

**THE
LORD'S DAY**

**MORAL DECAY,
EVOLUTION AND THE
THREAT TO LIBERTY**

**COLIN D. & RUSSELL R.
STANDISH**

The Lord's Day

By
Colin D. Standish
and
Russell R. Standish

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1	<u>What a Difference a Day Makes</u>	7
2	<u>The Sabbath of Creation</u>	12
3	<u>Sabbath During Old Testament Times</u>	20
4	<u>Christ and the Lord's Day</u>	26
5	<u>The Sabbath,</u> <u>the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus</u>	35
6	<u>The Sabbath in Apostolic Times</u>	47
7	<u>Sunday in the Life of the Apostles</u>	54
8	<u>Sabbath and Sunday in the Early Christian Church</u>	66
9	<u>The Decree of Constantine, and the Council of Nicaea</u>	76
10	<u>The Council of Laodicea</u>	82
11	<u>The Sabbath in the Time of the Middle Ages</u>	87
12	<u>The Sabbath and the Reformation</u>	95
13	<u>The Seventh-day Sabbath Enters American Colonies</u>	102
14	<u>The Sabbath from Eden to Eden Restored</u>	106
15	<u>The Yearly Sabbaths and the Spring Festivals</u>	114
16	<u>The Yearly Sabbaths and the Summer and Fall Festivals</u>	124
17	<u>Nailed to the Cross</u>	131
18	<u>The Sabbath and Legalism</u>	139
19	<u>The Sabbath and True Conversion</u>	146
20	<u>The Jewish Sabbath</u>	152

21	The Papal Sabbath and The Lord's Sabbath	158
22	The Bible Creation Story	164
23	The Sabbath and Evolution	171
24	Is the Seventh Day of Creation Week Saturday?	179
25	The International Date Line and Sabbath Keeping	187
26	Keeping the Sabbath Holy	193
27	The Seal of the Living God	204
28	The Mark of the Beast	213
29	The Sabbath and the New Covenant	222
30	Legislating Sabbath Observance	232
31	Sabbath, Unity and Salvation	239
32	The Sabbath and Religious Liberty	248
33	Sunday Laws—	
	Will They Bring Morality Back to the World?	257
34	The Separation of Church and State and the Lord's Day	265
35	Globalism and the Lord's Day	273
	Appendix A	282
	Appendix B	287
	Appendix C	292
	Appendix D	298



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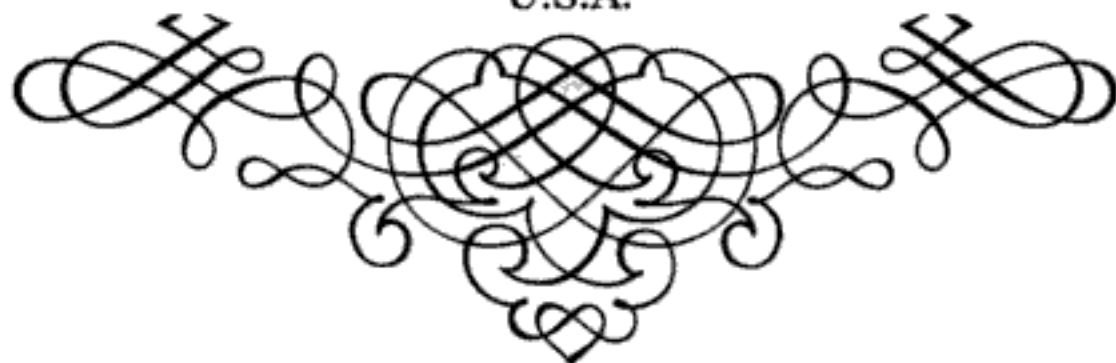
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EACH AUTHORED BY
COLIN AND RUSSELL STANDISH

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1

What a Difference a Day Makes

ONE day, even an hour, a minute or a second, can change the destiny of an individual, a nation or even the whole world. December 7, 1941, was one such day. It is arguable that no other single day in United States history has so profoundly altered the United States psyche, its political focus, its foreign policy and propelled the nation to a course which inexorably led it to world dominance.

The Japanese air-borne attack on Pearl Harbor transformed not only the focus of the United States of America, but of the whole world. It dramatically changed the course of history, affecting the lives of hundreds of millions of people. It led to many millions of individuals from scores of nations losing their lives prematurely. It altered the thinking of the United States that for almost 120 years had been committed to the Monroe Doctrine of non-involvement in the affairs of Europe, as America sent troops not only to the Pacific sphere but to the European arena of conflict.

Even the United States of America's relatively brief involvement in the First World War had not changed the general thinking of America. The Congress had determined that the United States should refrain from involvement in European affairs. Thus after the First World War she refused to join the League of Nations and involve herself in European affairs between the World Wars. These affairs included the Spanish Civil War and the Italian assault upon Ethiopia. However, the Monroe Doctrine was discarded after the nation's involvement in the Second World War. Today America has been elevated to the position of policeman of the world. Those readers who are old enough to remember that attack upon Pearl Harbor will almost certainly also remember exactly where they were and what they were doing when they first heard the shocking news.

Another day that changed the history of the world saw the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963. All the intrigues that have since been postulated, all the conspiracy theories that have been investigated, do little to erase the disquiet of a nation over that tragedy.

Even though we do not yet have the perspective of a long history, there are many who believe the September 11 terrorist attacks on the New York World Trade Center Towers and the Pentagon are leading to permanent changes in the way of life—of the citizens not only of the United States but of the world. We believe the world will never again return to the pre-September 11 status. The necessary safety precautions are perceived by many to have already extended to the abridgment of civil and religious liberties.

Many other days, both collectively and individually, have great significance to us. Birthdays and wedding days are accorded great individual and family significance. There are also national days commemorating the foundation of each nation or marking some great event. Columbus Day in the United States marks the European discovery of the Americas. Anzac (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) Day, commemorated in Australia and New Zealand, marks the heroic, albeit unsuccessful, assault on the Gallipoli Peninsula of Turkey during the First World War. Great Britain has a day to honor its monarch's birthday.

Many other events of international importance changed the course of English history. These had a profound effect upon subsequent English history and also world history. The signing of Magna Charta by King John of England in 1215 began to break the autocratic rule of the monarchs. The defeat of the Spanish Armada by the fleet of Sir Francis Drake in 1588 settled Protestantism in England. The signing of the British Bill of Rights in 1689 granted many more liberties to ordinary people in Britain. The signing of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776 changed the course of world history. The signing of the United States Bill of Rights in 1791 achieved even greater freedom in the United States than had the British Bill of Rights.

Religious events also have been commemorated far and wide. Christians of specific beliefs mark Easter and Christmas, even though neither precisely commemorates the death nor birth of

Jesus. Nevertheless, they are held to be holy days by many Christians. The Muslims have special days such as the end of Ramadan and the birthdays of Mohammed and Fatima, Mohammed's daughter; the Hindus celebrate Deepavali; the Chinese Buddhists celebrate the Feast of the Hungry Ghosts; and the Jews have their Passover and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement).

While not all religions of the world have a special weekly day for worship, three major religions do. Of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, each religion has a different day for worship. The Jews worship on the seventh day (Saturday), most Christians worship on what they call the Lord's Day or the resurrection day (Sunday), the first day of the week; Muslims worship on Friday, the sixth day of the week. Each is said to commemorate a special event.

The seventh-day Sabbath commemorates Creation, the end of God's creative work; the first day of the week, Sunday, commemorates the resurrection of our crucified Lord, and the sixth day of the Muslims is said by some to have been chosen as the special day of worship to distinguish Islam from the days observed by Judaism and Christianity. However there are Christians, including Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh-day Baptists, Church of God Seventh Day, some of the remnants of the World Wide Church of God, together with a rising number of Pentecostal churches, who designate the seventh day as their day of worship. When we were lads we read an Australian *Pix* magazine which included an article which documented the fact that each of the seven days of the week was a holy day to certain individual faiths.

In all religions there are those who guard the sanctity of their day of worship. Yet many have become very lax and indifferent, often not even attending corporate worship on their specified day of rest. In some countries of the Muslim world, however, there are very serious penalties for not attending the mosque. This reflects some of the penalties that were in England and in the American colonies for those who in past centuries were delinquent in church attendance on Sunday. These penalties included fines, imprisonment, and even death.

Though some religions do not have a weekly day of rest and worship, yet as a matter of convenience they commonly worship

on Sunday. The Jehovah's Witnesses have their main services Sunday though they attach no specific religious significance to that day. Colin was traveling with an officer of the World Bank in Washington, D.C., who identified herself as a Sikh. When Colin asked what day the Sikhs worshiped in their temples, she replied that there was no specific day set aside for worship but that they worshipped in the temple on Sundays, no doubt to fit in with the common practices of society.

Indeed the most common day of rest from regular weekly work is Sunday. This has been true throughout the Communist world, including the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China and North Korea. It is true also in Hindu India, Buddhist Thailand, even Muslim Malaysia. In 1997 Pakistan returned Friday to a work day, only allowing sufficient time off for a visit to the Mosque. This decision was taken in order to suit the business and economic patterns of the world. Pakistan, being unwilling to suffer economic disadvantages by closing its stock exchange and business activities on the Muslim day of rest, legislated this quite dramatic change. Sunday was declared to be a rest day for all workers since the stock, money, and commodities markets of the world were closed on that day. Faithful Pakistani male Moslems still attend mosques on Fridays and are accorded time from work to do so.

As can be expected, when Christians, Jews, and Muslims scattered to many regions of the world, the peoples they influenced took up the same worship days. Thus Marco Polo was greatly surprised, for example, upon reaching China in the thirteenth century, to discover that the Christians there kept holy the seventh day of the week. Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese explorer, when he reached the west coast of India at the end of the fifteen century, found also that the Thomistic Christians (those Indian Christians who descended from the converts of the apostle Thomas) kept holy the seventh day of the week. So affronted were the Portugese by the practice of these Indians following the Syrian Christian rite of seventh-day Sabbath-keeping that they introduced the Inquisition in order to quell this deviation from Roman Catholic practice (see Hilton Meyers, *Inquisitive Christians*, New Millennium Publications, P.O. Box 290, Morisset, Australia, NSW, 1992). Seventh-day keeping was strong in parts

of Ethiopia. Seventh-day keepers were also found as far away from Europe as Guatemala in Central America.

Especially after the Reformation, missionary societies were organized in various parts of the world. The London Missionary Society was an early example of such organized Christian missionary endeavor. This led to the rapid spread of Christianity to all continents, bringing with it the teaching of Sunday sacredness. The establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804 also increased the Christian witness to the world. Later the American Bible Society aided the spread of Christianity. We cannot ignore the consequences of the colonial conquests of the British, French, Dutch, Belgians, Germans, Spanish and Portuguese. All led to the spread of Christianity and with it Sunday sacredness, unfortunately sometimes at the point of the sword.

As we have traveled we have found reports of diverse peoples who held Saturday to be a sacred day. For example, while preaching in Fiji, Colin was informed that before Western Christianity came to that Pacific nation there was a group of seventh-day keepers. An acquaintance of ours, Pastor Lester Hawkes, reported that he and his wife, as young missionaries, were assigned to the southern part of Papua New Guinea. They discovered two villages in which no work was allowed on the seventh day (Saturday). Though this practice was not directly associated with religious ceremonies, the day possessed religious overtones.

Likewise the Muslims, as they traveled and conquered, brought Friday sacredness to large parts of the world—North, Central and Eastern Africa across to Pakistan and Bangladesh and parts of India to Malaysia, Indonesia and the southern region of the Philippines. As European persecution dispersed the Jews, the seventh-day Sabbath migrated with them. All three days—Friday, Saturday and Sunday—had been held very sacred by adherents of those faiths. All these religions were established on practices in which secular forms of work were put aside. Worship of a public nature was urged upon all adherents and the day was reserved for special emphasis upon reading of sacred writings and of contemplating deeper spiritual principles.

In this book we examine the origins and development of special days of worship, and seek to establish the Scriptural authenticity—or otherwise—of these days of worship.

2

The Sabbath of Creation

THREE great religions of the world hold in common the sacredness of the Old Testament writings—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All three religions trace their spiritual heritage back to Abraham. The Jews and the Muslims rightly claim Abraham as their spiritual father and also their genetic father.

Christians herald Abraham as their spiritual father and claim to be the inheritors of the oracles of truth handed down through successive generations of the Jews. It is believed that these oracles were passed to the Christian church when the Jews, as a nation, rejected Christ as their Messiah. Thus Paul declared:

And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)

The Old Testament book of origins, named *Genesis*, is therefore revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims alike. This is the book which records the beginnings of this planet and declares the planet to be the handiwork of the Eternal Father of the universe.

The book of *Genesis* describes a *created* beginning entirely in contradistinction to the popular evolutionary views of today. It in no way sustains a concept of the earth resulting from some cosmic explosion in the universe called the "Big Bang" which has resulted in the suns, the planets, the cosmic dust, and other cosmological entities in the universe. *Genesis* records nothing to support the evolutionary concept of natural selection as a mechanism by which evolutionary progress is made. It also provides no validity for the process of genetic mutations as a means of man's development from inanimate materials into simple cells and thence to human beings, postulated to have taken place over billions of years.

Rather, the book of Genesis declares that the earth and all that is in it was created by *fiat* [arbitrary decree] Creation at the command of God. This presentation of Genesis chapter 1 declares that the whole of the creation process was completed in six consecutive, literal days. The creation account itself allows for no other explanation. Indeed the Bible chronology indicates that the origin of this planet took place approximately 6,000 years ago. The record is plain, but few of earth's inhabitants accept the documentation of Creation as it is written in Holy Scripture.

Many claiming to be Christians, Jews or Muslims reject the creation account out of hand as fiction. Others see it as allegorical; still others have interpreted it within the framework of theistic evolution. This is the view that God created some form of simple life which triggered the evolutionary process. For example, in the original Scofield Reference Bible of 1909, the footnote to Genesis 1:1 is supportive of theistic evolution, indicating that each day was an unspecified era of time. Others have hypothesized that although the earth was created in seven literal days, huge segments of time intervened between each day. Only human speculation and theorizing could support such positions. They are not helpful in establishing religious faith. If these theories were correct, then Scripture is untrustworthy and the God it portrays as its author is grossly ill informed.

Many, in rejecting the literal creation account, point to the scientific evidence presented in determination of the age of the earth, which does not support a short chronology. However the simplest issues are overlooked. For example, the Bible clearly states that three times the earth was cursed. The first was after sin entered the planet:

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake. (Genesis 3:17)

The second curse came when Cain murdered Abel.

. . . the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. (Genesis 4:10-12)

The third curse was the flood in Noah's time.

And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. (Genesis 7:21-23)

Clearly the curses of the earth delivered by God greatly aged the earth and gave it the appearance of being much older than it really is. Thus the Bible says:

And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed. (Hebrews 1:10-12)

However it is not the goal of this book to debate the Creation-evolution issue in full. That has been undertaken in another book by the authors.*

The question addressed here is the relationship of the Sabbath to Creation. The word *Sabbath* is not found in the creation account. So let us examine the record of the seventh day of Creation week which is recorded as having great significance.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And 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 2:1-3)

All the acts of God's Creation, according to the Genesis record, were completed in six days culminating in the creation of man and woman. As a memorial to the creatorship of God, the seventh day was set aside as a reminder of the great God of the universe. The

* *The Big Bang Exploded*, Hartland Publications, Box 1, Rapidan, VA 22733, U.S.A; E-mail sales@hpcatalog.com; telephone 1-800-774-3566.

record declares that God rested on the seventh day, which does not, of course, mean that he was exhausted from the work of creation. It declares that God ceased from His work of Creation. Now we must be mindful that God's Creation resulted from the greatest energy source in the universe—the all-powerful God who spake everything into existence.

For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. (Psalm 33:9)

By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. (Psalm 33:6)

This is not a difficult concept for us to understand today. Man has learned how to transform matter into energy by the splitting of the atom. The enormous power loosed when matter is converted into energy has resulted in fearful destruction. The Creator of the universe, however, possesses the genius to convert energy into matter; and that is the basis of His creation of all there is upon our planet and, by extension, the universe. Only a God of infinite wisdom could have designed and constructed the universe.

However, there was something unique about the seventh day which was set apart from all other days. It is Scripturally unsound to say that God blessed "a seventh day," for that would make void the importance of the six working Creation days which were followed by God's rest day. It would also invalidate the plain statements written by Moses in other books which he authored under Inspiration. Surely the seventh day is the day referred to by God as the Sabbath day. For example, in the book of Exodus we read these identifications of the Sabbath as the seventh day.

Six days ye shall gather it [manna]; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. (Exodus 16:26)

We notice that this enlightening statement was made before God gave His written Ten Commandments to Israel. The fourth commandment includes these words,

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 20:10, 11)

In the book of Leviticus the seventh day is once more identified as the Sabbath.

Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. (Leviticus 23:3)

When we compare Exodus chapter 16, verses 23, 25 and 29 with verses 26, 27 and 30, we discover that the *seventh day* and the *Sabbath* are used interchangeably.

And he said unto 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. (Exodus 16:23)

And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. (verse 25)

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. (verse 29)

Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. (verses 26, 27)

So the people rested on the seventh day. (verse 30)

There can be no valid question that the seventh day of Creation is the Sabbath day. Indeed, if we need any further confirmation of this, surely it would come from the very meaning of the word *Sabbath*. The word *Sabbath* means *repose* or *rest*. The fact that God declared that He rested on the seventh day parallels the meaning of the word *Sabbath*. The two records of the Ten Commandments confirm, without doubt, the fact that the seventh day is the Sabbath of God. To argue that the Sabbath was made for the Israelites or Jews alone would deny the very plainest words

of Scripture. Let us look at what is said in the two records of the Commandments:

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God.
(Exodus 20:10)

Notice that the passage is recorded identically in Deuteronomy chapter 5:

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God.
(Deuteronomy 5:14)

The Commandments also explain the seventh-day Sabbath in relation to Creation.

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 20:11)

If there be even the slightest doubt that the seventh day is equated with the Sabbath, then surely the commandment settles the issue. It has often been argued that the term, *Sabbath*, does not appear in the Bible until the time of the Israelite exodus from Egypt. Therefore, it is conjectured that there is no evidence for its existence from Creation to about 1500 B.C. But such argumentation is shallow. The Sabbath is clearly presented in the Scripture at creation. Did not God teach this principle to Adam? Was it not known to the antediluvian patriarchs? It is important to remember that God's commandments do not require a written form and that God communed directly with Adam. Those verbal commands were no doubt then enshrined and passed down orally through the generations. ♦

We know there were commandments before Moses received the written law on tables of stone; otherwise the murder of Abel by Cain could not have been sin. God told Cain:

. . . if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. (Genesis 4:7)

John defines "sin" as the transgression of the law.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law. (1 John 3:4)

We are assured that Abraham kept all the commandments of God.

Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. (Genesis 26:5)

Joseph also understood sin when he resisted seduction by Potiphar's wife.

How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?
(Genesis 39:9)

These were all examples of a knowledge of sin before Sinai. The Bible is specific that without the law there is no sin. Thus God's law must have been known to man throughout history by verbal communication long before the giving of the Decalogue to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

By the law is the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)

Where no law is, there is no transgression. (Romans 4:15)

We certainly understand that the Sabbath was in place before Moses received the Ten Commandments from the hand of God.

And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto 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.

(Exodus 16:21-23)

And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day 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.

(Exodus 16:25, 26)

In their fascinating book, *Genesis and the Mystery Confucius Couldn't Solve* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1994), Dr. Ethel Nelson and Richard Broodberry, both of whom were missionaries in the Far East for many years, present clear evi-

dence that the characters of the written Chinese language depict the creation story including the Sabbath record. This is astonishing in a language that did not develop from Jewish or Christian roots.

The manner in which intelligent men and women have sought to question the existence of the Sabbath from the days of Creation has amazed the authors. This book will consistently use the words *seventh day* and *Sabbath* synonymously. Later we will investigate whether this is a specific seventh day or any chosen seventh day; and we will also investigate whether the seventh day, as understood today, can be certified as the same seventh day in which God rested from His creative acts (see chapter 24 entitled “Is the Seventh Day of Creation Week Saturday?”).

3

Sabbath During Old Testament Times

THE word *sabbath* appears in Scripture about 135 times, and another 35 times the word *sabbaths* appears. Most of the time the word *sabbath* refers to the seventh day of the week. However, on some occasions it also refers to the yearly ceremonial sabbaths associated with the great sacrifices and annual ceremonies of the Israelites including the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and the Day of Atonement (see chapters 15 and 16 entitled “The Yearly Sabbaths and . . .”).

The use of plural *sabbaths* is to be found only in the Old Testament. The singular form is a little more frequently used in the Old than in the New Testament. From these references we can gain a knowledge that the Sabbath was important to God’s people; so important, indeed, that when the Sabbath was commonly violated, great tribulation came upon the people.

There is a lack of Scriptural reference to either the Sabbath or the seventh day during the lives of the patriarchs before the flood and, indeed, those after the flood. Yet there can be no question that the Sabbath was carefully kept by all the faithful patriarchs and by their households. However, it appears that Sabbath observance was all but lost during the captivity in Egypt. It is almost certain that when the Israelites were enslaved, the Egyptians crushed out the Israelite observance of Sabbath. Therefore the Sabbath was reintroduced to the escapees as they journeyed to the promised land.

Much of the instruction concerning the Sabbath and its keeping is to be found in this period of journeying. Of course, besides the Israelites, there were the Egyptians who had been spared the horror of the death of their first-born sons by coming under the protection of the Israelites. There is no question that in their past experience these Egyptians had little knowledge of Sabbath keep-

ing. Therefore Moses spent much time educating the people to worship the true God on His holy Sabbath day.

God used the daily provision of manna as a foundation for teaching the Sabbath principle prior to the giving of the written commandments to Moses. The commandments were to form the foundation of the moral life of the Israelite people and later of the Jewish nation throughout their history. Yet it is plain that the Israelites frequently slipped into apostasy, often deep apostasy. During these extended periods of their history the Sabbath was constantly violated. That this is so is stated clearly by Nehemiah, who led the restoration of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. He declared that the judgments of God which directly led to the Babylonian captivity resulted from the disregard of Sabbath observance.

Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

(Nehemiah 13:17, 18)

But before the Babylonian captivity of the Jews, there was the captivity of the Northern Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians; for the inhabitants of this kingdom had constantly, if not more fully, violated the Sabbath. We must keep in mind that after the division of the kingdom of Israel upon the death of Solomon, the Northern Kingdom, comprising ten tribes of Israel, accepted Jeroboam as king. He led them back into the Egyptian worship of the golden calf and never was there another king of Israel who sought to lead the people back to the worship of the true God. Of course, there were pockets of faithful Israelites who continued to keep God's holy Sabbath day. It will be recalled that there were seven thousand in Israel at the time of Elijah who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

(1 Kings 19:18)

There is no doubt that this very small remnant in Israel was responsible for God's long-suffering with the nation. Yet little

more than 200 years after the death of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel, having overwhelmingly forsaken the Lord their God, and thus removed themselves from the protection of heavenly agencies, could not resist the might of Assyria. Thus in 725 B.C. Shalmaneser V, the king of Syria, laid siege against Samaria in the seventh year of the reign of King Hoshea of Israel. This siege led to terrible deprivation among the Israelites. In the third year of the siege Shalmaneser V overthrew the Israelites. However he died before all the captives could be taken away; and his successor, Sargon II, completed the scattering of the tribes of Israel. The Bible not only briefly explains what took place; it also provides the reasons why the Israelites were permitted by God to be taken captive.

And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes: *because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them.*

(2 Kings 18:11, 12, emphasis added)

It is plain that their disobedience to the voice of God, their transgression of the covenant and the commands of Moses provided the reasons why the Israelite people were no longer under God's protective umbrella. By this time Sabbath-keeping had long before been put aside by the people of Israel.

Relatively early in the seventh century B.C. Sennacherib, who had succeeded Sargon II, sent a mighty army against the smaller kingdom of Judah, bent on doing to Judah as Shalmaneser V had done to Israel. But there was a great difference. King Hezekiah of Judah put his trust and faith in the Lord. It is recorded that he followed in the pathway of righteousness:

And he [Hezekiah] did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. *For he*

clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. And the LORD was with him; and he prospered withersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. (2 Kings 18:3–7, emphasis added)

We observe that Hezekiah kept the Lord's commandments, which included the Sabbath Commandment. For this God honored him and prospered his kingdom. There was no other way that Judah could have survived a military engagement with the greatest army upon earth at the time. Yet what a wonderful victory came to Judah because this faithful king kept the commandments of God.

Sennacherib had sent his emissaries to impress the king with the futility of his resistance. Not only did they seek to intimidate the king; they sought to intimidate the people of Judah, and urged them to rebel against their king. For this reason they spoke in the Hebrew language in the hearing of the men on the city wall. They did all they could to discourage the Jews from following the godly example of their king, threatening them that they would be taken away as slaves. The spokesman for the Assyrians, Rabshakeh, urged the people to pay tribute to Sennacherib so that they could pursue normal lives. That the people too had faith in the Lord is shown by the fact that they followed the counsel of the king to respond not a word to the threatenings of Rabshakeh.

The anguished petition of the king to the God in whom he trusted led to the miraculous intervention of the Lord, whose angel destroyed the Assyrians, leaving 185,000 of the cream of the Assyrian army dead upon the ground outside the city. Sennacherib returned in disgrace to Nineveh.

Secular history attests that the Babylonians, upon hearing of the "defeat" of the Assyrian army, took the opportunity to attack the Assyrians. Yet Sennacherib was able to raise up another army that ruthlessly put down the Babylonians and destroyed many of their gods. But any thought Sennacherib had entertained that this victory would erase the defeat that he had suffered at the hands of God, soon faded; for many Assyrians also believed in the gods of Babylon. They were further angered by the king's actions and, shortly after this victory, two of his own sons assassinated him and another of his sons ruled in his stead.

And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

(2 Kings 19:37)

What an example is Hezekiah's keeping of God's commandments to God's people today. The breaking of the commandments will lead to impotency, as the kingdom of Israel experienced under its apostate king Hoshea. We contrast this with God's great protection when men keep His commandments.

At the time of King David, and no doubt through Solomon's reign, the Sabbath had been highly regarded. One Psalm was written for the Sabbath day. In this Psalm the solemnity of music is emphasized. How this contrasts with much contemporary church music:

Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery;
upon the harp with a solemn sound. (Psalm 92:3)

The Psalm also expresses praise for the Creatorship of the Lord.

For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. (Psalm 92:4, 5)

In the law of Moses we are reminded that the Sabbath commences at even on the sixth day of the week and ends at even on the seventh day of the week.

It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath. (Leviticus 23:32)

This parallels the days as recorded in Genesis chapter 1, all of which began at even and ended at even. This is a practice that seventh-day Sabbath-keeping Christians observe.

After the time of Nehemiah the Jews placed great emphasis upon the Sabbath. Never again did they revert to overt pagan practices. However, it was during this period that Satan found another way to make of non-effect Sabbath observance. He achieved this by adding to the Word of God. Not content with allowing men and women the opportunity to keep the Sabbath

according to the commandment and to the specific directions of Scripture, the Jews added many onerous human restrictions for the Sabbath. These became part of the *Talmud*.

The *Talmud* included the *Mishna*, a commentary upon the Scripture regulating minute details of Jewish life including the Sabbath, and the *Gemara*, which consisted of commentaries by famous rabbis upon the *Mishna*. Thus the Jewish people were judged not by the Word of God alone, but by the Word of God *and the Talmud*. Indeed, by the time of Christ, it would seem that the *Talmud* carried much greater weight and authority than did the words of the Old Testament.

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:9)

Thus what Satan could not accomplish through overt pagan apostasy, he accomplished by mingling human concepts with the concepts of the Divine. Great lessons must be learned from this. Like the Jews, most Christian churches have failed to learn that lesson; and they have developed creeds, prayer books and manuals by which the church is required to operate. How much more certain it would be if all were to lay hold upon the Bible and the Bible alone as the basis of faith and practice. Whenever a human creed or manual is out of harmony with the plain words of Scripture, then true Christians will always follow the Scripture.

4

Christ and the Lord's Day

HAVING been born into a devout Jewish family, there can be no doubt that Jesus, from His formative years, learned of the sacredness and sanctity of the Sabbath. No doubt Joseph and Mary attended the synagogue in Nazareth regularly. As the youthful Jesus grew He would have learned faithful Sabbath-keeping. Thus it is not surprising that in His early ministry it is recorded that Jesus was a regular attendee at the synagogue. Indeed He often taught there.

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And 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 for to read.

(Luke 4:14-16)

Jesus' worship on Sabbath was certainly a perfect example for us. On this particular occasion, however, so pointed was His testimony in applying the Scriptures to Himself that He was judged blasphemous and the crowd sought to kill Him.

And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

(Luke 4:29)

However, this was not the appointed time for Jesus to die. Miraculously He was able to escape from the mob.

But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

(Luke 4:30)

Yet Scripture attests that He continued to teach in the synagogues long after this incident.

And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? (Matthew 13:54)

And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. (Luke 13:10)

In spite of the wickedness, the corruption and the deep apostasy into which the Jewish Church had fallen, Jesus still took every opportunity to worship and, wherever possible, to teach in the synagogues. However, much of His teaching was in the open air. From the life of Christ we learn much about true Sabbath-keeping. Long before the time of Christ the Jews had developed the *Mishna*. The *Mishna* was a codification of the rules and laws of the Old Testament, especially the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses), placing human regulations and restrictions upon the Jewish people (see chapter 20 entitled, "The Jewish Sabbath"). Thus Jesus called their worship vanity.

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:9)

During His earthly ministry Jesus affirmed that He was Lord of the Sabbath. This revelation is recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke in their gospels.

For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day. (Matthew 12:8, see also Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5).

Thus Jesus laid claim that the Lord's day was the seventh-day Sabbath. This parallels the Old Testament claim of the fourth commandment that the seventh day is the Lord's day.

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God. (Exodus 20:10)

Even before the formal written commandments were delivered unto Moses the seventh day was called the Sabbath of the Lord.

And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. (Exodus 16:25)

Neither before His ascension nor after it does Jesus or the Bible lay claim to Sunday being the Lord's day. It is from Jesus that we obtain the fullest understanding of appropriate Sabbath keeping. Indeed, after the attempt to destroy Christ following His sermon in Nazareth, the Scripture records the first miracles which Jesus performed on the Sabbath day.

But he passing through the midst of them went his way, and came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power. And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about. And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them. (Luke 4:30-39)

On this occasion the miracles Christ performed did not raise the ire of leaders, possibly because none was present to witness these wonders. However, the teaching of the majority of the Jews is made very plain in that those seeking healing in Capernaum waited until the setting of the sun at the end of Sabbath before bringing their sick to Jesus to be healed.

Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. (Luke 4:40)

And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out

many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him. (Mark 1:32–34)

The next mention of the Sabbath during the life of Christ did not involve a miracle. Rather it dealt with the disciples and Jesus walking through a corn field. The Pharisees observed that they plucked the ears of corn and processed the seeds for eating on the Sabbath day. For this the Pharisees condemned them for breaking Sabbath.

At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. (Matthew 12:1, 2)

What the Pharisees said had nothing to do with the instruction of the Old Testament, but was consistent with the human rules which had been added by the Jews over the centuries. Note the response of Jesus:

But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day. (Matthew 12:3–8)

Jesus quickly solved the issue by recourse to the Word of God, thus demonstrating that He had no regard for the commandments of men. From this point on during His ministry the leaders of the Jews sought to condemn Jesus as a Sabbath violator because of the miracles which He performed on the Sabbath day. With great hypocrisy they accused the One who was the Lord of the Sabbath of breaking the Sabbath He had created, because He sought to heal the sick and the infirm. In their determined plot to find cause

against the sinless Son of God, they deliberately brought to him a man with a withered hand.

And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: and, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

(Matthew 12:9, 10)

We notice that the professed zealots of the Sabbath asked if it was lawful to heal this man on the Sabbath day. The question to be determined was whether such healing was "lawful in respect to the commandments of God" or "lawful according to the commandments of man." No doubt the Pharisees were referring to the *Mishna*; or maybe even the *Gemara*, which was a later addition by various notable rabbis with commentary on the *Mishna*. The *Gemara* was farther removed from the truth of the Scriptures than the *Mishna*. Jesus' response laid down a principle for all faithful Sabbath keepers to follow:

And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. (Matthew 12:11, 12)

Before laying down the principle of true Sabbath observance, Jesus showed the inconsistency of the Pharisees, who would much rather care for an animal than for the needs of a stricken human being. The principle is clear and plain, "It is lawful to do well on the sabbath days." As the Son of God, perfect in character, Jesus performed the miracle in the power of His Father, thus showing the approbation of the Father upon this act.

Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other. (Matthew 12:13)

Yet the Pharisees, proclaiming piety, held a council and established a plan whereby they might destroy Jesus. The ones who, in great hypocrisy, condemned the work of physical restoration to a handicapped man were willing to use the Sabbath issue as an excuse to plan the murder of Jesus.

Shortly thereafter Jesus performed another miracle on the Sabbath day at the famous pool of Bethesda. Here was a man who had been thirty-eight years a cripple. He hoped to be healed by being first into the pool when the pool was "troubled." But with no one to help him, year after year his hopes had been dashed. Jesus was not willing to allow him to suffer one more day, thus demonstrating His love, compassion and mercy. In healing the man Jesus said,

[T]ake up thy bed, and walk. (John 5:8)

The Jews, ever quick to condemn Jesus, accused Him of authorizing this man to do work on the Sabbath day by carrying his bed. As the result of this charge, the Scripture declares,

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

(John 5:16-18)

The Jews now judged Jesus as guilty of two terrible sins: the desecration of the Sabbath; and blasphemy, based upon His claim of equality with God. This was not Sabbath-breaking, because the cripple was doing nothing that he could have undertaken on the preparation day when he was still a cripple.

Many other miracles were performed by Christ on the Sabbath day. One example was the woman who for eighteen years had "a spirit of infirmity" (see Luke 13:10-17). On this occasion He called the leaders hypocrites, pointing out that each one led his ox or his ass from the stall to water on the Sabbath day. On another occasion (see Luke 14:1-6) Jesus asked the question,

Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?

(Luke 14:5)

Thus consistently Jesus affirmed that the care and the healing of the sick on God's holy, sacred Sabbath day did not violate the Sabbath commandment. Rather than being inconsistent with God's

Sabbath day, such acts of mercy were wholly compatible with true Sabbath observance.

Unfortunately some have used these incidents involving healing on the Sabbath to infer that Christ greatly liberalized the principles of Sabbath observance. But nothing could be further from the truth. The same Lord who created the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship is our Savior, the One who does not change.

That Christ was very particular about Sabbath-keeping can be seen from His prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, which indeed can be applied also to the troublous times just before the return of Jesus Christ:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. (Matthew 24:15–21)

We notice the call to pray that the flight of God's people from Jerusalem would not take place in the winter time nor on the Sabbath day. Two matters are very apparent here: (1) that the Jewish Christians who would flee Jerusalem would still be honoring the Sabbath day almost forty years after the death and resurrection of Jesus; and, (2) that at the end of this earth's history just before the second coming of Jesus, God's faithful people would also be honoring the Sabbath day; for Jesus spoke of the great tribulation such as has never been since the beginning of the world. Remember that the prophecy of Matthew chapter 24 has an application, not only to the destruction of Jerusalem but also to the end of the world:

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world? (Matthew 24:3)

It is easy to understand why Christ said that we are to pray that our flight be not in the winter for, if we will not have sufficient time to take any of our goods with us, in some locations we would surely suffer desperately in the freezing conditions of winter. This is even more important at the time of the end of this world, for many of God's precious saints will be living in very cold regions. Just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem this counsel was also important, for the winter time created very difficult conditions. But why did Jesus stress in His prayer that the flight of His people be not on the Sabbath day? Jesus understood that the rest and worship of the Sabbath would be wholly impossible for those fleeing from Jerusalem or from the danger zones at the end of time. This counsel is compatible with the sacredness and holiness with which Jesus regarded the seventh-day Sabbath.

Some apologists for Sunday sacredness have claimed that Jesus presented this prayer to His people because the gates of Jerusalem were closed on the Sabbath day. There are two great weaknesses in this position. The first is that all the gates of the city of Jerusalem were closed every day during the siege until the Romans briefly withdrew. But more importantly, the prophecy is equally applicable to the troublous times of persecution for God's people just before the return of Jesus. Clearly the issue then will not be the closing of the city gates that would impede the flight of God's people.

Both Josephus and Eusebius affirm in their monumental histories that the Christian Jews were able to escape just before the destruction of Jerusalem. Here is how Josephus records the situation:

It then happened that Cestius was not conscious either how the besieged despaired of success, nor how courageous the people were for him; and so he recalled his soldiers from the place, and by despairing of any expectation of taking it, without having received any disgrace, he retired from the city, without any reason in the world.

(Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, Bk. 2, Chapter 19, par. 7)

Then Josephus records,

After this calamity had befallen Cestius, many of the most eminent of the Jews swam away from the city, as from a ship when it was going to sink.

(*Ibid.*, Bk. 2, Chapter 20, par. 1)

Here is Eusebius' account:

The whole body, however, of the church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella. Here, those that believed in Christ, having removed from Jerusalem, as if holy men had entirely abandoned the royal city itself, and the whole land of Judea: the divine justice, for their crimes against Christ and His apostles, finally overtook them, totally destroying the whole generation of these evil-doers from the earth. (Pamphilus, Eusebius, *An Ecclesiastical History*, translated by C. F. Cruse, Samuel Bagster and Sons, London, 1847, 4th ed., pp. 104, 105.)

While it is not specifically recorded that the faithful Jewish Christians fled on a day other than the Sabbath, there is no question in the minds of the authors that God honored the sincere, earnest prayers of these faithful Jewish Christians, as He will for all faithful Christians at the end of this earth's history.

Some other apologists for Sunday sacredness claim that the reason that Jesus warned that the flight be not on the Sabbath day was because the Jews, seeing the Christians taking their goods with them, would have slaughtered the Christians and confiscated their goods. However, Jesus had said they were to take nothing with them.

Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. (Matthew 24:17, 18)

Such an explanation is without any creditability. Jesus came to uphold God's holy law. His followers at the end-time can do no less.

5

The Sabbath, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus

ONE of the most impelling evidences for the perpetuity of the Sabbath may be found in the gospel records of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Each of these records was written decades after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Some believe that John's record was written more than fifty years after the events which took place that weekend. The other three records are believed to have been written significantly earlier. It is commonly concluded that Mark wrote the first of the four gospels. Some scholars believe that Mark's account was written from information he had received from the Apostle Peter.

Now before delving into a deeper analysis of the records of the four gospel writers, it is appropriate to substantiate the Friday crucifixion and the Sunday resurrection. There are not a few Christians who have accepted the error of the Wednesday crucifixion and the Saturday night resurrection. Such cannot be sustained from a careful study of Scripture. The records are plain that the day of the crucifixion was the preparation day:

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath. (Mark 15:42)

And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. (Luke 23:54)

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. (John 19:31)

There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand. (John 19:42)

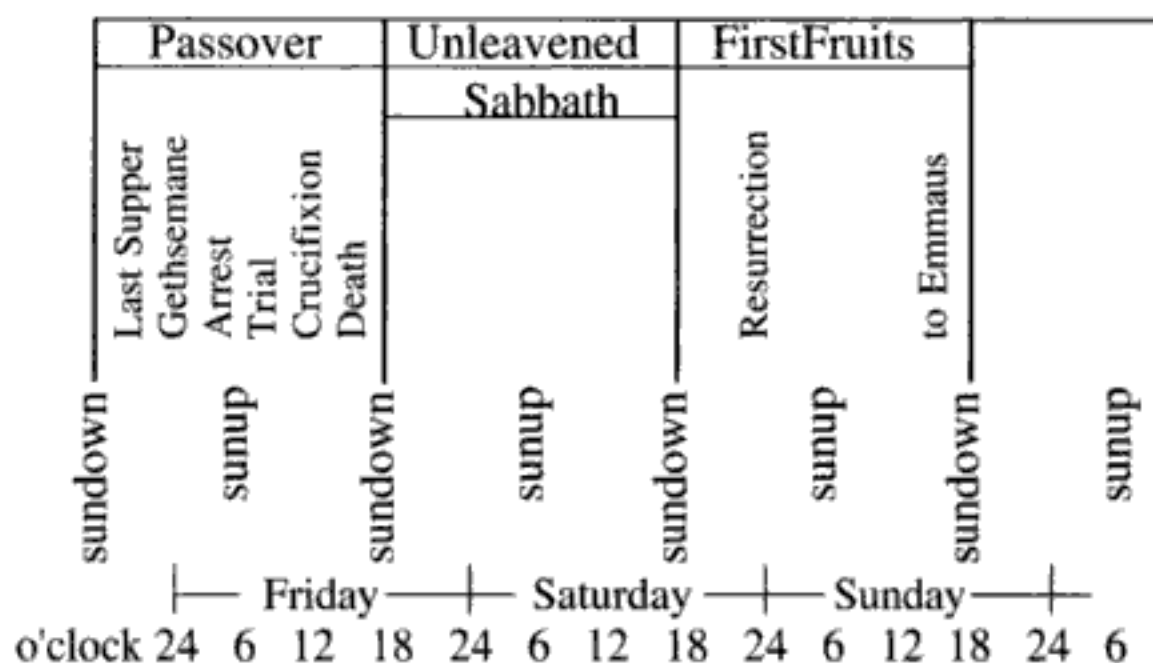
Some have argued, because this was the time of the Passover, that the day of the crucifixion was the preparation for the Passover. Indeed, that is true. However, the record of John specifically declares that the Sabbath which followed this preparation day was a high day (see John 19:31 above). This term is considered to apply to any seventh-day Sabbath that coincided with a yearly sabbath of one of the special sacred observances of the Jews (see *The Pulpit Commentary*, vol. 17, p. 432, Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1950). Therefore the evidence of the gospel attests to the fact that Christ was crucified on Friday. What has concerned many is the prophecy that Jesus made concerning Himself:

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:40)

Since this passage of Scripture says nothing concerning Christ's death or resurrection, its use is unsupportable.

It is argued that the Friday crucifixion only kept Christ in the tomb for two nights and thus would invalidate Christ's words. But again we would point out that this scriptural passage does not mention Christ's death or resurrection. It simply states that He was in the heart of the earth.

Yet Scripture itself plainly demonstrates that Christ could not have died on Wednesday. Cleopas and his friend, as they walked



to Emmaus on the Sunday following the crucifixion, attempted to explain to the unrecognized Jesus that which had occurred on the day of His death. Here is Luke's account:

Now upon the first day of the week . . . behold, two of them went *that same day* to a village called Emmaus. . . . But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. (Luke 24:1, 13, 21, emphasis added)

No ingenuity of calculation can ever convert Sunday into the third day since *Wednesday*. Sunday is the third day commencing with *Friday*. Even more importantly, the ceremonial type would not have been followed had Christ died on Wednesday and awakened on Sabbath. Let us construct a calendar for the three festivals:

In the *fourteenth day* of the first month at even is the LORD's passover. And on the *fifteenth day* of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. . . . Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the *morrow after the sabbath* the priest shall wave it.

(Leviticus 23:5-7, 10-11, emphasis added)

The Passover was appointed for the fourteenth day of the first month. The next day was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and was therefore a ceremonial Sabbath. The following day was the Feast of First Fruits. Because these feasts were on the same *date* each year, they did not necessarily match the weekly Sabbaths (your birthday does not always fall on Monday); but in the crucifixion year the Feast of Unleavened Bread Sabbath coincided with the weekly Sabbath, making it a high Sabbath. It was for this reason that it was mandatory for the victims to be removed from their crosses before the Sabbath.

Thus we see that on three consecutive days the Jews celebrated the Passover; the Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread; and the Feast of First Fruits. *There were only two nights between these three feasts*. The Passover was a type of Christ's

death, the Sabbath was a type of His rest in Joseph's tomb and the Feast of First Fruits was a type of the resurrection.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. (1 Corinthians 15:20)

Thus in the antitypes, the types were precisely followed; Friday crucifixion, Sabbath rest, Sunday resurrection. A Wednesday crucifixion could not have fulfilled the types.

The plain testimony of Scripture provides absolute evidence that Christ died on Friday. We need not wrest Scripture in order to uphold the Sabbath truth. We would all do well to study inspiration thoroughly before rushing to accept "new light" on the crucifixion. To ignore this principle is to ensure that we are open to accept every wind of doctrine.

Every text which unequivocally refers to Christ's death and the period of time He spent in the tomb mentions three days, but not three nights. These texts include the testimony of Christ Himself:

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. (Matthew 16:21)

And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry. (Matthew 17:23)

And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again. (Matthew 20:19)

And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. (Mark 8:31)

For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. (Mark. 9:31)

And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again. (Mark 10:34)

Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day. (Luke 9:22)

And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. (Luke 18:33)

We also possess the testimony of the chief priests and Pharisees who crucified Christ.

Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. (Matthew 27:63, 64)

We have further the testimony of the holy angels.

Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. (Luke 24:7)

Still further, we possess the testimony of Cleopas and his friend.

But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. (Luke 24:21)

And we have the testimony of our *risen* Lord.

And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. (Luke 24:46)

Finally, we possess the testimony of the apostle Paul.

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:4)

Scripture demonstrates clearly that the Jewish term, "the third day" signified the portions of three days and only two nights. We document this fact by reference to an episode in the life of Paul when he was transported as a prisoner to Rome and the sailing vessel encountered a storm. The Bible records what took place on each day of the storm.

But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive. And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the *next day* they lightened the ship; and the *third day* we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

(Acts 27:14–19, emphasis added)

Here we learn that the day the tempest Euroclydon commenced is referred to as the first day. The next day (the *second day*) they lightened the ship and on the *third day* they cast out the tackling of the ship. In this period only two nights were included.

How much more evidence do we require? The testimony of the chief priests and Pharisees is significant. It will be observed that they equated three days with the term, *third day*, indicating their understanding of the term. Furthermore, as we have shown, not one of these passages which specifically refer to Christ's death and resurrection mentions that Christ was in the tomb three nights.

That the Pharisees and the priests well knew that Christ's predicted resurrection was on Sunday and not after three days and three nights, extending it to the following day, is evident from the fact that so urgent did these Jewish leaders deem the situation to be that they were prepared to violate their own view of Sabbath sacredness by taking their request to a pagan ruler on the holy Sabbath day. Further, they breached the plainest words of the fourth commandment by urging Pilate to use his soldiers to do unnecessary work on the Sabbath day by sealing the tomb. If Christ was to rise the day after the third night they could have safely waited until after the second night, outside sacred hours to present their request.

Not one! Not one in thirteen references! Neither Christ, either before or following His resurrection, nor the chief priests and the Pharisees, nor Cleopas and his friend, nor the holy angels, nor Paul asserted that Christ was three nights in the tomb. Yet that which is never stated in Scripture and which is specifically contradicted, some Christians wish to offer as truth.

Others assert without a thread of Biblical evidence that the term "third day" means precisely seventy-two hours. Indeed the evidence is all to the contrary. If, as erroneously asserted, Christ rose from the tomb prior to sunset on the Sabbath and that concluded the third day of the postulated seventy-two hours, how then did Cleopas assert that on Sunday afternoon it was still "the third day" since Christ was crucified? Did Cleopas equate the term "third day" to a period of approximately ninety-six hours? Manifestly he did not.

This period consisted of but three days and two nights—the night between the first and second days and that between the second and third. Here we plainly read the usage of the Jews in relation to the term "the third day." It most certainly did not equal to a precise period of seventy-two hours.

A well-researched anonymous study has perceptively pointed out that Matthew 12:40, the only text in Scripture which mentions three nights, referred to Christ being in "the heart of the earth," a term used nowhere else in Scripture to mean the grave. In reality, Christ was buried in a sepulchre, not in the heart of the earth. To equate *heart of the earth* with the term *grave* is to place a human interpretation upon the meaning.

The term "heart" in similar usages in Scripture means *midst*, such as in a geographical location.

The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst [margin, "heart"] of the sea; and the way of the man with a maid. (Proverbs 30:19)

(Obviously the ship was in the middle of the *surface* of the water.)

Other texts with such marginal explanations include,

And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst [margin, "heart"] of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.

(Deuteronomy 4:11)

Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst [margin, "heart"] of the oak.

(2 Samuel 18:14)

Thy borders are in the midst [margin, "heart"] of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. (Ezekiel 27:4)

Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou has said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst [margin, "heart"] of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God. (Ezekiel 28:2)

For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst [margin, "heart"] of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. (Jonah 2:3)

When God brought salvation to Jerusalem, He stated:

For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. (Psalm 74:12)

The statement made in Matthew 12:40 emphasizes the fact that Jonah was *alive* in the fish's belly, not dead. Christ's fulfillment of this type could never have occurred in His death. This fact is crucial to our understanding of the text.

Further proof that Matthew 12:40 does not refer to Christ's death and resurrection is provided in that some time after Jesus had spoken of Jonas being three days and three nights in the fish's belly, Matthew indicates that for the first time Jesus began to reveal that He would be persecuted and killed. Therefore Christ could not have been expressing details of His upcoming death in the hearing of His disciples as recorded in earlier chapters.

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. (Matthew 16:21)

While the Passover occurred on the fourteenth day of the first month, the pascal lamb was separated from the flock on the *tenth* day.

Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house. (Exodus 12:3)

Christ fulfilled this type, not in the grave, of course, but in the three days and three nights He separated Himself from the Jewish leaders and the crowds. On the Tuesday (the tenth day of the first month) prior to the crucifixion, Christ stated:

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
(Matthew 23:39)

Speaking of the same occasion, John reported:

These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.
(John 12:36)

For the next three days and three nights Christ confined Himself to teaching the disciples privately. Three nights, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, did Christ withdraw Himself from the crowds. Three days, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday was He hidden from them. In this was the prophecy of Matthew 12:40 fulfilled. On Thursday night he reappeared to the mob in Gethsemane and was arrested.

Thus He hid himself *alive* in the heart of the earth (Jerusalem). For the Jews, Jerusalem was the heart of the earth as we have seen. In these three days and three nights, He fulfilled His own prophecy, of which Jonah was a type. Thus there is absolutely no conflict between Matthew 12:40 and the remaining testimony of Scripture, for this text in no wise refers to a *dead* Christ in the tomb, but a *live* Christ separated from the Jewish people.

Having established the Friday crucifixion and the early Sunday morning resurrection, let us now look at the record of the gospels. Note Matthew's record:

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.
(Matthew 28:1)

Keep in mind that Matthew was writing about two decades after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Yet he still referred to the day that Christ was in the tomb as the Sabbath. If the day of the Sabbath had been changed it would have been very likely for Matthew to have referred to "the Jewish Sabbath" or, more appropriately, "the former Sabbath." And if Sunday was then con-

sidered to be the Lord's day, surely he would have referred to Sunday as "the Lord's day" or perhaps "the new Sabbath," rather than the "first day of the week." But there is no hint of the use of such terminology.

Some have come to wrong conclusions because the words translated *first day of the week* in the Greek are *mia sabbaton* and they have interpreted this term to mean the first of the Sabbath. But the text would not read sensibly if it said, "in the end of the sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first of the sabbath." The intent of those who draw this conclusion is to suggest that the term *mia sabbaton* is an indication that Sabbath sacredness was transferred from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week. We know of no serious Greek scholar who has ever attempted to make such an argument in favor of Sunday sacredness. Grammatically it would be impossible. There is no credible translation, as some would suggest, that this term refers to a first-day Sabbath. Indeed, *sabbaton* has sometimes been translated in the Scriptures as simply week. Here is an example of such usage.

I fast twice in the week [*sabbaton*, meaning the period between two Sabbaths], I give tithes of all that I possess. (Luke 18:12)

So important was the Sabbath to Jewish Christians that they often called Sunday the first of the Sabbath, Monday the second of the Sabbath, Tuesday the third of the Sabbath, Wednesday the fourth of the Sabbath, Thursday the fifth of the Sabbath and Friday the Preparation Day (for the Sabbath).

Now let us look at the record of Mark:

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)

Once again the seventh day continues to be referred to as the Sabbath, and Sunday as the first day. There is not an inkling of a suggestion that these writers knew anything of the change of the Sabbath.

Let us proceed to the record of Luke:

And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. 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. (Luke 23:56–24:1)

Luke is even more emphatic in pointing out that those who were preparing spices and ointments for the embalming of the body of Jesus rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment. There is no intimation that the Sabbath commandment or any other commandment had been abrogated by the sacrifice of Jesus.

Thus we are left only with the record of John. The only reference to Sabbath in relationship to the death of Christ is as follows—

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. (John 19:31)

What makes John's record more definitive is the fact that it is acknowledged that John wrote his gospel *after* writing the book of Revelation. In Revelation John stated,

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. (Revelation 1:10)

If the Lord's day to which John referred was Sunday, then surely he would have been careful, several years later when he wrote his gospel, to emphasize that the Sunday of the resurrection was the Lord's day.

Once again there is no hint that the day following Christ's death was a "former" Sabbath or the "old" Sabbath or the Sabbath "that was done away with at the cross or at the resurrection." In John's record the day following the Sabbath is once again referred to simply as the first of the week. One could have expected that John, living several decades beyond the resurrection, would have been careful to state that the Saturday Sabbath had been replaced by the Sunday Lord's day as the day of worship and Christian fellowship. Yet John gives no such elucidation. The reason is obvious. The Jewish seventh-day Sabbath was also

the Christian seventh-day Sabbath because the Sabbath was not made for Jews, it was made for all humanity.

And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. (Mark 2:27)

Surely the same principle is made plain in the Old Testament. Note that the commandment is not limited to the Israelites.

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. (Exodus 20:10)

Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed. (Exodus 23:12)

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, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. (Deuteronomy 5:14)

The Sabbath was to be kept not only by the Jews but by their servants and the strangers (foreigners) who sojourned among them. The Sabbath rest even extended to their working animals. This is all consistent with the fact that the Sabbath was created more than 2,000 years before there was an Israelite. Thank the Lord that He encompassed the whole of the human race in His gift of the holy, sacred seventh-day Sabbath of each week.

6

The Sabbath in Apostolic Times

THE Sabbath is specifically mentioned ten times after Jesus ascended to heaven. Nine of those occurrences are to be found in the book of Acts, while the tenth is found in Paul's epistle to the Colossians. Added to these references, twice in the epistle to the Hebrews Paul refers to the seventh day. Thus we have a dozen references which we can investigate to see whether the seventh-day Sabbath was still the valid worship day for the emerging Christian church.

The testimonies of these texts will be critical to our understanding of the perpetuity of the Sabbath day. If we can find a plain inspired statement that states that, for Christians, the seventh-day Sabbath is no longer the day of rest; or that the first day of the week now had taken the place of the seventh-day Sabbath, then the issue will be settled. However, if we discover that the seventh-day Sabbath was still observed by Christians in apostolic times there is only one conclusion to be drawn: that God or Christ did not change the Sabbath, and that the resurrection is commemorated not by a day of rest, but by other divinely instituted rites. We would then be at liberty to examine the view that the resurrection is commemorated through the ordinances of baptism and the communion service. So let us analyze these twelve statements in the order that they appear in the Scriptures of the New Testament.

I Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.
(Acts 1:12)

This text refers to the distance from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives. Therefore there is no significance to this text which would help us to understand the Sabbath of the New Testament era. It is

quite incidental to our search for the designated day of worship established for New Testament Christians.

- 2** But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. (Acts 13:14)

This is the first scriptural reference to the Sabbath day, per se, subsequent to the ascension of Jesus. In this text Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue in Antioch in the Roman province of Pisidia on the Sabbath day. Not only did they sit down to listen but they were invited to present an exhortation to the people.

And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. (Acts 13:15)

Whereupon Paul preached a sermon in which he delivered to the congregation a message concerning Jesus the Savior. If this were the only testament that we have, it could be concluded that Paul took the opportunity to attend the synagogue on the Sabbath day because this was the day on which the Jews continued to worship God, so that he could bear witness to these Jews concerning the saving merits of Jesus. So while the text in no wise supports Sunday sacredness, nevertheless, neither does it provide conclusive evidence concerning the perpetuity of the Sabbath in the Christian era.

- 3** For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. (Acts 13:27)

Paul referred again to the Sabbath during the sermon which he preached in Antioch in Pisidia. Paul simply stated here that the words of the prophets were read every Sabbath day in the synagogue. He also pointedly stated that the rulers, in spite of the evidence of the words of the prophets, continued to condemn Jesus and His message. Once again, while not implying Sunday sacredness, neither does this passage of Scripture provide definitive evidence in favor of continued Sabbath observance in the Christian community of apostolic times.

- 4** And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. (Acts 13:42)

This is the first text that begins to help us understand the centrality of the Sabbath to the worship of God in the Christian church. After Paul's teaching in the synagogue the Gentiles urged him to preach to them the following Sabbath.

Some argue that the term here "the next sabbath" is unclear and some marginal readings translate this statement as either "the week between" or "in the sabbath between." However, we will see in the next reference to the Sabbath that clearly the Gentiles were asking for Paul to preach to them on the seventh-day Sabbath. It is quite evident that the Gentiles possessed no knowledge of a Christian practice of Sunday-worship. Had Sunday-worship been practiced there is little doubt that the Gentiles would have invited Paul to include them in the Christian worship service the day following the Sabbath. This would have been convenient since Sunday was the special day of pagan worship and presumably would have been very suitable for these Gentiles.

Note that Paul did not suggest that he preach on Sunday to these people, but rather agreed to their request to preach to them upon the following Sabbath. While this text does not offer ultimate proof that there was no change in the Christian day of worship from the day of worship of the Jews, it certainly is consistent with that understanding.

- 5** And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. (Acts 13:44)

What a wonderful experience this was! We can only imagine the joy in the hearts of Paul and Barnabas as they beheld almost all the inhabitants of that city, both Jews and Gentiles, gathering together to hear the Word of God. What a miracle it would be today to see such an occurrence in even a small city! This text confirms that it was the following Sabbath that the Gentiles, along with the Jews, came to hear Paul present the Word of God. Sadly, the Jews, filled with envy and hatred, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and these servants of God were expelled from the city.

- 6** For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.
(Acts 15:21)

This text is not of great help to us in our study of the perpetuity of the Sabbath. It simply states that the books of Moses were read every Sabbath in the synagogues, a practice of the Jews for many centuries.

- 7** And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. (Acts 16:13)

This text does provide significant information for our understanding of the Sabbath in the New Testament, for it clearly states that the faithful Christians gathered together for worship, albeit in the open air, beside a river, where prayer was undertaken and Paul preached a sermon. This passage provides documented evidence that Christians held corporate worship on the seventh-day Sabbath, refuting the claims of those who propose that Paul attended Sabbath worship in the synagogues exclusively for the purpose of influencing those Jews who worshipped there. But some questions still remain, for Paul preached on days other than the Sabbath day. So let us proceed.

- 8** And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures.
(Acts 17:2)

This passage does add significantly to our understanding because it explains that it was Paul's manner or custom or regular practice to attend the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Verse one of chapter 17 makes it plain that these exhortations were made in the synagogue of the Jews. This text parallels the practice of Jesus:

And 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 for to read. (Luke 4:16)

We know that Christ was a faithful Sabbath-keeper.

- 9** And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. (Acts 18:4)

This text offers even stronger evidence that the seventh-day Sabbath was unchanged by Christ or the apostles. As we learned of that which transpired in Antioch of Pisidia, we find that Paul not only preached to the Jews, but he brought the Gentiles into the synagogue where they might hear his messages. The ruins of that synagogue in Corinth are still to be seen on the site of the ancient city. An original painting of these ruins has pride of place in Colin's office. Paul's custom was to be in the synagogue on the seventh-day Sabbath. There is not one text that indicates that it was his custom to be engaged in worship on the first day of the week. These texts provide cumulative evidence from which it is valid to conclude that the Sabbath, which was the memorial of creation, remained that memorial for God's people in the Christian era.

Let us proceed further to the book of Colossians.

10 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days. (Colossians 2:16)

Now this text has been misinterpreted by many sincere Christians to support the assertion that it really does not matter which day of worship we keep. Therefore, it has been argued by some, that at the very least Sunday is just as suitable a day for corporate worship as is Saturday. But is that the message of this text, or is the focus on an entirely different subject? This matter is explained in much more detail in our chapter 17 entitled "Nailed to the Cross," which should be cross-referenced with this chapter.

However we state in brief that this passage is not addressing the seventh-day Sabbath. The translators of the King James Bible understood this, when they noted that the reference was to the ceremonies by inserting the word "days" after the word "sabbath" into their translation. These were the Old Testament ceremonies of the Jews, their feasts and fast days, especially, no doubt referring to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and the Day of Atonement. These were the special sabbath days commemorating what Paul called "a shadow of things to come." (Colossians 2:17)

It was to these sabbaths that Paul was referring in Colossians, chapter two. This passage makes no reference whatsoever to the

seventh-day weekly Sabbath. But even if it did provide such a reference to the seventh-day weekly Sabbath, surely no one could argue that this was a text which provided evidence for the sacred status of the first day of the week. But we would emphasize that the seventh-day Sabbath is not even mentioned in this passage.

Now let us examine the two passages in Hebrews referring to the "seventh day." A very specific reference to the seventh-day Sabbath is cited in the first of these texts.

11, 12 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.
(Hebrews 4:4)

Twice in this verse the words "seventh day" are mentioned. The first time it is mentioned the translators have added the word "day," but in the second reference the word "day" is part of the original Greek text. These two references confirm that God rested the seventh day from all the works that He had created during the six previous days of the Creation week.

Some have attempted to reason that while this biblical text refers to God resting on the seventh day, the passage implies a broader, deeper rest beyond the rest of the Sabbath day. The verse most commonly used to infer this is:

For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. (Hebrews 4:8)

Surely however in this text there is not a hint that the New Testament mandates the observance of Sunday as the new sacred day of rest and worship.

To what then was Paul referring? To argue that "another day" referred to Sunday sacredness would defy the context of the message that Paul is presenting to the Hebrews. Verse 7 gives us some clue.

Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. (Hebrews 4:7)

It is clear that this verse is not speaking specifically about a day of worship. It is focusing on the call of God to the hearts of men and women. To understand that to which Paul was referring we must go back to the gospel and search the words of Jesus in

respect to this issue of rest. There is only one passage of Scripture that quotes the words of Jesus in respect to anything that would be relevant to that which Paul refers in the fourth chapter of Hebrews.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (Matthew 11:28, 29)

These words of Jesus express the rest that is offered to all who come unto Him. It is a rest that brings peace of conscience, contentment of heart and the joy of salvation. That this rest refers to the conversion of the heart is seen in contrast to the words of the Psalmist:

Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest. (Psalm 95:10, 11)

It is clearly the righteous who enter into this rest to which the wicked can never attain. This Paul makes plain in Hebrews chapter 4.

For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. (Hebrews 4:10, 11)

Thus as we have reviewed the passages directed to the Sabbath and the seventh day in apostolic times we have found not one scintilla of evidence that the day chosen by God to commemorate His creative acts—the seventh day Sabbath—was ever abrogated by divine command. On the contrary, evidence supports that the apostles continued to keep the seventh day Sabbath holy throughout their life time.

T Sunday in the Life of the Apostles

THE LORD'S DAY—as Sunday was called from apostolic times.” In this manner commenced Pope John Paul's Apostolic letter *Dies Domini*, issued July 7, 1998. This indeed was a most startling introduction to the Pope's letter which was written in defense and exaltation of Sunday sacredness. It was unique because this claim was atypical of the many statements made by Roman Catholic authorities concerning the origin of Sunday worship. It has ever been the position of the Roman Catholic Church that the change from the seventh-day Sabbath sacredness came not from the command of Jesus, nor from any instructions from the New Testament Bible writers, but had taken place at the Council of Laodicea (c. A.D. 364). Indeed the Roman Catholic Church has made pompous claims that this is the mark of its authority. (See chapter 28 entitled “The Mark of the Beast.”) It claims the power of the Roman Catholic Church to change the divine instruction of Scripture, thus offering substance to its claim that the authority of the Church supersedes the authority of Holy Writ. Here are some examples of these claims:

Q. *Which is the Sabbath day?* **A.** Saturday is the Sabbath day.

Q. *Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?* **A.** We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday. . . .

Q. *By what authority did the Church substitute Sunday for Saturday?* **A.** The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday by the plenitude of that divine power which Jesus Christ bestowed upon her. (Geiermann, Peter, C.S.S.R., *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, B. St. Louis: Herder Book Co., 1946, © 1930, p. 50.) [Italics in original]

Having disposed of every text to be found in the New Testament referring to the Sabbath (Saturday) and to the first day of

the week (Sunday); and having shown conclusively from these texts, that, so far, not a shadow of pretext can be found in the sacred volume for the Biblical substitution of Sunday for Saturday. . . . (*Catholic Mirror*, "The Christian Sabbath," September 16, 1893, Baltimore, MD.)

*Q. 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, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority. [Italics in original] (Keenan, Stephen, *A Doctrinal Catechism*, New York: Edward Dunigan & Brother, 1848, p. 174)*

Sunday is a Catholic institution, and its claims to observance can be defended only on Catholic principles. . . . From beginning to end of Scripture there is not a single passage that warrants the transfer of weekly public worship from the last day of the week to the first.

(*Catholic Press*, Sydney, Australia, August 25, 1900; quoted in Haynes, Carlyle B., *From Sabbath to Sunday*, Review and Herald, Hagerstown, MD., 1928, p. 46.)

The Catholic Church of its own infallible authority created Sunday a holy day to take the place of the Sabbath of the Old Law. (*Kansas City Catholic*, "Protestants Keeping Sunday Holy," February 9, 1893, Kansas City, MO.)

The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her Divine Mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. (*Catholic Mirror*, "The Christian Sabbath," September 23, 1893, Baltimore, MD.)

Hence the conclusion is inevitable, viz: that, of those who follow the Bible as their guide, the Israelites and Seventh-day Adventists have the exclusive weight of evidence on their side, whilst the Biblical Protestant has not a word in self-defense for his substitution of Sunday for Saturday.

(*Ibid.*, September 9, 1893).

. . . Since Saturday, and not Sunday, is specified in the Bible, isn't it curious that non-Catholics who profess to take their religion directly from the Bible and not from the Church, ob-

serve Sunday instead of Saturday. (O'Brien, John A., *The Faith of Millions*, W. H. Allen, London, 1952, p. 465.)

It was Protestants, not Roman Catholics, who have sought to establish the claim that Sunday was the Lord's Day from apostolic times. Even many Protestant apologists, weary of trying to find Biblical support for their futile claims, have ultimately had to agree with the Roman Catholics that there is no such scriptural support.

There was and is a commandment to keep holy the Sabbath day, but that Sabbath day was not Sunday. It will be said, however, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week. . . . Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament—absolutely not. There is no Scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week.

. . . Of course, I know quite well that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history as a religious day, as we learn from the Christian Fathers, and other sources. But what a pity that it comes branded with the mark of paganism, and christened with the name of the sun god, when adopted and sanctioned by the papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism! (Hiscox, Dr. Edward T., author of *The Baptist Manual*, address to a New York Ministers' Conference on November 13, 1893; quoted in Haynes, *op. cit.*, p. 92.)

Centuries of the Christian era passed away before the Sunday was observed by the Christian church as a Sabbath. History does not furnish us with a single proof or indication that it was at any time so observed previous to the Sabbatical edict of Constantine in A.D. 321. (Domville, Sir William (Church of England), *The Sabbath; or, An Examination of the Six Texts*, Chapman and Hall, London, 1849, p. 291.)

Take the matter of Sunday. There are indications in the New Testament as to how the Church came to keep the first day of the week as its day of worship, but there is no passage telling Christians to keep that day, or to transfer the Jewish Sabbath to that day. (Rall, Harris Franklin, "Dr. Rall Answers," *The Christian Advocate*, (the official organ of The Methodist Church), July 2, 1942.)

It is quite clear that however rigidly or devotedly 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. . . . The only similarity between the Lord's Day and the Sabbath is that both recur once a week, and that both are religious festivals. (Dale, Dr. R. W. (Congregational), *The Ten Commandments*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1895, pp. 100, 101)

The observance of the Lord's Day [Sunday] is founded not on any command of God, but on the authority of the church.

(The Confession of the Swiss churches; quoted in Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 437)

The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions 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. (Neander, Dr. Augustus (Episcopalian), *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, translated by H. J. Rose, p. 186; quoted in Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 231.)¹

Dr. Hiscox in honesty acknowledged that Sunday sacredness is branded with the *mark of paganism*. From Babylonian times through to Roman paganism, Sunday was the day of pagan worship. It was Satan's counterfeit to God's Sabbath which is held

1. Andrews' footnote:

"Neander's Church History, translated by H. J. Rose, p. 186. To break the force of this strong statement of Neander, that 'The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions 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,' two things have been said:—

"1. That Neander, in a later edition of his work, retracted this declaration. It is true that in re-writing his work, he omitted this sentence. But he inserted nothing of a contrary character, and the general tenor of the revised edition is in this place precisely the same as in that from which this out-spoken statement is taken.

"In proof of this, we cite from the later edition of Neander, his statement in this very place of what constituted Sunday observance in the early church. He says:—

"Sunday was distinguished as a day of joy, by being exempted from fasts, and

inviolable by God's faithful followers. Sir William Domville admitted that there was no single proof prior to the edict of Emperor Constantine in 321, that the Sabbath was widely observed on the first day of the week. *The Christian Advocate* asserted that there is no positive command for the keeping of the first day of the week. Dr. Dale wrote that his study revealed that there is not a single sentence in the New Testament to support the charge that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday. The Confession of the Swiss Churches admits that the observance of the Sunday is on the authority of the Church, not the command of God. Dr. Neander proclaimed that the festival of Sunday was always only a human ordinance.

However, we do not imply that all Protestant leaders agree on these points. Some have searched the apostolic writings of the New Testament in a desperate effort to support Sunday sacredness. (See later in this chapter.) These efforts, although sometimes innovative, have all proven futile for no such evidence exists in Scripture.

It is plain to us that Pope John Paul II has moved away from the Papacy's traditional challenge to Protestants, that their keeping of Sunday is an acknowledgement of the authority of the Roman church to change the Scriptures. For centuries Catholics have needled Protestant leaders with this challenge.

Now, in this time of ecumenical outreach, the pope has embraced the Protestant claim that the Lord's Day is not the Sabbath as Christ declared (see Mark 2:28) but has always been Sunday. Notwithstanding this claim, not one word of inspiration

by the circumstance that prayer was performed on this day in a standing and not in a kneeling posture, as Christ, by his resurrection, had raised up fallen man again to heaven.'—*Torrey's Neander*, vol. 1, p. 295, 3d. 1852.

"This was an accurate statement of early Sunday observance, as we shall hereafter show; and that such observance was only a human ordinance, of which no feature was ever commanded by the apostles, will be very manifest to every person who attempts to find any precept for any particular of it in the New Testament.

"2. But the other method of setting aside this testimony of Neander is to assert that he did not mean to deny that the apostles established a divine command for Sunday as the Christian Sabbath, but meant to assert that they did not establish a divine command for Sunday as a Catholic festival! Those who make this assertion must know that it is false. Neander expressly denies that the apostles either constituted or recognized Sunday as a Sabbath, and he represents Sunday as a mere festival from the very first of its observance, and established only by human authority."

supports it. This stance that Pope John Paul II has taken is unique and contradictory. Yet the praise he received from many Protestant leaders in support of *Dies Domini* offers ample evidence that the Pope's strategy has reaped a handsome reward.

No doubt Vatican strategists have concluded that it would not promote ecumenism to continue their series of barbs and published sarcasm against Protestant creeds, yet violate its own plainest word in relation to the seventh-day Sabbath. This new Roman Catholic strategy has pleased somnolent Protestants, while fortifying the Roman Catholic-inspired day of worship.

In fairness to our readers we will explore in this chapter all the Sunday texts that appear after the resurrection day. Search as we may we can find but two such texts. This number in itself would be remarkably small considering the dramatic change it would have been for the Jewish Christians to divest themselves of their many centuries of Sabbath observance and to take a stand to commemorate the resurrection by the substitution of Sunday observance.

Before examining these two texts we discover that Christ instituted two ordinances to commemorate His death and resurrection. The first is baptism. Note these words of Paul,

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. (Romans 6:4, 5)

In addressing baptism, unlike Sunday sacredness, there is a plain "Thus saith the Lord" that baptism has replaced circumcision in the New Testament as the symbol of belonging to God and His people.

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:11, 12)

We cannot express surprise that the solemn, divinely-inspired rite of baptism has lost its God-ordained significance among Roman Catholics and those Protestants who follow the non-Scriptural,

pagan form of baptism—infant baptism. Only Biblical adult baptism by immersion reminds us of the death, burial and resurrection of our Savior. Manifestly one error leads to another. Thus has the purely secular day, Sunday, been transformed into a day of “sacredness.”

A purely pagan rite has supplanted a biblical ordinance and has been accorded a significance for which no biblical evidence can ever be offered.

The second institution is the communion service.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

(Matthew 26:26–28)

The communion service, like baptism, also commemorates the resurrection of Jesus, as Jesus promised that He would drink the cup with His redeemed saints in the kingdom. Such a promise could not be kept had it not been for Christ's resurrection.

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

(Matthew 26:29)

Let us now investigate the two first-day texts in chronological order. The first text in point of time addressing the first day of the week is to be found in 1 Corinthians 16:2. The second text is found in Acts 20:7. First the counsel of Paul to the Corinthian believers is cited.

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.

(1 Corinthians 16:2)

Here the issue and focus of the counsel centers upon the laying aside of tithes and offerings on the first day of the week. Some, desperately looking for a validation of their Sunday keeping, have decided that this text must refer to the returning of tithes and offerings at Sunday worship meetings. This issue was strongly debated in the nineteenth century. Dr. Justin Edwards attempted to assert that this “laying aside” was at a worship service.

This laying by in store was NOT laying by AT HOME; for that would not prevent gatherings when he should come. (Edwards, Dr. Justin, *Sabbath Manual of the American Tract Society*, p. 116. Quoted in Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 177.)

Yet the same Dr. Edwards contradicted his statement in his notes on the New Testament in which he states,

Lay by him in store; AT HOME. That there be no gatherings; that the gifts might be ready when the apostle should come. (Edwards, Dr. Justin, *Family Testament of the American Tract Society*.)

Indeed many other Bible students have discounted the possibility that this text refers to bringing offerings and tithes to a church service. For example, the late Presbyterian missionary, J. W. Morton wrote as follows:

The whole question turns upon the meaning of the expression, "by him;" and I marvel greatly how you can imagine that it means "in the collection box of the congregation." Greenfield, in his Lexicon, translates the Greek term, "*with one's self, i.e., at home*". Two Latin versions, the Vulgate and that of Castellio, render it "*apud se*", with one's self; at home. (*Vindication of the True Sabbath*, third edition, pp. 51, 52; quoted in Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 177)

Morton proceeds to demonstrate that French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Swedish translations all support the position that the statement by Paul indicates that believers were to put aside their tithes and offerings at home so that when Paul returned they could be gathered up for him to take to their appropriate destination.

This is the only passage of Paul's writings in which he so much as mentions the first day of the week. Paul attaches no evidence of sacredness to the first day of the week. He does not use the terms *the Lord's Day* or *the Sabbath*. Simply he used that designation—*first day of the week*—which for many centuries was the term used by the Jews for Sunday. Any claim that 1 Corinthians 16:2 is dealing with Sunday sacredness is easily dispelled by the record of Paul's ministry in Corinth.

After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; and found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus,

lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

(Acts 18:1-4)

Now we understand why Paul called the Corinthian believers to lay aside their tithes and offerings on the first day of the week. These funds were for the Christian ministry, not for the support of the Jewish Synagogue. It would have initiated unnecessary controversy if Paul had stood in the synagogue on the Sabbath day collecting offerings for Christian endeavors. He was thus using godly wisdom in requesting that such contributions be kept at home for collection the following day, when he was freed from his preaching duties.

The Corinthian believers, both Jews and Greeks, were regular worshipers on the seventh-day Sabbath. This provides the most obvious explanation of Paul's counsel. After the Sabbath had been completed all the believers were to set aside their tithes and offerings, keeping them in trust until he or some authorized person would carry them for distribution to the work of God and the care of the needy.

One more Sunday text remains for our study and consideration. Let us review Luke's record in the book of Acts and examine the claim by some Protestants that this was clearly a confirmation that Christians were worshiping on Sunday.

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. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they

brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

(Acts 20:7-12)

Examining this historical record of Scripture we make two observations.

- 1 Once again there is no claim that the day of this meeting was the Lord's day or that this day was the new Sabbath.
- 2 The strongest arguments that are made in favor of this being a new worship day arise from the fact that the disciples came together to break bread. There is some disagreement as to what Paul is referring. Some believe this merely indicated that those present came together to partake of a meal. But others strongly maintain that this is a reference to conducting the communion service following the command of Jesus before His death.

In 1998 the authors ministered in Macedonia. During their stay there they participated in a three and one-half hour television dialogue with a Macedonian Orthodox Church theologian. During that dialogue the Orthodox theologian claimed emphatically that the breaking of bread on the first day of the week was the communion service and that this event provided irrefutable Scriptural evidence for the change of the Sabbath. Russell pointed out that Jesus did not inaugurate a communion service on the Sabbath day nor on Sunday, but, indeed, on Thursday evening. In the end the Macedonian theologian agreed that communion may be held any day of the week. In no wise is the partaking of the communion emblems confined to God's special day of worship. Therefore to hold communion on the first day of the week offers no conclusive evidence that the Sabbath had been changed from the seventh to the first day of the week.

There are other considerations to which we would draw the readers' attention lest any doubts be left in any reader's mind. In early apostolic times the disciples commemorated the death of Jesus in the Lord's supper daily.

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

(Acts 2:46)

3 There are two conflicting beliefs concerning the time at which this service took place. Depending upon whether Luke, who wrote the book of Acts, was referring to Roman or to Jewish time, many believe this service took place on what was actually Saturday night and is referred to as the first day of the week. In Jewish reckoning the first day of the week began at sunset Saturday evening. If this be the case, then the meeting was held neither on the Sabbath day nor on the day of the Sun, for Sunday observers reckoned their time from midnight to midnight. Then the after-midnight communion service would have taken place in the early hours of Sunday morning.

However, if Roman time was used by Luke, then the service would have commenced at the end of Sunday and the communion service would have been held after the miraculous resurrection of Eutychus, who had fallen out of the window after falling asleep during Paul's sermon at midnight. Therefore the communion service would have been conducted early Monday morning.

Most assuredly, this second explanation would have been true if the seventh day Sabbath had been changed to the first day, Sunday, for Sunday worship has always been calculated by the pagan timing from midnight to midnight. We incline to the view that this sermon was preached on Sunday evening and thus the communion service was held early Monday morning. We present the following reasons upon which we hold this to be the likely dating of the event.

- 1** Luke would have been raised with the Roman form of dividing days. He was the author of the book of Acts.
- 2** Even John, who was a Jew, used the Roman method of reckoning. The evening he mentioned as the first day of the week could not have been Saturday evening, as Christ had not yet risen from the dead.

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. (John 20:19)

- 3** The Bible plainly states that when Paul preached the evening of the first day of the week he planned to sail “on the morrow.” If the Jewish reckoning was in use, then Paul would have been sailing not on the morrow but later the same day. (see Acts 20:7).*

However, this passage of Scripture offers no mandate for Sunday sacredness whether Jewish or Roman time was used in this record. The obvious reasons that the brethren and sisters of Troas gathered together for this very long meeting was because early the next day Paul was to depart for further missionary pursuits. No doubt these people, knowing that it would be a long time, if ever, before they would have the privilege of listening again to the preaching of Paul, desired to receive all the instruction possible before his departure.

Significantly there is no other reference in all of the New Testament to the first day of the week, much less to any religious service. Thus any honest researcher of the Scriptures would wisely admit that Sunday worship is without divine mandate or apostolic proclamation.

* (Standish and Standish, *The Pope's Letter and Sunday Laws*, Hartland Publications, 1998, p. 13 footnote.)

8

Sabbath and Sunday in the Early Christian Church

THE year was 1951. The authors were then seventeen years of age and were beginning their second year in college majoring in elementary (primary) education. We were excited to learn that the renowned New Zealand evangelist George Burnside was scheduled to hold a six-month evangelistic crusade in our home city of Newcastle. We had never met this man. However, we knew from reputation that he was a powerful preacher of the Word of God. He had already led thousands to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

At the time, Pastor Burnside was forty-three years of age and at the height of his evangelistic success. We knew, however, that Newcastle, an industrial city, was not very responsive to the Christian message. During this crusade, however, George Burnside shook the city of Newcastle (then 250,000 population) to its very foundations, as, under the power of the Holy Spirit, he presented the plain unanswerable challenges of the Word of God. Using prophecy as a strong basis to confirm the veracity and authenticity of the Word of God, he nevertheless placed before his hearers the challenge of not only accepting Jesus as their Savior but living their lives as a testimony to the power of the gospel to transform men and women from sin unto righteousness. Many convicted people responded to his call.

However, when he presented the unchallengable claims of the Holy Scriptures which attested to the eternal perpetuity of the Law of God as the transcript of the character of God, and the Sabbath as the sign of sanctification for all people throughout all ages (see Ezekiel 20:12; Ezekiel 20:20; and Exodus 31:13), it caused a great furor in the city and a number of the leading Sunday keeping pastors issued public challenges to Pastor Burnside. Pastor Burnside was too busy seeking to save the souls

of the lost to be diverted into debates with those who were determined to destroy the effectiveness of his witness. Even as teenagers it was amazing to us that one of the leading Anglican priests of the city challenged Pastor Burnside to debate the issue of the Sabbath and Sunday, not on the authority the Bible, but by the testimony of Christian history. That challenge spoke volumes for the absence of any evidence from Holy Scripture that would support the change of the day of worship from the seventh to the first day of the week. In this chapter we will explore the evidence of early Christian history in order to determine if there is any documentation of Sunday-observance among Christians of the first centuries of the Christian era for the change of the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday.

In his monumental book, *The History of the Sabbath*, pp. 230–244, John Nevins Andrews (Reprint Leaves-of-Autumn Books, Inc., 1991, P. O. Box 440, Payson, Arizona 85547-0440, reprint of 1887 edition) which had been originally published in the nineteenth century) explored the efforts of Protestant authors to seek to link the observance of the first day of the week to the apostles or early church fathers. The futility of such an effort can be seen by the testimony of the last disciple alive at the end of the first century. It is universally accepted that John wrote the Revelation before writing his gospel of the life of Jesus. Thus he had penned his statement concerning the Lord's day before he recorded the life of Jesus.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. (Revelation 1:10)

That John in no wise was referring to the first day of the week as the Lord's day can be ascertained from his gospel, in that twice he refers to the first day of the week without designating it as the Lord's day. Remember that John's gospel was written subsequent to his reference to the Lord's day in the book of Revelation.

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. (John 20:1)

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. (John 20:19)

It must be emphasized that like the other gospel writers he makes no reference whatsoever to Sunday as the Lord's day. John simply, like them, uses the time honored designation of "first day." The Gospel of John is believed to be the last book written of the canon of Scripture. It is the final testimony from inspiration dealing with the first day of the week. These two texts complete the Bible record concerning the first day of the week. They furnish conclusive evidence that John did not receive new light in vision, while in exile on Patmos or elsewhere, bidding him to declare that the sacred day of worship for Christians was then the first day of the week. These two Scriptural passages further demonstrated that Christians did not designate Sunday as the Lord's day during the first century of the Christian era. If they did, John certainly would have used the "Lord's day" to describe the resurrection of Jesus. It is without challenge that John remembered the words of Jesus recorded in the gospel of Mark when Jesus declared the "Lord's day" to be the Sabbath.

Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath. (Mark 2:28)

There have been failed efforts to link Ignatius, a disciple of John the beloved, with claims that he frequently spoke about the Lord's day. However, a complete search of the extant writings of Ignatius fail to reveal one instance in which he used the term *the Lord's day* let alone applied it to the first day of the week. (John Nevins Andrews, op.cit. p. 244)

Some have claimed that the epistle of Pliny, A.D. 104, attested to the observance of Sunday as the test of the martyrs on this point of belief. But once again there is not a scintilla of evidence that any of these first century martyrs were tested on the issue of Sunday worship. Indeed, it would have been amazing if the pagans had tested Christians on their alleged allegiance to the first day of the week, for that was the day of worship for the Roman pagans.

The concern to the pagans and the sign of Christianity was that they kept the seventh day of the week in contradistinction to the first day of the pagans. In spite of the fact that most of the

Christian believers, by the time of the first century, were converts from the Gentile peoples, yet still Christianity was considered a sect of the Jews, no doubt primarily because they kept the same seventh day Sabbath as the Jews.

Some others have claimed that about A.D. 140 Justin Martyr ordered that—

on the Lord's day all Christians in the city or country meet together, because that is the day of our Lord's resurrection.

(quoted in Andrews, op. cit., p. 213)

This however is what Justin Martyr wrote:

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets, are read, as long as time permits. (Justin Martyr's First Apology, chapter 67, quoted in Andrews, op. cit., p. 213)

Some have rashly assumed that this reference to Sunday is evidence that the day of worship had by this time been changed from the Sabbath for Christians. Yet before we rush to such a conclusion we must point out that Justin Martyr referred to the first day of the week by its pagan name, "Sunday." He did not designate the first day of the week "the Lord's day." Thus Sunday was a rest day and worship day for the pagans, not for the Christians. Work or commerce on that day was prohibited in many parts of the Roman Empire.

Therefore, the early Christians, anxious to learn as much as they could from the Scriptures, made it a practice not to rest on this day or to worship in the same sense as the Sabbath, but to study together the writings of the apostles and the prophets. Keep in mind that books were not available at this time. Therefore the citizens of any city or village who had a portion of the words of the Old Testament or of the writings and letters of the apostles considered themselves indeed privileged, and it was common for many to gather together as one would read to the assembled group. We found such a practice is still common today in such countries as Papua New Guinea where books are scarce and not all are literate.

John Andrews quotes from Dr. Justin Edwards' *Sabbath Manual*, p. 114, in which Edwards asserts,

Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, about A.D. 162, says: "Both custom and reason challenge from us that we should honor *the Lord's day*, seeing on that day it was that our Lord Jesus completed his resurrection from the dead.

(Andrews, op. cit., p. 213)

Dr. Edwards does not reference this statement. In his careful research Andrews attests that he minutely examined every paragraph from the writings of Theophilus several times and then affirms,

I state emphatically that nothing of the kind is to be found in that writer.

(*Ibid.*, p. 214)

In any case it would be preposterous to believe that a bishop in Antioch, Syria, would have upheld the first day of the week. Antioch became the greatest protector of the sanctity of the New Testament Scriptures against the changes and corruptions made by the leaders of the Alexandrian school of theology where Greek paganism was constantly mixed with Christianity. Remember that less than a hundred years before this alleged statement by Theophilus, many of the faithful Christians who had fled from Jerusalem relocated in Antioch, bringing great strength to the believers in that city. For many centuries after the rapid apostasy in the western Roman empire, the bastion of true Christianity was established in Syria (see B. G. Wilkinson's *Truth Triumphant*, Reprinted by Hartland Publications, P.O. Box 1, Rapidan, VA, 22733, 1995).

Wave after wave of missionaries moved eastward from Antioch and other places, including Baghdad, to establish Christianity in the vast reaches of Asia. All such Christian communities for centuries were Sabbath-keepers, attesting to the fact that the Syrian and other eastern Christians had not accepted the claims of Alexandria and Rome that the Sabbath had changed from the seventh to the first day of the week.

Another claim is made that Dionysius of Corinth, A.D. 170, identified the Lord's day as the first day of the week. It is true that he does at least refer to the Lord's day, unlike any of the first four claimants. Here are his words,

To-day we have passed the Lord's holy day, in which we have read your epistle; in reading which we shall always have our

minds stored with admonition, as we shall, also, from that written to us before by Clement. (Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 215)

This is a letter written by Dionysius to Sater, Bishop of Rome. This sentence was preserved by Eusebius, who wrote *The History of Early Christianity in the Fourth Century*. Sadly, he provides none of the context in which this sentence was written. It will be noted that he called it *the Lord's holy day*. The word "holy" in Scripture has exclusively been used for the seventh-day Sabbath rather than the first day of the week. Only desperate efforts to attempt to convince Christians of the change of the Sabbath could lead one to accept this as definitive evidence that Sunday was commonly observed in sacredness in the second century A.D. The incontrovertible weight of evidence is that Dionysius, in mentioning the Lord's holy day, was referring to the seventh-day Sabbath.

Others have claimed that Melito of Sardis, A.D. 177, confirms that Sunday is commonly called the "Lord's day." Melito wrote a number of books, all of which are lost. However, Eusebius preserved the titles of Melito's books. One of these books was entitled *On the Lord's Day*. However, when the Greek is examined, the word "day" is not included. There is not the slightest reason to believe that Melito was writing concerning the Lord's day, for the correct title of the book in Greek is simply *The Lord's*. This could have been addressing the life of Christ, or the teachings of Christ, or something possessed or given by the Lord, or one of many other possibilities. Certainly this book title provides absolutely no support for the postulated wide-spread worship of Christ on the first day of the week in the second century.

Dr. Justin Edwards, probably more than most, searched for evidence to support his Sunday-keeping beliefs. He quotes Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, a disciple of Polycarp, who himself was a disciple of the apostle John, as saying that the Lord's day was the Christian Sabbath. Here are the actual words of Irenaeus:

On the Lord's day every one of us Christians keeps the Sabbath, meditating on the law, and rejoicing in the works of God. (Quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 217–218)

Dr. Edwards makes much of the fact that the eminent Christian martyr, Polycarp, as a young man was a companion of the aged

apostle John and that, in turn, Polycarp had taught Irenaeus. From this flimsy evidence he assumes that Polycarp taught Sunday sacredness to Irenaeus and that John, the Beloved, had instructed Polycarp in Sunday sacredness. However this alleged statement of Irenaeus identified neither the Lord's day nor the Sabbath as the first day of the week. Further, these Christians were said— (1) to meditate upon the Law, and (2) to have rejoiced in the works of God. The law includes the Sabbath commandment and the works of God refer to His Creatorship. Surely, if authentic, Irenaeus was referring to the seventh day.

But once again it has been discovered that a claimed testimony to Christian Sunday observance in the first two centuries of the Christian era is a fraud. It does not pass the test of thorough scrutiny. Not one word of Irenaeus is preserved in extant writings. But even were this a true writing of Irenaeus and even were he endorsing Sunday sacredness, there would be no guarantee that Irenaeus inherited this concept as a spiritual grandchild of John, the Apostle.

History attests that many men have diverted from the principles they were taught by their professors and mentors. This backsliding is evidenced in the teachings of Arminius, the Dutch Reformer. Arminius had been taught by Beza, who in turn had been taught by John Calvin. In the theological sense Arminius was the grandchild of Calvin. But, whereas Calvin presented unwavering predestinarian concepts of salvation, Arminius taught the concept of free will. There is no guarantee that any spiritual grandchild, or even genetic grandchild, would believe and teach the concepts of his spiritual or genetic grandfather.

Other attempts have been made to claim either late first century or early second century evidence in favor of the change of the Sabbath, but none has proven conclusive. The first authentic evidence in support of the first day being designated as the Lord's day comes just prior to the end of the second century A.D. from the writing of Clement of Alexandria, 194 A.D. Clement used the Lord's day in reference to what he called "the eighth day." Clement was originally a pagan philosopher and is said to have refused to study the Scriptures except through concepts of the writings of the Greek philosophers. Frequently he wrote of the philosophy of Plato and attempted to link this philosophy with Christianity. Ob-

viously, coming from paganism and as a serious student of the writings of Plato, Clement would have kept Sunday, the first day of the week, long before he embraced Christianity.

Clement was the founder of the Alexandrian School of Theology. He was responsible for many alterations to the Christian faith. It was the Alexandrian School of Theology which led to great divisions during the latter part of the second and through the third century A.D. The teachings of these men were focused upon the establishment of compatibility between Greek pagan philosophy and the teachings of Jesus. It was the Alexandrian School of Theology which quickly pervaded the Bishopric of Rome and became the foundation to the many pagan doctrines that flooded later into the Roman Catholic Church.

In contrast the School of Theology in Antioch, Syria, was determined to fight the heresies that were increasing in the western church through Clement of Alexandria and his successors such as Tatian and Origen. Well before the end of the third century, Lucian of Antioch (A.D. 250–312) sought to counter the flood of errors coming from the western Alexandrian School.

No one stood more loyally than Lucian. He was dedicated to preserve the writings of the New Testament writers free from the changes and adaptations that had been made in the manuscripts of the west. It has been claimed by some that Lucian himself copied about three hundred manuscripts of the New Testament before he was martyred at the age of sixty-two. It was from this Eastern Syriac stream of manuscripts that we have what is called today the Majority Text which is the foundation of the *Textus Receptus* or the Received Text from which the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible was translated. By contrast almost all modern English Bibles have been translated from the corrupted western Alexandrian text.*

It must be understood that in early centuries of the Christian era the great majority of Christians kept holy the seventh day of the week. What then motivated some of the early Christians to desire to change the Sabbath? It was not because they had a mandate from Jesus or the apostles. Neither was it because they

* (See Russell and Colin Standish, *Modern Bible Translations Unmasked*, Hartland Publications, 1993).

had a special emphasis upon the importance of the resurrection distinct from the crucifixion and death of Jesus. There is evidence that some Christians wished to separate themselves from the identification of the Christian Church as a sect of the Jewish Church. This trend increased as the Christian Church was increasingly dominated by Gentile Christians.

There is another impelling factor. After the rebellion of the Jews which led to the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews were hated and severely persecuted in many regions of the Roman Empire. While ever Christians kept sacred the seventh day of the week they were often identified with the Jews and it was believed that much of the persecution that came to the early Christians was in consequence of the hatred for the Jews.

It can be understood that some of the early Christians conjectured their plight would ease if they should transfer the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week, in this way hoping to reduce persecution and to gain more favor with the pagans.

Certainly as the church diversified and expanded it was also obvious that Sunday worship was far more convenient. For to be in step with the pagans on their day of worship naturally permitted those engaged in business, commerce and trade to be at no disadvantage in competition with their pagan counterparts. Of course, these reasons attracted a few of the early Christians and led an ever increasing number of Christians to forsake the Sabbath in favor of Sunday observance. However, so strong was the conviction of most of the early Christians, that the seventh-day Sabbath was still the hallowed day upon which they worshipped.

This loyalty to the Sabbath is exemplified by the Council of Elvira held in Spain about A.D. 305. Wilkinson provided this account of the Council:

For the study of the first four centuries it is more than fortunate that the eighty-one church resolutions of canons passed by the council held at Elvira, Spain (c. A.D. 305), still exist.

The records of the Council of Elvira reveal three things: first, up until the time of that council, the Church of Spain had adopted no creed, and certainly not the creed later adopted at Nicaea; secondly, punishment of faulty members by the church

did not go farther than dismissal, for there was no appeal to civil law; thirdly, up to the time of the Council of Elvira, movements toward a union of the church and the state had made no progress, but it was evident that attempts were being made along this line.

When it is a matter of inquiry as to what was the attitude of Christians in Spain on Sabbath observance, the evidence is clear. Canon 26 of the Council of Elvira reveals that the Church of Spain at that time kept Saturday, the seventh day. "As to fasting every Sabbath: Resolved, that the error be corrected of fasting every Sabbath." This resolution of the council is in direct opposition to the policy the church at Rome had inaugurated, that of commanding Sabbath as a fast day in order to humiliate it and make it repugnant to the people.

(B. G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*, Hartland edition, p. 245)

As late as the fifth century Socrates Scholasticus, the Church Historian of the Roman Empire, stated in 426,

For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this. (Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, book 5, chapter 22. Quoted in Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 256)

This is further definitive evidence that centuries after the apostles, the seventh-day Sabbath was the sacred day of worship for faithful Christians other than those who had been greatly influenced by the Alexandrian school of theology centered in Alexandria and Rome. It would be more than a century after Socrates Scholasticus lived, that Rome, with the arm of the State, could begin to enforce Sunday sacredness upon the Christians in other parts of Europe.

9

The Decree of Constantine, and the Council of Nicaea

AT the end of A.D. 312 a conquering hero rode into Rome to become the new Emperor of that region of the Roman Empire. Constantine, the son of Roman Consul Constantius Chloris, was born in Nis in what is now Yugoslavia where his father was consul of that region. Later, he lived for some time in Western Germany and in Britain, the ancient name for England, where again his father was Roman Consul. In 305 his father became co-Emperor of the Roman Empire. When Constantius died the following year, Constantine, already popular with the troops, was proclaimed co-Emperor of the far western region of the Roman Empire.

Six years later Constantine marched toward home. It is said that Constantine saw the sign of the cross in the sky superimposed on the sun the day of his triumphal success. The eve before his success over Maxentius he claimed that in a dream Christ had appeared to him and told him to inscribe the letters XP on the shields of his soldiers. After his victory he ascribed his success to Christ. This triumph led to his victorious entry into Rome. This was to change his whole life—and the course of Christian history. Yet two years before this victory he had claimed to have had a similar vision of the sun god. Constantine did not fully unite the eastern and western Roman Empires until 324.

During the early Christian centuries there was fierce persecution from time to time. Perhaps the worst persecution took place just prior to the triumphal entry of Constantine into Rome. This period of history is often called the period of Diocletian persecution. Diocletian began to reign as emperor in A.D. 303. After five years he resigned as emperor, and before the triumph of Constantine there were two other emperors, Severus (306–307) and Maximian (308–313), who continued the persecution.

The book of Revelation had prophesied ten days (ten years) of terrible persecution.

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)

This certainly was a time when many martyrs rendered their lives a testimony to their loyalty to the true God of the universe. Many others were tortured and maimed; Christian meeting places were closed; the churches were forbidden to gather up tithes and offerings; and other acts of anti-Christian persecution were enforced.

However, there was a dramatic change in attitude in 313. Promptly Constantine stopped the persecution by uniting with his co-emperor Licinius to issue the Edict of Milan which mandated toleration of Christians throughout the Roman Empire. This edict permitted Christians again to worship in freedom, teach and preach, and to collect tithes and offerings. The gratitude which the Christians of that generation felt for this new emperor cannot be exaggerated. But little could they have foreseen the dramatic change that this emperor would bring to Christianity. What Satan had failed to accomplish through fiery persecutions, he was now able to achieve through the accommodation of the State.

A great influence on the life of Constantine was his mother, Helena. She professed Christianity. Eventually Constantine himself professed to embrace the Christian faith. Again we can only imagine the euphoria of the Christians when, for the first time in the history of the Roman Empire, a pagan emperor embraced Christianity. But problems were now facing the Roman Empire. With the rapid increase of Christians, the division between Christians and pagans became very apparent. This had caused a great rift in the Roman Empire and the wise emperor, recognizing that persecution of neither Christians nor pagans would bring unity, sought for a commonality by which he could unite the empire. It is likely that Constantine professed Christianity as a shrewd political posture rather than from spiritual convictions.

In Alexandria and Rome there were large bodies of Christians who were now observing Sunday as their primary day of worship. In spite of the fact that elsewhere in the empire such primary

worship on Sunday was rare, Constantine saw this as the way to unite the empire, and in A.D. 321 he issued his infamous Sunday law. It is instructive to record that the establishment of Sunday as the focal day of worship came not from the study of the Word of God but from the edict of a secular government. The edict stated:

Let all the judges and town people, and all the occupation of all trades rest on the venerable day of the sun; 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. Given this seventh day of March; Crispus and Constantine being consuls, each of them for the second time. (Quoted in Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 343)

It will immediately be noted that no mention is made of the Lord's day or the resurrection day, for the Emperor chose to use the pagan title of their day of worship, "the venerable day of the sun." This edict placed Sabbath-keeping Christians in a predicament. They owed much to this emperor who had freed them from the bondage of persecution and the restrictions of their religious practice. Many agonized over the issue of how they should respond to this edict. For those who already worshiped on Sunday, no problem resulted from its issuance. Already there were many groups who worshiped on the Sabbath who also gathered for some portion of Sunday to read the writings of the prophets and the apostles. It seemed to them that this was the answer. Not only would they keep the Sabbath as a day of holy worship but they would keep also Sunday in honor of the emperor's edict.

Little did such shortsighted Christians foresee the eventual outcome of their decision. Satan has always found a way to compromise God's truth by joining truth with error. There were those, no doubt, who salved their consciences by an act of rationalization. They reasoned that it was more pious to have two special days of worship per week instead of one. But when truth and error are confounded, always the error prevails. Thus step by insidious step, Sabbath became less revered and Sunday took upon itself the stature of God's special day of worship.

The moment Christians accorded sanctity to both the true Sabbath and the counterfeit Sabbath, the eventual supremacy of Sunday worship was sealed. Dire consequences inevitably result from uniting truth with error, the religion of God with the pagan forms of religion and the sacred with the profane. From this step forward the Christian church was destined to fall into gross apostasy. Thus began the first evidence of the union of State and Church in the history of Christendom.

Constantine's decree was well understood by the pagans of the Roman Empire,

As seen in Constantine's originating piety, that supreme deity would have been associated with the sun, and pagans would have recognized, with reason, their own solar cult in such Christian practices as orienting churches to the east, worshiping on "sun day," and celebrating the birth of the deity at the winter solstice. (Carroll, James, *Constantine's Sword, The Church and the Jews, A History*, p. 183.)

Carroll realized the implications of this Sunday decree.

For centuries, Christians' celebration of Easter coincided exactly with Passover, and their observance of the Sabbath continued to take place on Saturday. It took the order of Constantine, referred to earlier, and decrees of the fourth-century Church councils to draw fast distinctions between Jewish and Christian observances. (*Ibid.*, p. 145)

We emphasize this was the union of State and Church because the State was now controlling the religious practices of the Church. A little more than two centuries later, as the Roman Empire had fallen into deep decay and the Western Roman Empire had fallen, the reverse situation pertained. When Vigilius became Pope in A.D. 537 he soon after exercised the power of the Church over the State—a circumstance that continued for more than a millennium. Thus the Church dominated the State in a Church-State union.

Four years after the Sunday law edict and one year after he had completed the reunification of the Roman Empire, Constantine called the first general church council since the Jerusalem Council in apostolic times (see Acts chapter 15). This council was called in a decided effort to forge further unity in the Empire by seeking

to resolve doctrinal disputes that were dividing Christendom. So important was this to Constantine that he personally presided over the Council. This was a clear demonstration of the determination of the Emperor to intervene in the ecclesiastical affairs of the Christian Church to achieve political unity.

The council of Nicaea convened in A.D. 325, and was destined to commence a religious controversy that has never ceased. Assembled under the state-church union, the council commanded the submission of all believers to the new doctrines as enunciated. Many councils and synods were convened over the next half century or so, approximately forty-five of them, all in a futile effort to bring conformity to the Christian Church. Such councils can never bring unity, which alone can be achieved through the surrender of the will to the Word of God under the infilling of the Holy Spirit. So constant were these councils and synods that Samuel Edgar wrote,

The roads were crowded with bishops thronging to synods, and the traveling expenses, which were defrayed by the emperor, exhausted the public funds. These exhibitions became the sneer of the heathen, who were amused to behold men, who, from infancy, had been educated in Christianity, and appointed to instruct others in that religion, hastening, in this manner, to distant places and conventions for the purpose of ascertaining their belief. (Samuel Edgar, *The Variations of Popery*, p. 309. Quoted in Wilkinson, op. cit., p. 83)

The Council of Nicaea focused upon the relations of the three persons of the Godhead—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The council presented the befuddled claim that—

The personalities of the Trinity were not confounded, and the substance was not divided. (*Ibid.*)

Thus the Godhead became confused with the mysteries of the pagan trinity that found its origins in ancient Babylon. Rather than clarifying the truth, it created greater perplexity to the understanding of the doctrine of the Godhead.

It would not be an overstatement to say that church councils have never solved fundamental truths. Rather they lead to compromising decisions in order to meet the divergent theories of men. This is why devout men and women with average educa-

tion, but under the leading of the Holy Spirit, frequently come to an understanding of the pure truth of the Word ahead of the theologians. Sadly most Christian denominations today lean upon the scholarship of the theologians for their understanding of Scripture. But this is as unwise as dangerous.

It does not take much attention to the theories of theologians to recognize that were the theologians the true discerners of God's message to the human race they would all speak with one voice. The many theologians offer explanations that are as diverse as all the curious doctrines that have been presented in the history of Christendom. Hardly two theologians can be found who agree completely on any significant point of doctrine. The study of the writings of theologians is the study of the thoughts of fallible human beings. God's Word, and that alone, can provide the source of all Truth. The prophet Isaiah establishes the methodology for every earnest Christian to discover truth.

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little. (Isaiah 28:9, 10)

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. (Isaiah 35:8)

Ordinary dedicated people can correctly understand God's Word as they pray for the Holy Spirit to enlighten their minds before they study.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13)

10 The Council of Laodicea

ONE of these many councils held in the fourth century A.D. was that of Laodicea. Roman Catholic authorities often date it at A.D. 336 but this is almost certainly much earlier than the actual date. J. N. Andrews sets the Council of Laodicea at A.D. 364. (*op. cit.*, p. 361). B. G. Wilkinson sets the council at about the close of the fourth century (*op. cit.*, p. 196). The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1963 edition is content to state that this council convened in the second half of the fourth century. While it is not generally held to be one of the most significant of these many councils, nevertheless to our study of the Sabbath question it is very important. Following the Sunday law edict of Constantine, the assembled bishops sought to provide ecclesiastical support to weaken seventh-day Sabbath keeping and elevate the keeping of the first day of the week to the primary day of worship.

When the practice of keeping Saturday Sabbaths, which had become so general at the close of this century [fourth century] was evidently gaining ground in the eastern church, a decree was passed in the council held at Laodicea "that the members of the church should not rest from work on the Sabbath, like Jews; but should labor on that day, and preferring in honor the Lord's day, then, if it be in their power, should rest from work as Christians." (James, *Sermons on the Sacraments and Sabbath*, p. 122-123. Quoted in J. N. Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 361)

Thus the councils of men attempted to do more than exchange one day for another, to follow the pagan practices of Rome; they changed the reckoning of the days from even to even to midnight to midnight. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel that identifies the antichrist power which would attempt to change times and the law.

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (Daniel 7:25)

The ecclesiastical edict of the Council of Laodicea provided the platform for later Roman Catholic authorships to proudly proclaim that the Roman Church changed the Sabbath.

It was the Catholic Church which, by the authority of JESUS CHRIST, has transferred this rest to the Sunday in remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord. Thus the observance of *Sunday* by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the church. (Louis Gaston de Segur, *Plain Talk About Protestants Today*, Boston: Patrick Donahoe, 1868, p. 225)

The observance of the Sabbath according to the fourth commandment was extensive in the eastern Christian church in the latter part of the fourth century. This was also true of the churches in the far western regions of the Roman Empire at the time of the Council of Laodicea.

In spite of these decrees the proponents of Sunday sacredness found it most difficult to succeed in their determined effort to divest themselves of the Sabbath of the Lord for the counterfeit pagan sabbath. The experience of Ambrose illustrates this.

In the latter part of the fourth century Ambrose, the renowned Bishop of Milan, created a proverb which is extensively known today. The proverb states, "When in Rome do as the Romans do." Many know the proverb but few understand its origin. In the latter part of the fourth century the Christian Church in Milan kept holy the seventh-day Sabbath. However, from time to time Ambrose traveled to Rome and by this time the Roman Church had established Sunday as its primary day of worship. Some of his own church members questioned his practice of worshiping on Sunday when in Rome. He explained that he worshiped on Sunday in Rome but when he was in Milan he worshiped on the Sabbath day. Not all members in Milan were happy with this compromise. Ambrose justified it by the proverb, "When in Rome do as the Romans do."

It is not surprising then that the most famous student of Ambrose eventually became a staunch proponent of Sunday sacredness. This student, Augustine, who later became Bishop of Hippo, bemoaned the fact that though his churches in North Africa kept holy the first day of the week, most of the other churches in his region were still ardent Sabbath-keepers. The more distantly the nations of Europe, Asia and Africa were located from Rome, the more resistant they were to the substitution of Sunday worship for Sabbath worship.

However, after the decree of Constantine many churches, one way or another, had elements of worship on both the seventh and the first days. The first-day Christians considered the seventh day to be a fast day while the first day was declared to be a feast day. The reverse was true for those who held to the primary sanctity of the seventh day of the week. Slowly, but increasingly, churches were convinced or compelled to exercise Sunday as the sacred day of worship. More followed the practice of fasting on the seventh day and feasting on the first day of the week. It is not difficult to understand why these Christians looked far more favorably upon the feast of the first day of the week than the fast on the seventh day. Eventually the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath all but disappeared.

In England the change was made in the seventh century. Oswy, King of Northumbria, the most powerful kingdom in England, married a Roman Catholic queen. It was the queen who urged the assembling of the Council of Whitby in 664. The queen brought the wily Wilfrid to press the claims of the papacy upon the weak king. Wilfrid was the queen's chaplain and had been trained in the ways of the papacy. Representing the faithful Celtic Church was Colman, the leader of that Church in Lindisfarne in England. Wilfrid emphasized the primacy of the pope as the successor to Peter, basing his assertion upon the false interpretation* of the words of Jesus:

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)

* See p. 241.

Nothing Colman could say changed the king's evaluation that this text was conclusive evidence that Peter had divine authority to lead the church, and by extension so did his successors, and therefore all subjects were enjoined to become part of the papal church.

It was also in the seventh century that the change took place in the Spanish church. However, in the churches of Scotland and Wales Sabbath observance was maintained until the twelfth century. The change in Scotland took place in remarkably similar circumstances to those in England four and a half centuries earlier. King Malcolm III pled with Princess Margaret, niece of Edward the Confessor, King of England, to marry him. Margaret had planned to become a nun and had traveled to what is now Hungary to prepare herself for this role. She agreed to become Malcolm's queen on the condition that she could continue her Roman Catholic faith, to which Malcolm foolishly agreed. The powerful queen trained her sons in the Roman Catholic faith so that the next king was the first Roman Catholic king of Scotland.

Thus by determined efforts Satan had enshrined the sign and mark of his authority in almost all the churches in Europe. However it must be remembered that God was not left without witnesses and, indeed, in every century of the Christian age, here and there have been faithful Sabbath keepers who demonstrated their loyalty to God the Creator by worshiping on His holy, sacred day.

For many centuries the Celtic Church of the British Isles was a Sabbath-keeping church. Parts of the Waldensian Church had members who were faithful Sabbath keepers. B. G. Wilkinson's book, *Truth Triumphant*, also documents the keeping of the Sabbath by the Albigenses, Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, and Persians as well as the churches of Asia and Ethiopia.

That there is no divine mandate for the change of the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week cannot be validly challenged. As the above material confirms, the change of the Sabbath was made by fallible human decrees, both civil and ecclesiastical. Such decrees carry no weight of authority for the earnest Bible-believing Christian—they bear no divine mandate.

There are those who postulate that the central issue is that we keep holy *a* seventh day—that this is the main principle to be

derived from the fourth commandment. Surely this is shallow reasoning. How many Americans would be willing to support a change of Independence Day from the fourth of July to the fifth of July? Such a proposal would be met with outcries: "We celebrate Independence Day on the fourth of July because that is the day on which the Declaration of Independence was signed." Recently there was a proposal in Australia to change Australia Day from January twenty-sixth to another date, but there was strong opposition mounted because January twenty-sixth was the date on which the first penal colony was established at Sydney Cove.

How much more adamant should Christians be that we keep sacred the seventh day of the week which God ordained as a rest day to commemorate the completion of His work of Creation! How could the first of God's work days validly be substituted for God's rest day? Some argue that Sunday represents Christ's recreative work in the lives of believers. Where is there inspired support for such an assertion? The Word of God teaches that seventh-day Sabbath keeping not only points back to God's creative acts but to the regeneration of the sanctification of God's faithful ones.

Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, 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)

Mortals dare not presume to alter that which our Almighty God has ordained. Observing Sunday as the sacred day of man's devising is an affront to God, an act of presumption.

11

The Sabbath in the Time of the Middle Ages

WHILE it is not possible to precisely date the Middle Ages, nevertheless, it is generally defined by the fall of two great civilizations. The Middle Ages thus commenced about A.D. 476 with the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The end of the Middle Ages is held to have taken place about the time of the fall of Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1453, to the Muslim Turks. Then followed that period in history called the Renaissance. Some date the Renaissance back to the latter part of the fourteenth century, arguing that the enlightenment which was brought by John Wycliffe in his determined struggle against the excesses of the Papacy of his day was the true beginning of the Renaissance in Europe.

However, it was the fall of Constantinople that brought great revival of learning and culture to Western Europe. Wilkinson explains it thus:

The locating of the Western Hemisphere was such a revolutionary event that it is easy to overlook the great discovery in 1453. The treasures disclosed to wondering humanity by the finding of America met their counterpart in the literary wealth thrown upon Europe by the fall of Constantinople, capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. Until that time, the Greek manuscripts containing the knowledge possessed by a brilliant antiquity were confined to the Eastern Roman Empire, often called the Greek Empire. The fall of Constantinople before the armies of the Muslim Turks opened to Western Europe the empire's libraries with their thousands of manuscripts. The nations west of Constantinople awoke from the sleep of centuries. For nearly a thousand years the ecclesiastical power of Rome had eliminated the study of the Greek language and literature. "Knowledge of the Greek language died out in

Western Europe," says one whose pro-Roman leanings are well known. [Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. 2, p. 142]. Italy, France, Germany, and England were stunned by the sudden revelations in history, science, literature, and philosophy which came to them. Immediately they appropriated their newly found treasures. Scholars were as much intent upon manuscript hunting as Columbus was upon continent hunting. (Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 383-384)

This wealth of literature was, however, not confined to the philosophy of the Greeks nor to secular culture. Wilkinson added,

The greatest treasure accruing to the world by the fall of Constantinople was the recovery of multiplied manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. The vast majority of these manuscripts were the Received Text. [That is the Eastern Syriac manuscripts which were unlike the Western Alexandrian texts. The latter had been greatly corrupted]. Having had only the Latin Bible of Rome, called the Vulgate, the western world in general lacked the exact words written by the apostles of the revelations of Jesus. (*Ibid.*, p. 384)

Within little more than a century and a half most languages of Europe had the Word of God translated into the vernacular from this highly reliable group of manuscripts and so the Renaissance moved almost imperceptibly into the Protestant Reformation. Men of great stature, including Luther and Tyndale as well as many other men of great learning, education and skill in the classical languages, translated the Bible into the vernacular of almost all European peoples.

In the English language several translations were to be made in the next 150 years. They included the Geneva Bible, the Bishop's Bible, the Tyndale Bible, the Coverdale Bible and, ultimately, the Authorized or King James Bible. The Reformers readily recognized that the Eastern Syriac Greek manuscripts of the Bible permitted the Word of God to be reproduced much more reliably into the languages of the masses than did the Western Alexandrian Greek texts.

John Wycliffe, who was first to translate the Bible into the English language, did not have the advantage of these eastern manuscripts; thus, though a wonderful commencement to presenting the Word of God in the English vernacular, his translation still

contained many errors. Unfortunately, during the twentieth century there has been a major penchant for translators to use the corrupted Western Alexandrian texts for modern translations.*

Let us, with considerable brevity, explore the Sabbath during the Middle Ages. We reemphasize that at the beginning of the Middle Ages large segments of Christians still observed the seventh-day Sabbath as their special day of worship. These segments included almost all of the Eastern Roman Empire nations as well as India, China and parts of Siberia, England, Scotland, Wales, and Spain in the Western Roman Empire. However, the inroad of Sunday observance was also very marked. Under the powerful influence of Alexandria and Rome the onward march of the Roman Catholic faith was to enjoin Sunday sacredness at the expense of true seventh-day Sabbath observance.

By the end of the Middle Ages only the churches in India, China, and Ethiopia were still faithful to the seventh-day Sabbath of the apostles. Unlike Europe, where the Roman Church exercised coercive power through the arm of the state, the spread of Islam in north Africa and much of Western Asia had resulted in the Roman Church having no influence in African and Asian Churches. Only a small faithful, persecuted remnant of Sabbath keepers were to be found scattered throughout Europe. That there were any Sabbath keepers left in Europe was largely the result of the Celtic church and its missionaries, who for centuries had kept themselves from the Roman church and its unbiblical doctrines.

The first great Celtic missionary was Patrick, probably a native of southwestern Scotland who, as a youth, was captured by Irish slave traders. He believed that he was taken to Ireland because he had walked far from God and did not observe the commandments of God. Yet he came from a Christian background, indicating how far Christianity had developed in the British Isles prior to the influence of the Roman Church, which did not emerge until the end of the sixth century, long after the death of Patrick. Seven years Patrick served as a slave in Ireland. At this time most of the Irish were pagans.

During his captivity, Patrick was truly converted to Christianity and he saw the terrible need for Christianity in Ireland. He escaped from Ireland and returned home, but the deep conviction

* See Russell and Colin Standish, *Modern Bibles Translations Unmasked*.

fell upon him of the urgent need for the Irish to hear the gospel of Christ. Against all the pleadings of his parents he decided that it was his God-given calling to take the gospel to Ireland. There is no exact date known just when he returned to Ireland. But there he implanted a form of Christianity much closer to that of the apostles than the divergent one which had been developing in the Roman church. Like other Scottish Christians, he was a Sabbath keeper and thus the Sabbath was established in the early Christian church in Ireland.

No regard should be given to the fact that in later times Patrick was created the patron saint of Ireland by the Roman Catholic Church. In none of his writings did he refer to Rome's authority nor did he give any credence to church traditions as a basis for faith and practice. Patrick emphasized the sole authority of the Scriptures. He founded Bible schools for training Christian workers, which later grew into colleges, and some into large universities.

It was at one of these schools in the sixth century that Columba, a prince of Ireland, accepted Christianity. Columba forsook his royal heritage and traveled to Scotland, there to establish the most famous Celtic school on the island of Iona, off the wind-swept southwestern coast of Scotland. That school was to send out waves of missionaries, not only to the British Isles but also to the European continent.

Columba was born at Donagal in Ireland in 521. Before establishing his college on the island of Iona, off the Scottish coast, he had established many schools in Ireland. Columba was an administrator, educator, hymn writer, poet, and was credited with having copied three hundred New Testaments during his lifetime. Columba began his educational institution on Iona in 563, and it was to serve for 641 years until the teachers and students were driven away in 1204 by Benedictine monks. It ranks as possibly the longest-continuous, truly Christian school in history. It was from this institution that other schools were established. Keep in mind that all of these were Sabbath-keeping schools.

As stated earlier, the northern part of England capitulated to Roman Catholicism when King Oswy of Northumbria, urged by his Roman Catholic queen, succumbed to the pressure of the Roman Church at the Council of Whitby in 664. Yet during this

period of time Scotland and Wales held firm to the Sabbath of the Bible. Until well into the twelfth century the Scots were Sabbath keepers. Roman Catholicism was established by the Roman Catholic Queen Margaret, who was successful in influencing King Malcolm III of Scotland against the Celtic Christianity. Also of Margaret it is recorded that,

The queen further protested against the prevailing abuse of Sunday desecration. "Let us," she said, "venerate the Lord's day, inasmuch as upon it our Saviour rose from the dead: let us do not servile work on that day." . . . The Scots in this manner had no doubt kept up the traditional practice of the ancient monastic Church of Ireland, which observed Saturday rather than Sunday as a day of rest. (Bellesheim, *History of the Catholic Church of Scotland*, vol. 1, pp. 249–250. Quoted in Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 105)

This Sabbath keeping is also confirmed by other historians, e.g. Lang, *A History of Scotland*, vol. 1, p. 96; Moffat, *The Church in Scotland*, p. 140. Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, vol. 2, p. 349 describes the change from the Celtic to the Roman brand of Christianity.

Dinooth (530–610) was another great Celtic educator. He was said to have established seven educational institutions around the town of Bangor in Northern Wales. At the height of his educational institutions there was a total of about 2,500 trainee missionaries. Sadly, toward the end of Dinooth's life, Augustine (not to be confused with Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in North Africa), commissioned by the Pope, came to Canterbury, England, in 597 and there established the first beachhead for Roman Catholicism. Yet the Celtic church was to dominate for many years after Columba's death.

Dinooth in his declining years was responsible for the rejection of Archbishop Augustine's desire to extend his control over Christianity in the British Isles. A delegation was sent to dialogue with Augustine. But it became very evident that there were major chasms between the doctrines which Augustine espoused from Rome and those of the foundational Celtic Church.

Shortly after this rejection of Augustine's demands a terrible massacre took place of the young, unarmed ministerial candidates

who were praying when King Aethelfrith gave the command to kill them. Almost twelve hundred young men died in the slaughter.

One of the most notable students at Dinooth's college was Columbanus (543–615). An Irishman, Columbanus took the gospel taught by the Celtic Church, with its Sabbath observance, to Europe. He opened schools in France, Germany, Austria and Italy. Though Columbanus is depicted as a tall, handsome man, he declined marriage, rather putting all his energies into the spread of the gospel. His work had a great impact upon Western Europe and, in many ways, greatly hindered the objectives of the Roman Church. Many other missionaries came to Europe from the Celtic schools. Nevertheless, the Celtic Christians totally rejected coercion and therefore were opposed to any efforts to convert men and women at the point of the sword. This was in deep contradistinction to the philosophy and practice of the Roman Church and, therefore, by the tenth century the Celtic work had all but been extinguished from the European continent.

Other great Celtic educators, teachers and evangelists could be mentioned at length. These would include Aidan, a product of Iona. Aidan founded the Celtic training school in Lindisfarne, in Northumbria, on the eastern coast of northern England. Lindisfarne was modeled after Iona. Before the tragic capitulation of King Oswy another famous Celtic school was established at Whitby by Caedmon and Hilda. Hilda became its Abbess, possibly the most influential Celtic female leader of history. Caedmon was from humble roots. It was Hilda who recognized his talents and he quickly developed from a shy young man into a strong leader.

Finnan, another able evangelist, succeeded Aidan of Lindisfarne upon Aidan's death, and he carried forward the work of his predecessor with great success. Colman, the successor of Finnan, was a godly man who nevertheless was unable to convince King Oswy, King of Northumbria, to remain faithful to the pure Christianity of the Celts. The strength of the Sabbath-keeping Celtic Church is little known at the present day, but history reveals that during the Middle Ages God was not left without his strong witnesses.

Besides the Celts, the Ethiopians and the Asian Sabbath keepers during the Middle Ages, there were other continental Euro-

pean Sabbath keepers. Among these were the Waldensians. Dr. Wilkinson asserts that the Waldensians trace their heritage back to the primitive Christians of Western Europe. Voltaire claimed that the Waldensians were remnants of the first Gaulish Christians. That is, they had their origins from what is now called France. One thing is certain: that though many trace the Waldensians from the time of Peter Waldo, a well-known merchant of Lyons, France, the evidence takes the Waldensians back many hundreds of years before Waldo's life in the twelfth century. Certainly Waldo was a great man who on his conversion distributed his fortune to the poor, and evangelized extensively. He finally fled to Bohemia, and many of his followers fled to the the Waldensians in the Italian Alps to escape cruel retribution for their Christian witness.

The Waldensian Church kept itself distinct from the papal Church. For this they suffered terribly at the hands of the papal troops although there are wonderful evidences of God's miraculous salvation of the Waldensians. In 1993 we met a woman who was a direct descendant from Jean Leger, a Waldensian leader whom the Lord greatly honored. After his wife and children were captured by the papal forces, he refused any form of compromise to secure their release from the threat of death. So much did God honor his steadfast loyalty that the wife and children were eventually released and were reunited with this leader. Wilkinson offers incontrovertible evidence that Waldensians for many centuries were Sabbath keepers. Quoting an earlier source he records the words of Alphonse, king of Aragon, who persecuted the Waldensians.

We command you in imitation of our ancestors and in obedience to the ordinances of the church, that heretics, to wit, Waldenses, Insabbathi [Sabbath keepers] and those who call themselves the poor of Lyons and all other heretics should be expelled away from the face of God and from all Catholics and ordered to depart from our kingdom.

(Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 248)

Wilkinson asserts,

A large proportion of the Waldenses, whether called by that name or by other names, believed the observance of the fourth commandment to be obligatory upon the human race. Because

of this they were designated by the significant title of Insabbati, or Insabbatati. Farmers or townsmen going on Saturday about their work were so impressed by the sight of groups of Christians assembling for worship on that day that they called them Insabbatati. The term "Sabbath" was almost never applied to Sunday [at that time]. *(Ibid. p. 252)*

There is also evidence of Waldensians in Bohemia who too were Sabbath keepers. Wilkinson further claims that,

There are reliable historians who say that the Waldenses and the Albigenses fundamentally were Sabbath keepers. *(Ibid. p. 200)*

A large number of others who lived during the time of the Middle Ages were Sabbath keepers as well. What is perfectly clear is that regardless of the determination of Rome, the Sabbath was maintained throughout the Middle Ages by faithful peoples in many parts of the planet in spite of fearful persecution and retribution against them.

12

The Sabbath and the Reformation

IT was only to be expected that the Reformation with its bold proclamation of “sola scriptura” would lead to many reexamining the scriptural basis for Sunday sacredness. Had the most prominent Reformers truly believed in “sola scriptura” it is without doubt that there would have been a return to the Biblical Sabbath. There were some among the leaders of the Reformation who recognized that there was only one Sabbath in the Old and the New Testaments, and that it was the seventh day of the week.

A contemporary of Martin Luther, Andreas Rudolf Karlstadt, embraced the seventh-day Sabbath. Karlstadt in many ways was acknowledged as a greater scholar than Luther, and to have more fervently embraced the concept of “sola scriptura.” Luther enunciated this concept but he never fully embraced it. So eager was he to maintain the doctrine of justification by faith that he questioned some of the Scriptures, notably the book of James. James 1:12 and 2:5 particularly troubled Luther, for both enunciate a condition for the receipt of God’s free grace—love for God. Luther well knew that such love embraced the keeping of the first four commandments, and since one cannot love God without also loving his fellow men (“neighbour”), by implication honoring all of God’s commandments. Luther fully understood that we are saved by grace through faith alone, not of works lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8, 9), but that there is a condition upon which we receive the free gift of grace—that is, obedience, in Christ’s power, to all his commandments. Good works follow as a fruit of obedience.

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

(Revelation 14:12)

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

Early in the Reformation Karlstadt and Luther were close friends. Increasingly, however, they disagreed on various doctrines; and at times their disagreements were fierce. In most cases Karlstadt's stands have stood the test of time better than Luther's. For example, Luther's *consubstantiation* concept of the communion service was little different in finality from Rome's *transubstantiation*. *Consubstantiation* was a notion that although the wafer and the wine did not become the actual body and blood of Christ, nevertheless in some mystical manner Christ's body and blood came with the emblems. Karlstadt clearly saw that the wafer was a *symbol* of the body of Christ, not the very substance of Christ's body. Karlstadt included the partaking of the wine for the members of the church in the communion service. Luther followed the Roman Catholic practice of permitting the congregation only the wafer. A century before Karlstadt, John Huss had set the example by placing before the congregation the opportunity to participate both in the bread and the wine. This is the Scriptural position (Matthew 26:26–28).

So fierce became the division between Luther and Karlstadt that the Elector of Saxony banished Karlstadt for many years from the province of Saxony. Yet his influence became strong in southern Germany, and in Switzerland where his concept concerning the communion paralleled that of Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer. In contrast to Luther, Karlstadt also upheld the Old Testament as of equal authority with the New Testament. Luther branded Karlstadt's Sabbath keeping as Jewish, and claimed that if we kept the Sabbath we should also have to uphold circumcision. But there is a notable distinction between the Sabbath and circumcision (see chapter 29 entitled "The Sabbath and the New Covenant"). Paul clearly upheld the Sabbath and worshiped regularly on the Sabbath day. In contrast, Paul made it plain that circumcision had been replaced by baptism.

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism,

wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

(Colossians 2:11, 12)

Further, most importantly, the Sabbath is the fourth commandment, part of God's eternal law; circumcision is not. Circumcision was part of the ceremonial law which was "nailed to the cross." (See chapter 17 entitled "Nailed to the Cross.")

Philip Melanchthon, Luther's closest friend and colleague, is said by some to have kept the seventh-day Sabbath. Certainly he fully understood that the Roman Church had changed the Sabbath. Melanchthon expressed this matter thus:

He changeth the tymes and lawes. . . . when they changed Saterday into Sondaye. . . . They have changed gods lawes and turned them into their owne tradicios to be kept above Gods preceptis. (Joye, George, *The exposition of Daniel the Prophete*, 1545, pp. 118, 119.)

The Reformation ignited much investigation of the Sabbath message across Europe. John Frith, the English Reformer, who was martyred at Smithfield, July 4, 1533, was also a fervent seventh-day Sabbath keeper. Sabbath keepers were identified in Transylvania [now part of Romania], Bohemia [the western part of Czech Republic today], Russia, Germany, Holland, France and England (Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 463). However, most of the leaders of the Reformation strangely opposed the keeping of the Biblical Sabbath day. This generally stifled most Sabbath-keeping movements. The pejorative term *Judaizers* was sufficient to deter most children of the Reformation from seriously considering a return to God's seventh-day Sabbath.

One leader of faithful Reformers in Transylvania, Francis Davidis, a Unitarian Baptist minister, except for his extreme unitarian views, held to sound Biblical principles. In spite of his unwavering views he was a strong believer in religious liberty and gave great freedom to Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists in Transylvania. However, his Sabbatarian views were not long tolerated. Robinson in his *Ecclesiastical Researches*, summarized the fierce persecution against this godly man.

He supposed the Jewish Sabbath not abrogated, and he therefore kept holy the seventh day. He believed also the doctrine of the millennium, and like an honest man, what he believed he

taught. He was considered by the Transylvanian churches as an apostle, and had grown gray in their service; but the Catholics, the Lutherans, and the Calvinists thought him a Turk, a blasphemer, and an atheist, and his Polish Baptist brethren said he was half a Jew. Had he been a whole Jew, he ought not to have been imprisoned for his speculations.

By what means the Supreme Searcher of hearts only knows, but by some methods till then unknown in Transylvania, the old man was arrested, and by the senate condemned to die. He was imprisoned in the castle, and Providence, by putting a period to his life there, saved his persecutors from the disgrace of a public execution. (Robert Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches*, Cambridge: Francis Hodsden, 1792, ch. 16, pp. 636–637. Quoted in Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 465.)

Sabbatarians in Transylvania seem gradually to have lost heart and most of them disappeared. Many of Davidis' supporters were of high rank in Transylvania, and many continued to defend him after his death. But persecution was fierce against them and some paid the supreme penalty. Such a one was Jacob Palaeologus, who fled to Moravia (now the eastern part of the Czech Republic), where he was apprehended, and at the demand of Pope Gregory XIV, was carried to Rome, where he was burned at the stake in 1585 as a heretic.

Among the most fervent Sabbath-keepers at the time of the Reformation were the Waldensians of Bohemia (Western Czech Republic). The Russian Sabbatarians trace their existence back to the year 1400, long before the birth of Luther. It will be well to remind ourselves that Luther was strongly anti-Semitic and this, no doubt, contributed to his fierce opposition to the keepers of God's true Sabbath. German and Dutch Sabbath keepers were found in the early period of the sixteenth century.

Two faithful Sabbatarian martyrs from the Netherlands were burned at the stake. One, Barbary von Thiers, was executed September 16, 1529. She declared, "God has commanded us to rest on the seventh day." (*Ibid.* p. 41.) Christina Tolingerin, before her martyrdom said, "In six days the Lord made the world, on the seventh day he rested. The other holy days have been instituted by popes, cardinals, and archbishops." (*Ibid.*)

One of the Sabbatarian leaders in France was M. de la Roque who also spoke against infant baptism as having not been practiced in the early Christian Church.

Two Germans strongly proclaimed the seventh-day Sabbath in the early part of the sixteenth century—Andreas Fischer and Oswald Glait. Both had converted to the Lutheran faith and then embraced the Anabaptist teachings after serving as Roman Catholic priests. They were amazed to discover that the Scriptures offered no evidence for Sunday sacredness. Both fervently taught the seventh-day Sabbath from town to town and both suffered a martyr's fate, largely because of their Sabbath teaching.

In England it would seem that there were Sabbath-keepers at least until the time of William the Conqueror (1066). There may have been an unbroken stream of Sabbath keepers from the time of the defection of King Oswy at the Council of Whitby, A.D. 664, to the Reformation period. Some Puritans fervently accepted the Sabbath and its binding practice upon Christians. Chambers's *Cyclopedia* reports that many conscientious and independent thinkers believed that the fourth commandment required them to observe not the first day of the week but the specified seventh day of the week as a strict rest due unto God. Some believe this was the beginning of the Seventh-day Baptist movement. (Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopedia*, London, 1867, article "Sabbath," vol. 8, p. 402. Quoted in Andrews, *op.cit.* p. 484)

In the reign of King James I (1603–1625), John Trask, accepting the all-sufficiency of Scripture, challenged the Church of England's authority to constrain the conscience of men in matters of religion. He was brought before the infamous Star Chamber. His strong defense of the Sabbath was challenged by Bishop Andrews, who, it would appear, claimed that the early martyrs were tested by the question, "Hast thou kept the Lord's day?" The veracity of this challenge cannot be found in the writings of the early fathers and would seem to be almost certainly spurious on the grounds that it would be hardly likely that the pagans challenged the keepers of the first day of the week for, indeed, that was their day of worship.

Trask was condemned by the Star Chamber for sedition, creating commotion and for scandalizing the king, the bishops,

and the clergy. He was flogged and placed in a miserable prison. Unfortunately, after one year of cruel punishment, his spirit was broken and he recanted his doctrine.

His wife, however, made no such recantation. She, a teacher, was placed in jail for teaching only five days of the week and resting upon Saturday. Yet she was acknowledged to be a teacher of more than ordinary excellence and to have had a record for helping the poor. It was not so much that she did not teach on the Sabbath that brought her imprisonment, but rather that she did so because of her belief in the Biblical seventh-day Sabbath. This faithful woman spent more than fifteen years in prison until death released her from this cruel punishment (see *Ibid.*, pp. 492–493).

It would seem that significant numbers of other prominent men and women in England put forth the claims of the seventh-day Sabbath. A minister of the Church of England, Francis Bampfield, became a well-known Sabbatarian preacher. Shortly after he had left his congregation in 1662 he was imprisoned for worshipping God with his own family rather than in a church. He was released soon after but was shortly again imprisoned, this time for nine years, in the Dorchester jail. Despite that he was a man of unshaken loyalty to the king, he was charged with being disloyal to the new king, Charles II, who had taken up the British throne in 1660 after the collapse of the Commonwealth which had ruled England from 1649 to 1660 following the execution of Charles II's father, Charles I.

After his release, Bampfield established a church which followed the teachings of the Sabbatarian Baptists. This powerful preacher was arrested again February 17, 1682, while preaching without authority from the Church of England and on March 28 in that year was sentenced to forfeit all of his goods and to be imprisoned in Newgate for life. His life did not linger long as he died in prison, February 16, 1683 (*Ibid.*, p. 492–493). Francis Bampfield published two works on behalf of the seventh day as the Sabbath, one in 1672 and the other in 1677. His brother, Thomas Bampfield, who had been speaker in the House of Parliament under Cromwell's Commonwealth, also wrote on behalf of the seventh-day Sabbath, and he also was imprisoned for his religious principles, in Ilchester jail.

The Church of England proved to be just as fierce an opponent of the seventh-day Sabbath as had the Lutherans before them and the Roman Catholics earlier still. Yet this persecution was eventually to lead to the strongest movement since the early Christian years for the worship of God on His holy, sacred Sabbath day, which today is gathering even greater momentum.

13

The Seventh-day Sabbath Enters American Colonies

A TRAGIC event in 1661 may have been the single most important reason why the seventh-day Sabbath was brought to the American colonies. One has to understand the circumstances that pertained in England at the time.

In 1660 the rulers of England decided to reestablish the Monarchy. For eleven years after the beheading of King Charles I the British had been ruled by a Commonwealth led by Oliver Cromwell and, after his death in 1658, by his son, Richard. The reestablishment of the Monarchy under King Charles II was a time of great sensitivity and anyone who was perceived to have expressed opposition to the king was treated harshly. Obviously not all the British were happy with the reestablishment of the Monarchy and swift and excessive punishment was meted out to anyone who was considered to be disloyal to the monarch.

It was in this environment that on October 19, 1661, John James was preaching on Sabbath afternoon to a congregation of seventh-day Sabbath keeping Baptists who were assembled in a meeting house on the outskirts of London. During the preaching of John James, Justice Chard and Mr. Wood, an headborough (meaning a man who was the head of a borough), came into the meeting place. According to the record of Crosby's *History of the English Baptists*, London, 1739, vol. 2, p. 165–171, Wood commanded James in the name of the king to be silent and come down from the platform from which he was speaking, for it was claimed that he had spoken treason against the king.

John James believed that he had a higher authority than the headborough or the king—a commission from the King of kings and Lord of lords. He therefore attempted to continue his sermon. The headborough came closer to him and in the middle of the meeting place commanded him once more in the name of the king

to come down, else he would personally pull him down. This led to a great disturbance. James was taken into custody and placed in Newgate prison. It would be best to quote from the *Manual of the Seventh Day Baptist*. Here is a brief record of what took place.

Mr. James was himself examined and committed to Newgate, on the testimony of several profligate witnesses, who accused him of speaking treasonable words against the King. His trial took place about a month afterward, at which he conducted himself in such a manner as to create much sympathy. He was, however, sentenced to be "hanged, drawn, and quartered." When asked what he had to say why sentence should not be pronounced, he said he would leave with them these scriptures: Jeremiah 26:14, 15; Psalm 116:15. This awful sentence did not dismay him in the least. He calmly said, "Blessed be God, whom man condemneth, God justifieth." While he lay in prison, under sentence of death, many persons of distinction visited him, who were greatly affected by his piety and resignation, and offered to exert themselves to secure his pardon. But he seems to have had little hope of their success. Mrs. James, by the advice of her friends, twice presented petitions to the King [Charles II], setting forth the innocence of her husband, the character of the witnesses against him, and entreating His Majesty to grant a pardon. In both instances she was repulsed with scoffs and ridicule. At the scaffold, on the day of his execution, Mr. James addressed the assembly in a very noble and affecting manner. Having finished his address, and kneeling down, he thanked God for covenant mercies, and for conscious innocence; he prayed for the witnesses against him, for the executioner, for the people of God, for the removal of divisions, for the coming of Christ, for the spectators, and for himself, that he might enjoy a sense of God's favor and presence, and an entrance into glory. When he had ended, the executioner said, "The Lord receive your soul;" to which Mr. James replied, "I thank thee." A friend observing to him, "This is a happy day," he answered, "I bless God it is." Then, having thanked the sheriff for his courtesy, he said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." . . . After he was dead, his heart was taken out and burned, his quarters were affixed to the gates of the city, and his head was set up in Whitechapel on a pole opposite to the alley in which his meeting-house stood. (*Manual*

of the Seventh Day Baptists, George B. Utter, New York, 1858, pp. 21-23)

The martyrdom of John James did not dampen the fervor of all faithful Sabbath-keepers in England. But directly or indirectly it is almost certain to have led to the decision for the first Sabbath-keeper to leave Britain as a missionary to the American Colonies.

Stephen Mumford left London three years after the martyrdom of John James. He was sent by the London Seventh-day Baptists in 1664. A year later Elder William Gibson was also sent to America to propagate the gospel in foreign parts. No American will be surprised as to which colony Mumford chose to commence his work. With his views on the Sabbath, the only colony that would offer him complete religious freedom was Rhode Island, where the founder of the colony, Roger Williams, had guaranteed religious liberty within its borders. Thus Mumford settled at Newport.

Mumford emphasized that the Ten Commandments which were delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai were not only moral commandments, they were immutable. He declared that the anti-Christian power which thought to change times and laws (see Daniel 7:25) altered the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. Several members of the First Baptist Church in Newport embraced this message. Mumford was clearly a very careful recorder of those who initially accepted the Sabbath truth, for extant are the names of the first few who responded to his message. The very first convert to Sabbath keeping was Tacy Hubbard, March 11, 1665. His brother Samuel followed April 1 of the same year. Three others joined the Sabbath group in 1666.

In spite of the fact that Mumford earnestly taught the Sabbath truth, nevertheless, for quite some time he saw no reason to separate from the Sunday-keeping Baptists. Thus several members of the Baptist First Church in Newport embraced the Sabbath but continued for several years to worship in the First Church. However, this policy began to change when two men and their wives who had embraced the Sabbath turned back to their Sunday keeping. This reversion together with opposition that arose against the Sabbath keepers led to the establishment of a separate worship location and subsequently to the development of more Seventh-

day Baptist churches which began to be established in other parts of the colonies.

Another factor in the decision to establish separate churches arose when those who had once embraced the seventh-day Sabbath and then renounced it wrote against the Sabbath. The faithful Sabbath keepers, while being willing to worship with those who had yet to understand the importance of the seventh-day Sabbath truth, had an entirely different response to those who had once embraced the Sabbath truth and then renounced it.

As the leaders of the First-day Baptist church began to claim that the law was no longer binding upon the Christian church the split became final. Subsequently other Sabbath-keeping churches arose. By far the largest of these denominations is the Seventh-day Adventist Church which now has a membership approaching 1,000,000 in the United States and 13,000,000 world wide. Other smaller groups include the Church of God—Seventh Day, and the World-Wide Church of God, although after a split in the latter church several years ago many have reverted to Sunday-keeping. Also scattered throughout the United States are a significant number of seventh-day Sabbath-keeping Pentecostal groups. There has been a rapid growth in seventh-day Sabbath keepers around the world. This is very significant, as this planet is soon to witness the return of Christ to redeem His commandment-keeping saints (see Revelation 14:12).

Many thousands of books, tracts and periodical articles have been written addressing the issue of the Sabbath. A significant collection of these is housed in the National Library of Scotland in the city of Edinburgh. Here are stored about 2,000 items on the issue of the Sabbath. Over a third of this collection was bequeathed in 1854 by a Presbyterian lawyer and antiquarian, Robert Cox, who made a hobby of collecting materials, especially from the nineteenth-century pamphlet wars on temperance and the Lord's Day observance. Many more books have been written addressing the Sabbath in the one-and-a-half centuries since Cox made his bequest. To these can be added thousands of periodical articles and submissions on the Internet, many supporting seventh-day Sabbath-keeping, others rejecting it.

14 **The Sabbath from Eden to Eden Restored**

THE Bible description of the first Sabbath is simple and concise. The record reads as follows:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And 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 2:1-3)

A beautiful new planet had been completed in the six previous days, culminating in the creation of man and woman. Adam and Eve had not witnessed the creation that God had executed on the previous days. Their first glimpse of life was the glory of God's perfect creation. Wherever they looked they saw the mighty handiwork of God—magnificent fields, gardens and trees which majestically graced their perfect home. While today we see much beauty upon this earth, unquestionably it is but a faint reflection of that which the eyes of Adam and Eve beheld on that first day of their creation. God gave to Adam and Eve the responsibility of caring for the Garden of Eden. What a joy that responsibility must have been, devoid of the numerous insects, avian and animal pests, the weeds and the deteriorated soil gardeners are compelled to deal with today.

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. (Genesis 2:15)

God provided Adam and Eve with intimate association with the garden as they tended it and cared for it. Thus, creation's meaning was enhanced and there man's understanding of its biology,

its purpose and the marvelous, loving creative acts of God provided daily fresh glimpses of the Creator Himself.

Not only was man blessed by beautiful vegetation, he was blessed by the other creatures that God had made. Yet in every way he was superior to these creatures, for he was made in the image of God.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

(Genesis 1:26–28)

Not only was man made in the image of God but he was given a power no other creature possessed; a power akin to that of the Creator—the power of choice, the power to think and to reason. Further, he was granted dominion over the animals, over the birds and over every animate creature upon the earth.

When still fresh from the hand of the Creator, Adam was entrusted with the responsibility of naming each animal.

And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

(Genesis 2:19, 20)

We can only speculate the length of time this took, but we know that it was within the daylight hours of Friday on the sixth day. One matter is certain, Adam and Eve did not cultivate the garden on their first full day of life, the seventh day, for that was declared to be a day of rest. This day was set apart for understanding the miraculous work that our mighty God had fulfilled. There are no details whatsoever in the Bible concerning this first Sab-

bath. Surely it was a day in which the angels joined in rejoicing over the new creation. The angels had witnessed firsthand the handiwork of God. No doubt with great wonder they had marveled at the power of the Almighty. This was the greatest demonstration of that which God alone could have accomplished. No created being, not even the highest and noblest angel, could have accomplished such a work. Never could the created become the Creator. That power alone is possessed by God the self-existent One.

Creative acts required infinite wisdom, which God alone possessed. There was surely great praise and adoration from the angels as they had witnessed each successive day of creation; as they saw the mighty power of God. We learn of that praise service in Scripture as the sons of God, the angels, expressed their joy.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

(Job 38:4-7)

That loving voice of the Almighty that had charmed the angels so many times also had the power to bring into existence the creative works of God.

By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. (Psalm 33:6)

For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. (Psalm 33:9)

Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. (Psalm 148:5)

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (Hebrews 11:3)

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water. (2 Peter 3:5)

What a joy it must have been for Adam and Eve to be present and participate in that first Sabbath upon earth—their first full day of life. We can only wonder what message God communicated to them. What a gripping sermon that must have been. The Bible is silent on the details of that topic. But, without doubt, throughout their lives that Sabbath was a special day of recollection for them. It initiated Sabbath worship, which Adam and Eve were to enjoy for more than nine centuries.

As is detailed in this volume, thereafter faithful people in the antediluvian era (the period before the deluge in the time of Noah) kept the Sabbath as did the early postdiluvian patriarchs including Abraham. Many Sunday keepers argue that there is no evidence that the Sabbath was kept by faithful followers of God prior to the Exodus led by Moses. It is accurate to say that no specific information is given in the creation story of human Sabbath keeping. However, there can be no doubt about this from the communication of Jesus, the One who created the earth and all that is in it—His words are plain.

And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. (Mark 2:27)

With simple clarity the Savior declares that the Sabbath was made for man. The more popular term today would be that the Sabbath was made for humankind, but the meaning is quite the same. The Genesis record says that God rested on the seventh day. Jesus' statement clarifies that it was not simply to be a one-day rest for God, but it was to be a perpetual day of rest for "man" (humankind). There can be no doubt that the antediluvian patriarchs kept the seventh-day Sabbath and no doubt so did the postdiluvian faithful including Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The words of Scripture leave no room for misunderstanding that the Sabbath is a perpetual commemoration for God's people throughout the history of the world and eternity to come.

Before the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai the escaping Israelites kept the Sabbath. We read an account of this Sabbath-keeping at the occasion when God introduced the manna into their diet (Exodus, chapter 16). One entire Psalm was dedicated to the Sabbath. A few verses of this Psalm illustrate the praise given for the Sabbath day.

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: to shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound. For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.
(Psalm 92:1-5)

Faithful Israelites and Jews continued to keep holy God's Sabbath day. Jesus Himself was a faithful Sabbath keeper as were the apostles, not only before the crucifixion of Jesus but throughout their lives. For centuries after the crucifixion the vast majority of Christians kept holy the seventh day Sabbath. And, though through persuasion and coercion, by the seventh century most of the Christians in the Western Roman Empire were observing Sunday as their special day of worship; nevertheless, there were always faithful Sabbath keepers in the Eastern Roman Empire. After the collapse of the Eastern Roman Empire at the hands of the Muslim Ottoman Empire, the faithful Christian remnant continued to be faithful Sabbath keepers throughout Asia and in Ethiopia.

The Reformation reignited the issue of Sabbath keeping and in many parts of Europe small groups of Sabbath-keepers formed again. As we near the close of earth's history there is a resurgence of Sabbath keeping around the world. Therefore it can come as no great surprise that the redeemed saints will be Sabbath keepers, for all faithful Christians will keep God's law prior to Christ's Second Coming.

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.
(Revelation 12:17)

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.
(Revelation 14:12)

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.
(Revelation 22:14)

Such persons will not desecrate the Sabbath commandment—the fourth. Christianity would do well to investigate the role of the Sabbath when the earth is restored as the eternal habitation of the redeemed of all generations. Both the Old and the New Testaments assure us that there will be a new earth. Scripture explains that this old sin-blighted earth will be consumed by fire before it is recreated into the perfection of its original state. The apostle Peter vividly described the destruction of this sin-blighted world.

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. (2 Peter 3:7)

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10)

Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. (2 Peter 3:12)

We are promised that the earth will be transformed into its original beauty.

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. (Isaiah 65:17)

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. (Isaiah 66:22)

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2 Peter 3:13)

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. (Revelation 21:1)

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new, And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. (Revelation 21:5)

What a wonderful world that will be! There will be no carnivores; all animate life will be in harmony one with the other.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 65:25)

In the eternal home not the slightest evidence of sin will tarnish the planet.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (Revelation 21:4)

One of the great joys of the redeemed saints will be that they will actually have the privilege of witnessing the re-creation of this planet. Will God create it in exactly the same way in which He created it in the first instance? The Bible does not reveal the answer to this question. However, it is very probable that once again the earth will be created in six consecutive literal days. Each day will be the most thrilling revelation of the power of God. No doubt once again each day of re-creation will reveal the mighty power of the voice of God. Just as God must have had inexpressible joy in the original creation of the earth, as His all-wise mind had planned everything from the minutest subatomic particle to the mighty giants of the forests and the beasts of the fields and the crowning glory of His creation, man himself. Only, of the original creation, mankind will not be re-created. No doubt extinct species (although not amalgamations) of animals and vegetation will reappear for man to enjoy. The redeemed saints who will inhabit the new earth have already been physically perfected and invested with immortality at Christ's second coming.

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

(1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

Surely that same joy will be experienced by God the second time, for never again will sin enter or be experienced in the entire history of the universe.

What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction [sin and its attendant curses] shall not rise up the second time. (Nahum 1:9)

In commemoration of the original creation of the planet and, no doubt, the commemoration of the re-creation of the planet, the seventh-day Sabbath will continue throughout eternity. Speaking of Sabbath observance on the new earth, the prophet Isaiah recorded:

And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 66:23)

It would be inconsistent and illogical for God, Who originated the Sabbath at creation and Who will continue it at the re-creation of the planet, to have altered the seventh day Sabbath to Sunday in the Christian era when from one end of the Bible to the other, from one Eden to the next Eden the seventh day is the only Sabbath of God provided for the blessing of His faithful people.

15

The Yearly Sabbaths and the Spring Festivals

BESIDE the weekly Sabbath there were special days every year in the Jewish calendar which in the Scriptures are often referred to as sabbaths. The weekly Sabbath was enshrined in the Ten Commandments which were originally written by God.

And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. (Exodus 32:16)

Unlike the weekly Sabbaths, the yearly sabbaths were not mandated by any of the Ten Commandments. Rather they were portions of the law of Moses—the ceremonial law. The Ten Commandments were placed in the sacred ark itself, whereas the laws and statutes, including those pertaining to the yearly sabbaths, were placed in the side of the ark. Unlike the Ten Commandments this law of ordinances was to be a witness against God's people.

Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. (Deuteronomy 31:26)

These ceremonial laws were part of the shadows of things to come and of the ordinances to which Paul refers in his epistle to the Colossians (Colossians 2:14–17). We introduce these yearly sabbaths, although they are not central to the purpose of this book, because we find that there is much confusion in Christendom and much confounding of the weekly Sabbath with the yearly sabbaths. This is not without some reason, because the yearly sabbaths, no matter upon which day they fell, were to be kept just as sacredly as the weekly Sabbath. There was to be no secular work on those days, and special emphasis was to be given to sacred worship and fellowship. Below are listed the seven yearly festivals, some of which were ceremonial sabbaths.

- 1 The Passover was observed on the fourteenth day of *Abib*, the first month of the Jewish calendar which corresponded with parts of March or April of our present calendar. The Passover was not an annual sabbath, since it foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice for us. It was against Jewish law to execute on a sabbath day, whether weekly or annual.
- 2 The feast of Unleavened Bread was commemorated from the fifteenth to the twenty-first day of *Abib*. **Both** the fifteenth and the twenty-first days **were ceremonial sabbaths** (Leviticus 23:7, 8). These sabbath days were denoted as holy convocations upon which no servile work could be undertaken.
- 3 The feast of First Fruits, when sheaves of first-ripe barley were waved on the sixteenth day of *Abib*. This was not a ceremonial sabbath.
- 4 The feast of Pentecost. Pentecost was commemorated fifty days after the waving of the First Fruits (on the sixth day of the Jewish third month, Sivan). This feast was also known as the Festival of Harvest or the Festival of Weeks. It was held in the latter part of May or early June of our present day calendar. This day was **an annual sabbath** (Leviticus 23:21).
- 5 The feast of Trumpets came on the first day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar, the first day of Tishri. This day was **an annual sabbath** (Leviticus 23:24, 25).
- 6 Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) was held on the tenth day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar, the tenth day of Tishri corresponding to September or October of the Gregorian calendar. The day of atonement was **a ceremonial sabbath** (Leviticus 23:27, 28).
- 7 The feast of Tabernacles was held from the fifteenth day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar (Tishri) to the twenty-second day. **The first and the eighth days** of this feast **were ceremonial sabbaths** (Leviticus 23:34–36).

Though there were seven yearly assemblies, yet it will be plain to the reader that they were held only three times of the year—the

Passover, the feast of Unleavened Bread and the waving of the First Fruits were held in early spring. Pentecost was celebrated in late spring; and the feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the feast of Tabernacles were commemorated in the early autumn.

So important were these days that God commanded that all males were obliged to meet in a place chosen by the Lord to participate in the commemoration. They were also required to bring a gift to the Lord.

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty. (Deuteronomy 16:16)

Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. (Exodus 34:23)

The seven gatherings were divided into two categories. The Passover and the Day of Atonement were especially solemn days—days of holy convocation—whereas the joyous feasts included the feasts of the First Fruits, of Pentecost, of Trumpets, and of Tabernacles. The Day of Atonement was symbolic of the great judgment day and therefore was the most solemn and sacred assembly. Also the Passover was a solemn day.

Now let us investigate a little more fully the role of each of these seven yearly assemblies.

1 The Passover

The Passover has its origin in the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Four days before the Passover, that is on the tenth day of *Abib*, the first month of the Jewish calendar, each household was to choose a lamb. If the household was very small, the household could join with a neighbor in the choice.

Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: and if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. (Exodus 12:3, 4)

The lamb to be chosen must possess certain specifications.

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats.

(Exodus 12:5)

Such specifications were prophecies concerning Christ—a male, young, and unsullied by sin. On the fourteenth day of the month the Passover, or as it was often called, the Pascal lamb was to be slain.

And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

(Exodus 12:6)

The blood of the lamb was to be struck on the two side posts and on the upper doorpost of the house and that evening the participants were to eat the roasted lamb with unleavened bread—bread made without yeast—and with bitter herbs.

And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

(Exodus 12:7, 8)

Each of these symbols bore significance. The lamb without blemish was symbolic of the great sacrifice that would be made for the ultimate redemption of mankind and freedom from the slavery of sin through the sacrifice of Christ. The unleavened bread was a symbol of purity, for leaven in the Bible was a symbol of sin itself.

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

(1 Corinthians 5:8)

Just as Christ was without sin, so the congregation was to represent His sinlessness in the eating of unleavened bread. The blood on the door post and the lintel of the door was more than simply ritual; for the Israelites were told that, should they not follow implicitly these instructions, their firstborn would be killed in the same manner that all the firstborn of Egypt were slain by the destroying angel.

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

(Exodus 12:12, 13)

Not only was leavened bread forbidden to be eaten on the day of the Passover, but for seven consecutive days. Prior to the Passover the members of the household were required to search the dwelling to ensure that no leaven nor products made with leaven were on the premises.

For four years Colin taught at an Orthodox Jewish school, Mt. Moriah War Memorial College in Sydney, where he discovered that this practice was still meticulously upheld during the seven days from the beginning of Passover. Further, for this period the children of the school could wear no garments which were made from animal products, such as leather shoes.

It is not difficult to see how the term, *Passover*, arose; for the destroying angel was to *pass over* the house of all those who followed the instruction of the Lord. Being Israelites gave them no protection unless they had followed the precise commandments of the Lord. There is no record that any of the Israelites failed to meet this requirement on the initial day of the Passover. The indication is that all followed the instructions, thus ensuring the survival of their firstborn son.

And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. (Exodus 12:28)

The Passover commemorated Israel's freedom from Egyptian bondage, yet it also pointed forward to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Paul expressed this truth clearly.

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. (1 Corinthians 5:7)

There are other analogies between the sacrificial lamb and Christ the Lamb of God. In both cases, in death not a bone was broken.

In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. (Exodus 12:46)

But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: . . . For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. (John 19:33, 36)

The passover lamb was killed on the fourteenth day of *Abib* and eaten the same night. Christ died precisely at the time of the Passover.

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus he gave up the ghost. (Luke 23:44–46)

Just as the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrificial lamb meant “a passing over” and the deliverance from death of God’s people, Peter explained that the sprinkling of Christ’s blood purchased sanctification, and thus election to salvation of God’s people.

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (1 Peter 1:2)

As we have seen, the pascal lamb was to be without blemish, so too Christ was without the blemish of sin.

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Peter 1:19)

In a symbolic sense, just as the flesh of the pascal lamb was eaten, so we are to partake of the flesh of Jesus Christ.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (John 6:51)

The night before His death Jesus instituted the communion service. It resembled the Passover; however, no pascal lamb was slain, no flesh was eaten because Jesus, the Lamb of God, was the sacrifice. It, too, is a solemn service where the participants are expected to make all wrongs right and to have put sin out of their lives. Thus Paul instructed us,

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

(1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

At the same time Jesus initiated the ordinance of foot washing, which symbolizes the washing away of sin. Thus prior to entering into the communion service, solemn soul searching confession and repentance must take place.

2 The feast of Unleavened Bread

The feast of Unleavened Bread began the next day following the Passover and was considered as part of the same ceremony, so that the names were used interchangeably. The use of only unleavened bread symbolized the sinless nature of Jesus. Of Jesus it was recorded,

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

So important was this command that if the Israelites ate leavened bread they were to be cut off from the congregation. This command also applied to strangers as well as Israelites.

Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. (Exodus 12:19)

As we have seen, leaven has an even greater significance in our understanding in the New Testament. Leavened bread symbolized

malice and wickedness while unleavened bread was symbolic of sincerity and truth—purity of life and faith.

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1 Corinthians 5:8)

Christ also applied the symbol of leaven to refer to the false teachings of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the wicked practices of Herod.

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (Matthew 6:16)

And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. (Mark 8:15)

The depths of the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees can be seen in the words of Christ recorded in Matthew 23:13–33. Leaven is seen to include hypocrisy; defrauding widows; false proselytizing; the lack of judgment, mercy, and faith; full of extortion and excess; full of uncleanness; and many other sinful characteristics. The leaven of the Sadducees included disbelief in the resurrection.

The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection. (Matthew 22:23)

The leaven of the Herodians encompassed trickery, hypocrisy and wickedness.

And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? (Matthew 22:16–18)

Christ counseled the apostles, “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” (Luke 12:1)

3 The waving of the First Fruits

The waving of the First Fruits was in many ways a continuation

of the Passover and of the feast of Unleavened Bread. It took place on the sixteenth day of *Abib*.

And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. (Leviticus 23:11)

This was not a day of holy convocation, neither was it a yearly sabbath. It referred to the waving of a sheaf of barley. Barley, being a small grain, was the first grain to ripen and thus was selected for this early spring ceremony. On the day of the Passover, chosen men were commissioned to mark off a certain portion of a field of barley to be cut in preparation for the presentation on the sixteenth day. Three selected men cut the barley in the presence of witnesses. The sheaves were tied together before cutting them, then all the sheaves were tied forming a single bundle to be presented before the Lord. The same day a lamb without blemish was offered and a meat (meal) offering was presented as an offering.

And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. (Leviticus 23:12, 13)

Until the waving of the sheaf, the children of Israel were forbidden to use any of the fruit of the fields. It was of no little significance that Christ was resurrected on the day of the Firstfruits.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. (1 Corinthians 15:20)

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (1 Corinthians 15:23)

With meticulous detail the sacrifice of Christ, our Antitype, fulfilled the type of the Passover services. Christ died on the afternoon of the Passover; He rested in the tomb during the feast of Unleavened Bread and was resurrected on the day of the First Fruits; and before the day was completed He had presented Him-

self before the Lord for the acceptance of His sacrifice. Thus He became the firstfruits of all who would be resurrected to live eternally with Him.

The type specifically demonstrated that Christ spent but two nights in the tomb—the night of the crucifixion (Friday) and the night following. Thus on the first day of the week, Cleopas and his friend walking on the road to Emmaus could declare the resurrection day to be the third day since Christ died.

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. . . . And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. . . . But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. (Luke 24:1, 13, 21)

Until He had ascended to the Father He would allow no one to touch Him.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. (John 20:17)

Christ first sought the assurance of the efficacy of His sacrifice before He undertook intimate association with His followers.

16 The Yearly Sabbaths and the Summer and Fall Festivals

THE summer and fall assemblies, like the spring assembly, had deep spiritual meaning to the Jewish believers.

4 Pentecost.

Pentecost was distinguished from the spring and autumn convocations in that it stood alone without other feasts in association. This feast was held as summer was approaching. The wave sheaf was presented at the beginning of the harvest of the winter grain. Pentecost was held at the conclusion of the grain harvest. It represented the wonderful provisions of God in sustaining mankind's physical needs. It also possessed spiritual overtones reminding the Israelites of the blessings that God had provided for His people.

Thus this was a season of great rejoicing and thanksgiving, of praise to the Provider of all. The Israelites were dependent almost exclusively upon grain grown through the winter months. Palestine, located on the Mediterranean Sea, possessed a climate with almost no rainfall in the summer. Thus farmers were dependent upon the early rain of autumn for the germination of the seed. The latter rains in spring were essential for the final development of a good crop of grain.

There was a marked contrast between the celebrations of Passover and of Pentecost. At the Passover no leaven was permitted to be eaten or even found in the homes of God's people. However, at Pentecost the two loaves contained leaven—yet these two loaves were to be brought before the Lord as a wave offering. This leavened bread represented the members of the human race, who, unlike Christ, were sinners. Thus were the lives of those seeking God for purification of character represented.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

The day of Pentecost assumed far greater significance when the 120 disciples gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem to prepare their lives to receive the rain of the Holy Spirit.

Christ had been with His followers for forty days after His resurrection.

To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

(Acts 1:3)

For ten days following Jesus' ascension the disciples were prepared by God to receive the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal power. While Christ was the Firstfruits of those resurrected from the dead, nevertheless in a secondary sense, so too were those who had been resurrected at the time and had been taken with Him to be presented to the Father.

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

(Matthew 27:51-53)

This resurrection was a foretaste of the resurrection of the just at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

5 The feast of Trumpets.

The feast of Trumpets, beginning on the first day of the seventh month, was preparatory to the Day of Atonement, which took place on the tenth day of the month. It was a call to all the Israelites to meet God on this judgment day. Ten days were set aside for heart searching. The sounding of the trumpets throughout the land of Israel announced that the day of judgment was coming. It required that all professed people of God be ready for that solemn day.

The first ten days of Tishri grew to be the ten penitential days of the year, intended to bring about a perfect change of heart,

and to make Israel like newborn creatures . . . the culmination being reached on the Day of Atonement when religion's greatest gift, God's condoning mercy, was to be offered to man. The idea developed . . . in Jewish circles that on the first of Tishri, the sacred New Year's Day and the anniversary of creation, man's doings were judged and his destiny was decided; and that on the tenth of Tishri the decree of heaven was sealed. . . . Thus, the first ten days of Tishri grew to be the TEN PENITENTIAL DAYS of the year, intended to bring about a perfect change of heart, and to make Israel like new-born creatures, . . . the culmination being reached on the Day of Atonement, when religion's greatest gift, God's condoning mercy, was to be offered to man." ("Atonement," *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York, 1902, Vol. 2, p. 281)

Thus we see the significance placed upon the type of the feast of Trumpets by Jews who were deep students of the Old Testament. Today we are living just before God's judgment day. How important it is for us to afflict our souls, asking God to provide us with power to overcome; not only to forgive us of our sins, but to eradicate sin from our lives.

6 Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement—was the most holy day of the Jewish calendar. If the work of putting away of sin and making all necessary restitution had not taken place during the days prior to the Day of Atonement, such ones were cut off from the nation of Israel and could not be in the encampment during this day.

For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.
(Leviticus 23:29)

If one were to conduct work on this holy yearly sabbath, he would be cut off from the congregation. Every significant act of that day is referred to as atonement. The atonement was not confined to the slaying of the goat.

For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever. (Leviticus 16:30, 31)

That moment occurred on the tenth day of the Jewish month Tishri. The Jews certainly understood that the Day of Atonement was a day of judgment.

God, seated on His throne to judge the world, at the same time Judge, Pleader, Expert, and Witness, openeth the Book of Records: it is read, every man's signature being found therein. The great trumpet is sounded; a still, small voice is heard: the angels shudder, saying, this is the day of judgment: for His very ministers are not pure before God. As a shepherd mustereth his flock, causing them to pass under his rod, so doth God cause every living soul to pass before Him to fix the limit of every creature's life and to foreordain his destiny. On New Year's Day the decree is written; on the Day of Atonement it is sealed who shall live and who are to die, etc. But penitence, prayer, and charity may avert the evil decree. ("Atonement, Day of," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, *ibid.*, p. 286; quoted in Andreason, M. L., *The Sanctuary Service*, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, DC, 1947, p. 170, 171)

One week before the Day of Atonement the high priest moved to the temple precincts, there to pray and meditate, preparing his life for this most solemn day. Much could be added to the discussion of the Day of Atonement; this is clarified in much more detail in our book entitled *The Sacrificial Priest*, Hartland Publications, 2002.

As we have noted, the Day of Atonement was a day of judgment, which has its antitype at the end of earth's history. This day is recorded in the first angel's message of Revelation 14.

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; *for the hour of his judgment is come*: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:7, emphasis added)

It is essential to remember that these three messages are given just before the return of Jesus Christ.

And 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. (Revelation 14:14)

John prophesies again concerning this day.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

(Revelation 20:12)

The Day of Atonement in the Jewish economy was a type of that day. On the Day of Atonement the sins that had already been forgiven were blotted out. The unrepentant sinners were cut off from the people of Israel. The sanctuary was cleansed from the accumulated sins that in figure had been placed there during the year. So the sanctuary itself was cleansed, as were the people whose sins were blotted out of the record.

Peter preached the message of the antitype when, at the time of the pouring out of God's Spirit at the end of the world, the sins of the repentant will be blotted out.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

(Acts 3:19)

This priestly act for the salvation of repentant sinners will be accomplished by Jesus who is now ministering as our heavenly High Priest.

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

(Hebrews 9:22-24)

7 The feast of Tabernacles.

The feast of Tabernacles was the last feast of the year as none was held during the cold winter months. This feast was normally held in October. Whatever was grown in the summer was harvested by this time. The Day of Atonement had passed.

The sins had been confessed and forsaken. All differences had been put aside. Thus the feast of Tabernacles was a joyous occasion. The feast began with a holy convocation, a time of gratitude and thanksgiving to God.

On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. (Leviticus 23:35)

The people were given explicit instructions to build booths.

And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. (Leviticus 23:40)

It was called the feast of Tabernacles for it commemorated the time when the Israelites lived in tents in the wilderness during their forty years of wandering.

And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes. Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine: and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose: because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice. (Deuteronomy 16:12-15)

For a week families lived in these booths, preparing their hearts and lives for the coming days and months ahead. Even today time should be set aside to contemplate God's leading and providences in our lives. The feast also foreshadowed the time when God's people will dwell with their Lord after His Second Coming. What a day of rejoicing and fellowship that will be!

Through the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century it was common for camp meetings to be held in which such blessed activities took place. It is still the practice of some to meet in annual camps to praise God, to listen to the preaching of the Word and to prepare the heart and life for another year. This

is a very important part of Christian community, fellowship and spiritual growth.

Notice that the seven feast days and holy convocations played an important role in the lives of the Jewish people. While God did not design that these feasts be celebrated after the sacrificial death of Jesus, nevertheless these principles still are important in our lives today. Of all the days, the special sabbaths were the feast of First Fruits, the day of Pentecost and the Day of Atonement. These days were kept in the same way as the seventh-day Sabbath irrespective of the day upon which they fell. However, it is important to recognize that they were not enshrined in the Decalogue—the Ten Commandments—and therefore were part of the ceremonial law, which was abrogated by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

17

Nailed to the Cross

ONE of the most misunderstood passages in the writings of Paul is his counsel to the Colossians in chapter 2:11–16. Verse 14 is the center of the controversy.

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.
(Colossians 2:14)

There is no question from this text that some observances of the Old Testament ordinances were nailed to the cross. There is no question that the clause, *nailing it to his cross*, describes the end of these ordinances which once were an integral part of the Jewish economy. Many popular theologians have interpreted this text as declaring that the law of the Ten Commandments was nailed to the cross, and thus we are no longer under the dispensation of the law but under the dispensation of grace. There are two serious flaws to such a deduction.

- 1 The belief that God's faithful people, prior to the death of Christ on Calvary, were saved by the keeping of the law.
- 2 The belief that after Calvary the moral law has no validity in the life of the Christian.

GRACE BEFORE THE CROSS

While the Old Testament does not speak of grace as frequently as does the New Testament, nevertheless, the grace of God permeates the Old Testament.

Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. (Psalm 45:2)

Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.
(Proverbs 3:34)

Eleven other books of the Old Testament also specifically speak of grace. Further, many times the Old Testament extols the *mercy* of God, which is a synonym for His *grace*. Here are four examples:

And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. (Exodus 20:6)

And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments. (Daniel 9:4)

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. (1 Chronicles 16:34)

Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. (Psalm 25:6)

It was Paul who made it plain that we are saved by grace through faith.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

It was also Paul who declared that the luminaries of the Old Testament were motivated by faith in the Lord and not by works. Indeed, Paul devoted an entire chapter of the book of Hebrews to this theme. Here are some examples of that which he penned in this letter directed to Jewish Christians.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. (Hebrews 11:4)

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. (Hebrews 11:17)

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. (Hebrews 11:24–26)

In these and many other experiences recorded in Hebrews chapter eleven, Paul demonstrated that these faithful saints of God in Old Testament times were not saved by keeping the law but were saved by grace through faith. No doubt this was the same faith that is necessary today, "the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:12)

The dispensational concept that was enunciated by men such as John Darby, founder of the Plymouth Brethren Church, and Cyrus Scofield, famous for his Scofield Reference Bible, cannot be sustained in the light of a careful study of the Scriptures. Only the grace of God can save a human being, whether he lived before the flood or in the era between the flood and the sacrifice of Jesus, or in the Christian era.

THE LAW AFTER THE CROSS

That the law of the Ten Commandments is not abolished at Calvary is demonstrated by repeated references to the law in the New Testament. Here are but a few examples. This is what Paul wrote:

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:8-10)

James agreed,

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 2:10-12)

These would be strange words indeed if the law of the Ten Commandments had been abolished at the cross. The above passages of Scripture are confirmed in a most solemn declaration concerning salvation by God.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city [the New Jerusalem]. (Revelation 22:14)

It is therefore plain to all careful students of the Word that the moral law of the Ten Commandments could not have been nailed to the cross. Had the law of the Ten Commandments been nailed to the cross, Christians would have been left with no specific moral standards or principles by which to traverse the pathway of life. Principles of God's love require lawfulness, not lawlessness. Paul plainly stated this principle, "The just shall *live* by faith." (Romans 1:17, emphasis added)

Faith is a principle of life by which we live; and the Commandments of God can be kept only by total faith and trust in the abiding power of Jesus Christ. No human being has ever been saved by his own works, or the merits of his own life, or by keeping the Ten Commandments. But it is certain that no one will be saved without faithful commandment-keeping and consequent good works. Too often in examining Ephesians 2:8, 9, we ignore verse 10. So let us examine these three verses together.

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

While good works will not save even one soul, not one soul will be saved without good works, because the outcome of the life of a converted man or woman will be expressed in good works to our fellow pilgrims on life's journey.

Let us now examine the passage of Colossians chapter 2, verses 11–16 more fully. If there is any doubt that this passage refers to the Ten Commandments of the Decalogue, such doubt is dispelled when we analyze the text itself. Colossians 2:14 begins with these words,

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. (Colossians 2:14)

It is important therefore to determine those ordinances which were against us, for these are the ones that were nailed to the cross. An

investigation of the specific nature of these ordinances can come only as we research the Old Testament, especially the books of Moses, to discover the answer to this question. We find the answer in Deuteronomy chapter 31:

And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.

(Deuteronomy 31:24–26)

Here we learn that the law that was a witness against God's people was not the law of God, but the law Moses wrote in his own handwriting, and which was placed in the side of the ark. The Ten Commandments were not written by Moses, but by the finger of God.

And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God. (Exodus 31:18)

The law written by the hand of Moses was the law of ceremonies, sacrifices, statutes and ordinances. That this is true beyond any doubt is proven in that it was these laws which the Levites were commanded to put into the side of the ark of the covenant. These were the laws of ceremonies and ordinances. The sacred Ten Commandments were placed *inside* the ark of the covenant itself.

And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand. And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me. And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables *in the ark* which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me.

(Deuteronomy 10:3–5, emphasis added)

The evidence of Scripture leaves absolutely no doubt that the ordinances that were nailed to Christ's cross were the ordinances of ceremonies and sacrifices.

Now that we have settled this issue, verse 16 of Colossians chapter 2 falls into place:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days. (Colossians 2:16)

Some have taken this text to “free them” to indulge in any form of violation of health principles in terms of eating and drinking or in keeping holy God’s sacred seventh-day Sabbath. But this text offers no such mandate. First, it was Paul himself who has said our bodies are the temple of God.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17)

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s. (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

It was the same author who explicitly admonishes us to eat and drink to the glory of God.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

The Old Testament Scriptures also record the celebration of the new moons. With the Jews the first day of the month was called “the new moon,” and was a day of special festivities which included burnt offerings—

And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot . . . (Numbers 28:11)

and other sacrifices:

Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God. (Numbers 10:10)

This is obviously again evidence that Paul was speaking of ceremonies and sacrifices in verse 16. This fact makes it very plain, as the translators of the King James Bible recognized, that the reference to the sabbaths was not to the weekly Sabbath but to the special sabbaths such as the feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and the Day of Atonement which are also called sabbath (rest) days. These are recorded in Leviticus chapter 23. One Biblical example will suffice to provide understanding. The beginning of the feast of Trumpets, which preceded the Day of Atonement, was called a sabbath.

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.

(Leviticus 23:24)

These were the sabbath days which were nailed to the cross. The meat and drink references also refer to the special ceremonies of the Old Testament, not to the normal issues of daily eating and drinking.

And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be for a burnt offering unto the LORD, with their meat [meal] offering, and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the LORD.

(Leviticus 23:18)

There remains one, and one only, additional issue to consider—the shadow referred to by Paul.

Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

(Colossians 2:17)

Paul clarifies this statement in his epistle to the Hebrews. In that book Paul left no doubt that his reference to “a shadow of things to come” in his epistle to the Colossians, was addressing the Old Testament ceremonies which foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ and particularly His High Priestly ministry.

For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the

law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

(Hebrews 8:3–5)

Thus the common error—that Paul’s counsel to the Colossians nullifies the law of God and the keeping of God’s holy seventh-day Sabbath—must be rejected by faithful Christians on the testimony of Paul and by research into the Old Testament ordinances. It was the law of ordinances and sacrifices which was nailed to Christ’s cross. This passage of Scripture in no way invalidates the continued observance of the seventh-day Sabbath in the New Testament era.

18 **The Sabbath and Legalism**

MANY have hesitated to accept the biblical Sabbath because they fear that they may be driven into a dependence upon works for salvation. So frequently over the centuries have Sabbath-keepers been referred to as Judaizers or legalists that to many, any intimation of the importance of keeping the seventh-day Sabbath leads to cries of legalism. Now let us hasten to say that there are those who seek to keep the Sabbath purely for legalistic purposes, believing that the keeping of the Sabbath greatly enhances their merit or basis of salvation. But the legalistic motivation of a few must not be used to destroy the true basis for the keeping of the Sabbath. Earnest Christians follow Christ, their Example, because they are drawn by His love and their love for Him.

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

(1 Peter 2:21, 22)

By a strange contrast, however, it is rare to hear people claim that faithful Sunday-keeping as the day of rest and worship is legalistic. Of course, today, it is indeed rare to find a Christian who keeps Sunday in the manner in which the Bible details the keeping of the Sabbath. However, that was not true in yesteryears. Our paternal great-grandfather, Samuel David Standish, was born and reared and lived to middle life as a Reformed Lutheran in the Barossa Valley of South Australia, a region settled by German immigrants. He and his family kept Sunday, not only in the spirit of the law, but also to the letter of the (Sabbath) law. When in 1915, at the age of 58, he embraced the seventh-day Sabbath there was little change in his manner of Sabbath-keeping from

that of his former Sunday-keeping, with the important exception that he was now honoring the Creator, the Lord of the Sabbath.

A little reflection will cause the reader to recognize that cries of legalism are made most strongly concerning the fourth commandment. Rarely is the same claim made in relationship to the other commandments. Of course, true Christians take very seriously Paul's statement in his second letter to the Corinthians:

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (2 Corinthians 3:6)

From this passage of Scripture many deduce that to keep the law to the letter is to destroy spiritual life, thus we need keep only the spirit of the law. It must be acknowledged however that this statement does not refer directly to the law. Nevertheless we would agree that this text is true also of the law. The only way we can keep the law in the spirit, however, is when it is also kept to the letter. There would be very few who would argue that we could keep the seventh commandment in the spirit if we continued to violate the marriage vow, or that we could keep the eighth commandment in the spirit of the law while practicing stealing. The same is true of all the other commandments. Paul's warning thus consists of a condemnation of all attempts to keep the law by our own efforts, outside the acceptance of the power of the Spirit of Christ in our lives. Such a course would be folly and futile.

If we are seeking to keep the commandments to gain the favor of God or to merit salvation, no matter which commandment or which group of commandments be our focus, we would be worshipping our Lord in vain. The Scripture is quite plain:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

While we cannot deny the importance of good works, we can be certain that they offer no basis for salvation. Paul places works in the right perspective in the next verse.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

We are not saved *by* good works, but every Christian will be saved *with* good works. That is why Christ commends those who have done acts of kindness throughout their lives.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (Matthew 25:34–40)

Genuine seventh-day Sabbath-keepers are foremost in eschewing legalism. There is only one foundation for our salvation and that is the life, death, resurrection and ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts 13:39)

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:31)

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

Paul argued the saving power of Christ through the Holy Spirit with great beauty in his epistle to the Galatians. He did not argue against the keeping of the commandments of God. He points to the primacy of the Holy Spirit in the life. Christ's representative is presented as the foundation of all true conversion.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

(Galatians 5:16–18)

Paul then enunciated many of the prideful works of the flesh in verses 19–21, ending with these words,

They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

(Galatians 5:21)

Paul did not preach a sin-and-live theology. Neither did he preach a legalistic theology. He saw the good works of man as fruit of the ministry of the Spirit in the life.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

(Galatians 5:22–24)

Thus he declared that living in the Spirit results in a life of purity and holiness.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

(Galatians 5:25)

The Word of God teaches that the Sabbath is a sign (seal) of sanctification.

Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, 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)

Faithful Sabbath keeping is not the basis of salvation; but it certainly is a sign or a seal of salvation through sanctification of the Spirit. Paul endorsed this concept in his second epistle to the Thessalonians.

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

(2 Thessalonians 2:13)

Those who are saved by sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth will be those who will keep God's holy, sacred Sabbath day. They will leave nothing undone, for their loyalty to God means loyalty to His Word—that is, every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. They will not compromise, they will not rationalize, they will not neglect, they certainly will not minimize, any precept of holy writ which a gracious and loving God has provided for the security of their eternal life. Indeed, not only are these precepts the foundation for their eternal life, they are the foundation of a fruitful life here and now. Thus the Psalmist could declare,

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. (Psalm 119:165)

As fourteen-year-old lads we were walking along the main street of our home city of Newcastle, Australia, one Saturday evening. We happened upon a small group of street witnesses. We listened for a while and one of the representatives of the group came to talk with us. In the course of the conversation he asked us if we attended church, which we answered in the affirmative. As the dialogue continued, the discussion led to the issue of the Ten Commandments. We assured him that we believed in all the Ten Commandments. The proclaimed witness quickly countered by confidently declaring that the law of God had been nailed to the cross (see chapter 17 entitled "Nailed to the Cross"). Though still young and immature in our full understanding of God's Word, we attempted to explain that Colossians chapter two had nothing to do with the abrogation of the Ten Commandments.

We asked the man whether he believed it was appropriate for a Christian to murder, commit adultery, steal and lie. Of course, he believed that no Christian would continue in such practices. So we asked him then what made the Sabbath commandment different. Without giving any explanation he replied, "Keep the commandments and go to hell." We have many times pondered that statement, especially in the light of Revelation 22:14,

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

It is our conviction, firmly based upon the Scriptures, that those who do keep the commandments of God are the ones that will be in heaven and will not be devoured in hell.

In his book *Weighed and Wanting*, Dwight L. Moody wrote this concerning the law:

The commandments of God given to Moses in the Mount at Horeb are as binding to-day as ever they have been since the time when they were proclaimed in the hearing of the people. . . . The people must be made to understand that the Ten Commandments are still binding, and that there is a penalty attached to their violation. (Moody, Dwight L., *Weighed and Wanting*, Fleming H. Revell Co., Chicago, 1898, pp. 15, 16)

In the same book Moody wrote concerning the Sabbath commandment,

I honestly believe that this commandment [Sabbath] is just as binding to-day as it ever was. I have talked with men who have said that it has been abrogated, but they have never been able to point to any place in the Bible where God repealed it. When Christ was on earth, He did nothing to set it aside.

(*Ibid.*, p. 46)

More than half a century after the death of Dwight L. Moody, the *Moody Monthly* offered this statement concerning God's law. It correctly set forth the divine truth that—

The law of God is eternal, never to be abrogated, never set aside. Christ Himself, although we might properly say that He was in reality the Lawgiver and thus had power and authority over the law, indicated His purpose in coming to be that of giving the law in its full meaning, not of destroying it.

One could wish that those who profess to be His servants might have the same measure of regard for God's law. If they did, they obviously would not be so ready to ignore it, so quick to change it or explain it away, and far more ready to accept with their Master every "jot" and "tittle." (Lundquist, Harold L., "International Uniform Sunday School Lessons," *Moody Monthly*, June, 1946, p. 631)

We commend all earnest Christians, in unwavering loyalty to Jesus, to keep all God's holy commandments.

True Sabbath keeping—legalism? absolutely not!—tender love for Christ? certainly yes!—wonderful fellowship with His people? assuredly!

19

The Sabbath and True Conversion

IF WE accept Jesus into our hearts and lives, the law of the Decalogue will become part of the fabric of our lives. If we have the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5) we will not violate the Ten Commandments, because Christ could never lead us to violate His own law. This truth was demonstrated in His perfect life upon this earth. Indeed the New Covenant is a covenant where the law is not simply written on tables of stone, but also in the heart of the converted man. The prophet Jeremiah foresaw that day:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jeremiah 31:31-33)

Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, twice affirmed the writing of the law in the heart and mind as essential elements of the New Covenant.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. (Hebrews 8:10)

For this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them. (Hebrews 10:16)

There are two professed groups of Christians who will never keep God's law, and by extension, God's seventh-day Sabbath in holiness. They are the legalists and the antinomians (those who believe that in the Christian era there is no divine obligation to keep God's law). This second group, the antinomians, of course will never keep the law because they do not believe it necessary to do so. The legalist will never keep the law, albeit this is his singular focus, for he seeks to do so for salvation merit. Therefore, failing to trust in the merits of Christ, he cannot but fail in his earnest but misguided efforts to keep the law.

We hear much about relational theology today, a term that is remarkably absent from the Scriptures and from the writings of earlier Christian authors. It is not that *relation* is a bad word. But today it is used consistently by the antinomians in discourses in which their hearers and readers are confidently assured that if they have a relationship with Christ their salvation is assured, though they will continue to sin until Jesus comes. This idea is not affirmed by the inspired Scriptures. We certainly can come unto God as we are; but through Christ we are not only forgiven—we are transformed into His image, for Jesus is our Example in all things.

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

(1 Peter 2:21–22)

Jude assured us that in the power of Christ we need not fall under temptation.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. . . .

(Jude 24)

We have been confronted by those who claim that our characters are to be perfected at the instant of Christ's coming. They support this error by the misuse of passages of God's Word such as:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For

this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:51–53)

Here Paul is not addressing character. He is addressing our physical frame at the time of Jesus' return.

Others have incredibly attempted to offer John's wonderful promise as verification of their error.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)

But these people have failed to read on:

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. (1 John 3:3)

Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (1 John 3:6–9)

Not only will antinomians continue to sin because they see no reason to forsake their sin; neither will they be in the kingdom of the Lord. How tragic!

Legalists, on the other hand, believe that they must have victory over sin. They see this as essential to their salvation and often exert much effort to achieve this perfection. But without a true conversion, without the living connection with Christ, without abiding in Him, they are destined to live a life of failure and frustration; for there is no power in the human life to provide strength to resist the temptations and deceptions of Satan.

So in spite of the contrasting and often very acrimonious relationships which exist between legalists and antinomians, each suffers the same fate. They cannot have victory over sin; and both, if unrepented, will be tragically lost from the kingdom of heaven. Such was the fate of the man of Romans chapter seven.

That man was sincere, he was genuine, he was earnest, but he had not found Christ as the be-all and end-all of his faith. Thus we read of his constant failure in human strength to achieve victory over sin. This fact is clearly expressed in the plaintive cry of this doomed man.

For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. (Romans 7:15)

Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (Romans 7:17)

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (Romans 7:19)

Contrast Romans 7:17 with Galatians 2:20:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

The man of Romans chapter 7 says it is not he, but sin that dwelleth in him. That is his very problem. The man of Galatians chapter 2 has an entirely different experience, for it is not sin that dwells in him, but Christ who liveth in him. However, in Romans 7:25 this tortured man later found Christ. This second birth occurred only when he, in desperate helplessness, acknowledged the total failure of his efforts.

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (Romans 7:24)

Only then did he experience the transforming power of the gospel.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4)

And this chapter ends on the most glorious, victorious note in which there is no separation of this man from the love of God.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35–39)

Christ beautifully enunciated the principle of strength and power and victory and salvation in His own life in the parable of the vine and the branches. Note what He says happens when the vine and the branch are abiding together.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:5)

The branch is in the Vine and the Vine is in the branch. However, if the branch, representing humanity, is not abiding in the Vine, then there is no power, there is no life—and death ensues. The Vine does not need the branch, but the branch needs the Vine. Note Jesus' earlier statement:

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. (John 15:2)

The true branch abiding in Christ will bear fruit—the fruit of the Spirit will lead others to the grace of Christ and His salvation. Note the final words of verse 5, “without me ye can do nothing.” That is also true not only of the other nine commandments but of the Sabbath commandment. Only those who daily take hold of the holiness of Jesus can keep holy the Sabbath day. Only those who have surrendered the fullness of their will to Jesus will experience the joy of true Sabbath observance. As the chorus says, “The things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.” True Sabbath keeping is inimical to both legalism and

antinomianism. We entreat our readers to take full opportunity of the exceeding abundant grace of our Savior, fearing neither family, friend, financial security or future challenges; but holding firm to the power of Jesus Christ. Then the Sabbath will be “a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable.” (Isaiah 58:13)

20

The Jewish Sabbath

THE JEWISH SABBATH does have much in common with the Lord's Sabbath. Yet in many ways it is far removed from the Sabbath of the Lord. It has ever been the constant cry of Sunday-keepers that those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath are keeping the Jewish Sabbath. Such an assertion is wholly in contradistinction to the facts. To support such a concept is to present the most superficial arguments. Yes, there are some commonalities. Clearly the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's Sabbath commence at sundown Friday evening and conclude at sundown Saturday evening. Also, it is true that the Lord's Sabbath and the Jewish Sabbath both call for the assembling of adherents in corporate worship on the Sabbath day. But the study of the gospels demonstrates that the Sabbath of Jesus was in marked distinction from the observance of the Sabbath by the Jews.

Some wonder why there was such conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders concerning the keeping of the Sabbath. This question is discussed in the chapter "Christ and the Sabbath," where two major issues are presented. One issue dealt with the eating of corn from the field. Now it was legal, according to the Jewish law, to eat food on the land of any farmer as long as food was not taken away from the property. However, the issue in this dispute was that the disciples were accused of threshing in separating the grain for consumption. Yet there was not one word in the Bible that indicated that this act was a violation of the Sabbath commandment.

The major issue for the leaders of the Jews was the issue of healing on Sabbath. In self-righteous indignation some of the leaders of the Jews claimed that Christ could have healed on another day. But, once again, there is not an atom of evidence from the Old Testament that the healing of the sick on the Sabbath day vio-

lated the Sabbath commandment. However, there was evidence that servile work and work that could be accomplished outside the hours of the Sabbath should not be undertaken during the Sabbath hours (see chapters entitled "Sabbath During Old Testament Times" and "Keeping the Sabbath Holy"). Where did the Jews obtain such concepts if they were not enshrined in Holy Writ? they obtained them from the *Talmud*. At the time of Christ the *Talmud*, as we have previously discussed, consisted of two sections—

- 1 The Mishna which attempted to codify and specify some of the minute details concerning keeping the Jewish laws; and a considerable amount of it addressed the issue of Sabbath-keeping.
- 2 Later famous rabbis had written commentaries upon the Mishna which were gathered together in a book called the Gemara.

Two sets of human uninspired writings became the basis for the Jewish evaluation of Sabbath-keeping. It was to the *Talmud* that Jesus referred when he said,

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:9)

Jesus, the Lawgiver, was not bound by the uninspired writings of the Jewish Church Fathers. He kept the law according to the commandments which were a transcript of His own perfect character.

To give the reader some idea of the restrictions placed by humans upon the keeping of the Sabbath, here are recorded a few examples:

Shabath 2.5, in Talmud 29b, p. 131

If one extinguishes the lamp because he is afraid of Gentiles, robbers, or an evil spirit, or for the sake of an invalid, that he should sleep, he is not culpable. If [because] he would spare the lamp, the oil, or the wick, he is culpable. R. Jose exempts him in all cases, except in respect of the wick, because he makes charcoal.

Shabath 3.6 in Talmud 42b, p. 196

One may not place a vessel under a lamp to catch the oil. [Note 5: On the Sabbath.] But if it is placed there before sunset,

it is permitted. Yet one may not benefit from it, [Note 7: I.e., use the oil which drops therein.] because it is not of *mukan*.

Shabath 5.3 in Talmud 54a, p. 248

And wherewith may it not go out? A camel may not go out with a pad [tied to its tail]. . . ; and similarly other animals. One must not tie camels together and pull [one of them], but he may take the cords in his hand and pull [them], providing he does not twine them together.

Shabath 1.1 in Talmud 2a, p 1, 2

The carryings out of the Sabbath are two which are four within, and two which are four without. How so? The poor man stands without and the master of the house within: [i] if the poor man stretches his hand within and places [an article] into the hand of the master of the house, or [ii] if he takes [an article] from it and carries it out, the poor man is liable, and the master of the house is exempt. [Again,] [i] if the master of the house stretches his hand without and places [an object] in the poor man's hand, or [ii] takes [an object] therefrom and carries it in, the master is liable, while the poor man is exempt. [iii] If the poor man stretches his hand within and the master takes [an object] from it, or places [an object] therein and he carries it out, both are exempt: [iv] if the master stretches his hand without and the poor man takes [an object] from it, or places [an article] therein and he carries it inside, both are exempt. (*The Babylonian Talmud*, translated by Rabbi Dr. I. Epstein, The Soncino Press, London, 1938)

It will be seen by these few examples just how the Jews had been bound by such unacceptable restrictions. This had nothing to do with the Word of God, but rather took source in the imagination of man in attempting to make every requirement fit into human edicts. When we depart from, fall short of, or go beyond the Word of God we are sure to fail of finding the true blessing and power of the Sabbath. While the Scripture assures us that the Sabbath was made *for* man (Mark 2:27), it certainly was not made *by* man. It was the creation of God Himself, and Jesus put it in its right perspective when He declared that He was Lord of the Sabbath. (Mark 2:28)

By defining every conceivable minutia concerning the Sabbath, the Jews made it certain that they were not keeping the Sabbath of the Lord. The focused emphasis inevitably falls upon

a works-oriented concept of Sabbath keeping. Those who followed every man-made law concerning the Sabbath were considered strict Sabbath keepers. Yet they were unlikely to be keeping the Sabbath in the spirit of truth and holiness.

Our experience has been that these legalistic practices are the results of such man-made prescriptions. Colin, for four years, 1955–1959, taught at an orthodox Jewish school, Mount Moriah War Memorial College in Sydney. He was amazed that even among Orthodox Jews, while they refrained from doing any physical work on the Sabbath day except for that which was allowed by the *Talmud*, yet they saw no problem in engaging in intellectual activities which were of a secular nature. Colin discovered that even some of the orthodox Jews who refused to play sports on Sabbath, nevertheless saw it entirely acceptable to view sports on television or actually be spectators at sporting events.

Another area that perplexed Colin was his observation that even many Orthodox Jews evidenced that they were prepared to have their non-Jewish employees continue the activities of their businesses on the Sabbath so as not to be economically disadvantaged by their own “Sabbath keeping,” yet this is specifically prohibited by the fourth commandment. Perhaps in the minds of these Jews they do not equate employees with servants, but this indeed would be an unjustifiable, narrow reading of the commandment—

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. (Exodus 20:10)

In 1990, friends from Australia visited Russell in Singapore, where he then resided. They had just visited Israel and had purchased a book which set forth modern rules for the keeping of Sabbath by a certain group of fundamental Jews.

One very modern rule took Russell’s interest. It related to the use of refrigerators. The opening of refrigerators was strictly forbidden on the Sabbath. So, too, was the closing. Initially Russell assumed that the reason for this was that physical labor was required to accomplish these tasks, but he discovered he was incorrect. The problem centered about the fact that opening the

door switched on the light and closing the refrigerator door switched the light off.

The book, therefore, suggested that if the use of the refrigerator was desired, then one must remove the small electric globe in the refrigerator. But if the householder happened to forget to remove the light bulb, then he was forbidden to use the contents of the refrigerator during the Sabbath hours.

However, there was a further instruction. The believer was advised that if he forgot to remove the globe, but forgot that he had forgotten to do so and when opening the refrigerator he discovered that he had unintentionally switched on the light during the Sabbath hours, he must not close the door; for that would switch off the light and thus add deliberate sin to an inadvertent sin.

Of course not all Jews follow such instructions, but there is a strong element of Pharisaical practice still present within certain branches of Judaism today.

While students at the University of Sydney, we learned a little more about these practices. Graciously the University of Sydney had created a situation which permitted seventh-day Sabbath keepers to undertake their examination under a chosen supervisor after the Sabbath had been completed. Of course, to be sure that there was no hint of dishonesty, all such students were required to be with the chosen supervisor well before the scheduled commencement of the examination. This usually resulted in the students being under supervision from about nine o'clock in the morning. Most of the students who were involved were Jews and Seventh-day Adventists.

There was a marked difference between the practices of the two. Among themselves the Seventh-day Adventist students attended or conducted Sabbath services, refraining from any activities which involved their examinations or other secular activities. The Sabbath was observed as a spiritual day in contemplation of God and His love. On the other hand, while the Jews would not write their examinations on Sabbath, they saw no inconsistency in studying for the examination during the Sabbath hours, for such was not seen as being work specifically forbidden in the *Talmud*.

Many non-Jewish people obtained some insight into the thinking of the Jews when Senator Joseph Liebermann of Connecticut

was chosen as Vice-President Al Gore's running mate in the presidential elections of 2000. The Press spent not a little space to explain what the Senator was willing to do on the Sabbath and what he was unwilling to do; under what conditions he felt it appropriate to undertake his congressional duties when the Sabbath day was involved.

With such an emphasis upon man-made rules, the result is that many different notions will exist among the Jews and that is certainly true today. Thus while the Orthodox Jews will do all to keep the commandment according to the *Talmud*, many widely varying concepts of Sabbath keeping are found among practicing Jews who attend more liberal or reformed synagogues. Thus it is not uncommon to find full attendance at the synagogue on Friday night, but the Saturday services much less well attended. Somewhat like Roman Catholics, who believe that if they attend Mass once during Sunday they have fulfilled their obligations, so many liberal and reformed Jews believe that attending the synagogue on Friday night suffices and they can carry on their business activities on the daylight hours of the sacred Sabbath.

It is little wonder that the rabbis of Jesus' days almost despaired of truly keeping the Sabbath. Farrar described this difficulty.

If but one person could only for one day keep the whole law and not offend in one point—nay, if but one person could but keep that one point of the law which affected the due observance of the Sabbath—then the troubles of Israel would be ended, and the Messiah at last would come. (Farrar, *Life and Works of St. Paul*, p. 37. Quoted in A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, *Lessons on Faith*, Angwin, CA.: John O. Ford, p. 93)

Sadly, the Jewish Sabbath was not the Sabbath of the Scriptures, it was the Sabbath of the *Talmud*. This Sabbath then was a confounding of the authentic Sabbath of the Lord with the principles which were of human origin. Christ modeled the principles of Biblical Sabbath keeping.

True Sabbath keepers do not observe the Jewish Sabbath. They hallow Christ's Sabbath.

21

The Papal Sabbath and The Lord's Sabbath

THE PAPAL SABBATH which is also commonly followed by Protestant churches has little in common with either the Jewish Sabbath or the Lord's Sabbath. The Council of Laodicea (c. 364) officially established Sunday as the day of rest for Christians. This human decree set the Papal Sabbath apart from the seventh-day Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's Sabbath in that it is observed on an entirely different day of the week. Further, the fact that the Papal Sabbath is commemorated from midnight to midnight, following the practice of the pagan Roman Empire, distinguishes it from either the Sabbath of the Jews or of the Bible, for the seventh day Sabbath is commemorated from sundown to sundown.

Even more significantly, the Papal Sabbath was mandated by men and bore no Scriptural or divine credentials.

In truth the Papal Sabbath has nothing whatsoever in common with the Sabbath of the Lord—not even in form, for it utterly repudiates God's hallowed day. Roman Catholic authors are quite frank about this matter.

Keeping holy the Sunday is a thing absolutely necessary to salvation; and yet this is nowhere put down in the Bible; on the contrary, the Bible says, *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*, Exod. xx. 8, which is Saturday, and not Sunday; therefore the Bible does not contain all things necessary to salvation. (Baddeley, T. *A Sure Way to Find Out the True Religion*, P. J. Kenedy, New York, 1889, pp. 95, 96)

The claim that keeping Sunday holy is an absolute prerequisite to salvation is a bold claim nowhere found in Scripture. It surely is the commandment of men, not of God. The claim that the Bible does not contain all things necessary to salvation is startling. How

this claim contrasts with the Protestant affirmation "Sola Scriptura"—the Bible only! This claim opens wide the door to the spurious doctrine that the authority of the church is above the authority of the Scriptures. This statement offers a perilous philosophy, for it is in direct contradistinction to the claims of Scripture.

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures,
which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith
which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:15)

If we were to accept the assertion of Priest Baddeley, we would have to believe that the early Christians who faithfully kept the seventh-day Sabbath were—for this fidelity to God's law—deprived of salvation. The Roman Catholic Church, by repudiating the Word of the Lord, set itself above Christ and the Bible. That God just as surely created the Sabbath as He did the earth and all that is in it cannot be gainsaid by any Bible-believing Christian. Thus the Lord's Sabbath comes with the divine authority of the Creator and Ruler of the universe. How faulty it is to claim that a day which has no divine mandate, but is the formulation of the minds of fallible human beings, could deprive members of the human race of salvation. God did not make Sunday holy. The Bible knows nothing of special significance for this day. On the authority of the Bible it is a regular working day, for the commandment says:

Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God. (Exodus 20:9–10)

According to God's reckoning, Sunday does not encompass a single day, but parts of the first and second days of the week. From midnight to sunset it encompasses the first day of the week. From sunset to midnight the worship is on the biblically designated second day of the week, Monday. We can only emphasize again that one day alone has ever been spoken of as holy by God and that is the seventh day. This is the day that He sanctified, hallowed and made holy. The Sunday "sabbath" therefore stands as the sign of man's pretended power to sanctify secular time. If it were possible for man to create a new sabbath day, to sanctify it, to hallow it and make it holy, then by extension it would be logical

to believe that man has the power to make anything holy that he determines to be holy. If this be so, then God's Word need be consulted on no such matters. The Bible could be ignored with impunity.

By further extension we would have to believe that man had the power to make himself holy and to make others holy and, indeed, this is what we find in the claims of the Papacy. Thus it is no surprise that the Roman Catholic Church claims that priests can make parishioners holy by forgiving their sins. Here is such a claim.

Were the Redeemer to ascend into a church, and sit in a confessional to administer the sacrament of penance, and a priest to sit in another confessional, Jesus would say over each penitent, "Ego te absolvo" [I absolve you], the priest would likewise say over each of his penitents, "Ego te absolvo" and the penitents of each would be equally absolved. . . .

To pardon a single sin requires all the omnipotence of God. . . . But what only God can do by His omnipotence, the priest can also do by saying "Ego te absolvo a peccati tuis." . . . Innocent III. has written: "Indeed, it is not too much to say that in view of the sublimity of their offices, the priests are so many gods. (de Liguori, Alphonsus, "Dignities and Duties of the Priest," *The Complete Works of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori*, Redemptorist Fathers, Brooklyn, NY, 1927, Vol. 12, pp. 28, 34-36)

The Roman Catholic Church reserves to itself the right to determine those who will be elevated to sainthood. Such usurpation of divine authority is the height of arrogance. The author of the above passage, Alphonsus de Liguori, is one who was canonized (officially made a saint) by the Roman Catholic Church.

While the seventh-day Sabbath is the sign of God's power to save by His works, Sunday is a sign of man's assumed power to save himself by his own works entirely apart from and separate from the Lord. It repudiates the Lord by repudiating His Word that of our own selves we can do nothing (see John 5:30). This statement, however, in no way negates the authors' acknowledgment that millions are keeping the Papal day honestly, supposing it to be the Sabbath of the Lord. Such, of course, may still believe

in righteousness by faith although they unwittingly fail to observe the sign of righteousness—the seventh-day Sabbath.

Especially in modern times there is little emphasis by Sunday preachers upon keeping the first day of the week holy. Many varieties of accommodations have been made for Roman Catholics. The emphasis is alone upon regularly attending mass. For many years early morning mass has been conducted, allowing for the rest of the day to be taken in work or pleasure. More recently mass has been conducted on Saturday afternoon or evening, not because there is an acknowledgement that the seventh day is the Sabbath, but rather as a way to accommodate those who desire to do their own pleasure or undertake normal work on Sunday. Such churches display signs which state the time of the Saturday evening mass, often placing in parenthesis "Counts for Sunday." Thus there is no similarity between the Lord's Sabbath and the Papal Sabbath.

THE LORD'S SABBATH

Already it must be clear to the reader that the Lord's Sabbath has an entirely different focus from the Sabbath of the Jews or the Roman Catholics. Christian seventh-day Sabbath-keepers eschew legalistic bases for Sabbath keeping or human efforts to regulate Sabbath-keeping. The Sabbath rest is first and foremost a spiritual rest—a rest from the duties and the vicissitudes of life where there is deep fellowship with God in a way that is not possible during the other six days. It is also a rest from physical and secular labors and from other activities that might distract from the fullness of the blessing that God wishes to bestow upon His people.

God in His wisdom and love has set forth, in His sacred Word, principles by which the fullness of the blessing of the Sabbath can be achieved. These are explored in chapter 26 entitled "Keeping the Sabbath Holy." Thus the focus of Sabbath keeping Christians is not upon keeping Sabbath to gain merit for salvation (for salvation is not merited by works, not even good works) but in Jesus Christ. Peter specified this point when addressing the leaders of the Jews soon after Pentecost.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

Paul was just as emphatic.

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts 13:39)

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians 2:16)

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

The angel told Joseph of the saving power of Jesus.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

Good works play an important role in the lives of Christians but they are not the foundation or basis of salvation. Paul detailed their role:

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

Faithful Sabbath-keepers keep the requirements of the Sabbath, just as faithful Christians keep all the commandments of God. But those commandments are not kept for any concept of merit to earn salvation; for Christ alone, His sacrifice and the ministry of His blood, can save the fallen sinner. The converted soul, however, reaches out to seek in joy and privilege to honor His Redeemer in thankfulness for the gift by which he receives salvation.

To the one who is linked to the life of Jesus, there is a joy and delight in the keeping of the Sabbath day. It is not a chore, a restriction, or an onerous duty. It is the day above all other days of fulfillment and blessing. Sincere Sabbath keepers look to the Sabbath as the pinnacle of the week, a time to be able to relax from the vicissitudes of daily life, to fellowship more completely and more fully with their God and their Redeemer.

It is a time to enjoy the fellowship of others of like sincerity, the opportunity to understand more fully the blessings that can be achieved by faithfulness and loyalty to God. It provides an opportunity to reflect on the activities of the week sufficiently to thank the Lord for His blessings and yet to confess, as necessary, when one has fallen short of the glory of God, where opportunities to share the gospel have been neglected and where new courage can be obtained by prayer and supplication to the Lord.

Far removed is the Lord's Sabbath from the Sabbath of the Jews. While Christian seventh-day Sabbath-keepers seek not to fall short of any of the principles that are laid down to maximize the fullness of the blessings of the Sabbath, nevertheless, they refuse to extend the concepts of Sabbath-keeping beyond that which is enshrined in the Word of God. Truly the Lord's Sabbath is a blessing to the human race and is a mark of loyalty to our Creator and Redeemer.

22 The Bible Creation Story

THE FIRST WEEK of this world's history was its most dramatic. In rapid succession the days passed. Day one: God created light, dividing it from the darkness. What a spectacle. We cannot begin to understand the nature of that darkness. Surely that too was an act of divine wisdom, for God is light and He is omnipresent. Yet in His wisdom He created darkness, for He "divided the light from the darkness." (Genesis 1:4)

Whether the light created on that day was light as we know it, we are not informed. Certainly it was not the light of the sun, for that great astronomical object was not created until the fourth day. The light of the first day was the infinite power of God, the omnipotent One, that divine energy which was to empower God's creative acts during the subsequent days of creation week.

It was this power, this might, which energized every act of Creation week and which continues to sustain not only this planet and solar system but the entire universe.

To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

(Isaiah 40:25, 26)

On that day the earth, this planet of ours, was also created.

For he spake, and it was done: he commanded, and it stood fast.

(Psalm 33:9)

The apostle John informed us that it was Christ who was the Creator.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:1-3)

It was Christ's voice which spake the world "without form, and void" (Genesis 1:2) into existence on that first day.

Lest we question that the designation *the Word* referred to the Son of God in John's declaration, this matter is emphatically confirmed by the Scriptures, through John's explanatory words:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John [the Baptist] bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. (John 1:14, 15)

Christ was the only member of the Godhead who was made flesh and of whom John the Baptist spoke as being preferred to him.

But each member of the Godhead united in this work for we read,

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:1, 2)

The Hebrew word here used is *Elohim*; which is plural and indicates the Godhead united in this work. We also see evidence that the Holy Spirit moved upon the waters.

Thus, also, on that first day, water was created. With the creation of the liquid water from the chemical union of two gases, hydrogen and oxygen, the fluid so essential for life was provided. The substance of the earth and the energy required for the remarkable creative acts of the first and subsequent days of creation were in place. Light, earth and water; what a triad of potential, from which all other creative elements were spoken into existence!

Of day two we are told:

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God

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plants and their products nutritious: God in His love provided an exquisite variety of delicious tastes, ensuring that the provision of energy was not accepted simply as a necessity, but also as a joyous aspect of the lives of His creatures.

The third day surely was special.

On the fourth creation day:

God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness.

(Genesis 1:16–18)

It was not to be the light, the mighty energy source of the first day of creation, which was to continue to provide light for this earth. That initial energy would sustain both physical and spiritual life, but God placed the sun and the moon for times and seasons. From the sun, photons hurtled through space at the unimaginable speed of 187,000 miles per second (about 300,000 kilometers per second), a speed which entails travel around the earth's equator more than seven times in a single second. Those minuscule objects are, in themselves, a creative action beyond the comprehension of the greatest physicist on earth. Some observations show them to be particles, others to be waves. In truth mankind with all the advancement of science has been unable to understand fully the nature of photons. But sustain life by providing energy, this they most certainly do.

The sun was placed by God at such a distance from the earth that it provided optimal heat. Just one percent further from the earth it would be far too cold; one percent closer would scorch the earth.

Had God placed the moon a little closer to the earth the tides would have been so massive that at high tide all coastal regions of the earth would be flooded. Had the moon been sited a little further from the earth the tidal flow would have been so little that the coastal waters of this world would not have been cleansed by tidal action and thus these waters would have been a cesspool of stinking disease-generating filth.

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insect or man. If, as some ingenuously argue, the first chapter of Genesis is simply a mythical description given in order to present an underlying truth, then it is one of the weakest representations ever devised. Where Genesis chapter one teaches perfection, evolution shouts imperfection; when Genesis chapter one declares the absence of death, evolution postulates death as its key to progress; when Genesis chapter one speaks of a God who spoke and the earth and all that was in it was created, evolution devises a scheme found only in the minds of men who infer that God is a liar. In that scheme God plays no part whatsoever; and whereas Genesis one declares the existence of God, evolution knows no God.

Further, Scripture declares that Lucifer, the covering cherub, rebelled against God and brought sin to the first members of the human family and through sin, death (see Isaiah 14:12–15); evolution rather describes a scenario of death from the very inception of the process. Let Christians awake to the fact that they dishonor their God by their efforts, doomed to failure, of producing an admixture of creation and evolution.

Even some creationists who do not fall into this form of fallacious reasoning, nevertheless confine Creation to six days—utterly ignoring the seventh day. God created days—the rotation of the earth upon its axis. He created months—the period of the passage of the moon around the earth. He, further, created years, periodic transit of the earth in its journey in space about the sun.

But there was yet one other period whose creation and significance is largely ignored by Christians today. Let us read God's Word:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And 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 2:1–3)

Here God informs us that “on the seventh day he ended His work.” Most creation-believing Christians imagine that Christ concluded His creation on the sixth day. But Scripture declares otherwise. The creation of the seventh-day Sabbath and the establish-

ment of the seven-day weekly cycle was the consummation of the creation of the world. No wonder Christ stated:

And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath. (Mark 2:27, 28)

We note the word *made*—the Sabbath was *made* for man. It was a creative act. This word, *made*, here referring to the Sabbath, is the identical word in the fourth commandment.

For in six days the LORD *made* heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is. (Exodus 20:11, emphasis added)

It is also identical to the word *made* as used in the very next verse in reference to the other six days of creation week.

These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. (Genesis 2:4)

Just as the heaven, earth and sea were *made* during the first six days of creation week, so the Sabbath was *made* on the seventh day. At the crucifixion of Christ on Calvary the heaven and the earth did not cease. Neither did the Sabbath. Those things which God created in six days are established for eternity. Oh yes, the Lord will cleanse this evil old world, for we are told—

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. (Revelation 21:1)

Furthermore, the Bible specifically states that throughout eternity men will be worshipping on the holy Sabbath day.

And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 66:23)

As we have stated, there is not a single verse of Scripture which provides the least countenance for the Sabbath to cease at the cross. (See chapter entitled, "The Sabbath from Eden to Eden Restored.") That day was created in the Garden of Eden. It was not instituted for the Jews alone. Its observance was instituted to be a blessing for all mankind for all eternity. God's command comes forth to us, unchanged through the intervening millennia:

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 20:20)

Let the evolutionist desecrate God's holy day; let the atheist and infidel scorn it, but let not God-fearing men nor women dare to undertake such presumption.

God created the earth's rotation to provide us with the day. The moon in its orbit about the earth provided the month, and earth's orbit about the sun gave us the year. But it was God's creative act in instituting the Sabbath which, devoid of any astronomical manifestation, gave us the week. The Sabbath was the glorious culmination of the week, the time provided even unfallen man for rest, refreshing, and special worship of our Creator.

If all human beings had faithfully kept the Sabbath day holy, there would not be a single evolutionist, no pagan, no infidel upon this earth, for ever would the Sabbath have led mankind to worship his Creator—the King of kings and Lord of lords, the one God in three Beings—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Every weekly cycle testifies of God, for it was He who created all. It is He who provides our every heartbeat, our every breath. Our lives, moment by moment, are in His hands. Evolution shouts death and imperfection; the Sabbath, by contrast, is the promise of life eternal, vibrant, joyous and full of peace; it speaks to our hearts of perfection. The "blessed hope" of evolution is a few years of life on this sin-cursed earth and then eternal oblivion. By contrast, the Sabbath is the blessed hope of Christ who will bestow eternal life at His Second Coming upon all who love Him wholeheartedly.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. (James 1:12)

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? (James 2:5)

Evolution looks not beyond this wicked, vile, aging old earth. The Sabbath points us to the new earth, created for everlasting beauty. Evolution proposes a future when the entire universe will become extinct. The Sabbath is the promise from our God of a universe where pure and holy beings are ever challenged to higher and more satisfying goals, a universe cleansed from sin, one in which every minute subatomic particle and every massive galaxy in its unshadowed beauty declare that God is love.

The Sabbath is God's gift to mankind. It speaks of character, for the only manner in which one may keep the Sabbath day is in holiness to our Lord. In order to keep the Sabbath holy, men will, in the power of God, be holy themselves, their sins confessed, and in the strength of Christ their sins forsaken. Only then will be fulfilled God's promise that His people in these days, just prior to the Second Coming of Christ, will possess the character of Christ. That character is summarized in just two features by the apostle Peter:

Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

(1 Peter 2:22)

In the Old Testament it is prophesied that God will have such a remnant at the end of time.

The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

(Zephaniah 3:13)

The New Testament describing the remnant, the faithful, as the 144,000, also prophetically promises us such a people before Christ's return:

And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

(Revelation 14:5)

Sunday-keeping is no bastion against evolution. The countless millions of Sunday-keeping Christians who espouse the Satanic deception of evolution evidence this fact. But the Sabbath, the jewel of the weekly cycle, protects Christ's children against this affront to His Word and to His creative power. Every pagan and every infidel, as he or she follows the weekly cycle for which

there is no astronomical basis, is unwittingly testifying to creation week. It ill-behooves Christians to do less.

It is little wonder that Christ blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it (Genesis 2:3). This blessing, this sanctification was God's token of the importance of the Sabbath day. No other day, important as it was in the plan of salvation, received such blessing. Christ did not hallow Thursday, the day in which He instituted the Lord's Supper. He did not hallow Friday, the day in which He died for the sins of the world. And He did not hallow or sanctify Sunday, the day He arose from the dead. Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, and that day alone, was hallowed and sanctified. That day of worship, alone stands as a bulwark against evolution. It is the lone fortress that assures mankind that He serves the only true God, His Creator. It is the one promise that He is love.

Only our Creator-God can provide us help as we journey along life's pathway.

Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us. (Psalm 123:2)

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth. (Psalm 124:8)

The seventh day of Creation Week is our assurance that—

Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. (Psalm 89:4)

24 **Is the Seventh Day of Creation Week Saturday?**

THE BIBLE provides an amazing amount of chronological data. This data is largely found in the Old Testament, but the New Testament does provide helpful data also. It is manifest that God desired to provide us with information which would give us an approximation of the age of this earth.

Scientists date this earth at about 4.5 billion years old. Yet the biblical chronology provides an age of about 6,000 years. The disparity is enormous. Six thousand years is only a little over a millionth of 4.5 billion years—a mere 0.00013 percent.

Can this massive disparity be reconciled? No! We must determine whether the Creator's word is to be believed or whether the estimations of fallible men are more reliable. What scientists ignore is that this world was created mature. Adam was not created as a zygote or an embryo or a fetus or even a baby or child. He was created a mature man. So, too, were all other aspects of creation. Therefore it is the pursuit of a fallacious course for mankind to examine growth processes evident today and extrapolate these back in time in order to deduce the age of the earth. Scientists, if unaware of the events of creation week, would, seeing Adam in full manhood, declare the earth in the week following creation to be at least 30 years in age. No doubt they would extend their estimation as they viewed the lofty trees of mighty girths. Possibly they would declare that the earth was a minimum of several hundred years old. Their analysis of the geology of our earth would no doubt lead these thinkers to suggest an earth developed over eons of time. God, however, created this earth mature, and thus all speculation concerning the earth's age is bound to be wide of reality.

Remember also that the earth was cursed three times by God—when sin entered the earth, when Cain killed his brother

Abel, and at the time of the deluge during the era of Noah. These curses greatly "aged" the earth.

Even in an earth 6,000 years in age it is difficult for man to keep track of the weekly cycles. Nowhere does Scripture specifically state that the seventh-day Sabbath observed by the Jews of Christ's day was that which had been declared hallowed by our Creator. Yet there can be no dispute that the seventh day Sabbath of Creation Week was the Sabbath of the Israelites of the Exodus, for the fourth commandment, written by the hand of God at the time of the Exodus, makes that plain.

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 20:11)

That at least some of Jews punctiliously kept the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, from the days of the Exodus until the first advent of Christ, cannot be disputed. In the wilderness, for a period of approximately forty years, God left Israel without the slightest doubt concerning the matter of which day was the seventh day of the week, the holy Sabbath day.

Every day God performed a miracle for their sustenance as the manna descended from heaven. The Israelites were strictly forbidden to collect more than one day's food on the first five days of the week. Any who ignored God's counsel discovered that their greed remained unrewarded, for the excess manna was polluted before the dawn of the next day. God's people were thus encouraged to trust in God's day-to-day beneficence. (Exodus 16:15-20)

However, on the sixth day, the Israelite day of preparation for the Sabbath, God sent twice the portion of manna for the needs of the children of Israel. On this day they could, with absolute benefit, collect two days' needs, fully confident that there would be no deterioration in its quality by the seventh day.

The Sabbath, God's rest day, was void of manna. What a lesson in holiness this was! All that could be prepared was prepared in the secular hours of the sixth day of the week so that God's people could devote themselves to sacred worship on the Sabbath. (Exodus 16:22-26)

Thus for over 2,000 weeks God designated precisely which day was the day He had hallowed and sanctified on that last day

of creation week. God did *not* designate that any one of the seven days could be chosen the Sabbath, at the will of man, as the day of special worship. The day was specific. God, the Creator of all, chose the Sabbath day. He did not leave that decision to the whim of earthlings. The Israelites were not informed that they could select any day so long as they devoted one-seventh of the week to worship.

So specific was that day, that during the Israelite era there was a death penalty for desecration of the only day God had specified. (Exodus 31:14) God did not accept the limp excuse that the one in breach of His loving command had elected a day of his own choosing for his Sabbath day. Yet many modern Christians dare to usurp God's prerogatives and choose their own Sabbath day, manufacturing all kinds of alibis to justify their affront to their pure and holy God.

Other Christians implausibly claim higher ground by declaring that they keep all seven days of the week holy. While God calls His people to holiness every day, there are other features of God's special day demanded of Sabbath keepers. On the Sabbath day buying and selling is strictly prohibited. (Nehemiah 13:16-22) Secular labor is also not permitted.

In it [the Sabbath] thou shalt not do any work (Exodus 20:10).

Even family members, servants, visitors and animals were included in the prohibition.

Where does Scripture state that God hallowed any one of the six days other than the Sabbath? How can anyone claim to keep the Sabbath every day of the week? If that concept were truly accepted universally, then shortly the race would be extinct since no labor would be performed and no business conducted.

We serve a God who does not ask the impossible, nor does He countenance mortals proclaiming as hallowed that which He has never proclaimed holy. Indeed, God specifically states, in contradistinction to the Sabbath day,

Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. (Exodus 20:9)

When Christ came to earth, His very example certified the Sabbath day as being the particular day He had hallowed and sancti-

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The lunar month is equally difficult. It is 29.530588 days in duration. This is the period of time it takes the moon to make a single orbit of the earth.

The year is approximately 365.25 days and the month approximately 29.5 days. Even these imprecise approximations make it difficult to construct a calendar.

Many lunar calendars were based upon alternating months of 30 and 29 days, thus averaging 29.5 days. In 12 months that provided a mere 354 days, some 11 days short of the solar year. On a regular basis, within a 19 year cycle, a thirteenth 30-day month was added in the years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19 of the cycle. Within limits this strategy kept the months in line with the spring and autumn equinoxes—the days when the length of night and day were equal—and with the summer solstice when the daylight hours were the longest and the winter solstice when they were shortest.

However, minor adjustments were still required since there was no way in which exactitude could be reached because of the awkward period of the orbits of the earth and moon.

The vernal (spring) equinox in the northern hemisphere occurs on or about March 21 in our present calendar. Similarly, the summer solstice occurs about June 22, the autumnal equinox about September 23 and the winter solstice about December 22. In the southern hemisphere the equinoxes and solstices are reversed.

Since many festivals of various religions are determined by one or other of these four astronomical events, great efforts were made to ensure that the calendar dates did not stray from these seasons. For the Jews, the cluster of Spring Feasts began with Passover upon the 14th day, Unleavened Bread for a week beginning the 15th day, and First Fruits on the 16th day of Nisan, the first religious month. Since the first fruits of the barley harvest must be brought on the sixteenth day, this requirement could only be met by these feasts being synchronized with the harvest season. The paganism of Rome imposed similar constraints.

Julius Caesar, sensing the difficulty of the various lunar calendars, instituted a solar calendar in 46 B.C. It was based upon the approximation that the solar year was 365.25 days in length. That period was 365 days and 6 hours. But, in fact, as we have seen,

Hidden page

Sunday	September 30
Monday	October 1
Tuesday	October 2
Wednesday	October 3
Thursday	October 4
Friday	October 15
Saturday	October 16

Here we see that the loss of ten days from the calendar in no wise altered the sequence of the weekly Sabbath, which fell precisely on the same day which Christ, who made the Sabbath, kept while on earth. We can thus keep Saturday as the day Christ blessed and sanctified at the conclusion of Creation Week, fully confident that this *is* God's holy Sabbath day.

Some have asked why God, who said—

Let them [the sun and moon] be for signs, and for seasons,
and for days, and years— (Genesis 1:14)

created such awkward periods for the orbits of the earth (year) and moon (month) in relation to the rotation of the earth on its axis (day).

It is quite likely that God, who demonstrates such orderliness in His creation, did not originally devise these periods this way. We must never forget that the Noachian Flood has intervened since creation week. That was the most cataclysmic event in this world's history to date. The flood did not consist alone of flood waters, for the Bible informs us that seismic activity of tremendous proportions accompanied the flood. Scripture testifies that—

The fountains of the great deep were broken up. (Genesis 7:11)

The consequences of that disruption are evident in the mighty mountain ranges on every continent of earth, the evidence of the land God created torn apart, and the massive volcanic activity that encompassed the earth, including the largest lava flow in (pre-) history in the Deccan of India, stretching for 200,000 square miles and rising up to 6,500 feet. (http://volcano.und.nodak.edu/vwdocs/vok_images/southeast_asia/deccan.html)

Seismic activity of such gigantic proportions was bound to produce alterations in the speed of the earth's rotation on its axis and hence the count of days in both months and years.

Hidden page

Hidden page

September 26, 1580. The entry in his logbook [for this] date reads, "The twenty-sixth of September (which was Monday in the just and ordinary reckoning of those that had stayed at home in one place or country, but in our computation was the Lord's day or Sunday) we safely with joyful minds and thankful hearts to God, arrived at Plymouth, the place of our first setting forth, after we had spent two years, ten months, and some few odd days beside."

When Drake, the first Englishman to sail on the Pacific Ocean, returned to Plymouth, the date was Sunday, September 26, 1580, according to the *Pelican's* time count. But it was Monday, September 27, by England's time count. He had failed to adjust the time count on his ship by advancing it twenty-four hours when he crossed the Pacific Ocean westward from America to the East Indies. Consequently, he found himself one day behind English time when he returned.

The experiences of Magellan, Drake, and other navigators demonstrated the need of a prime meridian, an international date line, and an adjustment of time when crossing it.

. . . A scientific congress assembled in Paris in 1630 designated Ferro (Hiero), the westernmost of the Canary Islands, as such [the site of the prime meridian]. Some suggested San Miguel, one of the Azores islands, as another choice. Louis XIII authorized, on April 25, 1634, the use of Ferro for the purpose, and it gradually superseded all others chosen. In 1724, many preferred the longitude of Paris. Of course the British advocated the longitude of Greenwich.

In 1882 the United States Congress passed a joint resolution authorizing the President "to call an international conference to fix and recommend for universal adoption a common prime meridian to be used in reckoning longitude, and in the regulation of time throughout the world.

In the following year the Geodetic Congress met in Rome, Italy, and recommended that the 180th meridian be recognized as the International Date Line by all nations. The fourth recommendation of the international body reads, "The Conference recommends as the starting point of universal time and cosmopolitan dates the high noon of Greenwich, which coincides with the moment of midnight, or the commencement of the civil day, at

Hidden page

caused a great problem for Sabbath-keeping people on the island. If they followed the new series of days then they would be keeping Sabbath on the former secular day of Friday. If they continued to keep the Sabbath on the day they had previously observed, it was now designated as Sunday, and they would find themselves worshiping on the same day as those who uphold Sunday sacredness. The believers chose the second option in order to continue their observance as previously.

Then should Sabbath keepers living west of the date line and east of Jerusalem alter their day of worship to that which the world designates as Sunday? The answer is an emphatic "No." There are compelling reasons to maintain the present situation, except perhaps in Tonga and Niue; these reasons are enumerated below.

- 1** When God commanded the human race to keep the Sabbath day holy (Exodus 20:8), He well knew that the earth was round and that some point of longitude would have to be determined as the commencement of the day.
- 2** Nowhere in inspiration is it stated that the date line meridian passes through Jerusalem.
- 3** Since the earth's crust was violently altered during the Noachian Flood, we have no true knowledge of where the Garden of Eden was located. There is sound evidence that the continents were torn apart during the Flood. It is likely that the land mass prior to the Flood was a single continent because the sea and the land were separated:

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. (Genesis 1:9)

- 4** The Bible does indicate some geographical locations related to Eden. Jerusalem is not mentioned and the areas mentioned are as far apart as Ethiopia and the Euphrates River:

And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole

land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14)

- 5 If the date line ran through Jerusalem, then the Jews living east of the city would have been bound to keep a different Sabbath day from those living west of the holy city. This they *never* did.
- 6 If the Jews were in error in refraining from keeping Sabbath on different days depending on their direction from Jerusalem, then Christ would have been bound to witness to them on this point. There is no record of His having done so nor of Him keeping different days holy either side of Jerusalem.
- 7 As the Christian missionaries went west of Jerusalem they kept the Sabbath later and later as the sun set later. As the missionaries went east they kept it earlier and earlier as they traveled east. About the only place where the missionaries could not witness was the center of the Pacific Ocean.
- 8 The apostle Thomas traveled east and took the Christian faith to Asia, particularly India. The Sabbath he taught to the Christians in India is precisely the same Sabbath as is kept by seventh-day Sabbath-keepers today in India. If the date line was located as running through Jerusalem, he was in error and had not been fully taught by our Lord.
- 9 In Papua New Guinea there are a couple of tribes which refused to work on the seventh day from times immemorial. These tribes were discovered by a young Australian missionary, Lester Hawkes, and his wife when, soon after the Second World War had ended, they were appointed to serve in a region of Papua. It is possible that these tribes first heard the Sabbath truth before the fall of Jerusalem as Scripture testified:

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have

Hidden page

26 Keeping the Sabbath Holy

ONLY THOSE who themselves are holy will truly keep the seventh day holy. The holiness of Sabbath-keeping comes not from the burdensome keeping of a rigid list of requirements, but rather from the heart of love and gratitude by those who recognize the magnitude of God's gift to the human race of His Son, Jesus Christ. God in His mercy, however, has given us clear principles by which the fullness of the blessing and the joy of the Sabbath will be realized. The Sabbath is not a day to follow the dictates of our carnal hearts. Rather it is a day to find the fuller communion with our God and fellowship with His people. There is no question that worship is key to Sabbath keeping. (See chapters 27 and 28 entitled "The Seal of God" and "The Mark of the Beast" in which we explore the truth that at the end of earth's history the issue is largely one of worship.) In the messages of Revelation 14, the issue is the worship either of the Creator or of the antichrist represented in the Scriptures as a beast.

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: *and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. . . .* And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, *If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.*

(Revelation 14:7, 9, 10, emphasis added)

Obviously this worship goes far beyond daily individual worship, or daily family worship, essential though they be to the develop-

Hidden page

These practices mimic pagan worship forms. More and more paganism is entering our churches. For twenty years Russell worked as a physician in medical hospitals in Southeast Asia—Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. There he saw the oriental pagan worship forms. Drama, puppetry, dancing, mime, outrageous music and other theatrical performances played central roles in many of their worship meetings. They have done so for centuries. How tragic that many Christian churches now adopt articles of worship which, rather than expressing devotion and gratitude to God, please Satan.

Under the garb of the ecumenical movement, often preaching is far removed from the saving teachings which the Bible reveals to us. Human philosophy or false teachings have replaced the clearest testimony of God's Word and many times the Bible is barely opened as "empty calorie" sermons are presented by unfaithful preachers. That is not in harmony with divine counsel.

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:9)

Often, deceived preachers urge upon the members of their congregations that they are presenting "grace-focused messages." This may sound good, but it is all too often a cover for tame sermons that appeal to the unregenerate heart but do not prepare the congregation for the living connection with Christ that will include putting away of self by sacrifice and loving service to others. They assure their church members that doctrine is of little importance—that a relationship with Christ is all that is needed. Thus many heresies flood into the church, and members are like flotsam on the ocean without an anchor. Faithful preachers will proclaim Christ as the center of every doctrine.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16)

Jesus explains plainly the worship that is acceptable to the Father.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (John 4:23)

- 1** To fulfill the true principles of the Sabbath, God details some activities which are in contradiction to the rest and worship of the Sabbath. Indeed the first mention of the Sabbath by name in the Bible details one of those counsels. The issue was the gathering and preparing of the manna. Whereas God gave a single portion of manna every work day; on Friday—referred to in the Bible as the preparation day, meaning the preparation for the Sabbath—a double portion of manna was provided; and it was the responsibility of the Israelites to prepare the food for Sabbath as far as possible on Friday, so that the work of food preparation was not carried out on the Sabbath day. This encouraged Sabbath-keepers to engage in worship, study of the Word, spiritual fellowship, and other appropriate Sabbath activities.

And he said unto 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. (Exodus 16:23)

Thus it is a first principle to do all necessary baking or cooking before Sabbath. This is made easier today with refrigerators, freezers and microwaves—indeed much easier than it was in the hot desert where this command was issued.

- 2** Normal daily toil and work is inimical to Sabbath keeping. The fourth commandment makes that plain. There is to be rest from work, not only by the members of the family, but even visitors and also any working animals.

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. (Exodus 20:9, 10)

So essential was this to faithful Sabbath observance that any violation of it under the theocracy of Israel led to a death sentence.

Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. (Exodus 31:15)

Hidden page

Hidden page

And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. (Nehemiah 13:19-21)

In this same passage it is explained that it was the violation of the Sabbath that led to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the captivity of Judah.

Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. (Nehemiah 13:18)

All these are important principles and give us examples of that which is inconsistent with the keeping of the Sabbath and in violation of God's will for His people. Let us keep in mind that the issue was putting aside everything that would militate against God pouring out His blessings upon His people. The Sabbath was made for man, to be a great blessing to him and to strengthen him for the duties of life, thus keeping his life in communion with God.

Each day the Sabbath should be in our minds as we prepare for the next Sabbath. So that we are not distracted from our communion with God, all secular material from the media should be set aside before Friday evening. That which we can do in advance should be done. That would include our shopping, preparing our garments and shoes for the Sabbath, and preparing our meals, so that on the Sabbath we can focus our attention upon our spiritual lives. All Sabbath-keepers certainly would respond to any emergencies such as fires, floods or medical needs on the Sabbath. However they would unwaveringly refuse work that would require regular Sabbath violation irrespective of the consequences.

As lads we witnessed the fidelity of our father, Darcy Standish, to Sabbath-keeping. He worked as a fetler (rail repairman) for

Hidden page

Our father's example and God's providential answer to prayer were not lost on the authors, though only ten years of age at the time. When we faced a Sabbath issue while studying at the University of Sydney, we were not uncertain of what to do. We learned that one of our year-end examinations was scheduled for Saturday morning. We understood the complexity of the six-week long examination schedule in this British-style university. But we prayed together in the beautiful gothic central quadrangle of the University and told the Lord that we were willing to jeopardize our university education if need be, rather than violate the Sabbath by taking the examination on God's holy day. The professor in charge of the course involved, we knew to be an active, vocal atheist, but it was to him that we had to make our petition.

He found it almost impossible to understand our convictions, as he had not heard such a petition before. Yet we discovered that the Holy Spirit can influence the mind even of an atheist, and he agreed to help us after first urging us to "get a dispensation from your pastor." We assured him, however, that the conviction was ours and not dependent upon the pastor. With great difficulty but ultimate success he worked with the Registrar's office to change the examination time to the following Thursday. Several years later the University made provisions for conscientious Sabbath-keepers (see chapter 20 entitled, "The Jewish Sabbath").

The same atheistic professor the following academic year made a decision to remain Thursday evenings to permit us to undertake weekly our laboratory work, when he realized that the scheduled time for the rest of the students in the laboratory class was Friday after sunset. Just as God moved upon pagan kings in antiquity, He can minister through unbelievers in our day.

The Jews called Friday the preparation day and certainly this was the day when all preparation for the Sabbath was to be completed. However, it is possible that many of the tasks that we need to accomplish in preparation for the Sabbath can be completed well before Friday. It certainly would be true concerning the preparing of our clothes and shoes; it would be true of shopping and, indeed, with the refrigeration and freezing facilities that we have available, at least in most homes in the Western world, food could be prepared before the preparation day.

Hidden page

From this passage we learn:

- 1** That the reestablishing of the Sabbath is referred to as a restoration of old waste places, the resetting of the foundation and the repairing of the breach in the “wall” of God’s commandments, and the restoration of the paths of God. The Ten Commandments are a wall of protection, a fortress for God’s people. The violation of even one of the Ten allows the enemy of souls to breach God’s spiritual fortifications and permits great peril to confront our Christian lives.
- 2** That Isaiah’s instruction is a call to turn away from our own self-centered pleasure to the delights experienced in the keeping of God’s seventh-day Sabbath.
- 3** And best of all the wonderful promise of God’s great blessings to all who follow this counsel.

Finally let us rejoice in the promises God has assured to faithful Sabbath keepers, Jews and Gentiles alike,

Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. . . . For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. (Isaiah 56:1–2, 4–7)

27 **The Seal of the Living God**

GOD has a unique seal which He has reserved for His saints. It is the most important seal in the universe. This seal is reserved for His faithful servants—but sadly, few will receive it. This seal distinguishes God’s loyal followers from the rest of the inhabitants in the world, including many professing Christians. However there are two ways in which we find God’s seal deployed in Scripture. Clearly there is a sense in which, once God’s children accept the converting power of Christ into their lives, they are sealed.

Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. (2 Corinthians 1:22)

It is also evident that this sealing is the work of the Holy Spirit.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. (Ephesians 1:13)

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

Jesus also identified the Father as the giver of the seal.

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. (John 6:27)

It would be thus accurate to draw the conclusion that all three members of the Godhead are involved in the sealing of God’s people. It is, however, the second usage of the word “seal” in the Bible to which this chapter is directed. Three passages, one in the

Old and two in the New Testament, focus upon a special sealing work by God upon the final generation of living saints who will be prepared to be redeemed by their Savior. This seal (mark) is first identified in the fearful prophecy of Ezekiel.

He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; and the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. (Ezekiel 9:1-6)

This prophecy identifies a time when God's people will be protected from the judgments of God which are to be meted out upon those professors who have worked wickedness while claiming to be part of His people. It is clear from this passage that this prophecy is not addressing the worldling. All these people, faithful and unfaithful, are in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is symbolic of God's church.

It is evident, however, that God's church in this end-time prophecy will certainly be a mixed multitude. The fact is that only one man (angel, as we compare this prophecy with Revelation chapter 7) is commissioned to put a mark upon the foreheads of God's faithful people, whereas six men (angels) are sent to slaughter the wicked who have betrayed their trust. It will be noted that God's faithful people are sighing and crying for the abominations

Hidden page

Hidden page

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. (Titus 3:5)

It is only to be expected that the vast majority of those attending the churches today have no concept of the call that God has extended to His faithful people to keep the commandments of God—this their condition despite the many New Testament passages which plainly state that God's people will be commandment-keepers. Unsanctified church members are being constantly assured that if they have a relationship with Jesus they will be saved. Christ rather exhorts us to abide in Him.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:4, 5)

Abiding in Christ implies a much deeper experience than simply a relationship. It indicates that the life power of Jesus, represented by the vine, must flow into the human life represented by the branch. Only commandment keepers can clasp this living connection.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22:14)

Therefore only commandment-keepers will be sealed by God.

What is the seal of God? Every seal contains three identifications. The first is the name of the one authorized to use the seal, the second is his title, and the third is his dominion. Today seals are still used to certify documents. In ancient times the seal was of much greater importance. Under certain circumstances, if someone broke the seal on a communication without rightful authority he could be put to death. From kings to emperors, from governors to legislators, the seal was of the utmost importance. However, to today's Christian, how much more important is this seal, for it is the seal of the living God. Indeed not one word of Scripture was written before God declared His seal to man.

In the beginning *God created the heaven and the earth.*
(Genesis 1:1, emphasis added)

Hidden page

made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

(Exodus 31:12-18)

It is also of utmost significance that in the first of God's three-part message to the world at the end of time—contained in the everlasting gospel which will be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people—God's seal is presented before His people in the command,

Worship *him* [God] that *made* [created] *heaven, and earth, the sea and the fountains of waters.*

(Revelation 14:7, emphasis added)

The reader will discern that the emphasis in these last messages to the inhabitants of the world is upon worship. Clearly something had been lost. Thus there is a call back to God's faithful worship. This parallels, in a very significant way, the commencement of the fourth commandment,

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (Exodus 20:8)

The seventh-day Sabbath which has been forgotten by most professed Christians is to be reestablished before the return of Jesus. God knew that there would be many who would forget the sign of sanctification—His Sabbath. Thus the Sabbath would be neglected. In Scripture the word *sign* is synonymous with the word *seal*. A good example of this is given to us by Paul. Though the following text addresses the significance of circumcision, the same principle applies to the Sabbath.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.

(Romans 4:11)

Thus when in Scripture the Sabbath is associated with a sign, it is referring to God's seal.

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)

Hidden page

carried out His magnificent work of creation. The Bible teaches in both Testaments that only those will receive the seal of God, who in Christ's power keep the commandments of God, will be redeemed. The seventh-day Sabbath is central to commandment-keeping. There can be no substitute, there can be no alternative, and there can be no replacement, for the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord our God.

The Sabbath commandment contains the seal of God because it is the commandment of character, for it speaks of holiness of life. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it *holy*." (Exodus 20:8) The sealed will possess a Christlike character. The manifestation of this character will be displayed in virtuous, humble Sabbath keeping.

Hidden page

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Hidden page

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads. (Revelation 13:16)

The United States, with its world-wide power and influence which has been so patently evident in the Afghan war, will seek to enforce a decree that all must receive this mark either in their right hand or in their foreheads. It makes sense that this power will seek to convince men and women that the right thing to do is to worship the beast power (the Roman Catholic form of worship). Myriads will believe this is what they should do. The great success that Pope John Paul II has accomplished, in convincing the World that the Roman Catholic Church is no longer the cruel and ruthless power of the Middle Ages and is now the major hope to bring unity and peace to the world, has been accepted by many including Protestants and non-Christians. Because they have neglected or rejected the words and warning of the Scriptures they will receive the mark in their foreheads. Others who have a knowledge of the true nature of this decree will also follow suit because they have not allowed the principles of Christ to be enshrined in their lives. They, as it were, will receive the mark in their hand, pledging allegiance through forms of worship.

2 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the *mark*, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (Revelation 13:17, emphasis added)

A penalty will be defined for those who refuse to be enjoined by the decree which is to be issued by the United States and extended worldwide. This decree will forbid any form of commercial transaction between God's faithful people and those who have received the mark.

One can only imagine that when John penned these words he had no concept of how such a worldwide decree could be enforced. Today however, with the remarkable advances in technologies and the increasing sophistication of electronic means for commerce and business, it becomes very feasible. Obviously only those who would rather die than commit one wrong word or action will be willing to face such a terrible personal and family embargo. God's true, faithful saints will be willing to suffer any

consequences, even death, rather than deny their Lord. But for His faithful ones God has left a wonderful promise.

- 3 He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. (Isaiah 33:16)
- 4 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his mark* in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. (Revelation 14:9–11, emphasis added)

Thus every human being will face a death decree at the end of this earth's history. The first is the death decree issued by human agents. None of God's faithful people will flinch from their loyalty to God under this man-made decree. The other is the death decree of God. Those who yield their allegiance to the beast power face certain eternal oblivion under God's death decree. Fearful though the death decree of man is, it pales into insignificance when contrasted with the death decree of God. Those who suffer under man's death decree will be rewarded with eternal life. Daily we must pray for the faith and courage of Jesus which alone will strengthen us to stand loyal to Him in these most testing times ahead.

- 5 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over *his mark*, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. (Revelation 15:2, emphasis added)

This passage of Scripture depicts the glorious scene of those who gained the victory over the beast and his image. This is a scene of the redeemed saints. This is a solemn declaration because by exclusion, those who succumb to the coercion to worship the beast and his image will *not* be privileged to stand on the sea of glass in heaven.

Hidden page

in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4, emphasis added)

Here is revealed the glorious triumph of God's people who, because of their loyalty to Jesus, have been redeemed among men. Once again the redeemed saints are referred to exclusively as those who have *not* received the mark of the beast. They are the ones who reign with Christ throughout the millennium. What a glorious reward!

Now it is left to determine what is the mark of the beast. It probably is plain to the reader already. If the seal of God is the reward of those who are loyal to their Creator and have, under persecution, continued to worship Him on His holy seventh-day Sabbath, then it must be true without question that the mark of the beast is identified with a counterfeit "sabbath." This "sabbath" has its origin through the nefarious deception of Satan that enshrined it first in paganism and then in Christianity. The reader will recall that it has been consistently the boast of the papacy that the Roman Catholic Church changed the Sabbath. The Roman Catholic Church declared this change from Sabbath to Sunday to be the *mark of its authority*.

Q. How prove you, that the Church has power to Command Feasts and Holy-Days?

A. By this very Act of changing the *Sabbath* into the *Sunday*, which *Protestants* allow of. (Tuberville, Henry, *An Abridgement of Christian Doctrine*, Douai, printed, 1687, p. 99)

The reader will recall that previously we documented the change of the Sabbath as it was legislated, first by Constantine the secular Emperor of Rome, and then endorsed by the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Laodicea. The Sabbath is God's day of rest, Sunday is Satan's counterfeit pagan day of rest.

Although some have thought that the day of worship was unimportant, the consequences of following God's special day of worship in contrast to Satan's counterfeit will ultimately come to be the difference between eternal life and eternal destruction.

Now lest we be misunderstood, it is clear that this issue of the true versus the false Sabbath and its relationship to the seal of God and the mark of the beast does not reach its fulfillment until just prior to the end of earth's history, when the whole earth is

enlightened with the glory of the angel of Revelation chapter 18. Already, however, God is calling people to make their stand now. When truth comes to us it is a most serious danger to reject it or even to neglect it. In Christian love we encourage, indeed we urge, our readers to take a full stand for Christ and His truth, and to show their allegiance to Him by faithful seventh-day Sabbath-keeping. This is essential if we will ever realize the hope of living with Jesus eternally.

Hidden page

our covenant relationship with God every seven days is the only permanent binding aspect.

5. **COVENANT:** The sabbath was a sign of the Old Covenant which is no longer binding.
6. **THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK:** The sabbath has been replaced by the First Day of the week, the Lord's Day.
7. **CHRIST HONORS THE FIRST DAY:** Christ honored the first day of the week which is our new seventh day.
8. **NEW CREATION:** God rested on the seventh day and the Old Covenant focused on His Creation of the world. Christians are new creation in Christ and He has given us a new and better seventh day.
9. **EARLY WRITERS:** The early writers of the Church show that the followers of the Apostles and Christ understood that the Sabbath had been replaced by the First Day.

These are all interesting assertions, but unless freely supported by Scripture they are nothing more than that. One of the considerations upon which Hellmann concentrates most is the issue of the Sabbath and the New Covenant. He expresses a widely held view that the seventh-day Sabbath is the Sabbath of the Old Covenant and the first day of the week is the sabbath of the New Covenant. If this were true it surely would be clearly confirmed in holy writ. Such confirmation would be the end of the dialogue. One argument strongly presented in support of this claim is the contention that the Sabbath and circumcision were signs of the Old Covenant that God made with His people Israel. Hellmann uses two texts to support this assertion; thus we will examine them. The one concerning circumcision reads as follows,

And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

(Genesis 17:11)

Hellmann is correct in concluding that circumcision was a sign of the covenant between God and His people. No Bible-believing

Christian would think to challenge this point. Hellmann presents Exodus 31:13 in support of his claim that the Sabbath is a sign of the Old Covenant. But let us examine this text—a text which we refer to a number of times in this volume.

Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, 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)

In contrast to the text Hellman uses to support his correct claim concerning circumcision, the word *covenant* nowhere appears in this text. Indeed, as we research the Bible there is no text—not even one in Holy Scripture—in which the Sabbath is presented as a sign of the Old Covenant. This will be surprising, maybe amazing, to many Sunday keepers who have heard this form of argument for many years. Rather the Sabbath is a sacred sign of God's sanctification of His people, as this text confirms.

It is only to be expected that Hellmann and many others seek some confirmation of their claims by recourse to the New Testament. They find what they believe is support in Paul's epistle to the Colossians. In the book of Colossians Paul plainly teaches that baptism has replaced circumcision in the Christian era although nothing is said in this chapter or the whole epistle relating this change to the New Covenant. Note the words of the passage,

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses. (Colossians 2:11–13)

What Hellmann has proven from Scripture is that in the New Testament there is no longer a necessity for circumcision because circumcision no longer is the identifying mark of God's people; rather, baptism is the act that symbolizes the connection between God's people and Himself. We would expect to find just as definitive a statement concerning the change of the seventh-day Sabbath to the first day, if such a change had been made by Christ or,

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There can be no question that God's covenant was a promise by God to His people who are obedient to Him. While not designated a covenant as such, the first covenant was made after the fall of earth's first parents.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:15)

The second recorded covenant was made with Noah.

But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. (Genesis 6:18)

This was a covenant of deliverance from the fearful flood that was about to deluge the world. God fulfilled His deliverance because Noah was obedient to the commandment of God.

Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he. (Genesis 6:22)

God made a second covenant with Noah in which He solemnly promised that He would not again destroy the whole earth with a flood.

And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. (Genesis 9:15)

God also made a covenant with Abram that his descendants would inherit the promised land.

In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. (Genesis 15:18)

Later God strengthened that covenant with Abraham (see Genesis 17:2–21). However it is the covenant that God made with the children of Israel and inherited by the Jews which is most significant to our understanding of God's covenant relationship with His people. That covenant is used in different ways. For example, it is called the "Book of the Covenant" which Moses read to the children of Israel.

And he [Moses] took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. (Exodus 24:7)

The Scripture declares that the two tables of stones on which were written the Ten Commandments were the words of the covenant.

And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. (Exodus 34:28)

Moses focused upon the tables of the covenant.

When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water. (Deuteronomy 9:9)

Also the covenant was intimately associated with the sprinkled blood of the sacrifice.

And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words. (Exodus 24:8)

Many times the ark was referred to as the ark of the covenant. Here is an example.

And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. (Joshua 3:6)

In Nehemiah's day it was called the covenant of the priesthood.

Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. (Nehemiah 13:29)

Isaiah referred to the book of the covenant.

The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. (Isaiah 24:5)

Hidden page

Hidden page

Hidden page

seventh-day Sabbath with the first-day Lord's Day, fail to find support from even one text of the New Testament. Rather than the new covenant eliminating the law and the Sabbath, it replaces legalistic practices with justification and sanctification by faith in the redeeming blood of Jesus.

That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:7)

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. (Titus 2:11, 12)

The law and the Sabbath are enshrined in the heart of the true New Testament believer so that indeed the faith of Jesus might be established in the lives of Christ's people. Paul emphasized this covenant relationship this way,

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. (Romans 5:5)

We are constrained by His love. (2 Corinthians 5:14) "We love Him because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19) So that the law, rather than being abolished by the cross, is elevated to the transforming principle of grace in our lives.

Hidden page

be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

Thus the Fifth Amendment guarantees that no coerced confessions may be used in court as evidence against the accused. This Amendment guarantees that torture, physical or psychological, may not be employed against an individual accused of a felony as a means to extract a confession of guilt from him. Only confessions freely stated may be cited as evidence in court. Such a guarantee is an essential protection to all citizens if faithfully implemented. An even better system of justice in this matter was that held by the Jews in Christ's day. The confession of one accused was inadmissible, whether coerced or freely made. Such a rule of evidence insures that torture is valueless in aiding the prosecution's case by forcing personal confession. It also guaranteed that no testimony of a fellow suspect could be used against another suspect in the same crime. It was understood that such testimony could be falsified by the first suspect to reduce his own just penalty. Such a result casts doubt upon the veracity of the co-accused's implication of his colleague in crime.

However, in a five-to-four decision on March 26, 1991, the Supreme Court breached the Fifth Amendment. It must not be forgotten that the first ten amendments to the U. S. Constitution constitute the U. S. Bill of Rights, highly prized by freedom-loving people everywhere.

Voting 5 to 4, the court said some convictions may be allowed to stand *despite the use of confessions obtained in violation of the defendant's constitutional rights*. In an opinion by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, the court said that there may be so much other evidence of guilt that the use of an involuntary confession could be considered "harmless error."

(Ruth Marcus, "Court Splits on Coerced Confessions," *The Washington Post*, March 27, 1991, emphasis added)

To uphold the decision of a court of law which includes evidence contrary to the Bill of Rights, surely is wholly unacceptable and would breach the Bill of Rights itself. Further, to refer to certain

coerced confessions as “harmless error,” is to countenance pre-trial torture of one kind or another. Are such activities ever “harmless error”? It is unlikely that the victim would consider the coercion in such a light.

Certainly Justice Byron White, one of the four dissenting justices, did not concur with the majority decision. In language full of significance for Christians who recall the horrors of the Roman Catholic Inquisition of the past, Justice White stated,

Permitting a coerced confession to be part of the evidence on which a jury is free to base its verdict of guilty is inconsistent with the thesis that ours is not an *inquisitorial* system of criminal justice. *(Ibid., emphasis added)*

Ruth Marcus of *The Washington Post* observed that in practice, before this Supreme Court opinion was handed down, the court had in recent years used the “harmless error” test to uphold more and more convictions, despite the clear violation of the defendant’s constitutionally guaranteed rights. Thus, unlike earlier courts, the recent court has allowed decisions to stand in cases where there has been evidence which included illegal seizure, or confessions obtained in violation of the defendant’s right to counsel. *(Ibid.)*

The case in question before the Supreme Court was the appeal of Oreste Fulminante, an Arizona resident, who confessed to murdering his 11-year-old step-daughter. The confession was made to a fellow prison inmate who, unbeknown to Fulminante, was actually working as a government informant. The paid F.B.I informant, Anthony Sarivola, masqueraded as a figure involved in organized crime. Sarivola won the friendship of Fulminante, then told Fulminante that he knew other inmates were harassing him because of rumors that he had murdered a child. Sarivola offered to protect Fulminante, but only if he knew the truth concerning the murder of the child. The crime truly was a fearful one. Fulminante, who also confessed to Sarivola’s wife after he had been released from prison after serving time on an unrelated matter, admitted taking his step-daughter to the desert, choking her, sexually assaulting her, and making her beg for her life, before shooting her twice in the head. Fulminante was sentenced to death on the basis of the two confessions.

By a five-to-four vote of the Supreme Court, Fulminante’s conviction was overturned and a new trial ordered, because his

confession had been obtained through the threat of physical violence. However after the handing down of this Supreme Court decision concerning "harmless error," a number of appeals citing coercion were rejected because of the Supreme Court's ruling.

Ruth Marcus noted the dependence of the majority opinion upon the Supreme Court's 1967 opinion in *Chapman v. California*. In this case the court declared that not all constitutional violations required the criminal conviction to be overturned, providing the trial judge's error in admitting the evidence was harmless "beyond a reasonable doubt." The court had to be confident that the error had no effect on the ultimate conviction by the jury. However, in the Chapman case, the court said that some constitutional rights were so basic to obtaining a fair trial that their violation could never be treated as harmless error. In the Chapman opinion, the justices specifically referred to coerced confessions as violating one such basic constitutional right. Thus the Chapman case, rather than supporting the breach of the Fifth Amendment as "harmless," in fact explicitly excluded it from such a definition. Nevertheless, Chief Justice Rehnquist greatly restricted the "error" required to automatically overturn the conviction of a lower court. His opinion maintained that only "structural defects" that affect "the entire conduct of the trial from beginning to end"—such as a failure to provide a lawyer for the defendant, or having a biased judge preside over the case—required automatic reversal. (*Ibid.*) Surely, as in the Smith case, the Fulminante case has seen the justices of the Supreme Court violate their vow to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America.

The timing of the Supreme Court opinion concerning "harmless error" seemed particularly unfortunate. It came at the time of great national consternation in the United States concerning the brutal beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles police. The incident had been captured on home video by a citizen who happened to be close by.

The connection between Rodney King's beating and the Supreme Court decision was not lost on *The Washington Post's* cartoonist, Herblock. In *The Washington Post's* March 27, 1991, edition, Herblock depicted a burly Los Angeles police officer clenching a large baton, reading the headlines of the Supreme Court's "harmless error" decision and saying, "Some good news

for a change.” The sentiments of the cartoonist unquestionably captured the reactions of many U. S. citizens concerned at the dangerous erosion of the civil and religious freedoms in their beloved country. (*Ibid.*)

It must not be forgotten that no appeals court can rightly judge the degree to which a coerced confession weighed in the minds of the jury members when they voted their decision of guilty. While the Court of Appeals may believe that there “was so much evidence” as to merit a conviction, the jury may have decided otherwise. It is the jury which must be left to make such decisions. If the other evidence is so overwhelming as to convince a jury, surely there is no need to introduce evidence gained by illegal coercion. We must never forget that this decision opens the way for various forms of torture to be used to extract confessions, a decision inconsistent with civilized society. Inevitably the use of physical and psychological torture increases the number of innocent persons convicted.

The Fulminante case has directly challenged the prerogative of the jury system. Now Supreme Court Justices may “peer” into the minds of the members of a jury and decide whether or not they would have convicted the accused on other evidence. This is absolutely preposterous! No man, including Supreme Court Justices, can read another man’s thoughts, let alone the thoughts of twelve members of a jury.

With the Smith case, as well as the Fulminante case of Arizona, we see that the Supreme Court provides a mechanism for voiding the guarantees enshrined in the Bill of Rights without the use of the complicated and difficult procedures necessary to alter the Constitution. It is a mechanism full of danger to the citizens of the United States, and if left unchecked, will almost certainly lead to the United States’ abrogation of every element of justice and liberty.

There seems little doubt that the weakening of the civil protection under the Fifth Amendment to the American Constitution in part is a response to the alarming incidence of crime, especially violent crime, in the United States. However, while we abhor the violence and crime in society, and believe that every legal effort must be made to prevent crime and to punish the perpetrators, we cannot but deplore the use of anti-constitutional measures to

Hidden page

he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not *worship* the image of the beast should be killed.

(Revelation 13:12, 15, emphasis added)

Further, the prophecy plainly states,

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

(Revelation 13:8, emphasis added)

It would appear that the United States has already taken the first major steps required to fulfill this prophecy. This course has not been enacted by Congress, nor has a Constitutional Convention removed the First and Fifth Amendments. Five justices of the Supreme Court, exceeding their prerogatives, have been permitted to imperil the religious and civil liberties of the nation and set it on course to fulfill divine prophecy. It takes little reflection to perceive the perilous danger that these decisions present to earnest Christians who oppose the ecumenical agenda of a one-world religion and of the persecution that will be meted out upon the small group of faithful Christians who will not compromise their faith and their loyalty to Christ.

Hidden page

Hidden page

(elder) of one church with no greater authority than any other bishop who was appointed during apostolic times. Even as late as the seventh century there was great controversy over who was to be accepted as the universal or first bishop of the Christian church. Gregory I laid claim as the Bishop of Rome. Yet Bishop John of Constantinople with his supporters, was presenting his claims.

4 Jesus clearly referred to Himself as the Rock.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. (Matthew 7:24, 25)

If there were even the slightest doubt that Christ is the Rock, Paul swept such doubt away.

And did all [Israel] drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:4)

To claim that a human being was the rock upon which the Christian church was established is nothing short of blasphemy.

5 Christ's words recorded in Matthew 16:18 do not in the least suggest that Christ is building His church upon Peter. On the contrary, Christ was indicating just the opposite. The Greek word translated *Peter* means a small pebble or stone. Christ does not say, "and upon you, Peter, I will build my church." He said rather, "upon this rock"—no doubt referring to Himself, who is the Rock of the Bible—He would build His church. Only our Redeemer who was to die and be raised again could demonstrate that the gates of hell could not prevail. Then Christ promised to Peter, in symbolic language, that given to him would be the keys of heaven, which would open the storehouse of heaven's blessings to him, for Christ knew that he would be faithful unto death. We can also share that promise if we will evince the same loyalty which Peter possessed.

Unfortunately, from this misuse of Scripture Roman Catholics have deduced that every pope has heavenly insights not available to other human beings, not even to cardinals. Thus developed the

concept of papal infallibility.* It led to the designation of the pope as "another god on earth." The claim that human priests can forgive sins and can create Christ in the little wafer that is used in the Roman Catholic mass developed from this blasphemous deification of successive popes, many of whom possessed vile characters. Thus the Roman Catholic Church provides no credible evidence to support its claim to have a seamless heritage from the beginning of Christendom. Rather this church evidences degradation of apostolic practice and Christian principles.

As the apostles traveled all over the world, they brought the true elements of Christianity to people who accepted the gospel of Jesus. Thomas journeyed as far as India; some believe that he traveled beyond to China, spreading the gospel. It is of no little interest that when these Indian Christians were rediscovered, as a result of the voyages of the Portuguese explorer and trader, Vasco da Gama, to India in the latter part of the fifteenth century, they were found to be seventh-day Sabbath keepers, ignorant of the ways of Rome.

When Marco Polo visited China in the early part of the thirteenth century he found the Christians there were also seventh-day Sabbath-keepers and continued a worship form that was quite incompatible with the Roman Catholic practices of worship. This was also true of the Christians discovered in Ethiopia.

There is historical evidence that Joseph of Arimathaea took the message of Christ to the British Isles. One fact is certain: long before Archbishop Augustine came to England at the end of the sixth century, Christianity was flourishing in Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales under the leadership of the Celtic Church, which followed the practice of seventh-day Sabbath-keeping and a form of Christianity far purer than the teachings and practices of Roman Catholicism. The Celtic Church much more closely resembled the apostolic church than did Roman Catholicism, which drifted into a form of Christianized paganism as it embraced numerous pagan counterfeits of truths and enshrined them in a veneer of Christianity.

* See Standish and Standish, *Two Beasts, Three Deadly Wounds and Fourteen Popes*, Rapidan, Hartland Publications, 2002.

Christians today recognize that the fragmentation in the Christian church has brought great discredit upon Christianity. If Christianity be the only true religion, then why is there such diversity of belief and practice among professing Christians? Even in an era where doctrine is de-emphasized, nevertheless, there are traumatic differences in belief, differences which continue to divide. These differences are not limited to the day of worship.

Numerous interfaith consultations, statements of "accord," and declarations of understanding have failed to settle significant doctrinal issues related to the state of man in death, the nature and composition of the Godhead, baptism, the communion service, the rapture, the millennium, the free choice—predestination debate, the merit of praying to designated saints, the resurrection, charismatic worship, church organization and authority, along with a plethora of other doctrinal issues bedeviling attempts to achieve denominational unity.

What is required to forge Christian unity? We have noted the false kind of unity that is foreshadowed by the ecumenical movement. We believe that the ecumenical movement creates another level of disharmony amongst Christians, for it is established upon false premises and not upon a plain "Thus saith the Lord." It will surely lead to the persecution of those who truly are seeking the unity that heaven endorses.

Others have attempted to achieve unity upon the basis of credalism. Many creeds have been established. Among these are the Apostles' Creed, the Westminster Confession, the Helvetic Creed and the Smalkald Creed. These creeds have proven to be self-serving to the proponents of religions held by the majority of citizens of a nation. Often these creeds have been employed as a platform to remove the freedom of men and women to study the Word under the leading of the Holy Spirit. Others have established catechisms and prayer books which also dictate orthodoxy based, not upon the Word of God, but upon human devising. All of these extra-biblical statements, rather than serving the aim of Christian unity, have drawn humans from the only valid basis for unity—a deep study and practice of the Word of God.

Over the centuries efforts have been made to engender unity by the most fearful persecution of those who have deviated from the belief system of those who possess ecclesiastical power. Such acts of violence have not been limited to Roman Catholics

but Protestants including Calvinists, Zwinglians, Lutherans and Anglicans have participated. A purposeful study of Jesus' prayer for unity provides the fullest foundation for the establishment of unity. Many concentrate upon a single verse from the prayer of Jesus:

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. (John 17:21)

Truly this is a mighty, challenging verse to every Christian. But this prayer of Jesus also contains the key to Christian unity.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. (John 17:17)

The thoughts of this verse are repeated by Jesus.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. (John 17:19)

Here surely is the divine key to unity. Unity is founded upon the truth contained in the Word of God; it is not discovered in the interpretations or discordant theories of men. No matter how scholarly or learned a theologian may be, truth emerges only from the pure streams of light radiating from the Scriptures themselves. Truth alone cannot ensure unity. That very truth can be known and can be believed; but if it is not lived, the testimony of the Word lacks the mighty power of influence. Thus the soul must be sanctified by the truth. Indeed it is our belief that the greatest enemies of unity are those who intellectually believe the truth and even share it, but whose lives have not been transformed by it. Many are thus turned aside from unity by the witness of the godless lives of professors of Christianity.

The Bible declares,

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. (Ephesians 4:13-15)

This passage signifies that unity of the faith is developed through the knowledge of Jesus and the perfection of character which results when we are “partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter 1:4) The diversity of doctrine will fade away when the truth is spoken in love. Peter in addressing the new birth experience expresses this result in beautiful words.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Peter 1:22, 23)

If Christians in deep sincerity follow these principles we indeed will be one as Jesus desires. Conformity, even consensus, can be established by force, but earnest Christians put aside the law of force for the law of love. Some of the greatest men in the Bible had to learn this lesson. Moses resorted to the murder of an Egyptian, believing that he would thus achieve freedom for the Israelites in Egypt (see Exodus 2:11, 12). What a difference from the patient Moses of later years, who faced hostile responses to his leadership from many of the children of Israel. He so loved these rebellious people that he was prepared to forfeit his eternal life for them (see Exodus 32:31, 32).

Paul (then known as Saul) likewise had resorted to force to rid the Jewish church of what he judged to be the scourge of the emerging Christian community (see Acts 8:1–3). However after his conversion he became the loving, patient apostle who led thousands of men and women to the kingdom of heaven.

The Scriptures proclaim that the Word is the only foundation to guide our lives; and through the Word, empowered by the indwelling Christ, we have power over sin.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
(Psalm 119:105)

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin
against thee. (Psalm 119:11)

The words of John the Revelator leave no conjecture concerning the characteristics possessed by God’s people at the end of time.

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

(Revelation 14:12)

These saints who are living on the earth when Jesus returns will be commandment-keepers; they will also have the faith of Jesus, a faith that will not be put aside by difficulties, frustrations, persecution or threat of death. God's faithful people would rather die than commit by thought, word or action a single sin. Elsewhere in the Revelation John explains it this way:

And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

(Revelation 12:11)

Their loyalty to God transcends everything else. As the millions of martyrs who have rendered up their lives a testimony to their unwavering love for Christ, so too will those, who love the Lord at the end of the history of the earth, not flinch from martyrdom if necessary to maintain their loyalty to Christ. The imperfect character has been molded by Christ and they now walk in His footsteps. Unlike the terrorist "martyrs" of today, they will offer no threat to their fellow humans, for they are motivated by a Christ-like love, not hate.

A woman in prophecy represents a church. Such a symbolic woman in white robes represents a pure church (see Revelation chapter 12). A symbolic woman colorfully arrayed and bedecked with jewels is representative of a false or apostate church (see Revelation chapter 17). The final generation of living saints are also depicted as virgins, indicative of moral purity.

These are 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 firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

(Revelation 14:4)

The redeemed have refused to follow the false churches and their doctrines. They have lived only for the glory of God and the fulfillment of His Word in their lives and witness. Scripture summarizes their characters.

The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for

they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

(Zephaniah 3:13)

Decisions, choices, thoughts, words and actions develop the habits of life. When these habits develop from thoughts and feelings not prompted by the Holy Spirit, evil characters are formed. When Christ enters the heart there is a total transformation of these decisions, thoughts and actions: the character developed becomes Christ-like. Our destiny depends upon whether we follow Christ fully and His Word implicitly. As we have seen, only commandment-keepers are counted among God's saints. Those commandments include the seventh-day Sabbath commandment. This is not a minor issue. Contrary to the practice of all major Christian denominations, the seventh day is truly the Sabbath of the Lord our God.

It is our hope that many who read this book will, under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, be led to see how important and central is Sabbath-keeping to salvation. This is not a minor matter. It is not an optional issue. The Sabbath focuses upon the issue of the worship due to God. The fourth commandment centers upon the creatorship of our Redeemer, the One who will recreate us into His own image. We pray that through God's power and His grace each reader will prayerfully and solemnly take hold of the words that are contained in this book. We ourselves have a fervent desire and commitment to meet our Lord when He comes. It would be an infinite loss if any one reader is not in that kingdom. The ignorance of the past God "winks" at (see Acts 17:30) but there will be no salvation for those who, in full knowledge of Christ's command, neglect this great truth.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? (Hebrews 2:3)

Heaven is worth every sacrifice, every trial, every hardship, every tear. Jesus promises,

My grace is sufficient for thee. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

We sincerely long to meet all the readers of this book in Christ's soon-to-be-established kingdom.

32

The Sabbath and Religious Liberty

OUR understanding of the nature of God will greatly influence our understanding of religious liberty. The concept of divine predestination enshrined in the theology of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in the fourth century, leads to a concept of God's dealings with man altogether different from the foundation of those who believe that God has given to man the freedom to choose and to make decisions to accept or reject His matchless salvation through the merits of Jesus Christ. Those who join the authors in believing that the Bible unwaveringly teaches that God has given to man a power that is derived from his Creator, the power to think and to do—that is the power of free choice—will never embrace a theology built upon religious coercion.

The concept of free choice embodies in it the concept that man can be wooed, entreated, guided and encouraged through the Holy Spirit but can never be forced, coerced or manipulated; for that would be inimical to the very character of God. "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Love cannot be coerced, manipulated, enforced or enjoined. Such would be wholly out of character for the God of the universe. The very freedom that He has bequeathed to all His created beings would make coercion wholly incompatible with His love. The only love that God will accept from His creation is a freely reciprocated love. His love draws us to Him. As John has said,

We love him, because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

It is from this love that we love one another.

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. (John 15:12)

These things I command you, that ye love one another.

(John 15:17)

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

(John 13:35)

That love even incorporates love of our enemies.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.

(Matthew 5:44)

Thus the Christian who truly believes in free choice allows his fellowman the right to accept or reject the matchless claims of Christ. There is only one sword that a true Christian will employ and that is the sword of the Word. This is the influence of persuasion, not of coercion.

Christ gave a perfect example when, with great anguish of heart, He accepted the rejection of the majority of the Jewish people.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

(Matthew 23:37)

It was also Jesus who rebuked Peter's use of the sword of steel in the garden of Gethsemane.

Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

(John 18:10-11)

Later Jesus, in addressing the Roman governor Pilate, plainly stated that His kingdom was not established with the force of arms.

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

(John 18:36)

Paul certainly learned great lessons from Christ's teachings.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God 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 10:3–5)

We are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and therefore His true followers will never use force or persecution, either to increase the membership of the church or to punish those who reject the gospel of salvation.

On the other hand, the concept of divine predestination allows God to be seen as a controller, and arbitrary in choosing some to enjoy the pleasures of eternity. Scripture attests that God will show us the way. This is a far cry from coercion.

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.
(Psalm 16:11).

According to the Augustinian teachings, others will be preordained by God to eternal torment. Surely this establishes a concept of God as merciless toward those whom He ordains to eternal destruction. The argument has often been put forward that as fallible human beings we should not question the justice of God in that He has preordained some to eternal salvation and others to eternal burning torment. If this be true, then we serve a God who is willing to see the torture of those He has ordained to eternal damnation, not for a minute, an hour, a month, a century, a trillion years—but for ever and ever and ever. There is no way, if this were true, that we could ever be led to understand such a God as truly a God of love. Neither could we see Him as a God of absolute justice. If this concept were true, God would be an evil deity. Such a concept is not only unscriptural; it is abhorrent to men of pious and virtuous lives.

Surely many men and women have recoiled from such a description of God. But such a proposal concerning the acts of our God naturally leads to the conclusion that coercion, persecution and inquisitions are appropriately employed by the church; or by the state at the behest of the church. Therefore it is not surprising that Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, having espoused the concept of

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sion” of Emperor Constantine was now moving to the church-state union in which the church began to dominate the affairs of the state, rather than the state the church. Both ways great persecution is always likely to result. Almost all pagan religions believe in arbitrary gods who control the affairs of men and women and therefore punish brutally those who will not reside under their dominating control. Surely that is what sets our God of love apart from all the false gods ever known to humanity. The God of the Bible is indeed a God of love, a God of mercy, while also being a God of justice.

Now let us place this background in the light of the Sabbath and religious liberty (see chapter 13 entitled “The Seventh-day Sabbath Enters American Colonies”). It will be remembered that John James, in 1661 was hanged, drawn and quartered because he refused, in the name of King Charles II, of Great Britain, to stop preaching on Sabbath afternoon. It is interesting how frequently the laws of the United States of America, as well as many other countries, have sought to set Sunday apart by coercing men and women to rest or to worship on that day. The state has been employed to enforce these decrees in the name of safeguarding the state and its citizens. It is amazing how many of these Sunday laws developed in the United States during the nineteenth century. This led to terrible persecution of Sabbatarians during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

By 1890, most of the states of the United States had strong Sunday laws prohibiting secular labor on Sunday. It is most surprising that one hundred years of dialogue and debate since the enactment of the First Amendment to the Constitution had not convinced most American legislatures that any form of coerced Sunday observance, whatever the proffered reason, was wholly inconsistent with the Bill of Rights of the American Constitution, let alone with the Word of God.

At the end of the 1880s and into the 1890s Senator William Henry Blair of New Hampshire spearheaded the drive for the introduction of Sunday laws. The proposed legislation was especially repugnant to Sabbatarian groups in the United States. The opposition to the proposed legislation was led by a Seventh-day Adventist minister, Professor Alonzo Jones. Jones, a thorough

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State and settled a farm in Benton county. His farm was four miles from town, and far away from any house of religious worship. He was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and after having sacredly observed the Sabbath of his people (Saturday) by abstaining from all secular work, he and his son, a lad of seventeen, on the first day of the week went quietly about their usual avocations. They disturbed no one—interfered with the rights of no one. But they were observed, and reported to the grand jury—indicted, arrested, tried, convicted, fined; and having no money to pay the fine, these moral Christian citizens of Arkansas were dragged to the county jail and imprisoned like felons for twenty-five days—and for what? For daring in this so called land of liberty, in the year of our Lord 1887, to worship God!

Was this the end of the story? Alas, no, sir! They were turned out; and the old man's only horse, his sole reliance to make bread for his children, was levied on to pay the fine and costs, amounting to thirty-eight dollars. The horse sold at auction for twenty-seven dollars. A few days afterward the sheriff came again and demanded thirty-six dollars—eleven dollars balance due on fine and costs and twenty-five dollars for board for himself and son while in jail. And when the poor old man—a Christian, mind you—told him with tears that he had no money, he promptly levied on his only cow, but was persuaded to accept bond, and the amount was paid by contributions from his friends of the same faith. Sir, my heart swells to bursting with indignation as I repeat to you the infamous story.

(Ibid., p. 212, 213)

Concluding his plea for Sabbatarians and the passage of the bill that would exempt Sabbatarians from the Sunday laws of 1885, he said,

On next Monday, at Malvern, six as honest, good, and virtuous citizens as live in Arkansas are to be tried as criminals for daring to worship God in accordance with the dictates of their own consciences, for exercising a right which this government, under the Constitution, has no power to abridge. Sir, I plead, in the name of justice, in the name of our republican institutions, in the name of these inoffensive, God-fearing, God-serving people, our fellow citizens, and last, sir, in

the name of Arkansas, I plead that this bill may pass, and this one foul blot be wiped from the escutcheon of our glorious commonwealth. *(Ibid., p. 213)*

Senator Crockett's plea found favor with the Arkansas senators and the Sunday law of 1885 was repealed.

William Blakely provided brief accounts of others who suffered in other states of the Union, including Tennessee, Georgia, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. He details one case where a Sabbath keeper died due to fever he contracted from the unsanitary conditions in the prison.

It is a sober reality that such violations of individual conscience are again returning to the United States. Vigilance in the light of past history is the only hope for freedom. The majority opinion in *Smith versus the State of Oregon*, April 17, 1990, has greatly limited the protection under the First Amendment (see chapter 30 entitled, "Legislating Sunday Observance" where this case is carefully studied). It is not only the legislature which enacts laws today, but, indeed, in spite of protests to the contrary, the Supreme Court of the United States has moved into a perilous situation in which it has, in our evaluation, gone beyond its rightful responsibility of upholding the constitutionality of the laws of the United States by encroaching upon the legislative prerogatives of Congress. Eternal vigilance by all faithful Christians must be exercised.

33 Sunday Laws—Will They Bring Morality Back to the World?

EVER SINCE Emperor Constantine legislated Sunday laws in 321, prohibiting all but the most necessary work on Sunday, there have been strong efforts to enjoin Christians and sometimes non-Christians to worship on Sunday, or at least to refrain from work. In Great Britain penalties quite severe were legislated which influenced the British Colonies of America.

After the enactment of the Bill of Rights, Sunday laws came in direct conflict with the intent of the First Amendment of the American Constitution. In chapter 34, "The Separation of Church and State and the Lord's Day" it is documented that many legislators were not willing to enact Sunday legislation. In consequence of Congress's unwillingness to enact Sunday legislation there was a determined effort to employ secular reasoning in the hope that such would enforce Sunday sacredness while yet providing for it a secular, not a religious foundation. These claims for Sunday rest, based upon so-called secular reasoning, are clearly contradicted by the fact that for centuries every Sunday law sprang from a religious sentiment.

Addressing the twenty-year Congressional debate concerning the post-office and Sunday services, in the early nineteenth century, William Blakely commented as follows upon the petitions which quickly changed from providing religious bases for Sunday law to providing secular bases:

This is the real foundation of all Sunday-rest movements; though for clandestine purposes, reasons are often given of a very different nature, as, solicitude for the public health,—as though the people were so devoid of common sense as not to know enough to rest when they are tired, without being compelled to do so by law! Mr. Chief Justice Ruffin, of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, in the case of the State vs. Williams and Iredell,

Hidden page

United States, the laws of colonial times were greatly modified. But the whole current tendency has been to set forth laws of a totally different character through the decisions of the courts.

In the Sunday law legislation of the Roman Empire at the time of Emperor Constantine, the authority of the church was wholly subordinate to that of the civil power. In the Middle Ages, and also under Cromwell as Lord Protector of England (1649–1658), and during the colonial period of American history, by contrast the church was supreme. The state complied with the demands of the church.

All Sunday statutes enacted in the United States after independence prohibited “worldly labor,” and permitted only works of necessity and mercy on Sundays. There can be no valid meaning of these laws except as they are based upon religious foundations. Surely “worldly business” can be delineated only in contrast with religious obligation. Thus every Sunday law which has been enacted within the United States, and for that matter other countries of the world, is based upon the idea that it is wrong to do on Sunday the things prohibited in the fourth commandment. It must be acknowledged, then, that the theories men invent for the observance of Sunday on non-religious grounds have no logical value, unless it be understood that there is a covert religious motivation.

To claim that the present Sunday laws do not designate a day as a religious institution, is to deny every fact in history relevant to such legislation. Any claim otherwise is surely a shallow subterfuge. If this were not so, advocates of a rest day would not focus exclusively upon Sunday. They might decide to offer Friday, the sacred day of the Muslims, as their proposed rest day, or perhaps Saturday, the sacred day of the Jews and a small minority of Christians. Or indeed they might choose a day that is sacred to no religion, such as Tuesday or Wednesday, to provide respite from labor in the middle of the week.

Religious observance legislation did not spring from Apostolic Christianity. Every element of New Testament Christianity stood against interference by the state in personal religious matters. Thus all basis for legislating religious practice has its roots in pagan practice. This is equally true of the observance of other religious days such as Christmas and Easter. We have cited the pagan character of the first Sunday legislation because in that

legislation, Sunday was designated only by its pagan name, "the venerable day of the sun."

According to Doctor Lewis, all Sunday legislation is the product of pagan Rome. The Saxon laws were the product of the Middle Ages legislation of the "Holy Roman Empire." The English laws are an expansion of the Saxon, and the American are a transcript of the English laws (as quoted in Blakely, p. 270).

Lewis correctly identifies that the Sunday law issued under King Charles II of England in 1676 was the law of the American colonies up to the time of the Revolution, and so became the basis of the United States' Sunday laws. Charles II's law forbade any work whatsoever by tradesmen, laborers, and businessmen on the "Lord's Day" (Sunday). The penalty for those over the age of fourteen breaching the law was a fine of five shillings. The law also provided for the confiscation of any goods that a merchant was offering for sale on Sunday. Anyone who could not meet the financial penalties was to be set in public stocks for the space of two hours.

Let it be understood, notwithstanding the enactment of the First Amendment to the American Constitution, that the concept of Sunday laws and the effort to regard Sunday sacredness was so ingrained in the history of the American people that it seemed almost impossible for them to understand that such legislation should cease to be enacted or to be enforced in the new nation. Thus it was that the nineteenth century became a battleground for and against Sunday legislation.

Many of the Sunday statutes enacted in the nineteenth century are still on the legislative books of states. While they are presently inactive and therefore unenforced, this in nowise restricts them from being enforced in the foreseeable future. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that these dormant "blue laws," as they are often called, are time bombs ready to explode at some future time. Indeed there are strong lobbies seeking the enforcement of such laws. One such organization is the Lord's Day Alliance, a proactive organization pressing for the legal establishment of Sunday as the day of rest from all but essential labor. Of course "essential labor" is a term open to wide differences of interpretation.

Hidden page

Hidden page

transformation from the carnality of the natural human heart to the spiritual life of a converted son or daughter of God. To require church attendance and involuntary rest from secular activities on Sunday, or, indeed, any other day, would in no wise produce the true unity and harmony in which God has invited His children to participate. Even if correctness of behavior were the result—which, indeed, it will not be—nevertheless there would be no change of heart. The selfishness, the pride, the indulgence, the envy, the strife, the covetousness, and all negative motives would still be enshrined in the heart of such unconverted men and women. Crime will not cease, disputes will not vanish, wars will not end; for the Word of God says,

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked:
who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, de-
ceiving, and being deceived. (2 Timothy 3:13)

The Word of God provides the only way in which men's and women's lives can be truly transformed.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by
the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that
good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:2)

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of
Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into
their minds, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to
me a people. (Hebrews 8:10)

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those
days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and
in their minds will I write them. (Hebrews 10:16)

Only God can change the heart. Only God, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, can bring conversion to the soul. Instead of churches and church leaders seeking to employ the arm of the state to enact the morality that they profess to desire, let them reevaluate their role in the seeking and saving of the lost. Many churches, especially in the Western world, are teaching a "sin and live" theology. By this we mean they are preaching a gospel which does not include the power of Christ to transform the life. One minister we know very well preached that there is no differ-

Hidden page

34

The Separation of Church and State and the Lord's Day

WHEN the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, William Rhenquist, declared that the wall of separation between church and state is "a bad metaphor," the implication was that such a concept was not in the minds of the founding fathers of the United States. It has been stated that such a concept was written neither into the United States Constitution nor into the Bill of Rights. The implication of such argumentation is that the First Amendment to the American Constitution in nowise guaranteed a wall of separation between church and state. It is true that such terminology is not used in the Bill of Rights. But it is the considered opinion of the authors of this book that the implications very strongly support the notion of the separation of church and state. Let us review the First Amendment again:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Now as has been commonly stated, there are two main segments to the First Amendment addressing the relationship of Congress to religion. The first segment guarantees that the state will establish no religion. This is referred to as "the non-establishment clause." The second clause guarantees the free exercise of religion by all citizens. This is called "the free exercise clause." There certainly was a very clear understanding concerning the non-establishment clause by the early Congresses. In the early years of the nineteenth century the Second Session of the Eleventh Congress on April 30, 1810, enacted the following law:

That every postmaster shall keep an office in which one or more persons shall attend on every day on which a mail, or bag, or other packet, or parcel of letters shall arrive by land or water, as well as on other days, at such hours as the Postmaster-General shall direct, for the purpose of performing the duties thereof; and it shall be the duty of the postmaster at all reasonable hours, *on every day of the week*, to deliver, on demand, any letter, paper, or packet, to the person entitled to or authorized to receive the same.

(Quoted in Blakely, *op. cit.*, p. 58)

Immediately there were protests from many earnest Christians who claimed that this enactment was a violation of the Lord's Day. Many petitions were made to Congress and the debate extended for almost two decades.

The issue of postal services on Sunday emerged strongly again in the middle of the 1820s. The Second Session of the Eighteenth Congress, March 3, 1825, reaffirmed that the postal services should be conducted on every day of the week. It is helpful in our understanding of religious liberty for us to investigate the reasons which Senator Richard Johnson of Kentucky (later to become Vice-President of the United States of America) gave for his opposition to legislation that would close the postal services on Sunday. Johnson pointed out that, while he had no doubt that the motives of the petitioners were pure, nevertheless, he referred them to the proceedings of a meeting held at Salem, Massachusetts,

That the petitioners did not consider the ground they had taken as being purely that the Sabbath was a day of rest; they assumed that it was such by a law of God. (*Ibid.*, p. 87)

Johnson made this perceptive comment upon the above,

Some denominations considered one day the most sacred, and some looked to another, and these petitions did, in fact, call upon Congress to settle what was the law of God. The Committee had framed their report upon policy and expediency. It was but the first step taken, that they were to legislate upon religious grounds, and it made no sort of difference which was the day asked to be set apart, which day was to be considered sacred, whether it was the first day or the seventh, the principle was wrong. It was upon this ground that the committee went in making their report. (*Ibid.*, pp. 87, 88)

Hidden page

citizens of the United States would not willingly introduce a system of religious coercion into our civil institutions.

- 4 Johnson also admonished all to be careful watchers of other nations so that the United States did not follow their example in religious coercion, for,

It is not the legitimate province of the legislature to determine what religion is true, or what religion false. (Ibid., p. 93)

- 5 Johnson emphasized that the United States government is a civil and not a religious institution, reaffirming the time-honored principle that the state would not interfere in religious matters:

Our Constitution recognizes in every person the right to choose his own religion, and to enjoy it freely without molestation. Whatever may be the religious sentiments of citizens, and however variant, they are alike entitled to protection from the government, so long as they do not invade the rights of others. The transportation of the mail on the first day of the week, it is believed, does not interfere with the rights of conscience. *The petitioners for its discontinuance appear to be actuated by a religious zeal, which may be commendable if confined to its proper sphere; but they assume a position better suited to an ecclesiastical than to a civil institution.* They appear in many instances to lay it down as an axiom that the practice is a violation of the law of God. Should Congress in legislative capacity adopt this sentiment, it would establish the principle that the legislature is a proper tribunal to determine what are the laws of God. It would involve a legislative decision on a religious controversy, and on a point on which good citizens may honestly differ in opinion, without disturbing the peace of society or endangering its liberties. If this principle is once introduced it will be impossible to define its bounds. (Ibid.)

Johnson wisely concluded that any Sunday law opens the door to the endangerment of liberties. Surely his conclusions should not be lost upon modern day legislators.

Johnson followed with a very profound statement,

Among all the religious persecutions with which almost every page of modern history is stained, no victim ever suffered but

Hidden page

- 8 Johnson also explained that if mail coaches were not permitted to carry mail on Sunday, then those who were travelling by coach would be forced to stay over a day wherever the mail coach stopped before continuing their journey. Johnson thus drew the following conclusion,

If the principle is once established that religion, or religious observances, shall be interwoven with our legislative acts, we must pursue it to its ultimate. We shall, if consistent, provide for the erection of edifices for worship of the Creator, and for the support of Christian ministers, if we believe such measures will promote the interest of Christianity. (*Ibid.*, p. 98)

- 9 Johnson pointed out that to legislate even one act which involved the decision of a religious controversy would be to pass legitimate bounds of Congress—the mistake that had been made consistently in the Old World.

It is clear that Senator Richard Johnson understood well that the legitimate boundary of Congressional legislation must not proceed into the area of religious discrimination, and the then Congress agreed with him.

Finally, Johnson urged that the Constitution recognized no other power than that of persuasion for enforcing religious observances, and he gave counsel to those who were of a deeply religious conviction, suggesting that their moral influence will do infinitely more to advance the interests of their religion than any measure that could be enacted by Congress.

A submission to the Senate January 19, 1829, ended with the resolution that the committee be discharged from any further consideration of the subject. The Senate concurred.

On March 4 and 5, 1830, the reports of the Post-Offices and Post-Roads Committee were carried by Senator Johnson to the House of Representatives. Here, in different language, he presented many of the same reasons that he had given to the Senate the year before. But here he made some stronger assertions. For example,

With the exception of the United States, the whole human race, consisting, it is supposed, of eight hundred million of rational beings [the estimated population of the earth in 1830], is in religious bondage: and, in reviewing the scenes of persecution

which history everywhere presents, unless the committee could believe that the cries of the burning victim, and the flames by which he is consumed, bear to heaven a grateful incense, the conclusion is inevitable that the line cannot be too strongly drawn between church and state. (*Ibid.*, p. 111)

Johnson certainly believed in the separation of church and state and, unlike modern jurists exemplified by Chief Justice Rhenquist, believed the separation of church and state was enshrined in the United States Constitution. He further reminded Congress that it was a kiss by which Judas betrayed his divine Master. He stated that the Christian religion made its way into the world in opposition to all human government. Banishments, tortures, and death were inflicted in vain to stop its progress. Johnson correctly concluded,

But many of its professors, as soon as clothed with political power, lost the meek spirit which their creed inculcated, and began to inflict on other religions, and on dissenting sects of their own religion, persecution more aggravated than those which their own apostles had endured. (*Ibid.*, pp. 111, 112)

In his presentation to the House of Representatives, Johnson reminded all that primitive Christians did not ask governments to recognize their observances, but to provide toleration and freedom from persecution. He provided the examples of the Protestants of Germany; the Huguenots of France, who asked toleration of their Catholic superiors; and the persecuted Catholics of Ireland who in that time asked toleration of their oppressors. Then he asked the question,

Do the petitioners allege that they cannot conscientiously participate in the profits of the mail contracts and post-offices, because the mail is carried on Sunday? If this be their motive, then it is worldly gain which stimulates to action, and not virtue or religion. Do they complain that men less conscientious in relation to the Sabbath obtain advantages over them by receiving their letters and attending to their content? Still their motive is worldly and selfish. But if their motive be to induce Congress to sanction, by law, their religious opinions and observances, then their efforts ought to be restricted, as in their tendency fatal both to religious and political freedom. . . .

Why have the petitioners confined their prayer to the mails? Why have they not requested that the government be required to suspend all its executive functions on that day? Why do they not require us to enact that our ships shall not sail; that our armies shall not march; that officers of justice shall not seize the suspected or guard the convicted? They seem to forget that government is as necessary on Sunday as on any other day of the week. The spirit of evil does not rest on that day. It is the government, ever active in its functions, which enables us all, even the petitioners, to worship in our churches in peace. *(Ibid., p. 117)*

Senator Johnson recognized that to legislate any day as a rest day was indeed in violation of the intent of the First Amendment to the Constitution. He and the legislators of that day understood apparently far better than contemporary legislators and jurists the true intent of the First Amendment to the Constitution. This, no doubt, was because most of them had lived contemporaneously with some of the founding fathers of the nation. They did see that there had to be boundaries or walls that separated the prerogatives of the state from the prerogatives of the church.

Hidden page

And Jesus further answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

(Matthew 24:4, 5)

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

(Matthew 24:11)

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matthew 24:24)

Jesus also spoke of international conflict and terrible physical disasters.

And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. (Matthew 24:6, 7)

Further Jesus warned that His faithful people will be ruthlessly persecuted, thus giving no hint that all humanity will come together in love, harmony and unity.

All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. (Matthew 24:8-10)

Rather than a unifying love enveloping the world, Christ prophesied a great lack of love at the close of earth's history which will inflame persecution to such an extent that only those who can endure in the power of Christ will be saved.

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (Matthew 24:12, 13)

Christ explained further that a tribulation such as has never been in the history of the world would befall the planet.

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh

be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. (Matthew 24:21, 22)

The words of Jesus allow for no El Dorado (golden age) to be established upon this sin-blighted planet. The globalist movement does not arise out of the concepts of Christianity. The Bible teaches that unity can be achieved only in truth and righteousness. This requires the total transformation of the heart, which results when every individual surrenders his or her life to Christ. Once again we quote Jesus in His prayer for unity.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. (John 17:17)

Paul's unity chapter parallels the words of Jesus.

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. (Ephesians 4:12-15)

Rather than the world of the future coming into such a loving unity, the Bible reveals that the human race will actually become more evil just prior to Christ's coming.

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. (2 Timothy 3:13)

Any hope that binding nations together will bring all people into unity will result in dismal failure—it is a chimera. However we do not question that there will be the greatest effort to bind the peoples of this world by whatever means are deemed necessary. Of that the Scriptures leave no doubt. John the Revelator prophesied,

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

Hidden page

It ended in terrible decay and fragmentation, finally disintegrating in 1806 during the Napoleonic Wars.

With the obvious failure of a Christian unity, men of secular mind and earthly pursuits turned to humanism as the means to engender harmony and unity to the world. This humanistic philosophy reached a pinnacle in the eighteenth century with the writings of many philosophers including Rousseau and Voltaire. These humanistic writings were very appealing to the carnal heart. They upheld the dignity of humanity and the goals of love and harmony. But instead of this humanism heralding the dawn of Utopia, it brought devastating carnage beginning with the French Revolution. The revolutionaries proudly proclaimed the motto of the revolution as "liberty, equality and fraternity." God was declared to be nonexistent. The "goddess of reason" was established. Instead of bringing "liberty, equality and fraternity" it ended in at least forty thousand people literally losing their heads. Terrible carnage in Europe during the Napoleonic Wars counted further great loss of life.

Regardless of the failure of the French Revolution to achieve unity, other attempts were made. The revolutions in Europe in 1830 and 1848 each were, one way or another, attempts to redress the failures of the French Revolution. But it was the German philosopher, Karl Marx, after careful evaluation of the French Revolution and the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848, who confidently declared that the principles of the French Revolution were correct but the implementation had been faulty. It was upon these Marxist principles that the Bolsheviks of Russia entered upon the Russian Revolution culminating in the overthrow of the monarchy in 1917 and the establishment of the Soviet Union. However, instead of bringing unity to the planet it brought one of the greatest losses of human lives in the history of civilization. In the Soviet Union alone it has been estimated that up to forty million people lost their lives at the hands of the Marxists. This does not include the other untold millions who lost their lives as the tentacles of Communism reached out to every continent of the world—Australia alone being excepted. In Australia an insignificant, impotent Communist Party was never a threat to democracy.

It would have been expected that such a demonstration of the failure of humanistic principles to bring peace and harmony to the

Hidden page

many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. (Revelation 13:15)

It can be doubted by no student of the Globalism movement that the centerpiece of the one world government agenda is the unification of religions. As the authors study the Scriptures they are left in no doubt that this global religion ultimately will be enjoined on all humanity by the most powerful religio-political force on the planet—the Papacy. To bring this false unity to fulfillment will require the submission of all to the central principles of papalism. No doubt Sunday, declared to be the Lord's Day, will be enjoined on all peoples of the world. The fact that non-Christian nations have already adopted a Sunday rest day, including such Muslim nations as Pakistan and, in some states, Malaysia; and Hindu nations as India and Buddhist nations as Thailand, leaves us in no doubt that ultimately this coercion will be easily achieved for all but God's very elect. All earth's inhabitants, either by choice or coercion, the very elect alone excepted, will thus be forced to receive the mark of the beast. The joining together of nations in great economic blocks, such as NAFTA, or more importantly the much more widely international GATT treaty, is in place to enforce an economic boycott against those who refuse to be bound by the calls to join the one world religion.

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

(Revelation 12:17)

The centrality of religion to the globalist agenda was dramatically underscored by the calling of the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, held August 28–31, 2001. Bawa Jain, Secretary-General of the Millennium Peace Summit addressing religious leaders, Christian and non-Christian alike, expressed these words,

We believe the changing conditions of our world now offer a new opportunity for religions to work together in a way hitherto unrealized. Communications technology has permanently altered the way we relate to each other across national and geographical boundaries. It is exposing many of the world's people to religious and cultural diversity and is height-

Hidden page

And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the cluster of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

(Revelation 14:16–18)

There is no shadow of a doubt that Sunday will be the chosen rest day of the globalists just as it was in the days of pagan and papal Rome. There can be no doubt either that non-conformists will be brutally treated. From history we can conclude no other consequence. The love, harmony and peace will not extend to the non-compliant.

There are challenging times ahead but Jesus has given us wonderful comfort in His unfailing promise.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

(John 14:1–3)

Now is the time to prepare our hearts and lives for the return of our blessed Lord and Savior. He, He alone can calm the turbulent waters of the mayhem developing in contemporary society. At His return all the trials and tribulations will appear as nothing compared with the joys of eternity. The earnest burden upon our hearts is to encourage all the readers of this book to break the bands of human conformity. We earnestly encourage all to place their confidence in the One who alone can be trusted to guide the human race to the kingdom of eternity where love, harmony, peace and unity will reign throughout unending years.

We commend our readers to the sure source of Truth—the Holy Bible—which alone reveals the infallible precepts of the all-wise God of the Universe. Those who in the saving grace of Jesus follow every principle of the Sacred Word will have the unimaginable joy of sharing eternity with their Maker. We sincerely look forward with great anticipation to sharing the joy of the fellowship of Jesus with you.

Appendix A

The Christian Sabbath

**The Genuine Offspring of the Union of the Holy
Spirit, and the Catholic Church His Spouse.
The Claims of Protestantism to Any Part
Therein Proved to Be Groundless,
Self-Contradictory, and Suicidal**

From *The Catholic Mirror* of
September 2, 1893

Our attention has been called to the above subject in the past week by the receipt of a brochure of twenty-one pages, published by the International Religious-Liberty Association, entitled, "Appeal and Remonstrance," embodying resolutions adopted by the General Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventists (February 24th, '93). The resolutions criticize and censure, with much acerbity, the action of the United States Congress, and of the Supreme Court, for invading the rights of the people by closing the World's Fair on Sunday.

The Adventists are the only body of Christians with the Bible as their teacher, who can find no warrant in its pages for the change of day from the Seventh to the First. Hence their appellation, "Seventh-Day Adventists." Their cardinal principle consists in setting apart Saturday for the exclusive worship of God, in conformity with the positive command of God Himself, repeatedly reiterated in the Sacred Books of the Old and New Testaments, literally obeyed by the Children of Israel for thousands of

years to this day, and endorsed by the teaching and practice of the Son of God whilst on earth.

Per contra, the Protestants of the world, the Adventists excepted, with the *same* Bible as their cherished and sole infallible teacher, by their practice, since their appearance in the Sixteenth century, with the time-honored practice of the Jewish people before their eyes, have rejected the day named for His worship by God, and assumed, in apparent contradiction of His command, a day for His worship never once referred to for that purpose, in the pages of the Sacred Volume.

What Protestant pulpit does not ring almost every Sunday with loud and impassioned invectives against Sabbath violation? Who can forget the fanatical clamor of the Protestant ministers throughout the length and breadth of the land, against opening the gates of the World's Fair on Sunday? The thousands of petitions, signed by millions, to save the Lord's Day from desecration? Surely, such general and widespread excitement and noisy remonstrance could not have existed without the strongest grounds for such animated protests.

And when quarters were assigned at the World's Fair to the various sects of Protestantism for the exhibition of articles, who can forget the emphatic expression of virtuous and conscientious indignation exhibited by our Presbyterian brethren, as soon as they learned of the decision of the Supreme Court not to interfere in the Sunday opening? The newspapers informed us that they flatly refused to utilize the space accorded them, or open their boxes, demanding the right to withdraw the articles, in rigid adherence to their principles, and thus decline all contact with the sacrilegious and Sabbath-breaking Exhibition.

Doubtless, our Calvinistic brethren deserved and shared the sympathy of all the other sects, who, however, lost the opportunity of posing as martyrs in vindication of the Sabbath observance.

They thus became "a spectacle to the world, to angels, and men,"¹ although their Protestant brethren, who failed to share the monopoly, were uncharitably and enviously disposed to attribute

1. All scripture verses quoted in these articles are from the Catholic Version.

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keeping "holy" not Saturday, but Sunday. The discussion of the grounds that led to this unanimity of sentiment and practice for over 300 years, must help toward placing Protestantism on a solid basis in this particular, should the arguments in favor of its position overcome those furnished by the Israelites and Adventists, the Bible, the sole recognized teacher of both litigants, being the umpire and witness. If, however, on the other hand, the latter furnish arguments, incontrovertible by the great mass of Protestants, both classes of litigants, appealing to their common teacher, the Bible, the great body of Protestants, so far from clamoring, as they do with vigorous pertinacity for the strict keeping of Sunday, have no other resource left than the admission that they have been teaching and practicing *what is Scripturally false for over three centuries*, by adopting the teaching and practice of what they have always pretended to believe an apostate church, contrary to every warrant and teaching of Sacred Scripture. To add to the intensity of this Scriptural and unpardonable blunder, it involves one of the most positive and emphatic commands of God to His servant man: "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy."

No Protestant living to-day has ever yet obeyed that command, preferring to follow the apostate church referred to, than his teacher the Bible, which, from Genesis to Revelation, *teaches no other doctrine*, should the Israelites and the Seventh-Day Adventists be correct. Both sides appeal to the Bible as their "infallible" teacher.

Let the Bible decide whether Saturday or Sunday be the day enjoined by God. One of the two bodies must be wrong, and whereas a false position on this all-important question involves terrible penalties, threatened by God Himself, against the transgressor of this "perpetual covenant," we shall enter on the discussion of the merits of the arguments wielded by both sides. Neither is the discussion of this paramount subject above the capacity of ordinary minds, nor does it involve extraordinary study.

It resolves itself into a few plain questions, easy of solution:

- 1st. Which day of the week does the Bible enjoin to be kept holy?
- 2nd. Has the New Testament, modified by precept or practice the original command?

3rd. Have Protestants, since the Sixteenth century, obeyed the command of God by keeping "holy" the day enjoined by their infallible guide and teacher, the Bible; and if not, why not?

To the above three questions we pledge ourselves to furnish as many intelligent answers, which cannot fail to vindicate the truth and uphold the deformity of error.

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and that of the Jewish people on the other, both observing different days of the week for the worship of God, we will proceed to take the testimony of the only available witness to the premises, viz: [that is] the testimony of the teacher common to both claimants, the Bible. The first expression with which we come in contact in the Sacred Word, is found in Gen., 2d chapter, 2d verse: "And on the seventh day He (God) rested from all His work which He had made." The next reference to this matter is to be found in Exodus, 20th chapter, where God commanded the seventh day to be kept, *because* He had Himself rested from the work of creation on that day; and the sacred text informs us that *for that reason* He desired it kept, in the following words: "*Wherefore*, the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." Again, we read in the 31st chapter, 15th verse: "Six days you shall do work; in the seventh day is the Sabbath, the rest holy to the Lord." Sixteenth verse: "*It is an everlasting covenant*," "and a perpetual sign," "for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and in the seventh He ceased from work."¹

In the Old Testament reference is made one hundred and twenty-six times to the Sabbath, and all these texts conspire harmoniously in voicing the will of God commanding the seventh day to be kept, because God Himself *first kept it*, making it obligatory on all as "*a perpetual covenant*." Nor can we imagine any one foolhardy enough to question the identity of Saturday with the sabbath or seventh day, seeing that the people of Israel have been keeping the Saturday from the giving of the law, A.M. 2514 to A.D. 1893, a period of 3,383 years. With the example of the Israelites before our eyes today, there is no historical fact better established than that referred to, viz: that the chosen people of God, the guardians of the Old Testament, the living representatives of the only Divine religion hitherto, had, for a period of 1490 years anterior to Christianity, preserved by weekly practice the living tradition of the correct interpretation of the special day of the week, Saturday, to be kept "holy to the Lord," which tradition they have extended by their practice to an additional period of 1893 years more, thus covering the full extent of the Christian dispensation. We deem it necessary to be perfectly clear on this

1. Scriptures quoted throughout these editorials are from the Catholic Version.

point, for reasons that will appear more fully hereafter. The Bible—the Old Testament—confirmed by the living tradition of a weekly practice for 3383 years by the chosen people of God, teaches, then, with absolute certainty, that God had, Himself, named the day to be “kept holy to Him:”—that the day was Saturday, and that any violation of that command was punishable with death. “Keep you My Sabbath, for it is holy unto you; he that shall profane it shall be put to death; he that shall do any work in it, his soul shall perish in the midst of his people.” Exodus 31 ch. 14 v.

It is impossible to realize a more severe penalty than that so solemnly uttered by God Himself in the above text, on all who violate a command referred to no less than one hundred and twenty-six times in the Old Law. The Ten Commandments of the Old Testament are formally impressed on the memory of the child of the Biblical Christian as soon as possible, but there is not one of the ten made more emphatically familiar, both in Sunday-school and pulpit, than that of keeping “holy” the Sabbath day.

Having secured with absolute certainty the will of God as regards the day to be kept holy, from His sacred word, *because* He rested on that day, which day is confirmed to us by the practice of His chosen people for thousands of years, we are naturally induced to inquire *when and where* God changed the day for His worship, for it is patent to the world that a change of day has taken place, and inasmuch as no indication of such change can be found within the pages of the Old Testament, nor in the practice of the Jewish people who continue for nearly nineteen centuries of Christianity obeying the written command, we must look to the exponent of the Christian dispensation, viz: the New Testament, for the command of God cancelling the old Sabbath, Saturday.

We now approach a period covering little short of nineteen centuries, and proceed to investigate whether the supplemental Divine teacher—the New Testament—contains a decree cancelling the mandate of the Old Law, and, at the same time, substituting a day for the Divinely instituted Sabbath of the Old Law, viz: Saturday; for, inasmuch as Saturday was the day kept, and ordered to be kept by God, *Divine authority alone*, under the form of a cancelling decree, could abolish the Saturday covenant, and another Divine mandate, appointing by name another day to be kept “holy,” other than Saturday, is equally necessary to satisfy

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But, alas! We are once more doomed to disappointment. *Nine*³ times do we find the Sabbath referred to in the "Acts," but it is the *Saturday*, (the old Sabbath). Should our readers desire the proof, we refer them to chapter and verse in each instance. Acts 13c., 14.: again, same chapter, 27v., again, 42v.: again, 44v. Once more, 15c., 31v.⁴ Again, 17c., 2v.;⁵ again 18c., 4v. "And he (Paul) reasoned in the Synagogue *every Sabbath*, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." *Thus the Sabbath (Saturday) from Genesis to Revelation!!!* Thus, it is impossible to find in the New Testament the slightest interference by the Saviour, or His apostles, with the original Sabbath, but on the contrary, an entire acquiescence in the original arrangement; nay a *plenary indorsement* by Him, whilst living, and an unvaried, active participation *in the keeping of that day and no other by the Apostles*, for thirty years after His death, as the Acts of the Apostles have abundantly testified to us.

Hence the conclusion is inevitable, viz: that, of those who follow the Bible as their guide, the Israelites and Seventh-Day Adventists have the exclusive weight of evidence on their side, whilst the Biblical Protestant has not a word in self-defense for his substitution of Sunday for Saturday. More anon [at another time].

3 This should be eight.

4 Should be Acts 15:21, not 31

5 Also Acts 16:13

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Sunday, is to be found in Acts 2nd chapter, 1st verse: "The apostles were all of one accord in one place." (Feast of Pentecost—Sunday.) Now, will this text afford to our Biblical Christian brethren a vestige of hope that Sunday substitutes, at length, Saturday? For when we inform them that the Jews had been keeping *this Sunday* for 1,500 years, and have been keeping it for eighteen centuries after the establishment of Christianity, at the same time keeping the weekly Sabbath, there is not to be found either consolation or comfort in this text. Pentecost is the 50th day after the Passover, which was called the Sabbath of weeks, consisting of seven times seven days; and the day after the completion of the 7th weekly Sabbath Day, was the chief day of the entire Festival, necessarily Sunday. What Israelite would not pity the cause that would seek to discover the origin of the keeping of the first day of the week in his Festival of Pentecost, that has been kept by him yearly for over 3,000 years? Who but the Biblical Christian, driven to the wall for a pretext to excuse his sacrilegious desecration of the Sabbath, always kept by Christ and His Apostles, should have resorted to the Jewish Festival of Pentecost for his act of rebellion against his God and his teacher, the Bible?

Once more, the Biblical apologists, but for the change of day, call our attention to the Acts, 20th chapter, 6th and 7th verses: "And upon *the first day of the week*, when the disciples came together to break bread." etc. To all appearances, the above text should furnish some consolation to our disgruntled Biblical friends, but being a Marplot, we cannot allow them even this crumb of comfort. We reply by the axiom: "*Quod probat nimis, probat nihil.*"— "What proves too much, proves nothing." Let us call attention to the same, Acts 2d chapter, 46th verse: "And they, continuing *daily* in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house," etc. Who does not see at a glance, that the text produced to prove the exclusive prerogative of Sunday, vanishes into thin air—an *ignis fatuus*—when placed in juxtaposition with the 46th verse of the same chapter? What the Biblical Christian claims by this text *for Sunday alone*, the same authority, St. Luke, informs us was *common to every day of the week*: "And they, continuing *daily* in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house."

One text more presents itself apparently leaning towards a substitution of Sunday for Saturday. It is taken from St. Paul's 1 Ep. Cor. 16th chapter, 1st and 2nd verses:

"Now concerning the collection for the saints." "On the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store" &c. Presuming that the request of St. Paul had been strictly attended to, let us call attention to what had been done each Saturday during the Saviour's life, and continued for thirty years after, as the book of Acts informs us.

The followers of the Master met "*every Sabbath*" to hear the word of God: the Scriptures were read "*every Sabbath day.*" "And Paul as his manner was to reason in the *Synagogue every Sabbath*, interposing the name of the Lord Jesus" etc., Acts 18th chapter 4th verse. What more absurd conclusion than to infer that reading of the Scriptures, prayer, exhortation, and preaching, which *formed the routine duties of every Saturday*, as has been abundantly proved, were over-slaughed by a request to take up a collection on *another day of the week?*

In order to appreciate fully the value of this text now under consideration, it is only needful to recall the action of the Apostles and holy women on Good Friday before sundown. They bought the spices and ointments after He was taken down from the cross: they suspended all action until the Sabbath "holy to the Lord" had passed, and then took steps early on Sunday morning to complete the process of embalming the sacred body of Jesus. Why may we ask did they not proceed to complete the work of embalming on Saturday?— Because they knew well that the embalming of the sacred body of their Master would interfere with the strict observance of the Sabbath, the keeping of which was paramount, and until it can be shown that the Sabbath day *immediately preceding the Sunday of our text* had not been kept (which would be false, inasmuch as *every Sabbath had been kept*) the request of St. Paul to make the collection on *Sunday* remains to be classified with the work of the embalming of Christ's body, which could not be effected on the Sabbath, and was consequently deferred to the next convenient day, viz: Sunday, or the first day of the week.

Having disposed of every text to be found in the New Testament referring to the Sabbath (Saturday), and to the first day of

the week (Sunday), and having shown conclusively from these texts, that, so far, not a shadow of pretext can be found in the Sacred Volume for the Biblical substitution of Sunday for Saturday; it only remains for us to investigate the meaning of the expressions "Lord's Day," and "Day of the Lord" to be found in the New Testament, which we propose to do in our next article, and conclude with apposite remarks on the incongruities of a system of religion which we shall have proved to be indefensible, self-contradictory, and suicidal.

Appendix D

The Christian Sabbath

The Genuine Offspring of the Union of the Holy Spirit, and the Catholic Church His Spouse. The Claims of Protestantism to Any Part Therein Proved to be Groundless, Self-Contradictory, and Suicidal

From *The Catholic Mirror* of September 23, 1893

“Halting on crutches of unequal size,
One leg by truth supported, *one by lies*,
Thus sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
Secure of nothing but to lose the race.”

In the present article we propose to investigate carefully a new (and the last) class of proof assumed to convince the Biblical Christian that God had substituted Sunday for Saturday for His worship in the new law, and that the Divine will is to be found recorded by the Holy Ghost in Apostolic writings.

We are informed that this radical change has found expression, over and over again, in a series of texts in which the expression, “The day of the Lord,” or “The Lord’s day,” is to be found.

The class of texts in the New Testament, under the title “Sabbath,” numbering 61 in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles; and the second class, in which “the first day of the week,” or Sunday, having been critically examined (the latter class numbering nine, and having been found not to afford the slightest clue to a change of will on the part of God as to His day of worship by man, we now proceed to examine the third and last class of texts relied on to save the Biblical system from the arraignment of seeking to palm off on the world, in the name of God, a decree for which there is not the slightest warrant or authority from their teacher, the Bible.

The first text of this class is to be found in the Acts of the Apostles 2nd chapter, 20th verse: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord shall come." How many Sundays have rolled by since that prophecy was spoken? So much for that effort to pervert the meaning of the sacred text from the Judgment Day to Sunday! The second text of this class is to be found in 1st Epistle Cor. 1st chapter, 8th verse: "Who also shall confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless *in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" What simpleton does not see that the Apostle here plainly indicates the Day of Judgment? The next text of this class that presents itself is to be found in the same Epistle, 5th chapter, 5th verse: "To deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved *in the day of the Lord Jesus.*" The incestuous Corinthian was, of course, saved on the *Sunday next following!!* How pitiable such a make-shift as this! The fourth text, 2d Cor., 1st chapter, 13th and 14th verses: "And I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end, even as ye also are ours in the day of our Lord Jesus." *Sunday, or the Day of Judgment, which?* The fifth text is from St. Paul to the Philippians, 1st chapter, 6th verse: "Being confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it *until the day of Jesus Christ.*" The good people of Philippi, in attaining perfection *on the following Sunday*, could afford to laugh at our modern rapid transit!

We beg leave to submit our sixth of the class, viz: Philippians, first chapter, tenth verse: "That he may be sincere without offense *unto the day of Christ.*" That day was *next Sunday*, forsooth! not so long to wait after all. The seventh text, 2 Ep. Peter, third chapter, tenth verse: "But *the day of the Lord* will come as a thief in the night." The application of this text to Sunday passes the bounds of absurdity. The eighth text, 2 Ep. Peter, third chapter, twelfth verse: "Waiting for and hastening unto the *coming of the day of the Lord*, by which the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved" etc. This day of the Lord is the same referred to in the previous text, the application of both of which *to Sunday next* would have left the Christian world sleepless the next Saturday night.

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in an appearance in the 16th century, it not only seized on the temporal possessions of the church, but in its vandalic crusade stripped Christianity, as far as it could, of all the sacraments instituted by its founder, of the Holy Sacrifice, &c., &c., retaining nothing but the Bible which its exponents pronounced *their sole teacher* in Christian doctrine and morals. Chief amongst their articles of belief was, and is to-day, the permanent necessity of keeping the Sabbath holy. In fact, it has been for the past 300 years *the only article* of the Christian belief in which there has been a plenary consensus of Biblical representatives. The keeping of the Sabbath constitutes the sum and substance of the Biblical theory. The pulpits resound weekly with incessant tirades against the lax manner of keeping the Sabbath in Catholic countries as contrasted with the proper, Christian, self-satisfied mode of keeping the day in Biblical countries. Who can ever forget the virtuous indignation manifested by the Biblical preachers throughout the length and breath of our country, from every Protestant pulpit, as long as the question of opening the World's Fair on Sunday was yet undecided, and who does not know to-day, that one sect, to mark its holy indignation at the decision, has never yet opened the boxes that contained its articles at the World's Fair?

These superlatively good and unctuous Christians, by combing over their Bibles carefully, can find their counterpart in a certain class of unco-good people in the days of the Redeemer, who haunted him night and day, distressed beyond measure, and scandalized beyond forbearance, because He did not keep the Sabbath in as straight-laced manner as themselves.

They hated Him for using common sense in reference to the day, and He found no epithets expressive enough of His supreme contempt for their pharisaical pride. And it is very probable that the Divine mind has not modified its views to-day anent [concerning] the blatant outcry of their followers and sympathizers at the close of this 19th century. But when we add to all this the fact that whilst the Pharisees of old kept the *true Sabbath*, our modern Pharisees counting on the credulity and simplicity of their dupes, *have never once in their lives kept the Sabbath* which their Divine Master kept to His dying day, and which His Apostles kept, after his example, for thirty years afterwards, according to the Sacred Record.

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of abominations," when it suits their purpose so to designate her—adopted, despite the most terrible threats pronounced by God Himself against those who disobey the command, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath."

Before closing this series of articles, we beg to call our readers' attention once more to our caption, introductory of each, viz: 1st The Christian Sabbath, the genuine offspring of the union of the Holy Spirit, with the Catholic Church, His spouse. 2nd The claim of "Protestantism to any part therein proved to be groundless, self-contradictory and suicidal."

The first proposition needs little proof. The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her Divine Mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. We say by virtue of her Divine Mission, because He who called Himself the "Lord of the Sabbath," endowed her with His own power to teach, "he that heareth you, heareth me;" commanded all who believe in him to hear her, under penalty of being placed with the "heathen and publican" and promising to be with her to the end of the world. She holds her charter as teacher from him—a charter as infallible as perpetual. The Protestant world at its birth found the Christian Sabbath too strongly entrenched to run counter to its existence; it was therefore placed under the necessity of acquiescing in the arrangement, thus implying the Church's right to change the day, for over 300 years. The Christian Sabbath is therefore *to this day* the acknowledged offspring of the Catholic Church as Spouse of the Holy Ghost, without a word of remonstrance from the Protestant world.

Let us now, however, take a glance at our second proposition, with *the Bible alone* as the teacher and guide in faith and morals. This teacher *most emphatically forbids any change in the day for paramount reasons*. The command calls for a "perpetual covenant." The day commanded to be kept by the teacher *has never once been kept*, thereby developing an apostacy from an assumedly fixed principle, as self-contradictory, self-stultifying, and consequently as suicidal as it is within the power of language to express.

Nor are the limits of demoralization yet reached. Far from it. *Their pretence* for leaving the bosom of the Catholic Church was for apostasy from the truth *as taught in the written word*.

They adopted the Written Word as their sole teacher, which they had no sooner done than they abandoned it promptly, as these articles have abundantly proved, and by a perversity as willful as erroneous, they accept the teaching of the Catholic Church in direct opposition to the plain, unvaried and constant teaching of their sole teacher in the most essential doctrine of their religion, thereby emphasizing the situation in what may be aptly designated "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare."

Should any of the Rev. Parsons, who are habituated to howl so vociferously over every real or assumed desecration of that pious fraud, *the Bible Sabbath*, think well of entering a protest against our logical and Scriptural dissection of their mongrel pet, we can promise them that a reasonable attempt on their part to gather up the "*disjecta membra*" of the hybrid, and to restore to it a galvanized existence, will be met with genuine cordiality and respectful consideration on our part. But we can assure our readers that we know these Reverend howlers too well to expect a solitary bark from them in this instance.

And they know us too well to subject themselves to the mortification which a further dissection of this anti-scriptural question would necessarily entail. Their policy now is to "lay low," and they are sure to adopt it.

Scriptural Index

Genesis	17:2-21	226	31:15	196, 288
1:1	26:5	18	31:16	225
1:1, 2	39:9	18	31:18	135
1:2	Exodus		32:16	114
1:4	2:11, 12	245	32:31, 32	245
1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31	12:3	42	34:23	116
172	12:3, 4	116	34:28	227
1:6-8	12:5	117	35:2	198
1:9, 10	12:6	117	Leviticus	
1:9	12:7, 8	117	16:30, 31	126
1:11, 12	12:12, 13	118	22:3	16
1:12	12:19	120	23:5-7, 10-11	37
1:14	12:28	118	23:7, 8	115
1:16-18	12:46	119	23:11	122
1:20-22	16:15-20	180	23:12, 13	122
1:24, 25	16:21-23	18	23:18	137
1:26-28	16:22-26	180	23:21	115
1:27	16:23	16, 196	23:24	137
2:1-3	16:25	16, 27	23:24, 25	115
170, 174	16:25, 26	18	23:27, 28	115
2:2	16:26	15	23:29	126
2:3	16:26, 27	16	23:32	24
2:4	16:29	16	23:34-36	115
2:10-14	16:30	16	23:35	129
2:15	20:6	132	23:40	129
2:19, 20	20:8	190, 210,	Numbers	
2:20	212		10:10	136
3:15	20:8-11	209	15:32-36	197
3:17	20:9	181	23:19	211
4:7	20:9-10	159, 196	28:11	136
4:10-12	20:10	17, 27, 46,	Deuteronomy	
6:18	155, 181, 182		4:11	41
6:22	20:10, 11	16	5:14	46
7:11	20:11	17, 175,	5:16	17
7:21-23	180, 182		9:9	227
7:24	24:7	227	10:3-5	135
8:3	24:8	227	16:12-13	129
8:4	31:12-18	210	16:16	116
9:15	31:13	66, 86,	31:24-26	135
15:18	142, 211, 224		31:26	114
17:11	31:14	181, 289		

Joshua			
3:6	227		
2 Samuel			
18:14	41		
1 Kings			
19:18	21		
2 Kings			
18:3-7	23		
18:11, 12	22		
19:37	24		
1 Chronicles			
16:29	194		
Nehemiah			
10:31	198		
13:15-17	198		
13:16-22	181		
13:17, 18	21		
13:18	199		
13:19-21	199		
13:29	227		
Job			
38:4-7	108		
Psalms			
5:7	194		
16:11	250		
25:6	132		
29:2	194		
33:6	15, 108		
33:9	15, 108, 164		
40:8	230		
45:2	131		
74:12	42		
89:4	178		
92:1-5	110		
92:3	24		
92:4, 5	24		
95:10, 11	53		
95:6	194		
96:9	194		
		116:15	103
		119:11	245
		119:105	245
		119:165	143
		123:2	178
		124:8	178
		148:5	108
	Proverbs		
	3:34	131	
	30:19	40	
	Isaiah		
	8:16	209	
	14:12-15	174	
	24:5	227	
	28:9, 10	81	
	33:16	218	
	35:8	81	
	40:25	164	
	56:1-2, 4-7	203	
	56:2	202	
	58:12-14	202	
	58:13	151	
	65:17	111	
	65:25	112	
	66:22	111	
	66:23	113, 175	
	Jeremiah		
	17:9	263	
	17:21-27	198	
	26:14, 15	103	
	31:31-33	146	
	31:31-33	229	
	Ezekiel		
	9:1-6	205	
	9:4-6	214	
	20:12	66, 210	
	20:20	66, 176, 211	
	27:4	42	
	28:2	42	
	Daniel		
	7:25	83	
	9:4	132	
	Amos		
	3:3	280	
	Jonah		
	2:3	42	
	Nahum		
	1:9	113	
	Zephaniah		
	3:13	177, 247	
	Malachi		
	3:6	211	
	4:5	172	
	Matthew		
	1:21	141, 162	
	4:4	211	
	5:44	249	
	6:16	121	
	7:24, 25	241	
	11:28, 29	53	
	12:1, 2	29	
	12:3-8	29	
	12:8	27, 182	
	12:9, 10	30	
	12:11, 12	30	
	12:12	182	
	12:13	30	
	12:40	36, 41, 42, 43	
	15:9	25, 27, 153, 195	
	16:16-19	239	
	16:18	84	
	16:21	38, 42	
	17:23	38	
	20:19	38	
	22:16-18	121	
	22:23	121	
	(continues)		

Matthew (cont.)

[23:13-33](#) 121
[23:37](#) 249
[23:39](#) 43
[24:3](#) [32](#), 273
[24:4, 5](#) 274
[24:6, 7](#) 274
[24:8-10](#) 274
[24:11](#) 274
[24:12, 13](#) 274
[24:15-21](#) 32
[24:17, 18](#) 34
[24:21, 22](#) 275
[24:24](#) 207
[25:34-40](#) 141
[26:26-28](#) [60](#), [96](#)
[26:29](#) 60
[27:51-53](#) 125
[27:63, 64](#) 39
[28:1](#) 43

Mark

[1:32-34](#) 29
[2:27](#) [46](#), [109](#),
[154](#)
[2:27, 28](#) 175
[2:28](#) [27](#), [58](#), [68](#),
[154](#), 182, 290n
[3:14-19](#) 240
[8:15](#) 121
[8:31](#) 38
[9:31](#) 38
[10:34](#) 38
[15:42](#) 35
[16:1, 2](#) 44

Luke

[1:70-73](#) 228
[4:14-16](#) 26
[4:16](#) [50](#), 182
[4:29](#) 26
[4:30](#) 26
[4:30-39](#) 28

[4:40](#) 28
[6:5](#) [27](#), 182
[9:22](#) 39
[12:1](#) 121
[13:10](#) 27
[13:10-17](#) 31
[14:1-6](#) 31
[14:5](#) 31
[14:21](#) 251
[14:23, 24](#) 251
[18:12](#) 44
[18:33](#) 39
[23:44-46](#) 119
[23:54](#) [35](#), 290
[23:56](#) 290
[23:56-24:1](#) 45
[24:1, 13, 21](#) [37](#),
[123](#)
[24:7](#) 39
[24:21](#) 39
[24:33-40](#) 294
[24:46](#) 39

John

[1:1-3](#) 165
[1:14, 15](#) 165
[1:29](#) 118
[4:23](#) 195
[5:16-18](#) 31
[5:8](#) 31
[6:27](#) 204
[6:51](#) 119
[12:36](#) 43
[13:35](#) 249
[14:1-3](#) 281
[15:2](#) 150
[15:4, 5](#) [208](#), [264](#)
[15:5](#) 150
[15:6](#) 251
[15:12](#) 248
[15:17](#) 249
[16:13](#) 81

[17:17](#) [244](#), [275](#)
[17:19](#) 244
[17:21](#) 244
[18:10-11](#) 249
[18:36](#) 249
[19:31](#) [35](#), [36](#), [45](#)
[19:33, 36](#) 119
[19:42](#) 35
[20:1](#) 67
[20:17](#) 123
[20:19](#) [64](#), [68](#),
[294](#), 300
[20:26, 29](#) 294

Acts

[1:3](#) 125
[1:12](#) 47
[2:1](#) 295
[2:20](#) 299
[2:46](#) [63](#), 295
[3:19](#) 128
[3:25](#) 228
[4:12](#) [141](#), [162](#)
[5:29](#) 200
[5:31](#) 141
[6:1-4](#) 240
[8:1-3](#) 245
[13:14](#) [48](#), [291](#)
[13:15](#) 48
[13:27](#) [48](#), [291](#)
[13:39](#) 141
[13:42](#) [49](#), [291](#)
[13:44](#) [49](#), [291](#)
[15:21](#) [50](#), [291n](#)
[15:31](#) 291
[16:13](#) [50](#), [291n](#)
[17:2](#) [50](#), [291](#)
[18:1-4](#) 62
[18:4](#) [50](#), [291](#),
[293](#), [296](#)
[20:6, 7](#) 295
[20:7](#) 65

- 20:7-12 63
 27:14-19 40
- Romans**
 1:17 134
 3:20 18
 4:11 210
 4:15 18
 5:5 231
 6:4, 5 59
 7:15 149
 7:17 149
 7:19 149
 7:24 149
 7:25 149
 8:1-4 149
 8:35-39 150
 11:26, 27 228
 12:2 263
 13:8-10 133
- 1 Corinthians**
 1:8 299
 2:9 176
 3:16, 17 136
 5:5 172, 299
 5:7 118
 5:8 117, 121
 6 19, 20/136
 10:31 136
 10:4 241
 11:27-29 120
 15:20 38, 122
 15:23 122
 15:4 39
 15:51-53 112, 148
 16:1, 2 296
 16:2 60
 16:34 132
- 2 Corinthians**
 1:13, 14 299
 1:22 204
 3:6 140
- 5:14 231
 10:3-5 250
 12:9 247
- Galatians**
 2:16 162
 3:15-18, 24 229
 3:29 12
 5:16-18 142
 5:19-21 142
 5:22-24 142
 5:25 142
- Ephesians**
 1:13 204
 2:1-10 134
 2:8, 9 95, 132,
 140, 162
 2:10 96, 140,
 162
 4:12-15 275
 4:13-15 244
 4:30 204
- Philippians**
 1:6 299
 1:10 299
- Colossians**
 1:23 192
 2:11, 12 59, 97
 2:11-13 224
 2:11-16 134
 2:14 134
 2:14-16 225
 2:14-17 114
 2:15 131
 2:16 51, 136
 2:17 51, 137
- 1 Thessalonians**
 5:2 172
- 2 Thessalonians**
 1:8-9 213
- 2 Timothy**
 2:13 142
 3:13 263, 275
 3:15 159
 3:16 195
- Titus**
 1:2 211
 1:5-7 240
 2:11, 12 207, 231
 3:5 208
 3:7 207, 231
- Hebrews**
 1:10-12 14
 2:3 247
 4:4 52
 4:7 52
 4:8 52
 4:10, 11 53
 4:15 120
 8:3-5 138
 8:10 146, 263
 9:12 230
 9:22-24 128
 10:16 146, 230,
 263
 10:25 194
 11:3 108
 11:4 132
 11:17 132
 11:24-26 132
 12:2 162
 13:20 230
- James**
 1:12 95, 176
 2:10-12 133
 2:5 95, 176
- 1 Peter**
 1:19 119
 1:2 119
 (continues)

1 Peter (cont.)[1:22, 23](#) 245[2:21-22](#) [139](#), [147](#)[2:22](#) [177](#)**2 Peter**[3:5](#) [108](#)[3:7](#) [111](#), [172](#)[3:8](#) [171](#)[3:10](#) [111](#), [172](#),[299](#)[3:12](#) [111](#), [299](#)[3:13](#) [111](#)**1 John**[1:9](#) [125](#)[3:2](#) [148](#)[3:3](#) [148](#)[3:4](#) [17](#)[3:6-9](#) [148](#)[4:19](#) [231](#), [248](#)**Jude**[24](#) [147](#)**Revelation**[1:10](#) [45](#), [67](#),[300](#)[7:3](#) [206](#), [214](#)[12:11](#) [246](#)[12:17](#) [110](#), [207](#),[279](#)[13:5-7](#) [214](#)[13:7](#) [276](#)[13:8](#) [215](#), [238](#),[275](#)[13:11](#) [214](#)[13:11-17](#) [237](#)[13:12](#), [15](#) [238](#)[13:15](#) [216](#), [279](#)[13:16](#) [214](#), [217](#)[13:16](#), [17](#) [213](#)[13:16](#), [17](#), [14:9](#), [11](#);[15:2](#); [16:2](#); [19:20](#);[20:4](#) [213](#)[13:17](#) [217](#)[14:4](#) [246](#)[14:5](#) [177](#)[14:7](#) [127](#), [210](#)[14:7](#), [9](#), [10](#) [193](#)[14:9-11](#) [218](#)[14:12](#) [95](#), [105](#),[110](#), [133](#), [207](#), [246](#)[14:14](#) [127](#)[14:16-18](#) [281](#)[15:2](#) [218](#)[16:2](#) [219](#)[16:10](#), [11](#) [219](#)[19:20](#) [219](#)[20:4](#) [220](#)[20:9](#), [14](#) [172](#)[20:11](#) [171](#)[20:12](#) [128](#)[21:1](#) [111](#), [175](#)[21:4](#) [112](#)[21:5](#) [111](#)[22:14](#) [110](#), [134](#),[143](#), [208](#)

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THE LORD'S DAY

The Lord's Day is a term used only once in Scripture. John the beloved declared, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (*Revelation 1:10*). In his famous encyclical *Dies Domini*, Pope John Paul II commenced with these words, "*The Lord's Day—as Sunday was called from apostolic times.*" To many Protestants, this was an unexpected and much approved declaration from the pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church. Protestants were not accustomed to hear such a declaration issuing forth from Roman Catholic sources, let alone from the supreme pontiff himself.

The issue of the apostolic origin of Sunday worship had often been a contentious one between Roman Catholics and Protestants. The pope used words that had issued forth previously almost exclusively from Protestant sources. It was not uncommon, especially during the 19th and early 20th centuries for Roman Catholics to challenge this declaration of Protestant authors. Indeed the Roman Catholic Church routinely denied any apostolic link to Sunday observance as the special day of Christian worship. Roman Catholic apologists declared that there was no Biblical nor apostolic link between Sunday observance and the early Christian Church. Boldly, Roman Catholic theologians had claimed that the origin of the 1st day as the Christians' Lord's Day had its source in a decision voted by the Council of Laodicea held in the 4th century.

One prominent Roman Catholic spokesman affirmed that the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath was a mark of the authority of the Roman Church:

"Of course the Catholic church claims that the change [of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday] was her act. And the act is the *mark* of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." (C.F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbins, Archbishop of Baltimore in the 1890s, emphasis added)

Other Roman Catholic spokesmen have claimed that Protestants, by observing Sunday as the special day commemorating the resurrection, demonstrated that Protestants acknowledge the primacy and authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus many Protestant leaders, especially those close to the ecumenical process, were relieved to hear the Pope's change of direction on this important topic.

In preparing this book, the authors thoroughly researched the claims made in favor of the apostolic roots of the Lord's Day, Sunday. Their research challenges some of the most cherished beliefs of the Christian Church. This is a book that is essential reading for every seminary professor, every church pastor or priest, as well as every devout Christian. Its fascinating conclusions will challenge the thinking of, and in many cases will be received enthusiastically by, both laity and clergy alike.

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