

Why I Observe The Sabbath

THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE WEEK

By

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(Third Edition)

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(Seventh Day)

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Because I worship God, who performed the work of creation in six days and rested on the seventh, and enjoined upon his worshipers to follow his example in labor and rest. This rest day is called Sabbath, which, besides its meaning of rest, is a sacred day devoted to the service of God. We need a day of rest for physical recuperation and cessation from labor, and the Creator has set the example for mankind, and says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; 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."

I observe the seventh day instead of any other on account of divine example. At the present time a large part of the professed Christian world observe the first day of the week for the sabbath, contrary to the original command and example, and devote the original day to secular use. Some of them say of us that "we keep Saturday for Sunday;" but not so; we observe Saturday or seventh day instead of Sunday, or first day, following the original command and example, and we claim that there is no divine authority or example for departing from the original Sabbath; and as we would "worship God in spirit and in truth," we follow in his own appointed way. As we expect the blessings of God and he is an unchanging Being, is just as well as merciful, and prefaces his command with the word "remember," therefore we think it important to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

I observe the Sabbath because I believe in Christ, the Son of God, and expect salvation and a home in the kingdom of God which he has promised his followers. The keeping of the Sabbath is not the saving element in the Christian religion, but we keep the Sabbath because we are saved in Christ. Faith in Christ is the saving element, and our faith in Christ and His atoning work increases our obligation to keep the law of God. "Sin is the transgression of God's law," says a divine commentator, and if we would be saved through Christ we must cease from sin, and this brings us into special or renewed obligation to observe the law of God, the violation of which makes us sinners, and the keeping of the seventh day being a part of the law of God it devolves upon us at the present time to observe the original Sabbath as much as it did upon his ancient people.

For this added or accrued obligation to observe the law by the believer in Christ see the comments of the apostle Paul to the Romans, 3:31, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid, yea, we establish the law." A very strange idea prevails in the world that because sinners are pardoned from their sins through faith in Christ they are freed from obligation to obey a law of which the violation made them sinners. People do not look at human laws in that way. If a pardoned criminal transgresses the state law he is again adjudged guilty and liable to punishment. So in the Christian religion, the believer in Christ must obey the law of God. Jesus' own words on this point are not to be passed lightly over. Matt. 5:17, 18, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfill. Till heaven and earth pass away one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law till all things be accomplished." R. V. Thi

shows the perpetuity of God's law, and that it holds its obligation right on through the Christian dispensation as well as through the former one. Jesus fulfilled the law of God by observing it, but that did not abolish the law any more than Jesus' being baptised by John and thus fulfilling righteousness abolished righteousness. Matt. 3:15. Righteousness is right doing, and righteousness must have a standard, and fulfilling a law is practicing or obeying it and does not abrogate it.

I observe the Sabbath because it was one of the first institutions of God for man's observance. It was instituted in Eden, and before sin entered into the world; hence it exists for man when he is freed from sin and its condemnation, and is for serving God. Through the early history of the human race there are recognitions of Sabbath observance, and when a written law was given to the Israelites who were taken to be God's special people the Sabbath is incorporated therein, prefaced with the word "remember," thus specifying a reason previously existing. The base of their laws was comprised in a code of ten commandments, of which the Sabbath is the fourth, with the reason for its institution and obligation. Ex. 20: 3-17. They were required to observe each one of these commandments; they had other laws for their national government and also laws for conducting their worship of God in sacrifices and offerings. Was the Sabbath given only to the children of Israel? The Israelites were the only people of the time who knew the true God and worshiped Him, therefore they were the people to whom the laws were given and who had communication with him. All other people had lost knowledge of the true God and knew not his laws and government. God had not different laws for different people,

then nor now. The obligation of the Sabbath was universal and so has it continued to be.

The memorial character of the Sabbath shows its perpetual obligation. It was instituted to commemorate the work of creation, six days of creative labor followed by a day of rest—the seventh. In the beginning of Bible history we read of the institution of the Sabbath, but the book of Genesis is not a book of laws, except the prohibitory laws given to Adam and Eve, the violation of which brought sin and death; therefore the opponent of the perpetuity of the Sabbath loses his argument when he says there is no Sabbath command for twenty-five hundred years of the world's history. But when great promises were made to Abraham, and a covenant, the Lord said Abraham was chosen "because that he obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws." Gen. 26:5. There were laws and commandments then although they were not written; and most certainly after the Sabbath had been instituted in Eden it was one of the laws and commandments which Abraham kept. In further evidence of its existence and obligation before the exodus from Egypt, we read that in the gathering of the manna some of the people went out on the Sabbath to gather it and the Lord said: "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" Ex. 16:25-30. This is evidence of its previous existence and also that it was one of the commandments and laws.

When the Hebrew people were brought out of Egypt and organized into a nation, the ten commandments were given them written on stone, showing their durability, to be the foundation of all their laws, and the keeping of the Sabbath was made a prominent commandment—the fourth, and there we read its memorial character—"Remember the Sab-

bath day to keep it holy; for (or because that) in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11. It is well known that memorials are as perpetual as the things commemorated; and this memorial character of the Sabbath emphasizes the fact that the obligation of the seventh day to be observed for the Sabbath is as lasting as the fact that the creative work was done in six days and the seventh day observed as a rest day. Therefore as long as that fact remains so long should the seventh day be observed by the intelligent creatures of God who would worship him. And for the same reason the Sabbath service cannot be transferred to any other day of the week. The observing of some other day would not commemorate something which occurred on some other day than the one observed. Therefore the sabbatic institution requires the observance of the definite seventh day of the week; the sabbatic institution has not been transferred to some other day, neither can it be, nor can its obligation cease. The savior said that they who "worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth," and both spirit and truth designate the seventh day of the week as the definite day of sabbatic observance.

I observe the Sabbath because I love God. Love to God is shown by serving him. The apostle John writes, "This is the love of God that we keep His commandments." 1 John 5:3. The keeping of the Sabbath is one of the commandments, the fourth. Love must be manifested and if we live in obedience to God we show our love to him by that service. Love and service go together, as do faith and works, law and gospel, letter and spirit; each requires the other. Love to God is more than sentiment. The

religious life consists of knowledge in the mind, love in the heart and obedience in the life. When Jesus says, "the first and great commandment in the law is to love God with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind," the fact of that love requires a standard for it, some precepts by which that love may be shown, as well as does the second great commandment of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," require a standard of service by which love to our neighbor may be known. Matt. 22:36-40. That standard is given in due form where a code of laws of righteousness, right doing, or right living is given, which code is called the Ten Commandments, and the observance of the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, is one of them. This is a well known theorem, that love is shown by service.

The keeping of the commandments of God is made by the Bible an important part of Christian duty and life, and we would emphasize the fact that the original seventh day Sabbath is one of those ten commandments. In our Savior's sermon on the mount, he said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." Matt. 7:21. To do the will of the Father is to do or keep his commandments, all that he has commanded. In accordance with this statement of Jesus in his reply to the young man who asked him, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life," He answered, "If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments." Matt. 19:16-17. And to be specific Jesus quotes some of the commandments. This shows how important in the service of God and the seeking of eternal life is the keeping of the commandments of God, and the Sabbath is one of them. We would not be misunderstood to say that

to keep the commandments insures eternal life; it requires in addition just what Jesus said to the young man who had kept all these commandments, "Come and follow me." v. 21. Faith in Christ is the saving element; another element is conversion, which implies turning from sin to God, to obey all his laws and requirements. Thus we have law and gospel, "keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

I observe the Sabbath because Christ did while on earth. We read in the opening of his ministry, Luke 4:16, that it was his custom to go into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. This states that it was his custom to observe the Sabbath, and in the many miracles of healing the sick and infirm on the Sabbath day not a word is said of the Sabbath observance to cease, or its observance to be changed to some other day of the week. If such had been the case it would have been recorded. On the contrary, we read that Jesus kept His Father's commandments, John 15:10, and the Sabbath is one of the Father's commandments. And on this point there is an important testimony in the event of the Pharisees finding fault with Jesus and His disciples for plucking the ears of corn and eating them as they passed through the fields on the Sabbath day, and in his reply that "the Sabbath was made for man," Mark 2:27. As it was made for man it was made for all men; not for Jews alone but for Gentiles as well; it was made for man in the beginning, when man was made; it was made for man during all time; not to cease just then when Jesus said this, but to continue obligatory to the end of time; and was to continue as it was made, to be celebrated on the seventh day of the week; it was made for man's benefit, a day of rest, a day of worship. Therefore having been made for me and for my benefit, and pronounce

By so high an authority as the Son of God, I observe it as originally given.

Christ's recognition of the Sabbath is not to be overlooked. In saying that he was Lord of the Sabbath he told the Pharisees that he was its superior, or that he, their expected Messiah, was greater than the Sabbath, as He had also said that He was greater than their temple, greater than Solomon or Abraham. He recognized the Sabbath as an existing institution. It is objected by some that Christ gave no law for the keeping of the Sabbath. There was no need. And more, Christ was not a law-giver. His office was not to make laws, or to interfere with laws already made. His work was to save a world from sin, to redeem sinners to God, to restore a lost creation to its primeval condition. The Father was law-giver, Christ was life-giver. An apostle has written: "He came to bring life and immortality to light by his gospel." None of the Father's laws for the government of the world was abrogated by Him. The fundamental of all laws, the ten commandments, which represent so many principles of righteousness, remained the same as before His coming. When the children of Israel were organized into a nation in the wilderness of Siani, under Moses, when they came out of Egypt, they were given laws for such national capacity which were to exist as long as their national government should continue, and so of course when there was no longer a nation of Israel such laws could no longer be executed. Many of their laws or regulations were for public worship, for their religion and worship were national, for church and state were united. The work of Jesus had no interference with these. We find him observing the passover, the paschal lamb of which service typified Himself, and at His last observance of it he instituted what we call the Lord's Supper, of

broken bread to represent his broken body and the wine to represent his shed blood, after which Christ is our passover, slain for us. In all this we do not see any interference with his Father's laws; their work was different—the Father's to create, Christ's to redeem.

We cannot see how any professed Christian can see antagonism between the work of Christ and His Father, so that his work should break down or abrogate his Father's laws, abrogating or changing the keeping of the day of the Sabbath. Even if the following of Christ be called His spiritual kingdom the same precepts are needed in our relation to both God and man. The gospel of Jesus Christ, which is salvation from sin, needs the law of God, the ten commandments, to show the individual that he is a sinner. Thus the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Gal. 3:24. But when we are brought to Christ and justified by faith (v. 25) and the law has passed its schoolmaster character to us, it by no means follows that the law has ceased to exist. This is equivalent to the teaching of Paul in Rom. 8, that there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ, who walk after the Spirit, for the believer has passed from that side of the case unto justification. Rom. 5:16. The law of God is seen in all this, condemning the sinner, showing him justified when the condemnation is removed.

But it is objected that we are now under the law of Christ instead of under the law of God as formerly. The term, "under the law," means under its condemnation as it also means under obligation to its obedience. But the objector fails to show how the law of God gave place to another law, or why it should, and fails to show us a code of laws called the law of Christ. The term, "law of Christ," occurs but once in the Bible (Gal. 6:2),

"Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." Now here is no code of laws and no reference to anything to antagonize or supersede the law of God. What kind of law is fulfilled by bearing one another's burdens? Precisely that law of which Christ speaks when He says, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." John 13:34. It is that law or principle of love which prompts one to do by another as you would have another do by you; and that love is the moving element in the matter. This is also that which Jesus did by the law of which the prophecy says, "He will magnify the law and make it honorable." Isa. 42:21. Magnified by the principle of love being the mover to action. Then the law of Christ is nothing to supersede or take the place of His Father's law, but an auxiliary to it, to help us to carry out its holy precepts.

The advocates of first day observance instead of the seventh day Sabbath tell us that the resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week made it the Sabbath, or caused it to be thenceforth the Sabbath instead of the ancient day of the Sabbath commanded by Jehovah. But they fail to show us any divine authority for such a change if there had been any change. As Jesus neared the end of his ministry he said not a word of an approaching change or of a new Sabbath to take the place of the former one, nor of the abrogation of His Father's laws. Neither did He say that His resurrection from the dead and His work of redemption were so much greater than the work of creation that we must take away creation's memorial and establish a new one in its place. The memorial of Christ's death is the Lord's Supper, and his resurrection is memorialized in the believer's rising from the water in baptism. But in the absence of scripture for the sabbatic change the

Roman Catholic church claims to be authority for the change, assuming the right to do so, and the Protestant churches are following her example and teaching. Neither can they show that the resurrection of Christ occurred on the first day of the week. The recorded statement is that "late on the Sabbath, or "in the end of the Sabbath," those first at the sepulcher found that the resurrection had already occurred, and such was the testimony of the angle; hence this would-be evidence for biblical authority fails and leaves the perpetuity of God's Sabbath unharmed and standing on the eternal rock of God's word, who says, "I am the Lord, I change not."

I observe the seventh day Sabbath as did the apostles of Christ after his ascension to heaven and He had sent them to preach the gospel to all the world. Had they observed a different day from the one previously observed the Acts of the Apostles would state it. But in every mention of the Sabbath it is of the same custom as the Jews observed among whom the apostles preached and traveled. Here is no reference to new laws or customs, but a recognition of previously established ones, even the feasts which were a part of the Jewish worship, Acts 18:21, as still proper for them. The Christian religion was an outgrowth of Judaism requiring the recognition of Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah. As positive proof that the apostles did not teach and observe a different day for the Sabbath than the Sabbath of the previous dispensation, Paul stated before Festus, the Roman governor, and the Jews who sought to condemn him, "Neither against the laws of the Jews___have I offended anything at all." Acts 25:8. Now had Paul taught and observed a change of the Sabbath, or its abrogation, the statement would not have been true. And again

he stated the same to the Jews in Rome who came to him there in his imprisonment, "I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers." Acts 28:17, 21. This is irrefutable proof that Paul had not taught a breaking down of the Sabbath either by change or abrogation, and the other apostles were in harmony with him.

Jesus would have his people a sanctified people, and prays that they may be sanctified through the truth, hence the importance of the truth in every part of our religious life and doctrine. We cannot be sanctified in error, neither shall a false theory save us, no matter how sincere we are, so we need to have truth in every particular, especially so as to keeping the Sabbath God has sanctified for us to keep. If we would have sanctified lives we should observe the Sabbath which God has sanctified and set apart to a holy use. See Gen. 2:3, and Ex. 20:11. To be sanctified and holy is to observe the holy precepts God has enjoined upon us, and his Sabbath day is an important one of those precepts.

I observe the Sabbath because I would worship God. We have Abrahamic example, for he "obeyed my voice, kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws," the Lord said of him (Gen. 26:5), and surely the Sabbath was amidst laws, commandments, and statutes. I observe the Sabbath for it is particularly specified among the ten commandments, and is specified as a memorial of creation; and as a memorial its claims are as obligatory at the present time as at any previous time since the creation. It was instituted before sin entered the world, it was instituted for man then, for man in the Savior's time, and for all times since. It was instituted before types were given, hence was no type, and if it were as some claim, the heavenly

rest, which it would typify, is not yet reached, therefore on that argument the Sabbath remains. I observe the Sabbath because my Savior sanctified its observance by his example and his teaching. Were I to take some man-made institution in place of the sabbath I would fall under Jesus' condemnation, "In vain do ye worship me teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." I prefer to "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." I would worship God in spirit and truth, that I may render acceptable service.

