was founded on a specific, divine command. We can plead no such command for the obligation to observe Sunday. . . . There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday.” — R. W. DALE, M. A. (Congregationalist), *The Ten Commandments* (1871), pp. 106, 107.

“There is no word, no hint, in the New Testament about abstaining from work on Sunday. . . . Into the rest of Sunday no divine law enters. . . . The observance of Ash Wednesday or Lent stands on exactly the same footing as the observance of Sunday.” — CANON EYTON (Church of England), *The Ten Commandments* (1894), pp. 62, 63, 65.

“And where are we told in Scripture that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day. . . . The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things, not because the Bible, but because the church has enjoined it.” — REV. ISAAC WILLIAMS, B. D. (Church of England), *Plain Sermons on the Catechism* (1882), vol. 1, pp. 334-336.

“It is impossible to extort such a sense from the words of the commandment; seeing that the reason for which the commandment itself was originally given, namely, as a memorial of God's having rested from the creation of the world, cannot be transferred from the seventh day to the first; nor can any new motive be substituted in its place, whether the resurrection of our Lord or any other, without the sanction of a divine commandment.” — *The Christian Doctrine*, book 2, chap. 7, in *Prose Works of John Milton* (1853), vol. 5, page 70.

“For if we under the gospel are to regulate the time of our public worship by the prescriptions of the decalogue, it will surely be far safer to observe the seventh day, according to the express commandment of God, than on the authority of mere human conjecture to adopt the first.” — JOHN

MILTON, *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine*; cited in ROBERT COX, *The Literature of the Sabbath Question* (1865), vol. 2, page 54.

“I conceive the celebration of this feast [Easter] was instituted by the same authority which changed the Jewish Sabbath into the Lord’s day or Sunday, for it will not be found in Scripture where Saturday is discharged to be kept, or turned into the Sunday; wherefore it must be the church’s authority that changed the one and instituted the other; therefore my opinion is, that those who will not keep this feast [Easter] may as well return to the observation of Saturday, and refuse the weekly Sunday.” — Extract from the Query to the Parliament Commissioners by King Charles II, April 23, 1647; cited in ROBERT COX, *Sabbath Laws and Sabbath Duties* (1853), page 333.

These testimonies all agree that there is no scriptural authority for any change of the Sabbath. They agree also with the Bible on this point; so we accept their testimony as conclusive.

GOD'S SIGN AND SEAL

THE SABBATH A SIGN OF SANCTIFICATION

THE SABBATH is not merely a memorial that points back to creation. It is also a sign of the vital power of present accomplishment — a sign of God's power in the transformation of lives, a sign of holiness, of sanctification.

Says God: "Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them." (Ezekiel 20:12). "And hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God." (verse 20). "Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you." (Exodus 31:13). These texts definitely connect the Sabbath and sanctification. The one is a sign of the other.

Some may wonder what connection there can be between the Sabbath and the Holy Spirit, between sanctification and the keeping of a day. How can the Sabbath be a sign that the Lord "doth sanctify you?" Let us consider this.

Sanctification is the power of God in the individual life so applied that the entire being becomes dedicated to God and His service. It is a Spirit-directed life under the absolute control of God, perfectly yielded and consecrated. It embraces an intense desire for communion with God, a thirsting after the courts of the Lord, a hungering after the divine word that is all-consuming. Christ expressed it in these words: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." (John 2:17).

Such a life is not an accident, nor is it brought about by the effort or desire of man. It is all of God, who works in us both to will and to do according to His good pleasure. When God has finished His work in us, when He has reproduced His own image in the soul, He puts His seal of approval upon the consecrated life. "He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also *sealed* us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." (2 Corinthians 1:21, 22). Those who are thus sealed, are "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," "sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). The Sabbath is the sign of this sanctification. "It is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you." (Exodus 31:13). It is God's stamp of approval, impressed upon the heart by the Spirit of God.

For the Sabbath to be a sign of sanctification, it must of course include more than the mere abstinence from labor on a certain day. It is in a very vital sense true, that no unregenerate man can keep the Sabbath holy. He may cease from his common duties, he may even attend divine service, but this does not ensure his entering into the rest of God. Only a Christian can do this. Only "we which have believed do enter into rest" (Hebrews 4:3). Hence only he who is himself holy can keep the Sabbath holy. True Sabbathkeeping is a spiritual service that can be rendered only by a Spirit-filled person.

God takes cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart as well as the outward appearance. As baptism presupposes a spiritual preparation and condition, lest it become merely the washing away of the filth of the flesh, so true Sabbathkeeping presupposes a spiritual preparation and condition, lest the Sabbath become merely a day of indolence and useless inactivity. Let it ever be kept clearly in mind that Sabbath observance is not primarily bodily rest. On the contrary, in many cases it demands greater physical exertion than is required on other days.

To keep the Sabbath day holy means to enter into rest, God's rest. "He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." (Hebrews 4:10). God did not rest because He was weary. "The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary" (Isaiah 40:28). "God did rest the seventh day from all His works," but the rest was first of all a spiritual rest (Hebrews 4:4). Even when Adam rested with God that first Sabbath, his rest was not demanded by physical exhaustion. It was primarily a rest with God, a spiritual experience, a day of communion and instruction.

These considerations make it clear that true Sabbathkeeping involves complete dedication to God. The Sabbath is a bit of heaven transferred to this earth. It is a small sample of what heaven will be. The man who keeps it as God would have it kept, must be at peace with God. Not only or merely must be his body rest. Rather, his whole soul, body, and spirit must for that day be used in God's service, and everything worldly shut out.

The mind is probably the last thing of which we will gain complete control. Most Christians can control — some to a greater, some to a lesser, degree — their body and its lusts. Some can control their tongue and their temper, though many fail in this. Few there are, if any, who have reached the standard set by the apostle Paul, who considers the power of God sufficient “to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5).

It is no light thing to bring our thoughts into captivity. Who has not caught himself in church thinking of things utterly unconnected with worship? It is possible for a person to attend divine service on the Sabbath, but his real self, his heart, his mind, his thoughts be far away. It takes tremendous control, greater than is possible for a human being in any strength he may have of himself, to control his mind. Yet Sabbathkeeping that does not include heart and mind is not Sabbathkeeping in the highest sense.

In perplexity we may all ask, How can this form of Sabbathkeeping be brought about? Is this not an impossible standard? To this it may be answered that we have probably been satisfied with too low a standard of Sabbath observance. Some think that it is sufficient for them to go to church Sabbath morning, and when they have done this, they feel free to do as they please the rest of the day. Others are more conscientious. They would not desecrate the day either by unnecessary traveling and sight-seeing, or by sleeping the precious hours away. Despite this, they find that their minds wander, and that there is little Sabbath in the soul. At times their minds run wild and must be called back again, but even with the best of intentions, they are unable to bring their thoughts into captivity to Christ. Sabbathkeeping in its highest sense includes a mind *stayed* upon God, a *mind* keeps the Sabbath as well as the *body*.

To exercise the mind so that it will be stayed upon God is one purpose of the Sabbath. It is a day that should be used in the exercise of godliness, in communion with God, in practising the presence of God. The man who succeeds in this, who really keeps the Sabbath with all there is of him, has reached the goal God has set for him. He is sanctified, he has reached God's standard. God can put His seal of approval upon him, place His name in his forehead, and exhibit him to the world as a finished product of what Christianity can do for a man. Such a man has used the Sabbath for its intended purpose; it has accomplished for him what God had in mind; it has become the sign and seal of sanctification, and God owns him as His.

“I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, *that they might know* that I am the LORD that sanctify them.” (Ezekiel 20:12). As men on the Sabbath are instructed in righteousness as they attend worship; as God graciously comes near on that day as on no other; as sins are revealed to them, that they might renounce them; as holiness is held up before them as possible of accomplishment; as the conviction comes to them that Sabbathkeeping must include heart, mind, and soul as well as body; as it suddenly dawns on them that every thought must be brought into captivity to Christ; as the standard is constantly lifted and they cry out unto God for help, men begin to realize the tremendous influence that Sabbathkeeping has upon Christianity. Soon they realize how closely sanctification is bound up with the Sabbath, and how the Sabbath can be a sign *that they might know* that the Lord is their sanctifier. To them Sabbathkeeping and sanctification become synonymous, for they realize that only the man who is completely sanctified can keep the Sabbath as God would have it kept.

While we have stressed the spiritual aspect of the Sabbath, and that it is a sign between God and His people, from another viewpoint the Sabbath is a sign to the world. Between God and His people the Sabbath is a sign of sanctification; between God's people and the world the Sabbath is a sign of separation, a mark of distinction between those who obey God, who have come out of the world to enter the heavenly rest, and those who are careless and disobedient. As verily as God in olden times used the Sabbath to “prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or no,” so God uses

the Sabbath now (Exodus 16:4). This becomes evident from a study of the last church as it is characterized in the book of Revelation.

THE LAST CHURCH

The fourteenth chapter of Revelation brings to view a people who stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion. They are without guile, they are without fault, they are wholly dedicated to God, they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth (verses 1-4). These same people are mentioned in chapter seven as having been sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads, and in chapter fourteen they are seen with the Father's name written there (Revelation 7:1-4). Evidently there is a close connection between the Father's name and the seal.

The Holy Spirit is closely connected with the seal of God. "Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." (Ephesians 1:13).

"Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30).

It should be noted that while these passages do not state that the Holy Spirit Himself is the seal, they do assert that the Spirit is the means that God uses to impress the seal. We are sealed with and by the Spirit of God.

The Greek noun translated "seal" and its verb have in their root meaning the idea of "fencing in," "enclosing," with the purpose of protecting from misappropriation, to keep secure, to preserve. Thus, when a seal is attached to any document, it serves to protect that document from falsification; it fences it in, as it were; attests to its genuineness; and makes fraud hazardous if not impossible. A seal is also a sign of approval, an attestation of truth and genuineness, a mark of authority and ownership.

"Him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:27). Christ is here speaking of Himself. He declares that He has been sealed by the Father. We understand this to mean that Christ had the approval of the Father, that whatever the Son did satisfied the Father and pleased Him, and that He endorsed Christ's work.

In like manner we understand that the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation have the endorsement of the Father. They are sealed with the seal of the living God; they have the Father's name in their foreheads; they are approved of Him. They are without fault; they keep the commandments of God (Revelation 14:12).

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

This last expression is taken from the book of Revelation, and describes exactly what is needed today. The whole text reads, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:12). In this the complete gospel is revealed. Let us examine the statement.

"Here is the patience of the saints." The word *saints* is the same word that is in other places translated "holy," the Greek *hagios*. It is used in such expressions as "Holy Father," "holy child Jesus," "temple of God is holy," "holy and without blemish," "present you holy and unblameable," "He which hath called you is holy," "holy men of God spake," "holy is his name." (John 17:11; Acts 4:27; 1 Corinthians 3:17; Ephesians 5:27; Colossians 1:22; 1 Peter 1:15; 2 Peter 1:21; Luke 1:49). We are therefore safe in believing that the ones here spoken of are saints in the truest sense, that they are sanctified and holy, without spot and blameless.

The saints that are thus spoken of keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. To some this may seem like a strange statement, because popular theology does not combine the keeping of the commandments with holiness. Rather, many who claim holiness repudiate utterly the commandments of God, and seem to hold themselves aloof from anything that savors of law. But not so God. When He wishes to define those who are truly holy, when He wishes to point out those who are really holy in the sight of Heaven, He says that they keep the commandments of God. True sanctification and the commandments belong together.

The chapter from which we quote the text under consideration begins by giving a description of the Lamb of God standing on Mount Zion, "and with him an hundred an forty and four thousand,

having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (Revelation 14:1). They are spoken of as "they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (verses 4, 5). They are the same as those "that keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus" (verse 12). They are doubtless also the same as those that are mentioned in Revelation 12:17 as "the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus."

This remnant is generally considered to be the last of God's people on earth, those who live just before the appearing of the Son of God in the clouds of heaven. The word *remnant* would seem to indicate this, though we are not dependent upon that expression alone for this view. The whole context gives the same impression. The messages of the three angels mentioned in Revelation 14 are the last messages sent to the earth before the coming of the Lord. Immediately following their proclamation, John says, "I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. . . . And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped" (verses 14-16). It is clear that the remnant of God's people, those who live just before the coming of the Son of man, the last generation on earth, will have attained unto holiness of life, and they will keep God's commandments.

We believe that we are living near the time when we may expect to see the Son of man come in the clouds of heaven. It is at such a time that the distinguishing mark of those who are sanctified is that they keep the commandments. It is therefore evident that the law must have come into its own again. Before a people can be produced who keep the commandments, there must be a preaching of the commandments, there must be an awakening on the part of the people to the binding claims of God's law. We may therefore rightly look for a revival of the study of the law before the coming of the Lord, and this revival will be so widespread as to take in all nations and peoples, out of which the remnant will be taken.

We might expect more than this. As the people study the law, they will naturally have their attention called to the fact that they are not keeping holy the day which the commandment demands. This will lead them to a thorough search for truth, and this search will lead them to other truths which have been hidden for ages and generations. As the truth of the seventh-day Sabbath dawns upon them, they will naturally be led to consider the question of creation, which is closely bound up with it. Being believers in the Bible, they will take their stand upon the account given in Genesis in regard to creation, which is diametrically opposed to any doctrine that is evolutionary in origin or in tendency.

Thus a people will be developed who are Bible Christians.

MARTIN LUTHER

More than four hundred years ago a young monk decided to take his stand on the Word of God, whatever the cost. Tradition had been his guide, but henceforth the Word of God, and the Word of God only, would be his lodestar. Whether he ever said the words attributed to him or not, the sentiment is surely his, and that of a large body of Christians today: "Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me." "Here I stand," he said, placing his hand on the Bible. And "the Bible, and the Bible only," has from that time been the rallying cry of true Protestants.

Will the work so nobly begun a few hundred years ago come to nought? We believe not. God was in that movement. Its fault was that it was not continued beyond the lifetime of its founders. No man knows all truth. God's revelation is not communicated all at once. It is here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept. A steady walking in the light would have brought newer and greater revelations, and saved some from the pitfalls into which they fell.

God has not left this world, nor is He satisfied with half measures. If the church fails in an hour such as this, God has means at hand that will restore the old faith. There are those who will build the old waste places, raise up the foundations of many generations, repair the breach, and restore the paths to dwell in. God does not leave Himself without a witness. Men may depart from the law, they may hew themselves cisterns that will hold no water, they may consider themselves wise above what is written, but God's arm is not shortened. He has in reserve instruments whom men may

despise, but who nevertheless will cause God's name to be known to the ends of the earth. God knows what He is doing.

ONE FOLD, ONE SHEPHERD

We believe that the time has come for a new Protestant movement, one that will rally Bible believers in all churches and societies, and unite them in one body for the defense of the faith. Men have made void the law of God. It is time for Him to work. From one end of the earth to the other the call must sound. Protestantism has deserted its standards. A new Protestantism must arise.

Christ's word, "There shall be one fold, and one shepherd," will yet be fulfilled before the end (John 10:16). There are now many folds, and honest believers in all of them. This shall not always thus continue. The call will sound: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). God will gather His own into one fold, and when the final struggle comes, there will be no doubt in regard to where each stands. The people thus called out will keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12).

The question may be asked whether it is possible to unite all the true saints of God in one body. Which creed would be accepted? What unifying factor is there to be to bind them together? With the many different denominations now in existence, is it not too much to believe that there could ever be a call sounded that would be strong enough to draw these diverse elements into one body?

Says Christ, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." (John 10:16). Note: "They shall hear My voice." As the Good Shepherd, Christ goes before the sheep. They follow Him. In these few words Christianity is summed up. "He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice" (verse 4). Christianity is just that simple. To follow Christ is all the theology anyone needs for salvation. On that platform all Christians can unite. And as one follows Christ, and another follows Him, the two will walk together. And as all follow Him, there will be one fold and one Shepherd.

Will this ever come to fruition in this earth? I believe so. As the nominal churches depart more and more from the faith of the living God, there will be those in every communion who are longing for a consolation in Israel. They see hundreds of churches with thousands of believers, each church different in faith from the others, and yet with people in it who are truly trying to serve God. They will be perplexed, and will wonder what they are to do and what they are to believe. One great man of the church will say one thing, and another equally great will say something different. In his perplexity the true child of God will turn to the Word, and it will suddenly dawn upon him, as though it were a new revelation, that Christ is the way, the truth, and the light, and that all he needs to do is follow Him, and every religious problem will be solved. Breaking with every earthly tie, men will set out to follow the Lamb whithersoever He leadeth, and to their astonishment will find that others are pursuing the same course. On the simple program and creed of following the Lamb, they will unite in divine fellowship, and God will set His seal of approval upon them. They follow the Lamb; they have the Father's name written upon their foreheads; the Lord owns them as His; they are sealed for eternity.

When men follow this simple program there will be developed a people who will keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Jesus states definitely, "I have kept my Father's commandments" (John 15:10). Those who follow Jesus will keep the commandments. If any do not, it shows that they do not follow Him.

We are therefore safe in believing that there will be a return to primitive faith and godliness before the coming of the Son of man. Men will begin to follow the Master again, trustfully doing what He did. With apostolic faith will come apostolic power. The whole world will be arraigned in two camps: those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who do not. There will be no mistaking the saints. They will have the seal of the living God in their foreheads.

Believing in the simple story of creation as recorded in the first chapters of Genesis, they naturally accept the account of the Sabbath. The two go together. Believing in Christ, they follow Him as the way, the truth, and the life. Accepting Christ as their Lord, they accept Him also as the Lord of the Sabbath. As He rested, so they rest. They follow Him whithersoever He goeth.

It is against this company that the wrath of Satan will be directed. It is against them that he will make war. And the struggle will be fierce in its intensity. The decree will at last be issued that whoever will not worship according to the command of the “beast” shall be killed (Revelation 13:15). Then comes the time of Jacob’s trouble. Satan is determined to test the people of God to the utmost, and if possible, to make them sin. If he succeeds, he has gained an important point, for God has determined to show His power in this very people. In and through them He intends to give a demonstration to the world of what the gospel can do for humanity.

The last generation of men carry all the sins and the weaknesses of their forefathers. If any are weak, they are. If any have inherited or cultivated tendencies to evil, they have. If it is possible for *them* to live through the struggles of the last days without sinning, it has always been possible to live sinlessly. And this is the very thing that God intends to demonstrate. This demonstration will also settle the question whether it is possible for men to keep the law. If these people can do so, it is conclusively proved that man *can* keep the law, and that God is not unjust in requiring obedience.

The last generation of God’s people, therefore, constitutes a special company. Satan is given permission to try them to the utmost. He makes war against them. He threatens them. They are under death sentence. But all these things do not move them. “Here is the patience of the saints.” They endure, they continue steadfast, they are immovable. Threats and flatteries fall on deaf ears. All that Satan can do is without effect. They, as did Christ, go through Gethsemane. And as He came out victorious, so do these. When the struggle is over, they are seen standing on Mount Zion, with the Father’s name written in their foreheads. They are without fault before the throne of God. (Revelation 14:1, 5).

In these 144,000 God stands justified. He has proved by them that the law can be kept under the most adverse circumstances. He has disproved Satan’s assertion that God is unjust in demanding that men kept the law. God is vindicated. Satan is defeated. The controversy is ended. All that remains is the balancing of accounts. And then — after the judgment is ended — comes the reign of God, unending, glorious. God speed that day!

With this ends our short discussion of the true Sabbath. The question is greater than that of this or that day. It is a question of following the Master, of doing His will. May God grant the reader divine enlightenment and faith and courage to do His will.
