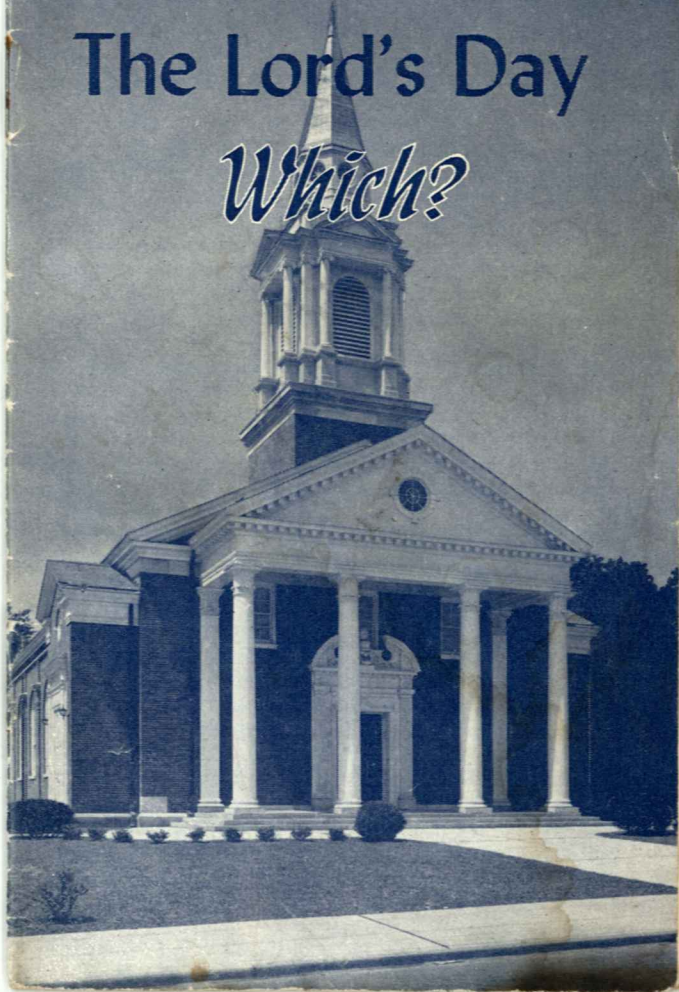


The Sabbath
or
The Lord's Day
Which?



THE SABBATH OR THE LORD'S DAY— WHICH?

By James M. Tolle

THE SABBATH

IS THE SABBATH, the seventh day of the week, binding upon the followers of Christ as a day of special religious significance? For a long while now this question has been the focal point of a great deal of confusion, conflict, and dissension in the religious world. A vast number of sincere persons have been deeply disturbed by it. The question obviously needs candid and reasonable discussion in the light of the scriptures.

The term "sabbath" is the anglicized form of the Hebrew word *shabbath*, day of rest, from *shabath*, to rest. Because God specified the seventh day of the week, commonly known as Saturday, as the day of rest in the Old Testament, it is expressly designated in the Bible as the sabbath.

The first reference in the Bible to the seventh day is found in Genesis 2:2, 3: "And on the seventh day God finished 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 hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made."

It is not asserted in this citation that God "hallowed" the seventh day at the same time "he rested from all his work" at the finish of creation. We have here a case of prolepsis, the joining together of two distant events to make it appear as if they had happened at the same time. We find an example of prolepsis in Genesis 3:20: Adam naming his wife Eve,

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“because she was the mother of all the living,” before her first child was born. Another example is Matthew 10:4: “. . . and Judas who also betrayed him.” This statement is made in connection with the Lord’s choosing of His disciples. It is made to appear as if Judas betrayed Jesus at the time he was called to be a disciple, although actually the two events were separated by a period of about three years.

So it is that Genesis 2:3 connects God’s resting on the seventh day and His hallowing it as if they happened at the same time; but the latter event did not take place until approximately 2500 years after the former, when God set apart the sabbath as a day of rest for the children of Israel after their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. During this interim of twenty-five centuries there is absolutely no reference in Biblical history to any man, Jew or Gentile, observing the sabbath for any purpose whatever.

In Exodus 16, in connection with the gathering of the manna, the word “sabbath” occurs for the first time in the Bible. Verses 22, 23 say, “And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which Jehovah hath spoken, To-morrow is a solemn rest, a holy sabbath unto Jehovah: bake that which ye will bake, and boil that which ye will boil; and all that remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.”

In this charge to the Jews, Moses does not remind them to keep a day that they had already been observing. His careful explanation plainly shows that the sabbath day was entirely new to the Israelites: “Tomorrow is a solemn rest, a holy sabbath unto Jehovah . . . Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. . . . See, for Jehovah 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” (Exodus 16:23, 26, 29).

THE SABBATH GIVEN SOLELY TO THE JEWS

The reference in Exodus 16 to the Jews keeping the sabbath was in anticipation of the formal giving of the sabbath law at mount Sinai, where God made His perpetual covenant with the Israelites, giving to them the decalogue, the ten commandments. The fourth commandment reads: “Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8-11).

That the sabbath law was not given to the Israelites until they were in the wilderness of Sinai, after their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, is attested by Nehemiah 9:13, 14, “Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven . . . and *madest known unto them thy holy sabbath . . .*” Nehemiah does not say that God reminded them of the holy sabbath, but *made it known* unto them, proving that it was a new commandment. Substantially the same fact is revealed in Ezekiel 20:10-12.

Moses declared, “Jehovah made a covenant with us in Horeb [Sinai]. Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all alive this day” (Deuteronomy 5:2, 3). That the covenant Moses refers to here contained the sabbath law is proved

by the verses to follow, which list all the ten commandments. Again we see that the sabbath was not enjoined by God upon man as a day of religious significance until given to the Jews in the wilderness of Sinai.

The introduction to the ten commandments is most significant in informing us as to whom they were given: "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:2). The pronoun "thou" which introduces each commandment limits the decalogue to the people named in the introduction. Who were they? Those "brought out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage"—the Jews, the fleshly descendents of Jacob. To these people alone were the ten commandments given.

Those today who call themselves followers of Christ, yet accept the ten commandments, the decalogue, as their basic religious standard, have appropriated to themselves what does not rightfully belong to them. They would do well to read and respect the limitation imposed by the introduction to the decalogue.

There are other significant passages which affirm that the sabbath was given solely to fleshly Israel. Carefully read the following:

"And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day" (Deuteronomy 5:15). Here we see that the sabbath is described as being given to the Jews as a commemoration of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. It is without meaning to the Gentiles.

"So I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes, and showed them mine ordinances, which if a man do, he shall live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and

them, that they might know that I am Jehovah that sanctifieth them" (Ezekiel 20:10-12). The sabbath was a sign between Jehovah and one nation only, Israel. It was never given to any Gentile nation.

THE SABBATH LAW IS ABROGATED

The word "abrogate" is defined by Webster: "to annul by an authoritative act; to abolish; repeal." In this phase of our discussion, we shall show by the scriptures that the sabbath law has been annulled by the authority of God.

It was never the divine plan that the sabbath should be kept as a holy day beyond the Jewish dispensation. Attesting to this conclusion is Exodus 31:16, 17: "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath *throughout their generations*, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever . . ." Whenever the phrase "throughout their generations" is used in the Bible, it refers to the Jewish dispensation.

Sabbatarians raise the objection that the words "for ever" and "perpetual" make the sabbath just as binding on men now as it was on the Jews. We answer this objection by referring to the passover, which was also to be kept "for ever": "*throughout your generations* ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance *for ever*" (Exodus 12:14). Then, too, we observe that the burning of incense was to be "perpetual": ". . . he shall burn it, a *perpetual incense throughout your generations*" (Exodus 30:8). Cf. Genesis 17:3; Exodus 29:42; Leviticus 23:14. Do Sabbatarians observe the passover feast and the burning of incense? No, for even they admit that these ordinances ended with the death of Christ. But the Bible affirms that the sabbath law was to continue just as long as the laws of the passover and the burning of incense. We see, then, that the expressions "throughout your generations," "for ever," and

"perpetual," limit all these laws to the Jewish dispensation.

The abrogation of the old covenant, of which the sabbath law was part, was predicted in the following prophecy: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, 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 a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

The Hebrew letter declares that the new covenant promised by this prophecy is the covenant of Christ: "But now hath he [Christ] obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for the second" (Hebrews 8:6, 7). In the verses to follow, 8-13, the inspired writer reiterates the words of Jeremiah 31:31-34, showing that the "better covenant" to which he refers, even the covenant of which Christ is the mediator, is the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the new covenant that God would establish.

The sabbath law belongs to the abrogated old covenant. Nowhere does the covenant of Christ bind the sabbath law upon any man.

Sabbatarians make a distinction between what they call "the law of God" and "the law of Moses," the former designating the ten commandments and the latter referring to the so-called "ceremonial law." They maintain that only "the law of Moses" was done away in Christ. This conclusion is wrong because the scriptures do not make a distinction between the law of God and the law of Moses. That the law given by God to the Jews is the same as the law given by Moses is positively affirmed in Nehemiah 8:1, 8; 10:29, "... the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel . . . And they read in the book, in the law of God . . . to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses, the servant of God."

Luke 2:24 says, "And to offer a sacrifice according to which is said in the law of the Lord. a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons." Where does the Bible speak of the offering mentioned in this verse? In Leviticus 12:8, that part of the Old Testament which Sabbatarians call "the law of Moses." Yet Luke declares that this offering "is said in the law of the Lord." Obviously the law of Moses and the law of the Lord are one and the same. Cf. John 7:19.

The Sabbatarian distinction between the law of God and the law of Moses is unwarranted by the scriptures.

That the ten commandments belong to the old covenant, which we know was done away in Christ, is plainly revealed in Deuteronomy 4:13: "And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." The express mention of the ten commandments in connection with the abrogation of the old covenant is found in 2 Corinthians 3:5-14: "not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God; who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new

covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written, and engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face, which glory was passing away: how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory? For if the ministration of condemnation hath glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth. For if that which passeth away was with glory, much more that which remaineth is in glory.

"Having therefore such hope, we use great boldness of speech, and are not as Moses, who put a veil upon his face, that the children of Israel should not look steadfastly on the end of that which was passing away: but their minds were hardened: for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remaineth, it not being revealed to them that is done away in Christ."

Throughout this description, Paul depicts a clear-cut contrast between the old and new covenants. He clearly tells us that the old covenant, "the ministration of death," was that which was "written, and engraven on stones," the ten commandments. Then he declares that the decalogue, the old covenant, "passeth away," being "done away in Christ."

The abrogation of the old covenant, the ten commandments, annulled the sabbath law, the fourth commandment. Those today who keep the sabbath are following a covenant described by inspiration as "the letter which killeth," "the ministration of death," and "the ministration of condemnation." Theirs is indeed a precarious and unhappy plight.

Sabbatarians present the objection that if the decalogue is no longer binding, then we

have no standard of right to guide us; that if the fourth commandment, the sabbath law, is not in force, then neither are the commands to refrain from stealing, murder, idolatry, etc.

This objection is invalid in light of the fact that all things revealed in the old covenant having to do with the eternal, divine principles of decency, right, and justice are also given, with even greater emphasis and more clarity, in the "perfect law, the law of liberty" (James 1: 25), the new covenant. In reading the New Testament, we find that Jesus and His inspired apostles taught, in changed form, all the commandments of the decalogue, with the exception of the fourth commandment, the sabbath law.

Observe the following comparison: 1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). "We bring you good tidings, that you should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is" (Acts 14:15). 2. "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image . . . thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them" (Exodus 20:4, 5). "My little children, guard yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21). 3. "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain" (Exodus 20:7). "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath" (James 5:12). 4. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). *There is no command in the covenant of Christ for any man to keep the sabbath.* 5. "Honor thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12). "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1). 6. "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). "For let none of you suffer as a murderer" (1 Peter 4:15). 7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10). 8.

"Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15). "Steal no more" (Ephesians 4:28). 9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Exodus 20:16). "Lie not to one another" (Colossians 3:9). 10. "Thou shalt not covet" (Exodus 20:17). "Covetousness, let it not even be named among you" (Ephesians 5:3).

We are to respect the principles of righteousness revealed in the new covenant because they represent the supreme law of God given through Christ, not because they are embodied in essence in the abrogated law of Moses. We reject sabbath keeping for the simple reason that it is not part of the new covenant, the authority of Christ.

Let us further consider the teaching of the New Testament which affirms that the covenant containing the sabbath law has been annulled in Christ.

Hebrews 9:1, 3, 4, "Now even the *first covenant* had ordinances of divine service, and its sanctuary, a sanctuary of this world. . . . And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holy of holies; having a golden altar of incense, and the *ark of the covenant* overlaid round about with gold, wherein was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the *tables of the covenant*."

In this reference, the inspired writer represents all that pertained to the Jewish sanctuary, with its Holy place and Holy of holies, as belonging to the first covenant. In the Holy of holies was the ark of the covenant, in which were the tables of the covenant. The removal of the first covenant would, of necessity, annul everything belonging to it, including the tables of the covenant, on which were written the ten commandments.

Hebrews 10:9, 10 tersely and plainly states that the removal of the first or old covenant, with the consequent establishment of the second or new covenant, has been effected by Christ:

"He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." With the abrogation of the first covenant is the annulment of the decalogue, the tables of the covenant, and therefore of the sabbath law.

Ephesians 2:14-16, "For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

"The middle wall of partition," which religiously separated Jews and Gentiles, was the old covenant, depicted by Paul as "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," the decalogue. This covenant, as we have already observed, was given solely to the Jews. Read again the significant introduction to the decalogue given in Exodus 20:2. In order that both Jews and Gentiles might become united religiously in the one body, the church, Jesus abolished the old covenant, "the law of commandments contained in ordinances"; and with its removal was abrogated the sabbath law.

Romans 7:1-7, "Or are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to men who know the law), that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth? For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of her husband. So, then if, while the husband liveth, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be

joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. . . . But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

Paul's teaching here is positive and explicit: 1. The brethren to whom he writes had formerly been under the law of Moses. That this law embraced the decalogue is affirmed in verse 7, where the apostle quotes the tenth commandment, ". . . except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." 2. While this law was in force, they were so bound to it that obedience to any other would have been regarded in the same light as the sin of adultery. 3. But as a woman is free to marry another by the death of her husband, they were "made dead to the law," "discharged from the law," by the body of Christ, and were "joined to another," even the Savior. 4. Their release from the law of Moses made them free from the sabbath law. This does not mean that they were without any law; for being joined to Christ, they were expected "to bring forth fruit unto God," which could only be done by their obedience to the law of Christ, the perfect law of liberty. Read Galatians 6:2; James 1:25.

Colossians 2:13-17, "And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses; having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; having spoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's."

Sabbatarians deny that the "bond written in ordinances," which was "blotted out," "taken out of the way," and "nailed to the cross," refers to that part of the Old Testament they are disposed to call "the moral law," the decalogue. They maintain that the word "ordinance" cannot refer to the ten commandments, but only to the so-called ceremonial law.

A brief examination, however, of the Greek word *dogma*, rendered as "ordinance," shows that it can just as validly be applied to the "moral law" as well as to the "ceremonial law." This word occurs five times in the New Testament, and in three instances it is rendered "decree." For example, "And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were in Jerusalem" (Acts 16:4). One of the decrees referred to here was that the Gentile Christians were to "abstain . . . from fornication" (Acts 15:29). Sabbatarians must admit that this particular decree is of a moral nature. They are certainly wrong, then, in insisting that the word "ordinance" (*dogma*, decree) cannot apply to the ten commandments.

Another Sabbatarian objection offered is that the "moral law," the decalogue, was never "against us" nor "contrary to us," but only the "ceremonial law." But the plain fact is that the whole system of law representing the Old Testament, the ten commandments and all the rest, was against those to whom it was given because it demanded perfect obedience, which demand no man was ever able to meet. Cf. Galatians 3:10.

Sabbatarians also insist that the expression "a sabbath," of verse 16, does not apply to the

sabbath of the fourth commandment, but exclusively to the yearly sabbaths—feast days or stated festivals—described in Leviticus 23. This is untrue, for the words “a feast day,” which describe the yearly sabbaths, are mentioned separately in the text from the phrase “a sabbath day.” The set order of religious services in the Old Testament were: daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. We read in 1 Chronicles 23:30, 31: “And to stand every morning to thank and praise Jehovah, and likewise at even; and to offer all burnt-offerings unto Jehovah, on the sabbaths, on the new moons, and on the set feasts.” Observe the order of services listed in this citation: morning and evening (daily), sabbaths (weekly), new moons (monthly), and set feasts (yearly). The same services as these are expressed in Colossians 2:16, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink [daily], or in respect of a feast day [yearly], or a new moon [monthly] or sabbath [weekly].”

It is evident that Paul had in mind in this verse the regular weekly sabbath of the decalogue, and he insists that no one is to judge us in respect of it. Sabbatarians are guilty of judging when they require men to keep the sabbath. But faithful Christians refuse to let anyone bind it upon them, for they know that it has been “blotted out,” “taken out of the way,” and “nailed to the cross.”

Another witness to the fact that the old covenant, of which the sabbath law is a part, has been abrogated is Paul’s testimony in Galatians 4:21-31, “Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid, and one by the freewoman. Howbeit the son by the handmaid is born after the flesh; but the son by the freewoman is born through promise. Which things contain an allegory: for these women are two covenants, one from mount Sinai [the decalogue, the

covenant that came from mount Sinai], bearing children unto bondage, which is Hagar. Now this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to the Jerusalem that now is: for she is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother. . . . Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, so also is it now. Howbeit what saith the scripture? Cast out the handmaid and her son: for the son of the handmaid shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman. Wherefore, brethren, we are not children of a handmaid, but of the freewoman.”

The evidence here is conclusive and incontrovertible: “the son of the handmaid,” representing the follower of the covenant given from mount Sinai, the decalogue, “shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman,” representing the follower of the new covenant; therefore, the person who follows the old covenant, with its sabbath law, cannot inherit eternal life in “the Jerusalem that is above.”

The twenty-one epistles of the New Testament relate every duty and obligation that Christ has enjoined upon Christians; yet in not a single instance is there given a command for sabbath keeping. Why? Because the sabbath law has been abrogated in Christ; consequently, it is not binding on His followers.

SABBATARIAN OBJECTIONS

Sabbatarians present many objections to the conclusion that the sabbath law of the ten commandments has been abrogated. Some of these we have already considered in the preceding phase of this discussion; others will be dealt with in the section to follow. We shall now answer the general, motley array of Sabbatarian objections.

1. *The ten commandments were written on*

tables of stone by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18).

What has this to do with their perpetuity? They were also given in the writings of Moses; e.g., Exodus 20:2-17, proving that they were simply part of the law of Moses, which we know has been abrogated.

And while we are on the subject of the Old Testament commandments, let us consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:37-40: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. A second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets." These two greatest commandments of the law are found in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, in that part of the Old Testament which Sabbatarians call the "ceremonial law," the part they maintain was abrogated in Christ. What a predicament this leaves the Sabbatarians in! They are forced to the conclusion that the two most important commandments of the law have been abrogated and that, therefore, the decalogue, which they affirm is still in force, is left without anything to hang on.

2. *Proof that we should keep the sabbath is presented in Isaiah 66:22, 23. "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith Jehovah, so shall your seed and your name remain. 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 Jehovah."*

If this reference gives assurance of the perpetuation of the sabbath law during the gospel age, it just as assuredly teaches the same about the feast of the new moon. But even Sabbatarians admit that the latter is not binding on men today. We, therefore, draw the conclusion

that Isaiah did not teach that the sabbath law was to be perpetuated in the new covenant.

3. *Jesus kept the sabbath as an example for us (Luke 4:14-16).*

Yes, Jesus kept the sabbath, but not as an example for us. He was "born under the law" (Galatians 4:4), and was obedient to it all the days of His life because it was completely and entirely in force until His death. Not only did Jesus keep the sabbath, but He also met the other requirements of the law; e.g., He was circumcised (Luke 2:21) and kept the passover (Matthew 26:17-25). Should we practice circumcision and keep the passover just because Jesus did?

4. *Paul's preaching on the sabbath in the synagogues (Acts 13:14-44) and at the river side in Philippi (Acts 16:13, 14) is apostolic example for sabbath keeping.*

True, Paul preached on the sabbath—many, many times; but this in no way proves that he kept the sabbath as a day of Christian worship. On the sabbath in the synagogues many persons gathered, especially Jews, making it possible for Paul's preaching to have an extensive hearing. At the river side in Philippi on the sabbath, Paul was afforded the opportunity of preaching the gospel to "the women who were gathered together." Just because one preaches the gospel on Saturday does not prove that he is keeping the sabbath, any more than his preaching on Monday proves that he is keeping the second day of the week as a holy day. Let Sabbatarians advance just one example of an apostle keeping the sabbath as a day of Christian worship and they have proved their case.

5. *We are taught to keep the commandments of God (1 John 5:3; Revelation 12:17; 14:12); which means that we must keep the commandment concerning the sabbath.*

This argument in favor of sabbath keeping is based on the assumption that the word "commandments" in the Bible always refers to the ten commandments. The facts, however, prove otherwise; for the scriptures present many commandments besides those of the decalogue; e.g., *Joshua 8:8*; *1 Samuel 15:1*; *Deuteronomy 6:5*; *Leviticus 19:18*; *Romans 16:26*; *1 Corinthians 14:37*.

The commandments of God in the New Testament are those which He has revealed through Jesus Christ, not the commandments revealed through Moses. "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (*John 1:17*). Cf. *Hebrews 1:1, 2*. We today are bound solely to obey the commandments of God given through His Son. The Father said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (*Matthew 17:5*). Jesus declared, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him . . . If a man love me, he will keep my word" (*John 14:21, 23*).

It is true that the Lord requires us to observe certain principles found in the law of Moses; e.g., the law of love; however, we accept them as authoritative not because they were commanded by Moses, but because they are commanded by Jesus. The sabbath law is binding on no man today for the evident reason that Jesus has nowhere commanded it in His supreme authority, the new covenant.

6. James teaches Christians to obey the ten commandments, which he calls the royal law: "Howbeit if ye fulfill the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect for persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one

point, he is become guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (*James 2:8-11*).

What is characterized as the royal law is not the decalogue at all, but the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," a direct quotation of *Leviticus 19:18*, part of what Sabbatarians call the "law of Moses" and distinguish from the "law of God." James' use of this quotation from *Leviticus* and his reference to two of the ten commandments do not mean that he advocates the keeping of the old covenant by Christians. His reference to the law is simply illustrative for the benefit of the Christians to whom he is writing of their obligation to "so speak . . . and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty" (verse 12). That this law of liberty by which we are to be judged is the new covenant, the gospel, is affirmed in *Romans 2:16*, "When God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ." Cf. *John 5:22*; *2 Timothy 4:1*; *Galatians 5:1*. Admittedly, the love of one's neighbor and the commands against adultery and killing, to which James refers, are enjoined in principle in the gospel of Christ, the law of liberty—but not the keeping of the sabbath.

7. Jesus said, "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished" (*Matthew 5:18*), which means that the sabbath requirement of the law is still in force.

The key word to the understanding of the text is "till." Does this word imply that the law was never to pass away, but that it was to be perpetuated in the new covenant? Quite the contrary. Certain men took an oath "that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul" (*Acts 23:12*). Does the word "till"

here convey the idea that Paul's enemies were never to eat nor drink again? Not at all; it definitely implies that after they had accomplished their plan to kill Paul, they would again eat and drink. So Jesus is teaching in Matthew 5:18 by His use of the word "till" that after the things concerning the law were accomplished in Him, it would then pass away. Philip Schaff fittingly said, "till" implies that after the great events of Jesus' life, and the establishment of his kingdom, the old dispensation, as a dispensation of the letter and yoke of bondage . . . will pass away, and has passed away (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 8:13)." Read Luke 24:44.

8. *The Hebrew letter declares that the sabbath law is still in force: "There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9).*

The context of this verse shows that the heavenly rest is what is contemplated by the inspired writer: "For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day. There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest hath himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience" (Hebrews 4:8-11).

When Joshua "spoke of another day," the Jews already had entered the Canaan rest and the sabbath rest; but a rest still remained: the heavenly rest. It is called a sabbath rest, because it is typified by God's rest on the seventh day. As God rested on the seventh day when His work of creation was finished, so shall His faithful people rest in heaven when the labor and toil of life are over.

9. *Giving warning to His disciples about the coming destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, Jesus said, "And pray ye that your flight be*

not in the winter, neither on a sabbath" (Matthew 24:20), proving that the Lord's followers would keep the sabbath during the gospel age.

Jesus did not have in mind any sacredness concerning the sabbath when He told His disciples to pray that they would not have to flee on that day at the destruction of Jerusalem, any more than He considered the winter season as being sacred. The Lord knew that it would be difficult for His disciples to flee in the winter because of the inclement weather, and on the sabbath because the Jews who continued to follow the law would have the gates of Jerusalem and the other Judæan cities closed on that day.

10. *The necessity of our keeping the sabbath is conveyed by the demand Jesus made of the rich young ruler: "But if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17). That Jesus had in mind the ten commandments is disclosed in verse 18, where He says, "Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness."*

Jesus demanded that the rich young ruler keep the commandments because the law was still in force and would so remain until it was nailed to the cross. As a Jew this young man was amenable to the law, not just to the decalogue but to everything else contained in it. Jesus also told him, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (verse 19), a commandment not found in the decalogue.

Evidence showing that Jesus during His personal ministry taught the Jews to keep all the law, not just the decalogue, is plainly revealed in the command given by Him to the leper He had cleansed: "Go thy way, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them" (Luke 5:14).

No argument in favor of sabbath keeping for us can be derived from the injunction Jesus gave to the rich young ruler, a Jew.

11. *The sabbath was changed to Sunday by the fallible authority of man in an edict of Emperor Constantine in A. D. 321.*

The religious significance of the first day of the week, Sunday, to the Christian was not created by Constantine's edict, but was existent from the beginning of the new dispensation, as we shall presently see in the next phase of our discussion. This edict simply gave imperial, legal sanction for the first day of the week, designated by its Roman name Sunday, as a day of religious worship and cessation of secular work.

THE LORD'S DAY

The only day given special recognition in the new covenant is the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday, referred to in the scriptures as the Lord's day. This day is not the Christian sabbath, as many denominationals assert. The sabbath, whenever mentioned in the scriptures, always, without exception, designates the seventh day of the week. Nowhere in the Bible is it affirmed that the first day of the week is given in place of the Jewish sabbath. It is part of a *new* covenant and with a *new* significance, a day in which faithful Christians worship God through their Lord Jesus Christ.

We will now consider the scriptural events and facts giving evidence to the peculiar religious meaning of the first day of the week as a day of Christian worship.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

That Christ was raised from the dead on the first day of the week is clearly stated in Mark 16:9: "Now when he was risen early on

the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene."

No greater event ever occurred than the Lord's resurrection. By His triumph over the grave, He was enabled to establish His covenant and His church and to enjoy "the pre-eminence in all things" (Colossians 1:18). Without His resurrection, no man could look forward with hope to a deliverance from the bonds of death, and those who are Christians would be "of all men most pitiable" (1 Corinthians 15:19). What day could be more meaningful to the Christian than the day of the Lord's resurrection? It is not difficult to understand why the first day of the week was ordained of God to be the peculiar day of Christian worship, the day in which Christ's disciples assemble for worship and reverently declare the great reality of the Lord's triumph over death.

THE EVENTS OF PENTECOST

Pentecost always came on the first day of the week, according to Leviticus 23:11, 15. On the first Pentecost after the Lord's resurrection, the Holy Spirit was given; the church, "the mountain of Jehovah's house," was established; Christ was crowned as king of His throne; and going forth was "the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem" as the new covenant went into effect. Read Joel 2:28; Isaiah 2:2, 3; Zechariah 6:13; Acts 2:1-36. All these events happened on *the first day of the week*, emphatically declaring the honor God gave to this day.

THE ASSEMBLY AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

The new covenant demands the meeting together of the disciples of Christ: "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh" (Hebrews 10:25). This passage does not

reveal on what day the disciples were to come together; but a day is implied, since there could be no assembly without a time for it.

Jesus commanded His disciples to partake of the Lord's supper (Matthew 26:26-28), and this was to be done when they assembled: "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another" (1 Corinthians 11:33). The eating designated here is the Lord's supper, not a common meal, as the context indicates. Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:20-23.

On what day did the disciples assemble to partake the Lord's supper? The answer is presented in the following citation: "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we tarried seven days. And *upon first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread*, Paul discoursed with them" (Acts 20:6, 7). During the period of seven days in which Paul and his companions tarried in Troas, a sabbath passed by; yet not a word is said about them keeping it. Why, then, did they tarry the seven days? Obviously, in order that they might assemble with fellow Christians on the first day of the week for the breaking of bread.

The quibble Sabbatarians make about this breaking of bread being the eating of a common meal is refuted by the fact that the context describes a religious meeting: the assembly of the disciples and the consequent discourse of Paul. Furthermore, the Sabbatarians' twisting of the words of the text to make it appear that the disciples did not actually break bread on the first day of the week is a contradiction of the plain words of the historian Luke: "*upon the first day of the week, when we gathered together to break bread.*"

Summing up the foregoing facts, we note the following: 1. The disciples were commanded

to assemble (Hebrews 10:25). 2. They were also commanded to partake of the Lord's supper (Matthew 26:26-28), which they were to do when they assembled (1 Corinthians 11:33). 3. The only example in the New Testament of the coming together of the disciples to partake of the Lord's supper relates that it was done on the first day of the week.

We can safely conclude that the first day of the week, Sunday, is the significant day of the new covenant, the day on which Christians are to assemble for worship and lovingly remember the manifold blessings of their Savior as they partake of the Lord's supper.

THE CONTRIBUTION

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collection be made when I come" (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2).

This citation is strong proof of the first day of the week being a day of Christian assembly and worship. What more reasonable, logical, and convenient time for disciples to make a contribution for religious purposes than during a religious service?

Sabbatarians argue that the expression "lay by him in store" asserts that the contribution was to be made at home, not at a religious service. But why a particular day for a home responsibility? The very purpose Paul had in view in his order to the church at Corinth, "that no collection be made when I come," would be defeated by the contribution of each Christian being laid up in his own house; for then Paul would have to go from house to house to collect all that was contributed. Only by the contribution of each Christian being put into a common treasury could Paul's instruction be carried out.

THE LORD'S DAY AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

The apostle John declared in Revelation 1:10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." The word rendered "Lord's" is from the Greek *kuriakos*, found only twice in the New Testament: Revelation 1:10 and 1 Corinthians 11:20. The latter passage uses the expression "Lord's supper." Does it not seem most appropriate that the Lord's supper should be eaten on the Lord's day? The apostolic example in Acts 20:7 instructs us that the Lord's supper is to be eaten on the first day of the week. It is entirely reasonable to conclude that the first day of the week and the Lord's day are one and the same.

The passover feast was called "Jehovah's passover" (Exodus 12:11), and the seventh day of the week was called "sabbath unto Jehovah thy God" (Exodus 20:10). These two institutions were peculiar to the old covenant. The communion feast is called "the Lord's supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20), and the first day of the week is called "the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10). These two institutions are peculiar to the new covenant. The Lord's day of the new covenant is no more the sabbath day of the old covenant than the Lord's supper of the new covenant is the passover of the old covenant.

Sabbatarians maintain that Mark 2:38 proves that the Lord's day is the sabbath: ". . . the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath." Jesus is not saying here that the sabbath was to be His day of peculiar religious significance in the new covenant; He is simply affirming that He was the *master* of the sabbath, and that He, therefore, had the power to interpret it, while it was in force, for the higher good of man.

HISTORICAL TESTIMONY

The testimony of the early postapostolic writings fully corroborates the evidence we

have given from the New Testament to show that the first day of the week, Sunday, is the significant day of the new covenant, the special day set aside by the authority of Christ for Christian worship. We call as witness three of the oldest postapostolic treatises.

The Epistle of Barnabas 12:10 (A. D. 100); "Wherefore also we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose from the dead."

The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians 9:1 (A. D. 107): "Those, then, who lived by ancient practices arrived at a new hope. They ceased to keep the Sabbath and lived by the Lord's Day, on which our life as well as theirs shone forth, thanks to Him and his death."

Justin Martyr, *The First Apology of Justin*, Chapter LXVII (A. D. 145): "But Sunday is the day on which we hold our common assembly, because it is the first day of the week and Jesus our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead."

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