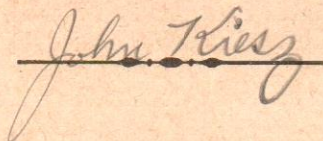


The Change Of The Sabbath; Who Authorized It?

By

A. C. Long, Deceased.
(Sixth Edition.)

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John Kies", is written over a horizontal line. The line has four small black dots spaced evenly along its length.

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Seventh Day
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The Change of The Sabbath

WHO AUTHORIZED IT?

That the people of God anciently observed the seventh day as the Sabbath must be admitted by all Bible readers. That the great majority of the people at the present time observe the first day of the week as the Sabbath, is also admitted. Then it must be evident to all that there has been a change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. To show when and by what authority this change was effected is the object of this tract.

It is a prevailing opinion that Christ and His apostles authorized this change. This claim we shall now consider. In order to institute the first day as the Sabbath it certainly would require as plain a command as to institute the seventh day as a Sabbath. The command for the seventh day is very plain: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labor 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." Ex. 20: 8-10. Now if Christ or the apostles had said that the first day of the week was now the Sabbath, and that we should do no work on it, then this question would be settled. But we search in vain for that passage. Christ and the apostles are as silent as the grave upon this subject.

But some claim that the example of Christ and of the apostles is sufficient to settle this matter. We might admit this provided it could be proved that they regularly observed the first day as a Sabbath, or that it was their custom or manner of doing so; and that believers should follow their example.

We now come to the sacred Scriptures and ask, What day is called the Sabbath in the New Testament? "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." Matt. 28: 1. "And when the Sabbath was past 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. These two passages are sufficient to show that the New Testament recognizes the seventh day as the Sabbath, while it is entirely silent as to the first day being the Sabbath. "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 said unto them, Peace be unto you." John 20: 19. This is an account of our Savior meeting with His disciples after His resurrection. His object was, as the context teaches, to convince them of his resurrection. Nothing is here said about the change of the Sabbath. But it is urged from this text, and also from verse 26, which says that "after eight days" he met with them again, and that we also should assemble on that day. But we would say in reply that the first meeting was not a public one; the second being "after eight days" must necessarily have been upon the ninth or tenth day from that time, and consequently could not have occurred on the next first day. The next chapter teaches that the third time Jesus met with His disciples was when they were engaged in fishing. Now if we are to conclude that by Christ's meeting His disciples upon a certain day will constitute it a Sabbath, then we have a Sabbath on the first day, and another near the middle of the week, and lastly, we would have a Sabbath on a fishing

day, which, of course, is too absurd to be entertained for a moment.

We now introduce another text which is considered their strongest. But it will be seen that it comes far short of teaching that the first day is the Sabbath. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." Acts 20: 7. First—This text says nothing about a Sabbath. Second—By the disciples simply meeting and breaking bread upon a day would not constitute it a Sabbath; for if it did then every day would be a Sabbath, for we read that the disciples met "daily in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Acts 2: 46. Third—It was a night meeting, for "Paul continued his speech until midnight." Fourth—It was a farewell meeting, for Paul "preached unto them ready to depart on the morrow." Fifth—The disciples who were with Paul did not observe this as a sacred day, for while he was preaching they were taking the ship around the cape. See verse 13. There is nothing in this passage to teach the first day sacredness.

We now call attention to one more text, which is relied upon by some to prop up that tottering and man-made theory of first-day Sabbath. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as the Lord hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." 1 Cor. 16: 2. This contribution was made for the poor saints at Jerusalem, but there is no intimation in the above of the change of the Sabbath. Neither does the above text teach a public collection on the first day of the week, for it says: 'Let every one lay by him (individually, not in the collection box)

in store as the Lord hath prospered him." This text teaches that upon this day secular work was to be attended to, as they would only know how much each was prospered by casting up their accounts, which of course, is secular work.

We have now examined all the principal texts which are relied upon to teach the change of the Sabbath; but we find they do not teach such a change. Neither does our Savior nor the apostles intimate such a change, but on the contrary, they teach and observe the seventh-day Sabbath.

It is said we should keep the first day to commemorate the great work of redemption. But we reply by saying that Christ, while instituting the Lord's supper, which commemorated His sufferings and death, and baptism which brings to remembrance his burial and resurrection never as much as once said anything about the first day of the week as commemorative: and since Christ has set up His own memorials of the work of redemption it appears to me the height of folly and bigotry to amend the work of Christ by setting up a memorial of our own as if Christ had not completed His own work. But those who will observe a day to commemorate the work of redemption ought to observe the day of the crucifixion, for Paul says, "we have redemption through His blood." Col. 1: 14. The song of the redeemed will be: "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." Rev. 5: 9. As His blood was shed upon the day of crucifixion, if any day should be observed it is that day. But as there is no command for either one of those days to be observed, there is, therefore, no obedience in observing them.

So far we have failed to find that Christ or the apostles taught or observed the first day as a sacred day. But on the other hand, both Christ and

His apostles recognized, taught and observed the seventh day as the Sabbath. Christ taught that "the Sabbath was made for man;" that it was lawful to do well on that day: and that His disciples should pray that their flight should not take place on that day, at the destruction of Jerusalem: Matt. 24: 20. He also teaches the law of which the Sabbath is a part. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than one tittle of the law to fail." Luke 16: 17. The Sabbath being one precept of this law, of course it cannot fail. He also said to the one who desired eternal life, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Matt. 19: 17. In harmony with this teaching we find that it was His custom to obey the law, in religiously observing the Sabbath: "He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up, and as His custom was He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read." Luke 4: 16.

The apostles also in harmony with our Savior, taught the ten commandment law. Paul frequently refers to it as binding, and states that it is established by faith. Rom. 3: 31. James says if we violate one precept of that law, we are guilty before God. James 2: 10. Their practice is in harmony with their teachings, for they "kept the Sabbath day according to the commandment." Luke 23: 56. And it was Paul's manner to observe the Sabbath. Acts 17: 2.

From all these considerations we conclude that instead of Christ and the apostles teaching and observing the first day of the week as a sacred day, on the contrary they taught and observed the seventh day as the Sabbath.

As we have seen who has not made the change we shall now show who has made the change. This change of the Sabbath into Sunday was a gradual

work, and it was not for many centuries that this rival institution was able to displace the Sabbath of the Lord; in fact it never entirely succeeded in doing this. We shall now notice some of the steps that led to this change.

The very name Sunday suggests its heathen origin. Webster in his Unabridged Dictionary, thus defines it: "Sunday: so called because this day was anciently dedicated to the sun, or its worship, the first day of the week." Worcester's Dictionary has the following: "Sunday: so named because anciently dedicated to the sun, or its worship; the first day of the week." Morer says: "It is not to be denied that we borrow the name of this day from the ancient Greeks and Romans, and we allow that the old Egyptians worshipped the sun, and as a standing memorial of their veneration dedicated this day to him."—Dialogues on the Lord's Day." P. 22.

These authorities teach that Sunday was anciently dedicated by the heathen to the worship of the sun. And we learn from the Scriptures that this worship was in direct opposition to the true worship of God. When Josiah the king destroyed the idol worship in Judah, it is recorded that "he put down the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the hosts of heaven." 2 Kings 23: 5.

We learn from this passage that even the people of God had for a time followed the heathen in worshipping the sun and the hosts of heaven, and also that the image of Baal was dedicated to the worship of the sun. This is the image that Elijah proclaimed against: "If the Lord be God follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." 1 Kings 18: 4.

This heathen festival Sunday was to a limited extent brought into the church in the latter part of the second century of the Christian era, by the professed conversion of some heathen who continued to observe some of their pagan rites and festivals. But it was left for Constantine, Emperor of Rome, to pave the way for this change of the Sabbath. Constantine issued an edict in favor of this heathen festival, A. D., 321, as follows:

“Let all the judges and town people; and the occupation of all trades, rest on the venerable day of the sun; but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty attend to the business of agriculture because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines; lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted by heaven.”

This is the first law for the observance of Sunday as a rest day, and this was given in favor of paganism, as is evident from the language used, for he speaks of it as the “venerable day of the sun.”

In Library of Universal Knowledge, under the article of Sabbath, I find the following concerning this edict:

“But whatever may have been the opinion and practice of these early Christians in regard to cessation from labor on the Sunday, unquestionably the first law, either ecclesiastical or civil, by which the Sabbatical observance of that day is known to have been ordained, is the edict of Constantine, 321 A. D. But it was not till the year 538 that abstinence from agricultural labor on Sunday was recommended, rather than enjoined by an ecclesiastical authority (the third Council of Orleans), and this expressly that the people might have more leisure to go to church and say their prayers; nor was it till the end of the ninth century

that the Emperor Leo, 'the philosopher,' repealed the exemption which it enjoyed under the edict of Constantine."

From the above extracts we learn:

First—The law of Constantine, A. D., 321, was the first religious or civil law for the observance of Sunday of which we have any record.

Second—It was only binding on town people, but left all country people free to labor at their agricultural business on Sunday.

Third—That this privilege, for country people to work on Sunday, was permitted until the ninth century; although the church council of Orleans, A. D., 538, recommended the people to rest on Sunday.

We will now introduce further history on this:

Coleman says:—Down even to the fifth century the Jewish Sabbath was continued in the Christian Church but with a rigor and solemnity gradually diminishing until it was wholly discontinued—Ancient Chris. Exam. Chap. 26, sec. 2.

Edward Brerewood, professor in Gresham College, London, says:—"It is commonly believed that the Jewish Sabbath was changed into the Lord's day by Christian emperors, and they know little who do not know that the ancient Sabbath did remain and was observed by the eastern churches three hundred years after our Savior's passion."—Treatise on the Sabbath p. 77.

The American Presbyterian Board of Publication, in tract No. 118, states that "The observance of the seventh day Sabbath did not cease till it was abolished after the empire became Christian."

Dr. Cox says:—"The early fathers give no support direct or indirect, to the notion that the Sabbath had been transferred at all; but it is not surprising that those who wrote after the enactment by Constantine that Sunday should be kept as a Sabbath, were more apt to discover reasons for observing it."—Lit. Vol. 1, p. 257. (note.)

Dr. Neander says:—"Opposition to Judaism introduced the

particular festival of Sunday, very early, indeed, into the place of the Sabbath The festival Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance and it was far from the intention of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday. Perhaps at the end of the second century, a false application of this kind had begun to take place: for men appear by that time to have considered laboring on Sunday a sin."—Church History p. 168.

Sir Wm. Domville says:—"Centuries of the Christian era passed away before the Sunday was observed by the Christian church as a Sabbath. History does not furnish us a single proof or indication that it was at any time so observed previous to the sabbatical edict of Constantine in A. D. 321."—Examination of the Six Texts, p. 291.

The American Encyclopedia, art. "Sabbath" says—"Constantine the Great made a law for the whole empire (A. D. 321), that Sunday should be kept as a day of rest in all cities and towns; but he allowed the country people to follow their work."

Prynne says:—"The seventh day Sabbath was solemnized by Christ, the apostles and primitive Christians, till the Laodicean Council did, in a manner, quite abolish the observance of it The Council of Laodicea (A. D. 364), first settled the observation of the Lord's day."—Dissertation on the Lord's Day, 1633, p. 163.

Dr. Gregory and Ruter's Church History says:—"Constantine commanded the first day of the week to be celebrated with peculiar solemnity; and in time this practice extended over the whole Christian world." Page 103.

It will be observed from the above extracts that while Constantine played a conspicuous part in exalting Sunday as a Sabbath in his empire. yet it was the ecclesiastical Councils that substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of the Lord's Sabbath. That this

may appear more apparent to the reader we refer him to Daniel the prophet, who spake of a power which "shall think to change times and laws." Dan. 7: 25. It is universally believed and taught by Protestants that the above prophecy is fulfilled in the Catholic church. This power then should attempt to change times and must refer to the Sabbath, as that is the only divine time we have in this dispensation. We shall now quote from their catechisms, in which they teach that they made this change. In a book entitled the Catholic Christian Instructed, which is published and endorsed by that church, we find:

Question.—What warrant have you for keeping the Sunday preferable to the ancient Sabbath which was Saturday?

Answer.—We have for it the authority of the Catholic church and apostolic tradition.

Q.—Does the Scripture anywhere command the Sunday to be kept for the Sabbath?

A.—The Scripture commands us to hear the church (Matt. 18: 17; Luke 10: 16), and to hold fast the tradition of the apostles (2 Thess. 2: 15); but the Scripture does not in particular mention this change of the Sabbath. St. John speaks of the Lord's day. Rev. 1: 10, but he does not tell us what day of the week this was, much less does he tell us that it was to take the place of the Sabbath ordained in the commandment. St. Luke also speaks of the disciples meeting together to break bread upon the first day of the week (Acts 20: 7) and St. Paul (1 Cor. 16: 2) orders that on the first day of the week the Corinthians should lay by in store what they designed to bestow in charity on the faithful in Judea. But neither one nor the other tells us that this first day of the week was to be henceforward the day of worship and the Christian Sabbath; so that in fact the best authority we have for this ancient custom is the testimony of the church. And therefore those who pretend to be such religious observers of the Sunday, whilst they take no notice of other

festivals ordained by the same church authority, show that they act more by humor, than by reason and religion; since Sundays and holy days all stand upon the same foundation, namely, the ordinance of the church.—Page 232.

From the above texts we learn that Sunday has for its foundation and authority the Roman Catholic Church.

We shall now quote from Doctrinal Catechism which is approved by John Hughes, D. D., Archbishop of New York.

Question—Have you any other proofs that the (Protestants) are not guided by the Scripture?

Answer—Yes; so many that we cannot admit more than a mere specimen into this small work. They reject much that is clearly contained in the Scriptures and profess more that is nowhere discoverable in that Divine Book.

Q.—Give some examples of both.

A.—They should, if the Scriptures were their only rule, keep, not the Sunday, but the Saturday, according to the commandment, "Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day;" for this commandment has not, in Scripture, been changed or abrogated.

Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?

A.—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.

Q.—When Protestants do profane work on Saturday, or the seventh day of the week, do they follow Scripture as their only rule of faith—do they find this permission clearly laid down in the sacred volume?

A.—On the contrary, they have only the authority of tradition for this practice. In profaning Saturday they violate one of God's commandments, which He has never clearly

abrogated,—“Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.”

The *American Catholic Quarterly Review for January, 1883, contains a paper on “The observance of Sunday laws and Civil Laws for its Enforcement,” by John Gilmary Shea, L. L. D., a representative man, and an accomplished writer. The paper was called forth by the late agitation concerning the “Penal Code,” in the State of New York. The claims which Mr. Shea makes concerning the relation of Sunday observance to the Catholic Church, accord with the facts of history, and are worthy of more candid consideration than modern Protestants have been accustomed to give them. We reproduce so much of these claims as space permits. Thy cannot be answered by a sneer:

Strange as it may seem, the State, in passing laws for the due sanctification of Sunday, is unwittingly acknowledging the authority of the Catholic Church, and carrying out more or less faithfully its prescriptions.

The Sunday, as a day of the week set apart for the obligatory public worship of Almighty God, to be sanctified by a suspension of all servile labor, trade, and worldly avocations and by exercises of devotion, is purely a creation of the Catholic church.

Nothing in the New Testament forbids work, travel, trade amusement, on the first day of the week. There is nothing which implies such a prohibition. The day as one especially set apart, had no authority but that of the Catholic Church; the laws requiring its observance were passed to enforce decrees of Councils of the Catholic church.

The Catholic Church created the Sunday and made the very regulations which have come down on the statute books and she will constantly, from her pulpits, her catechists, chairs, and the confessional, call on her faithful to obey them, to sanctify the day and refrain from all that desecrates it.

Samuel, David, Isaiah, and the line of holy prophets who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Not only is the seventh day the Sabbath of the Old Testament, but the Seventh day is the Sabbath of the New Testament. Matt. 28: 1; Mark 16: 1.

2. It was Christ's custom to observe the Sabbath. Luke 4: 16. It was Paul's manner to observe it. Acts 17: 2. The disciples of Christ observed "the Sabbath according to the commandment" down to the close of the New Testament. Luke 23: 56. On the contrary, the first day of the week in the New Testament, like in the Old, was regarded as a working day; for the disciples went to perform work on the first day of the week which they would not do on the Sabbath. Luke 23: 56; 24: 1. It was a day for journeying (Acts 20: 13) and business. 1 Cor. 16: 1.

On entering into secular history we learn that the first day of the week, or Sunday was dedicated by the ancient heathen to the worship of the sun, and worshipped under the name of Baal; that Constantine was the first to make a law for its observance as a rest day, and that it was afterwards adopted by the Roman Church instead of the Lord's Sabbath; yet a noble line of devoted Christians have all along protested earnestly against this change, and have kept up the observance of the Sabbath of the Lord amidst opposition, persecution and even death. This devoted line of Sabbath keepers reaches back through every century to the days of the apostles, and thence back through the Jewish dispensation the patriarchal, to the very morn of creation, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. For sixty centuries has the seventh day Sabbath been observed by God's people. While on the other hand, the first day has not been

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observed more than fifteen centuries under the garb of Christianity.

Dear reader, which day will you keep? If you are a servant of the Lord your duty is to obey Him. Why halt ye between two opinions? "If the Lord be God follow Him, and if Baal follow him."



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