

Fisk

DIALOGUE WITH A SEVENTH DAYIST
A Biblical Discussion in Six Sessions

Designations:

7th Dayist = A Seventh Day Adherent
Mr. Allgrace = One standing for full grace
SDA(s) = Seventh Day Adventist(s-ism)

First Session

Mr. Allgrace: Hello neighbor; nice to see you. I notice you are all dressed up like you're going places on this fine Saturday morning.

7th Dayist: Yes; I'm not going to spend the day hammering on my roof or mowing my lawn. I've got better things in mind.

Mr. Allgrace: Oh, perhaps you are one of those who observe the seventh day Sabbath and worships on Saturday.

7th Dayist: Yes indeed, we follow what God laid down in the Bible and we observe His holy day. It is part of the Law of God and is not to be lightly disregarded if one seeks to obey Him.

Mr. Allgrace: But today we are not under law but under grace. That is clearly stated in the New Testament (Romans 6:14, Galatians 5:18, etc.).

7th Dayist: Ah, this gives me a good place to unfold the Scriptures to you and explain what is the great misunderstanding of so many of you. Those statements, "not under law," are surely true, but what "law" is it referring to? That is the question. Now if you carefully examine the Bible you will find that there are two leading kinds of law referred to throughout Scripture. One is the eternal Law of God, the moral law, and that is found in the Ten Commandments. The other is the ceremonial law, the law of Moses, of rituals and sacrifices. That, and that alone, is what has been done away with. This is most evident as seen

in Ephesians 2:15, "abolished...the law of commandments contained in ordinances," and in Colossians 2:14, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us,...nailing it to his cross." This is so often overlooked. Of course we no longer offer animal sacrifices, we do not observe feast days as commanded in the law of Moses. All that, we readily acknowledge, has been done away. But certainly the eternal Law of God has not been cancelled; we are still not to worship idols, not to take the name of God in vain, not to lie, steal, murder, et cetera. And just as sure the positive parts of the Ten Commandments remain, like honoring father and thy mother, and observing the Sabbath as ordained of God. Follow this distinction and you will see that your confidently cited references about what was done away doesn't ~~hold, doesn't~~ relieve us of our higher obligation to the Law of God.

Mr. Allgrace: So you are saying Bible references to ceremonial observances, the law of Moses, are that part which was done away, and the Law of God in the Ten Commandments is above the others and abide forever?

7th Dayist: True; now you are getting on the right track; glad you see it.

Mr. Allgrace: Not so fast, my friend. If such a division of law in Scripture is valid, it should hold when the Bible is studied throughout. Right?

7th Dayist: Yes, surely.

Mr. Allgrace: Ah, but I fear that is a craftily worked out scheme, man made, and does not hold up when closely tested. Careful analysis of Scripture proves just the opposite.

7th Dayist: What! Surely you cannot mean it. This vital distinction has been followed through again and again and helps clarify things in Bible study.

Mr. Allgrace: Very well; let's test it. If I find ceremonials, the Law of Moses, referred to as "the Law of God," something is wrong. And if I find something in the Ten Commandments referred to as "the Law of Moses," the whole distinction falls down.

7th Dayist: Perhaps, but I hardly think that will be the case.

Mr. Allgrace: O.K., here we go. Turn in your Bible to Luke 2:23, 24. After Jesus was born, his parents brought Him to Jerusalem and offered "a sacrifice according to that which is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Now that certainly was ceremonial observance and should have been referred to as the Law of Moses, but it was not. Even in the Old Testament we find something similar. In I Chronicles 16:40 we read of burnt-offerings "upon the alter of the burnt-offering continually...to do according to all that is written in the law of the Lord." And the word "Lord" there is Jehovah, God. The same is found again in II Chronicles 31:3. But

according to your theory these should be referred to as the law of Moses; why aren't they then? Now the second way your system falls down. In Mark 7:10, Jesus Himself declares, "Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother." And you yourself just brought that up as the Ten Commandments, the law of God. Then why does Jesus attribute it to Moses? (The same is found in Matthew 15:4). Look also at Hebrews 10:28, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses." That is like the man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36), yet in Hebrews the reference is to the law of Moses, which definitely included the Ten Commandments. Something else is of interest here. In Nehemiah 8 the terms "law of Moses" and "law of God" are used interchangeably (see particularly verses 1, 8, 14, 18, all referring to the same thing). So your system completely breaks down. When it says we are not under law you cannot dodge it so easily.

7th Dayist: But if you are saying we are no longer under the Ten Commandments, God's eternal moral law, then no one would be obligated to refrain from lying, stealing, committing adultery, et cetera. Horrors, that would lead to anarchy, a complete breakdown of society. The Ten Commandments have been recognized as the very foundation of well ordered behavior.

Mr. Allgrace: Seems that way, but what I am saying is that we are not under the Ten Commandments as a set of laws, as a tightly bound system. Yet if you look carefully you will find that actually nine of the Ten Commandments, and only those nine, are repeated in the New Testament and elevated to a higher level, and other spiritual precepts are given along with them. Let me tell you about a chart I made when I was ministering on the mission field abroad. Some Seventh Day Adventists came into our area and began to confuse our people. So I got a piece of canvas and made a chart which I stretched across the front of our meeting place. In one column I listed the Ten Commandments as set forth in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. In a corresponding column I listed New Testament references where each was found in the New Testament for the church after the resurrection of Christ. In fact I had two references for each, except that for the fourth commandment this column was blank. I challenged these good folks to help me find a post-resurrection reference to fill in that space for the fourth commandment (the Sabbath). They never could find one.*

7th Dayist: But Jesus kept the Sabbath and we can find that in the New Testament; I can prove it.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, He observed the Sabbath, but that was before the ordinances were nailed to the Cross at His death, as you

*See Appenxix A, p. 51.

yourself referred to it. That's why I said all but one were repeated after His resurrection. But the Sabbath never.

7th Dayist: Ah, but wait. I believe we can find that the apostle Paul observed the Sabbath, and that was after the resurrection.

Mr. Allgrace: Paul may have observed it, but he never suggested that anyone else keep it. The obvious reason Paul heeded it was because he wanted to witness to his fellow Jews, and they, still bound by the old order, assembled on that day, and he could reach more of them when they were together with copies of the Scripture (see I Cor. 9:20). So you will find that every observance of the Sabbath in the New Testament is connected with Jewish usage.

7th Dayist: Now let me see; oh yes, I believe Jesus said he did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it; yes, that is in Matthew 5:17.

Mr. Allgrace: True, Jesus did not come to destroy any law, not even the ceremonials, but He fulfilled them. "Fulfill" means to complete, accomplish the purpose of; as we find in Luke 24:44, He said "all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." Now we know that refers to things to be completed. The word in this Luke text is the same word in the original as "fulfilled" in Matthew 5. And in Acts 19:21 the same word is translated "ended;" while in

Acts 7:30 it is translated "expired" ("when the forty years were expired")! All that shows the word surely means brought to the place where it fully served its purpose. In Matthew this word occurs 17 times, and 13 times it has to do with prophecy being fulfilled, which could not mean being continued. Let me give you an illustration. You want to build a new house and you have an architect draw up plans for it. Then you engage a contractor to build according to the plans. When it is completed, you see that the house has been built as required; it is finished. The contractor did not destroy the plans, he fulfilled them. Now you may consider you are through with the blueprints; they fulfilled their purpose. You don't have to destroy the plans, but on the other hand, you don't hang them up on the wall and keep endeavoring to see that they are being complied with. The plans may be interesting to look at once in a while, but they are no longer of any essential importance to you; they were fulfilled.

7th Dayist: Well, I'll have to consider all this further. I've got to go now. Let's continue this another time.

Second Session

Mr. Allgrace: Howdy. Glad to see you again. How have you been?

7th Dayist: I'm fine, thanks. Now I've been pondering the things you brought up. Before we go further, I'd like to ask you a question. Can you give me a Scripture definition of sin?

Mr. Allgrace: Sure; I'm not surprised you bring it up.

Scripture says in I John 5:17, "All unrighteousness is sin."

And Romans 14:23 says, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

7th Dayist: But you must be purposely avoiding one of the leading definitions of sin. In I John 3:4 it says, "Sin is the transgression of the law." Thus if there is sin now—and you surely admit there is—there must be some outstanding law before us to make it possible, for "sin is the transgression of the law." So God's law could not have been done away with.

Mr. Allgrace: That may seem to be clear to you, but let me call your attention to Romans 2 where it speaks of those who "have sinned without the law," verse 12; and verse 14 speaks of "the Gentiles which have not the law." And Romans 5:13 says that "until the law sin was in the world." So sin does not depend upon the law you refer to. Furthermore, in the text you cite, I John 3:4, there is no definite article in the original before law, so it can properly be rendered, "sin is transgression of law." What law? It could be any law or command then in vogue. I see most of the scholarly

translations now render it, "sin is lawlessness." But anyway, today we are told that we are under "the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2, I Cor. 9:21). That should be our goal in these days. It is pointedly said that to turn away from Christ is the greatest sin one may commit. The Holy Spirit would convict the world, not of breaking the Ten Commandments, but "of sin because they believe not on me," Jesus said (John 16:9).

7th Dayist: I can admit most of that, but it doesn't mean that we don't still also have God's eternal law, the Ten Commandments.

Mr. Allgrace: God's "eternal law?" Where do you get that? Show me any place in the Bible where the Ten Commandments are ever called the eternal law of God, or for that matter, the abiding law of God, or the unchanging law of God, or the immutable law of God, or where they are in any way designated as perpetual, continual, or everlasting. In fact, as a set of laws they are not even referred to as "the law of God," although I have heard Sabbath keepers again and again apply these various terms to them. But not according to Scripture.

7th Dayist: Perhaps, but I believe in the Psalms it says "God's commandments stand fast forever and ever.

Mr. Allgrace: That is in Psalms 111:7-8. It says, "all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever."

The word "commandments" there is really precepts as the better translations now have it, even the New King James version. But if you want to take it the old way, notice it says "all" his commandments. That would include ceremonials, sacrifices and all, if you are going to press it.

7th Dayist: Well then, how about the New Testament. In I John 2:3, 4, we are told, "...we know him if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar." And Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments' (John 14:15). And in Revelation 12:17 it speaks of the remnant "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." So the commandments are in effect even to the end.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, but again I must ask, what commandments? It doesn't say the Ten Commandments; it doesn't say keeping the Sabbath. But Revelation 12:17 combines the keeping of the commandments of God with having "the testimony of Jesus Christ." Similarly, chapter 14:12 combines keeping the commandments with "the faith of Jesus Christ." So it must be Jesus' New Testament commandments, like that to love one another, etc. And as to those references in Revelation, a number of Bible students believe they refer to the 144,000, as in that 14th chapter, v. 1 and 3. Early in their history, the SDAs believed they were to be the 144,000. But

as their number grew, they saw they were increasing beyond that figure, so they had to abandon that interpretation. But in abandoning it, they failed to abandon that which was tied in with it! However, the Ten Commandments are not in any of these references. Once more, it could include ceremonial ones. It would be just as logical for a Jew to start offering animal sacrifices today in order to "keep the commandments of God."

7th Dayist: But the ceremonials were done away, and they alone. Unless you can show me that the Ten Commandments were abolished, I'll still believe that they all hold for us, for they are basic.

Mr. Allgrace: All right, let me show you. Turn in your Bible to II Corinthians 3:6-13. This whole passage should be carefully studied. Verse 7 speaks of that which was "written and engraven in stones," and refers it to Moses, so that could only be the Ten Commandments. Then verse 11 says that very thing was "done away," and verse 13 that it was "abolished." There you have it; the Ten Commandments were done away and finally abolished. Now it may possibly be thought that that which was "done away" in verse 7, was the glory of Moses' face, etc. But in verse 9 it certainly is something more tangible, for that referred to is "the ministration of condemnation," and the glory of Moses' face could not by any stretch be called a ministration of

condemnation, but the Ten Commandments proved to be just that. Furthermore, when (beyond the Ten Commandments) Moses' face, the glory radiating from it, and the vail he put on are referred to, of none of these things would "abolished" be appropriate; they naturally passed away while "abolished" implies something more positive. Now look even more closely at that word "abolished." In both the English and the Greek it is the same word as is used of the ceremonials in Ephesians 2:15 which you yourself brought up as showing that the ceremonial law was abolished. So you can't have it both ways; if the ceremonial law was abolished, so were the Ten Commandments which were written and graven on stone. Sorry my friend, but I've sort of got you over a barrel here.

7th Dayist: Well, I hope it's not a barrel full of gun powder.

Mr. Allgrace: No, more likely full of salt pork.

7th Dayist: Horrors, I wouldn't go for that.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, I know you people strictly avoid pork—

incidentally part of the ceremonial law which you say was done away. But let's go back. I have still another passage showing the decalogue was ended. Turn to Romans 7:1-7. This passage says "ye are become dead to the law" (v. 4), and "now we are delivered from the law" (v. 6). But you may ask, what law is referred to? Well, verse 7 answers by saying, "the law said, Thou shalt not covet." And where is

that found? In the Ten Commandments. I have searched through the Old Testament and find that only in the Ten Commandments is that set forth as a definite command. Now notice that this passage is speaking of the marriage bond, and that is included in the tenth commandment (Exodus 20:17). This Romans 7 passage says that if a married woman goes to another man, "she shall be called an adulteress" (v. 3), a terrible thing. Even so, if a person claims to be united to Christ and at the same time tries to hold onto the Old Testament law, he is violating what should be his exclusive commitment, and that is spiritual adultery, an awful thought. You see it was only when her husband died that she was free to marry another (v. 2), and only when we are free from the old law can we be really be considered Christ's, otherwise we are in a spiritually adulterous relationship. I don't think you would want to be so considered. So you should die to the law in order to be married to Christ (v. 4).

7th Dayist: Well, I'll have to study that some more.

Mr. Allgrace: Please do. But note that we now have two New Testament passages which certainly point out that we are no longer under the decalogue, and others bear this out.

7th Dayist: But there's still a problem with that. If you're saying we no longer have the Ten commandments, then we have

no definite standards of conduct, and we surely need definite rules to show us how to live.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, I'm not surprised you say that, and it is important, and we can take up that later. But mark first how in these two discussions we have struck at the very foundation of the SDA system. We saw that the distinction between ceremonial law and the Ten Commandments collapses, and further, the Ten Commandments as such were done away, although nine are repeated in the New Testament and raised to a higher level as we intimated. This strikes at the very heart of SDA teaching. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3). No need to argue about Mrs. White's claims, or who changed the day of worship, or the heavenly sanctuary theory, etc., or if it is possible to keep the Sabbath as set forth in the Old Testament on a round world today. We are not bound by the old law, and that should settle it.

7th Dayist: Well, I'm not so sure. So let's continue this when we meet again.

Mr. Allgrace: Fine; I'll be glad to. And we can look into such things as what should be the standard for believers in this day.

Third Session

Mr. Allgrace: Hello. I was expecting we'd meet again. Got your Bible?

7th Dayist: Sure have. And you suggested we take up the standard of conduct for today in view of your claim that we are not under the Ten Commandments any longer.

Mr. Allgrace: Right, and this is an important matter. I know it has long been the contention of SDAs to say that if one is not under the law then he is free to break the law; that if we do not have the Ten Commandments one could just go on sinning with nothing to restrain him. That is a tragic concept, for it leads so many to overlook the wonderful higher, nobler principles God wants His children to recognize for these times. But notice first, Scripture's direct answer to the question. Turn to Romans 6:15 where we read, "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." There it is definitely stated we are not under the law, and also that this very fact doesn't leave us free to live in sin. Compare this with the first two verses of the same chapter, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God Forbid." And a study of this sixth chapter of Romans will show you the higher principle, the glorious privilege we have to yield to and follow Christ. So just because we are free from the law doesn't mean we go on in sin, for the higher principle is at work deep within us.

You see, being born again and possessing the new nature from a divine source (II Cor. 5:17, Eph. 4:24), and having the Holy Spirit to direct us (Rom 8:4, 14, 15; Eph. 3:16), we conform to Christ as our ideal rather than to the law. Some interesting things on this are brought out in Hebrews. In chapter 12:2 we are expected to be "looking unto Jesus" as our focal point. And in the next chapter Jesus is set forth as working in us, as it says, He is able to "make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ" (13:21). Note the last three words, showing how it all comes "through Jesus Christ." Although we in ourselves are indeed weak, Christ is continually held forth in the New Testament in two ways; first as the prototype of the believer, and then as our source of strength. Notice the first, Christ, and not the law, is our norm, as it says in I Peter 2:21, "For even hereunto were you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps;" and I John 2:6, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." And then at the same time He gives us the strength we need. As it says in II Corinthians 3:5, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves...but our sufficiency is of God;" so Paul, the writer of that text can say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Again,

we read in II Peter 1:3, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." How comprehensive that text is! And observe that it all comes through the One whom we follow, and not through trying to live by the law. There really is a great deal in the New Testament on this, and it's a pity that it has been overlooked by so many.

7th Dayist: But don't you think we recognize and respect Christ? One of our authors wrote a wonderful little book, Steps To Christ, and it has gone through many editions, helping many.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, I have that book by Mrs. White. But if it went far enough it would show that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:4), and being the end of the law He provides all that we need to live as we should. For example, notice several verses on it in Colossians. Colossians 2:6 says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him," and verse 10 says, "Ye are complete in him." These statements are all-encompassing, showing that we no longer need the old decalogue. And in the next chapter we read of "Christ who is our life," and "Christ is all, and in all" (vs. 4, 11); while in chapter one it says, "that in all things he might have the preeminence," etc. So you see how

much we have in Christ—we don't need anything else. It has been well said, we live not by compliance to precept, but by conformity to a Person, and that Person who supplies all is the Son of God Himself.

7th Dayist: Well, I've been trying to follow you, and it all sounds very nice, but it seems to me the whole thing is too vague, too indefinite for a person to be able to pinpoint how he should actually shape his conduct.

Mr. Allgrace: Oh, don't you see that there is a lot in the New Testament on the subject of one's practical walk. Take for example the epistles of Paul and the other Apostles. See how full they are of the matter of how we should walk, how to treat fellow believers, how to behave before the people of the world, as well as how to worship, how to pray and commune with God, and much more. And with all that ample instruction, not a word about going back to the Ten Commandments, nor any order to observe the Sabbath as you folks do. Ponder that. To see the force of it, take your concordance and look up words like "walk" in the epistles. Note how many times we are told how we as Christians should walk or behave, over and over again; and of course never once is it suggested that our walk should be directed by or conformed to the Ten Commandments. Or, if you want to try something else, just try reading any or all of the epistles by themselves, read straight through, and you will see a lot

both on our practical walk and on our having Christ and Him alone as our sufficiency. Oh I only wish you people would read through large portions of the Bible by itself, read thoughtfully and just take it for what it says. I have observed that SDA's by and large, read avidly their own publications like Mrs. White's, but hardly ever read for their own enlightenment a single book or even an entire chapter of the New Testament straight through. Wouldn't I embarrass you if I asked you how long it has been since you read a chapter or two just to get what it says itself. Take for example that brief epistle to the Colossians, four short chapters (95 verses). The average reader, I suppose, could read it through in 10 or 12 minutes, or read it slowly and thoughtfully in 15 or a few more minutes. And if they really let it speak to them they would learn so much.

7th Dayist: Well, we have Bible studies and I think our teachers are pretty well versed in both the Old and New Testaments. I've learned a lot of Bible truth from them.

Mr. Allgrace: Now speaking of teaching, did you know that, not being under the law, grace itself is our great teacher, showing us all we really need to live by? See it says so in Titus 2:12, 13, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and wordly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." So

grace actually "teaches," and just see what it teaches! That is what God wants for these days. And then note how Ephesians 4 shows that we actually learn in Christ. After revealing how the Gentiles live (v. 17-19), it says, "But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus" (v. 20, 21, emphasis added). So God is bringing us like a class of students up to a higher level, expecting us to thoughtfully recognize and respond to something above the ABCs stage, something whereby we use some initiative to trace out and think through our privileges in grace. And in it all He evidently wants our response to be voluntary, not of compulsion. Like Paul's service where he says, "If I do this thing willingly, I have a reward" (I Cor. 9:17), or as Peter says regarding the service of others, "not by constraint, but willingly" (I Peter 5:2). Isn't that a higher principle? It is seen even in our giving which should be voluntary, not a strict tithe as the SDAs expect, but as is spoken of in II Corinthians, "a readiness to will...for if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted..." and, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart,...not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver" (8:11, 12; 9:7). I don't think God is really pleased when we have to give a tithe. So also our entire walk should be similarly based, that is, voluntary

and from the heart. As it says in I Timothy 1:5, "Now the end of the commandment is charity (love) out of a pure heart and a good conscience." Think that through. And then see what love working in us will do. Romans 13:8-10 says, "he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Then it lists those of the Ten Commandments which are repeated in the New Testament, as I said earlier, but not the Sabbath commandment (v. 9), and then it says again, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Isn't that amazing? And Galatians 5:13, 14, repeats very much the same thing, even going further for it shows that we thereby "have been called unto liberty...for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and the first verse of that chapter says, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." So come on, my friend, move over onto the wonderful ground of Christian liberty. And don't be misled by SDA publications which, I'll admit, refer in part to some of the things I've brought out here, but then again will bring in the importance of compliance with the law—they have to do that or they would cease to be seventh day Adventists. So there is among them a good deal of what may be called double talk, ^{yes, a split-level theology.} Indeed, it can be seen even in much of Ellen G. White's writings where statements are found on

opposite sides of various questions (also as in more recent Seventh Day Adventists Believe.... 27 Fundamental Doctrines).*

7th Dayist: Well, I'll have to study these things through a little more and think them out. But I still believe without the Ten Commandments most people will do pretty much just as they please.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, I've heard that before. But the people of the world won't pay attention even to the Ten Commandments anyway. And as to doing what one pleases, you might find that is true in a sense in which you didn't intend it. For the one born again and with the Spirit of God dwelling within him, prompting and motivating him, it will please him to do what is right, pure, kind, noble—all that is upright in God's sight. As it says in Colossians 1:10, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work," and Hebrews 13:21 again, "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." You see the difference: the law says, do thus and so and you shall live; grace says, live in Christ and you will want to do thus and so.

7th Dayist: Seems to me all that is very idealistic, and pretty intangible.

Mr. Allgrace: Oh, don't limit what God can do. Of course it will be fully realized only as we really try to discover and follow His will as revealed in the New Testament, for all this is New Testament truth. I will admit that some Sunday worshipers need to give more heed to these deeper truths. But in spite of that, I challenge you to ponder well this new and higher ground upon which the child of God may now live, higher than the old law of the rigid Ten Commandments.

7th Dayist: Well, we don't ignore the New Testament, and I think we have enough as it is.

Mr. Allgrace: Is it enough when you settle for half a loaf when you can have a whole loaf, or when you hang onto a stale loaf instead of reaching out for a fresh one? But we have been at this too long. I wanted to show you more about the Sabbath itself, so we can take that up next time, as I hope.

Fourth Session

Mr. Allgrace: Hello, what a nice day, and a good one to continue our studies. Have you tried to go through what I gave you last time, and have you been reading your New Testament for itself, taking in large portions just as it is?

7th Dayist: Somewhat, but there's a lot involved in that. So may we begin with the matter of God's day; surely we ought to recognize one day in seven set aside as God's holy day.

Mr. Allgrace: Very good, and a very interesting subject. Since there's much to look at on this, let's start by observing just to whom the Sabbath was actually given. You emphasize the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 where the day is found in the fourth commandment, but turn to Exodus 31 and notice how its giving there is amplified. Observe first to whom it is specifically addressed, and mark the personal pronouns, that is, to whom it is applied. We read, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep...." So you see it was addressed directly to the Children of Israel. Going on, "...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 and doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore, for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in

the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy unto the Lord: whosoever doeth any work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever..." (Ex. 31:12-17, emphasis added). That is pretty strong language and, did you note, rather severe. And it entails more emphasis than would be put on the monthly or new moon or other festivals. Furthermore, the "six days" of work (v. 15) shows it was the weekly sabbath. So this weekly sabbath was specifically for the children of Israel.

7th Dayist: Yes, but we who follow on are the spiritual Israel, we are brought in as spiritual heirs of the covenant, so it is for us.

Mr. Allgrace: Not quite, for verses 13 and 16 both say "throughout your generations," and that is used specifically for literal descent, so there is no "spiritual Israel" who could claim this. Our identification with the Lord is now an individual matter, personal faith, a very different thing. And would you want to be put under the Israel who would "surely be put to death" for violating that Sabbath? Now look at the Sabbath as found in the Ten Commandments proper. I have observed that SDAs like to prominently display the Ten Commandments, but always begin with the

words, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3, or Deuteronomy 5:7), leaving out the preceding words. But who is speaking, who is the one who says, "no other gods before me." You have to take the preceding verse, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Ex. 20:2, Deut. 5:6). That identifies both the Giver of the law, and the recipients—the latter those who were in the land of Egypt and in the house of bondage, and only them and their children. As a small boy in an old line denomination I had to memorize the Ten Commandments as found in Exodus 20:1-17). But that second verse, just quoted, became an enigma to me for I had never been in the land of Egypt nor in a house of bondage! But the Ten Commandments would be incomplete without that, for you wouldn't know who was speaking nor who was addressed. And one more thing to look at here: the very next commandment after the Sabbath one, this about honoring father and mother, states "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (v. 14). Now it will have to be admitted that that is the land of Israel, the promised land, Canaan. So the Ten Commandments as a set were specifically for Israel.

7th Dayist: Yes, but here is where I get you on another point. The Sabbath commandment starts out, "Remember the sabbath day..." (Ex. 20:8). Now you can't remember something that

didn't exist for some time before. So I believe the people of God can trace it all the way back to Eden.

Mr. Allgrace: I'm not so sure of that. "Remember" very properly can mean, just remember it from week to week, give regular heed to it. The dictionary of Hebrew words in Strong's Concordance gives this word as "a prim. root; prop. to mark (so as to be recognized)." This original word is translated, "be mindful," six times in the Old Testament. Wilson's English Hebrew Lexicon and Concordance suggests on it, "...to bear in mind, to mention; it has also respect to things future... to commemorate, as applied to the sabbath." An example of this is found in Exodus 13 in connection with the giving of the Passover, when Moses said to the people, "Remember this day in which ye came out from Egypt" (v. 3). Well, they hadn't come out of Egypt yet, but they were to remember it, obviously only in days ahead.

7th Dayist: Perhaps, but it will have to be admitted that the Sabbath was given in Eden, so it goes all the way back to that time.

Mr. Allgrace: Given? Given to whom? Genesis 2:3 says God rested and "blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." But it doesn't say that it was then given to man. A special significance, indeed, was attached to it, whether referring to a twenty-four hour day or to a period of time, but that significance was not then revealed as far as the record

goes. "Sanctified" means set apart. Perhaps it indicated a future period when perfect peace and rest would prevail.

7th Dayist: But why then would attention be called to God's creative rest when He gave this in the fourth commandment (Ex. 20:11)?

Mr. Allgrace: It could well be that their weekly rest also was to cause them to look forward to a future complete rest and give them hope amid the toils of life. But it does not say that God ordered Adam and Eve to keep it; they couldn't for they didn't have to work then—every day was for them a day of rest. Only after the fall, outside of Eden, were they to "till" the ground with any suggestion of sweat and the like. There is not a bit of evidence that such a day was observed by Adam, Cain, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Ham, Shem, Japheth, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc., in fact, for about the first two thousand and more years of human history. It is interesting to note that the early patriarch Job's so-called "comforters" in trying to account for his sufferings accused him of everything under the sun except they never charged him with being lax regarding Sabbath observance, nor, on the other hand, did they suggest that he was being unjustly punished since he had faithfully kept the Sabbath. Think that through. Now to show further that the Ten Commandments were not made known until the time of Moses, look at Nehemiah 9:13, 14. "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai,

and speakest with them from heaven, and gavest them...commandments, and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath...by the hand of Moses thy servant." So that pinpoints it pretty close.

7th Dayist: But wait a minute. I can show you where the Sabbath was observed before Sinai and the giving of the law. In Exodus 16 it was to be observed in connection with the giving of the manna in the wilderness, and that was before they reached mount Sinai.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, but please observe that it all was by the hand of Moses as we see indicated in Nehemiah (9:14). Since all this was through Moses over a short space of time, it is looked at as one event. It has been suggested that when the manna was given here they were probably in sight of mount Sinai—hence the wilderness is called the desert or wilderness of Sinai (Exodus 19:1, 2, Lev. 7:38, Numb. 1:1, etc.). Since some went out so easily to gather manna on the Sabbath (Ex. 16:27), that seems to indicate that they were not used to the Sabbath; as you read the record it all appears to be something quite new. The Sabbath of rest was evidently in appreciation of the final deliverance from slave labor in Egypt; now for the first time a rest could be observed and incorporated into their code. As it says in Deuteronomy 5:15, right in the fourth commandment, "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and

that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day," and in v. 3 it says, "The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers." That's decisive.

7th Dayist: But in Exodus 31 which you pointed to so confidently, and in other places, it says the Sabbath is "a perpetual covenant" (v. 16), and a sign to be "for ever" (v. 17). So it was not limited as you suggest, and cannot be lightly set aside by those true to God.

Mr. Allgrace: Sure, but the sign was to be between the Lord "and the children of Israel for ever" (v. 17), and "throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant." So all the Jews today should strictly observe it along with their other ceremonials, for just one chapter preceding, in Exodus 30:8, we read of the burning of incense in the tabernacle, "a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations." And that certainly was part of the ceremonial law. Other strictly ceremonial practices are similarly designated "perpetual" (Ex. 29:9, Lev. 3:17, 24:9, Numb. 19:21), and "for ever" (Ex. 12:14, 17, 27:21, 29:28, Lev. 23:14, 21, 31, 41, 24:3, Numb. 18:21). You see this copy of the Bible I am holding; I have gone through it carefully and for all the familiar references to Sabbath keeping used by SDAs, I have noted in the context or in close association,

references to ceremonials, sacrifices or temple worship, all of which show that the Sabbath is in the same category as ceremonial law rather than moral law, and ceremonials were fulfilled at the cross once and for all.

7th Dayist: Yes, I believe we recognize the ceremonials were temporary, but I've never felt the Sabbath could be pressed into the same class. Why be so insistent on such a fine point?

Mr. Allgrace: I don't think it's a fine point since SDAs themselves make so much of it. I just don't want you to be like the man who thought the danger sign over the bridge was a youthful prank and started over it in his old truck and landed in the slough. I want you to avoid any such ill-timed dunking.

7th Dayist: Well maybe I could swim out of it like a duck, and find our teaching is more like a solid bridge.

Mr. Allgrace: But you need a bridge which will bring you all the way over into the glorious truth of grace in the New Testament and will establish you wholly in Christ, without ducking any of the clear evidence.

7th Dayist: But you will still have to show me why you worship on the first day of the week instead of the seventh.

Mr. Allgrace: Very well, we can take up that and related matters next time.

Fifth Session

Mr. Allgrace: Well, we meet again. Good; and I hope our meetings are proving profitable.

7th Dayist: Yes, I'm beginning to see a few things in a new light. I recognize that there are some real problems with our SDA position. And there are points that still puzzle me. To start with, since you people worship on Sunday, can you show me in Scripture where the day was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week?

Mr. Allgrace: I never said the day was changed. It wasn't. To ask that question is an old ploy; I've heard it so often. So let me say emphatically, the old Sabbath was never changed or transferred to another day. It was fulfilled; it served its purpose; it just passed away with the old covenant. A new day, commemorating something new, gradually came into being. Strictly speaking, our day of worship should not be called the Sabbath, although many of our people ignorantly still do so. But no exact equivalent of the Sabbath is found today. So that is begging the question.

7th Dayist: But surely you should be able to give some Bible reason for first day worship instead of the seventh.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes; we observe the first day because Jesus rose from the dead on that day and that signifies new resurrection life for the Christian believer. He first met with His disciples on that day dispelling their fears and

imparting peace to them. After the resurrection He was on earth for forty days, meeting with them (Acts 1:3), and this included at least five Sabbaths, but nowhere does it say that either He or they observed the Sabbath during that time. Later we find the believers met on the first day of the week, Acts 20:7, I Cor. 16:2. As I indicated before, every reference to the Sabbath after the resurrection was in connection with Jewish worship only.

7th Dayist: But we observe the day which God gave as a memorial of creation, as pointed out in the fourth commandment, Exodus 20:11. So now you have no memorial of creation.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, you have a memorial of the old creation, a creation which some day will be utterly destroyed. We have a day which commemorates a new creation following the resurrection of Christ (Eph. 4:24; II Cor. 5:17; II Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:13), a creation which will abide forever. See how it is put in Hebrews 12:18-24: "For ye are not come to the mount that might be touched...", that is to Mount Sinai where the Ten commandments were given, "But ye are come...to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven...and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant..." And Romans 6:4 ties this "walk in newness of life" with how "Christ was raised up from the dead." Also certain offerings, like that of the firstfruits, point to

observing the resurrection of Christ "on the morrow after the sabbath" (Lev. 23:11, compare I Cor. 15:23). There you have it spelled out.

7th Dayist: Well that is amazing; I've never seen anything like that before.

Mr. Allgrace: Let me tell you of something I did while on the foreign mission field where the SDAs were trying to make a big push. I duplicated and distributed a challenge calling on anyone to find proof of things such as: a direct command in the New Testament for a person to observe the Sabbath; for any clear Bible statement that the Sabbath command was ever given to or observed by any man before Israel's exodus from Egypt; for any Bible evidence that the seventh day Sabbath was ever observed by men other than Jews and Jewish proselytes, "strangers within thy gates" (Lydia, Acts 16:13, 14, was evidently such a proselyte); for Scripture showing that the Ten Commandments as a code of laws was ever given to any nation or people other than Israel. Needless to say, no one ever seriously came forward to meet the challenge.

7th Dayist: But it seems to me that I have heard that in Hebrews 4, when taken literally there is yet a Sabbath to be observed.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, that is in Hebrews 4:9 where it says literally, "there remains a sabbath," or really, a sabbath-rest, for the people of God. But note that it says there

remains or remaineth that which is spoken of. It is now generally agreed that it refers to a spiritual or future rest, and I understand that the SDA's own commentary admits it is not the weekly Sabbath. Study the context of Hebrews 4:9 and it will become evident that the point is of God's rest after creation (Heb. 4:4, Gen. 2:2), a final spiritual rest indicating satisfaction in what was well done.

7th Dayist: But going back to the Old Testament, I understand that Isaiah closes his book saying that in the final state of things all people will worship the Lord from Sabbath to Sabbath.

Mr. Allgrace: Oh, that is Isaiah 66 and appears to relate to a restored temple service. While v. 23 mentions the Sabbath, v. 21 refers to the work of the "priests and Levites." Now do you have Levites in your church? And v. 20 speaks of offerings, ceremonial offerings which you said SDAs affirm were nailed to the cross! Some Bible students suggest that these things may apply to a reinstated temple service for Jews, whether during the tribulation period or the millennium or whatever. Also Isaiah refers in that 23rd verse to the "new moons." But in Revelation we are told that finally the moon will no longer be needed (Rev. 21:23), and indeed, there will not even be a temple in that final place (v. 22, Jer. 3:16). So that Sabbath lasts only as long as these elements continue.

7th Dayist: But anyway, also in Isaiah, we have a promise of blessing to those who honor the Sabbath; I want to claim the benefit there.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, Isaiah 58:13-14 has been cited as showing a boon granted to those honoring the Sabbath. But again, consideration of the context will reveal the actual limitation involved. Verse 14 declares the benefit to include being fed "with the heritage of Jacob thy father." So it is a promise to the descendents of Jacob. Indeed, this chapter begins saying, "show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins" (v. 1). Sabbath desecration was a sin peculiar to the house of Jacob, the Jews. And notice also, in verse 2, that "as a nation" they tried to act as if they "forsook not the ordinance of their God." Thus, all this applies to ordinances which we know meant the ceremonial law — that which for us was done away at the cross. No my friend, you'll have to find better grounds than these to justify your present day Sabbatarian system.

7th Dayist: But on the day of worship, here is something that clinches the argument for the seventh day. There is a real scholar who has gone deeply into all this, Bacchiocchi I believe is his name, and he reaches what seems to me the high point of Sabbath observance in this way: He points out that there is nowhere in the New Testament any definite command or direct injunction to observe the first day of the week, none at all. That should settle it.

Mr. Allgrace: Ah, now you've struck at the very crux of the whole matter; that is just where the problem lies, yes, that's exactly where SDAs make their big mistake. They're looking for a specific command, they want an explicit regulation, they want exact rules to go by. No, my friend, don't you see that today God lifts us to a higher plane; as I tried to point out earlier, He seeks something spontaneous, something voluntary on our part, something that springs from love and heartfelt appreciation, rather than something drawn out of explicit necessity. The spirit of the New Testament is personal commitment; we are encouraged to grasp the higher principles and respond accordingly (John 4:24). But going back a bit, I could turn Mr. Bacchiocchi's own argument against himself. There is in the New Testament no direct or positive command to observe a seventh day Sabbath. That is surprising in view of the fact that so much is new in the New Testament where we today should look for direction. In the New Testament the gospel was now reaching out to the gentile world—those who knew nothing of Old Testament things. So today we have opened up before us the "new and living way" (Hebrews 10:20) for both our walk and our worship.

7th Dayist: But I have heard that the Pope changed the Sabbath to Sunday and that the emperor Constantine played a part in this.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, the SDAs have long drummed on that point. In fact they used to be more insistent on it than lately, for I guess it is becoming more clear that sound evidence for it is lacking. Many of their books long used to quote Roman Catholic writers to the effect that they, their church, brought in Sunday worship. But their claim entirely breaks down in that what they call their (Catholic) church is really just the early church—the church of the apostles and their successors—not by any means the Roman Catholic church. The Roman church has no solid links that far back; their claim is spurious, and so are any claims based on such assertions. So this SDA boast is really an admission that Sunday worship goes back to earliest church times. Then the SDAs point to Constantine and the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364) which went on record authorizing Sunday worship. Sure, but that Council only made legal what had already long been observed. At that time Christians who had always been observing it were no longer regarded as law breakers and persecuted as such. And that Council was one of the Eastern or Greek Church where Constantine was, met in the East and not under Western or Roman patronage. So the whole thing falls down. And SDAs cannot have it both ways: for them

either Sunday was brought about by the Western Roman church (the Pope), or by Constantine and the Eastern doings.

Actually, as we have seen, both are wrong!

7th Dayist: But another point; as to the Ten Commandments, have you ever noticed that the fourth commandment on the Sabbath is given more prominence, more space is allotted to it than to any other of the ten (Ex 20:8-11)? That shows God wanted the emphasis given to it as of supreme importance.

Mr. Allgrace: On the contrary, the fuller explanation of this commandment shows it must have been something quite new; it had to be fully explained because they did not have it from of old as has been claimed. They now had to be shown what it really was.

7th Dayist: But God wrote the Ten Commandments on tables of stone, and only them. This shows the importance He invested in them.

Mr. Allgrace: But all the time during the first giving of the Ten Commandments no tables of stone were referred to. Then, only after their being given (Exodus 20), after other regulations were set forth, are tables of stone mentioned (Ex. 24:12). Evidently the Ten Commandments, then put on stone, are a reflection of some of the high points of those laws and regulations covered by the intervening chapters (20-24), but anticipated in chapter 20. The people

voluntarily agreed to what was thus given as a covenant and promised to keep it (24:3, 7, 8). Only then are the tables of stone mentioned (24:12).

7th Dayist: But why then were the tables of stone to be preserved so carefully by being placed in the ark?

Mr. Allgrace: Because they were to be a constant sign or emblem of Israel's covenant (Ex. 24:7). Remember it was "the ark of the covenant" (Deut. 10:8, Heb. 9:4). God made a special covenant with the children of Israel; they were to be "a peculiar people" unto Him if they kept His "covenant," as it says in Exodus 19:5, and keep "all his commandments" Deut. 26:18. This covenant was made only with Israel (Deut. 5:3, and many other references), and even in II Chronicles 6:11 we read why it was placed in the ark: "...the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, that he made with the children of Israel." So there you have it, clear enough. Yes, the tables of stone were indeed placed in the ark, but along with them the pot of manna was similarly placed (Ex. 16:33, 34, Heb. 9:4). Now if the tables of stone are to be so exalted, so also should be the pot of manna! And remember, the manna came only upon the exodus of Israel from Egypt, just as the Sabbath likewise did. So that's where it all started, and equal regard should duly be given to all.

7th Dayist: Why then are these Ten Commandments put together this way as a distinctive group; what did they thus stand for?

Mr. Allgrace: God evidently gathered together some of the high points of Israel's broad legal system and, for convenience and as a constant reminder of the covenant, put these ten into this form. They were representative of leading elements of Israel's law, a nucleus or epitome of their whole system, elsewhere enlarged upon. Together they formed a sort of preamble to the covenant of God with Israel. Throughout the entire Mosaic system we find both moral and ceremonial elements commingled and with adjustments. If time permitted I could show you purely moral precepts in much of the Pentateuch (as throughout the whole Old Testament) beyond what is in the Ten Commandments, precepts relating to being merciful, fair treatment of others, kindness to strangers, forgiveness; or negatively, against pride, anger, boasting, filthy language, and much more, morality beyond what you call "the moral law."

7th Dayist: Well, I've heard the Ten Commandments eulogized most of my life, and you seem to be down-grading them and encouraging people to forget them.

Mr. Allgrace: No; they have no doubt served a very good purpose; if not condensed this way it would have left too big a spread and many people would find vagueness or uncertainty

prevailing. Even non-Jews see much in them. But we must regard them only as God intended—no more and no less. Remember, as said before, the significant elements of them are found in the New Testament, and even higher elements added.

7th Dayist: Well, I have a couple of more things that puzzle me, but this has been dragging on too long, so perhaps we can get together just once more.

Mr. Allgrace: Very well, and let us pray much about this and face it all with an open mind.

Sixth Session

Mr. Allgrace: Hi! Really good we can meet again. Hope you are beginning to see things in better perspective.

7th Dayist: Yes, some things. As I said last time, I recognize there are real weaknesses in the SDA position. Yet there are several texts which SDAs often quote and appear much relied on. For example, where Jesus Himself said, "The sabbath was made for man," Mark 2:27. So that shows that man, generically, should observe it.

Mr. Allgrace: I don't know where you get the "generically;" it doesn't say mankind or all men. You have to take it in the light of the context. Jesus was addressing the Pharisees. They were criticizing Jesus' disciples for plucking grain to eat as they passed along on the Sabbath day. Jesus justified that by appealing to what David did when it looked like David was intruding into the "house of God" and ate the "showbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests" (v. 26). This had to do with the ceremonial law, so Jesus justified what they were doing on the Sabbath by an appeal to the ceremonial law. That shows the Sabbath is within the ceremonial law! He said, "the sabbath was made for man." Yes, made for man. Moral principles exist inherently. If this was made for man, man must have first been in existence, for it was made for his benefit and not the other way around as SDAs have indicated; not that the Sabbath already existed and man was to be pressed into it, for as it

further states, "and not man [made] for the sabbath" (same verse). The Sabbath was made to serve man, and not man made to be a bondservant to the Sabbath.

7th Dayist: But going on it says, "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" (v. 28). Therefore the Sabbath is special for Him insofar as He is Lord.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, He is Lord of the Sabbath. The word Lord, kurios in the Greek, is also translated master. It means supreme over whatever is involved. So as Lord over the Sabbath, Jesus would have a right to do whatever He wanted with it. He could override it, as He did, He could abrogate it, He could let it just die a simple death, He could bring in another more glorious day to overshadow it; He was indeed Lord of the Sabbath.

7th Dayist: But in many other places it tells how Jesus observed the Sabbath; He surely honored it as an example for us.

Mr. Allgrace: Sure, Jesus kept the Sabbath all right as He did all the ceremonial law, and that before the cross. He kept the Passover (John 2:13; Luke 22:7-15). Does that bind us to keep it? He ordered a man to offer the gift according to the law of Moses (Mark 1:44). Does that mean we do similarly? Jesus bid Peter pay the temple tax (Matt. 17:24-27). Yes, He kept the ceremonial law, including the

Sabbath, and then superseded it. However, for the dedicated believer, He is honored as Lord every day of the week.

7th Dayist: But as to law, in Romans 3:31 we are told that we don't make void the law, but "we establish the law."

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, but what law is established? It doesn't say the Ten Commandments. Actually there is in the original no definite article before "law," so it may well be law in general, law as a principle. And that principle for us evidently is faith, which is seen if one takes in the whole verse which reads, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea we establish the law." And you will notice only four verses above, it is talking about "the law of faith" (v. 27); that is the law we establish. The entire chapter shows that efforts of the old law could not bring in righteousness, as the immediate context says, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (v. 28). That should settle it.

7th Dayist: Well this term law, then, sure seems rather confusing; easy to misconstrue.

Mr. Allgrace: It need not be, my friend. Just study the context in each case and get the gist or sweep of the entire passage and it will become clear. Think of the main purpose of the whole book under consideration and its place in the development of New Testament teaching. But the SDAs evidently have a very subtle system of handling Scripture.

Wherever the law is held up as good or adherence to it implied, they say, that is the Decalogue and binding. But when it is shown to be inadequate or superseded, hocus-pocus, they pronounce that to be the ceremonial law and as no longer binding. Very convenient. They try to make it fit whatever their predetermined system demands. One can prove anything that way. When I was on the foreign mission field I told the people that folks who handle the Bible chiefly by jumping around—a verse here and a text (or part of one) there—that was the grasshopper method of Bible study. And I always got a laugh out of them, for they understood. We study a book as a whole, chapter by chapter.

7th Dayist: But I find many matters regarding the SDA position for which other explanations are found, different from those you give.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, to be sure, I know SDA authorities have long resisted any and all efforts to bring out fuller truth or Bible facts which go against them, which they try to cover up or willfully dodge. In fact, they have even tried to suppress whatever came out on the other side. I was in the largest Bible book store on the West Coast many years ago when the manager began to pull from the shelf all the copies of Seventh Day Adventism Renounced by D.M. Canright, a former highly respected SDA leader. The SDAs had brought pressure upon the publisher to give them the copyright; then

they recalled all the existing copies they could find and destroyed them. Can't they stand the glare of open exposure? That, to me, would really be a sign of weakness. But I have observed that SDAs buy their own publications in large quantities and go all out for them.

7th Dayist: Well, I guess that's natural; the members of any church would favor reading their own publications and concentrate on them. No doubt your own shelf is full of books from your particular denomination.

Mr. Allgrace: On the contrary, if you look at my collection of books you could never tell that I am identified with any particular group. I have books by Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Church of England men, Plymouth Brethren, and what have you, and I appreciate them as long as they are true to the faith. And I have numerous ones by authors who I wouldn't have any idea who they worship with. Also I get magazines that come to me, put out by interdenominational agencies. As I look at their articles I never stop to consider what church an author may be in. For years the SDA paper Signs Of The Times came to me, and I found that the ones sending it to me ~~to~~ read nothing but it and other SDA material. That seems to me to indicate a closed mind.

7th Dayist: But I have seen in certain of their books quotations from men like Martin Luther and even C. H.

Spurgeon, and from well-known commentaries widely used, upholding the things they are contending for.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, I know their writers love to quote these sources. But has it ever occurred to you that if the men they quote meant all that they read into it, these men would themselves have become seventh day worshipers instead of first day ones, but they certainly did not become such. Perhaps they were merely following popular custom coming down from men like the Puritans in calling Sunday the "sabbath." This of course was not accurate; they should have risen above that. And many felt bound to lift up the Ten Commandments for, as I have shown, so much of similar truth is repeated in the New Testament. So don't be bamboozled by any of that.

7th Dayist: Well, I guess it's true the SDAs try to contest every inch of ground when they are challenged.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, to be sure, I have observed that for a long time. I suppose no one really likes to back-track and face it that they were wrong. Especially is this so when the viewpoint has long been held and one is in a comfortable place with the group. But there are no doubt numerous sincere individuals among them. And I have great feeling and sympathy for the many who are caught up in the system. A recent trend seems to make their line even more wily, for I have observed lately that they are giving great lip

service to grace and faith in salvation, albeit they still emphasize the place of law and works, particularly for continuing in good standing before God. But it should be clear by now that not only can no one be saved by compliance with the law, but also there should be emphasis on the truth that neither can one attain righteousness in their Christian life by trying to live according to the law, as is being suggested. Scripture plainly says, "if righteousness came through the law, then Christ died in vain," Gal. 2:21 (NKJ), and "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" Rom. 10:4. There you have it. So SDA teaching misses the mark.

7th Dayist: Yes, I think that is true. Boy! I'm beginning to feel that their position doesn't hold water, and if so, I don't see how I can go along with them from here on out.

Mr. Allgrace: Well I only hope you let the whole truth take deep hold. And then go on "into the glorious liberty of the children of God," as Romans 8:21 says. Also in that same chapter we read, "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (v. 4). Again in Romans, note the seventh chapter where we earlier saw that when one's spouse dies, that one is truly free from those former ties, and the old law no

longer holds anyone, for "now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (v. 6). Thus you see the new way in which we are to live.

7th Dayist: Well, that would be a whole new ball game for me.

Mr. Allgrace: Yes, maybe you'd have to go back to square one.

But it would be worth it—a thousand times. For real peace of soul is worth any price. Notice Jesus said, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," and "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 8:36, 10:28). Wonderful promises! Just let them sink into the depths of your soul and rest upon them. Remember, I touched earlier on the fullness or abundance of what we have in Christ. To call attention to still other significant texts, look at Romans 5:17, one of the "much mores" of the apostle Paul: "much more they which receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Oh, just see all that we have in Christ. As we saw earlier in II Peter 1:3, "according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through..." not the law, but "through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." And "all things" means all things, assuring us of completeness in Christ. We saw before in II Corinthians 3

that we are not under the law engraven on stone any longer, and v. 17 of that chapter says, "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."!

7th Dayist: Well, all of this sounds wonderful. But all my friends are SDAs and I hate to think of not keeping up with them.

Mr. Allgrace: On the other hand, maybe you could help some of them to come into fuller truth, and if so they would only thank you. But be sure you know where you stand first. As it says in Galatians 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." That little book of Galatians would be a good one to read over and over, like I said once regarding Colossians; saturate yourself with Galatian truth; then you will see, as it says, "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:18). Now here is something else very interesting. Look at the classifications set forth in I Corinthians 9:20, 21. This reveals three divisions of men in relation to God. It speaks of some who were "under the law," that is the Jews, some who were "without law," that is the Gentile world, and then of the believer in Christ (like the apostle himself), as neither "under the law,"—the Jewish position, nor "without law,"—the position of the natural man, but "under

law to Christ," a new position which includes all true regenerated Christians. So we need to ask ourselves, in which group are we? (These three groups are seen again in the next chapter, 10:32) Oh, come over into the right group and you'll find the fulness of blessing.

7th Dayist: Well, I admit I'm somewhat up in the air, and I sure need the blessedness you talk about.

Mr. Allgrace: Then why not just talk to God about it? Admit your lack of peace, confess all to Him, ask Him to come into your heart saving you by faith alone, cleansing you completely and making you a new creature in Christ Jesus. He is able, abundantly able. "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 Spirit, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5, 6).

"Not the labors of my hands
 Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
 All for sin could not atone,
 Thou must save, and Thou alone.
 Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
 Let me hide myself in thee."

Appendix A

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

In the Old Testament

Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5

- I. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."
- II. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images...thou shalt not bow down to them."
- III. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."
- IV. "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy."
- V. "Honor thy father and thy mother..."
- VI. "Thou shalt not kill."
- VII. "Thou shalt not commit adultery."
- VIII. "Thou shalt not steal."
- IX. "Thou shalt not bear false witness."
- X. "Thou shalt not covet..."

In the New Testament

After Christ's Resurrection

- Acts 14:15; I Corinthians 8:5, 6.
- I Corinthians 10:7, 14;
I John 5:21.
- Colossians 3:8; James 2:7; 5:12.

N O N E

- Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 3:20.
- Romans 13:9; I Peter 4:15.
- Romans 7:2, 3; I Corinthians 6:9.
- Romans 13:9; Ephesians 4:28.
- Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9.
- Ephesians 3:3, 5; Hebrews 13:5.

From THE GREAT CONTROVERSY by Ellen G. White, 1888 & later editions

What then is the change of the Sabbath, but the sign or mark of the authority of the Romish Church—"the mark of the beast"?

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But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress

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He is worshipping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of his authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome—"the mark of the beast." And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive "the mark of the beast."

With the issue thus clearly brought before him, whoever shall trample upon God's law to obey a human enactment, receives the mark of the beast; he accepts the sign of allegiance to the power which he chooses to obey instead of God.

p. 604

The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty; for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve him not. While the observance of the false

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loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.

From SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS BELIEVE...27 Fundamental Doctrines
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Wash., D.C. 1988

It Reveals God's Will for Humanity. As the expression of God's character and love, the Ten Commandments reveal His will and purpose for humanity. They demand perfect obedience, "for whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Obedience to the law, as the rule of life, is vital to our salvation. Christ Himself said: "If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. 19:17).

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precipitate a conflict that will involve the whole world. The central issue will be obedience to God's law and the observance of the Sabbath. In the face of this conflict everyone must decide whether to keep God's commandments or those of men. This message will produce a people who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Those who reject it will eventually receive the mark of the beast (Rev. 14:9, 12; see chapter 12 of this book).

p. 263.