

The Sabbath

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The Sabbath.

1. *The original Sabbath was not given as a command.*

Reasons:

a. Because, considered as a day of *rest*, the Sabbath is for those who have labored.

Up to that time man had not labored.

He had no need of rest, nor of a rest day.

If he had not sinned, he never would have labored.

The Sabbath therefore, originally, had no place for man as a command.

b. Because, the only person who rested on the first Sabbath was God himself.

God did not rest in the day because he had need of recuperation from toil.

If God rested in the day at all, it was a moral and declarative rest.

But God did not rest in the day, as a day; he rested in the man whom he had created.

We always rest in the last thing we do; the last thing we do, is the place both of outward and inward rest, rest of mind and body.

The last thing God made was man.

In man God rested, on the seventh day.

The seventh day has the sacramental number seven to qualify it; seven is the number of completion; man was the completion, the completion of creation; in the man, on that day, God rested.

The first Sabbath therefore has nothing to do with the rest of man, but, of God.

The first Sabbath, by so much, cannot be a command to the man.

This article is taken from "*How to Study the Bible*," by Rev. I. M. Haldeman, a book of 580 pages, containing in addition to a comprehensive and inspiring treatise on Bible Study—according to the above title,—forty-four live expositions of supposedly difficult portions of the Word.

For fuller description see the back of this pamphlet.

PUBLISHER.

c. Because, after man sinned God could not rest in man.

He could not rest in any mere day out of man; for, God's rest was not a rest from weariness but a moral rest.

As God could not rest in any mere day after man's sin, He could not command man to rest in any day; He could not command him to rest where all was the unrest of sin.

Thus the Sabbath was not a command either before or after the Fall.

d. Because, God could not rest in a creation marred by sin.

God cannot command man to rest where he cannot rest.

Hence, even, if the first Sabbath had been a command before the Fall, it could not be a command after the Fall.

To sum up the reasons why the first Sabbath was not given as a command:

Before the Fall man had no need of physical rest.

After the Fall he had no place of moral rest; and God cannot give a command that has in it no moral significance.

Man's sin broke up both the moral rest of God and man.

Sin set both God and man to work.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Genesis iii: 19.

"My father worketh hitherto, and I work." John v: 17.

Thus the First Sabbath looked at in any wise has no place as a command to man.

It was simply a declaration of God's moral rest in man.

It was God's creation rest in man.

2. *The Sabbath was first given as a command nearly two thousand years later to the children of Israel; and only given to them after the Exodus.*

"Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness:

Moreover also, I GAVE THEM MY SABBATHS, to be a sign BETWEEN ME AND THEM. Ezekiel xx: 10, 12.

3. *The Sabbath was given to the children of Israel as a memorial of creation, that the children of Israel might know that their Redeemer was also the Creator and Ruler of the universe.*

4. *The Sabbath was given only after the blood of the passover lamb had been shed, and the people by an outstretched hand of power had been typically brought into the place of resurrection on the other side of the Red Sea.* By this God would teach that he could not find creation rest in this world; that his rest in relation to this earth henceforth must be on the basis of sacrifice; that he could rest only in a man who should shed his blood and rise from the dead. That henceforth his rest must be Redemption Rest. And therefore, and never forget it, he gives the first command to keep the Sabbath, AFTER THE BLOOD.

THE SABBATH AFTER THE BLOOD; that is the Sabbath that was given as a command. That first Sabbath rest of God after the Fall was the Rest of Redemption, redemption by blood.

5. *The Sabbath was given to Israel as a covenant between them and God, that they might know he was the Lord.*

"A sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord." Ezekiel xx: 12.

6. *Those who violated the Sabbath were under the penalty of death.*

A man who gathered sticks was stoned to death. Numbers xv: 32-41.

In this incident there is, in passing, a profound spiritual lesson.

Gathering sticks is manifesting works.

Works can bring in death only to the imperfect man.

Life is to be found without works by RESTING WHERE GOD RESTS, IN THE BLOOD OF REDEMPTION, IN THE MAN WHO HAS BROUGHT IN REDEMPTION THROUGH BLOOD.

7. *The Sabbath was never given to any other nation but Israel.*

“Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, verily my Sabbaths shall ye keep: for it is a sign between ME AND YOU throughout your generations.

A sign between ME AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL FOREVER.” Exodus xxxi: 13-16.

8. *The Sabbath was never given to the Gentile world.*

The world never has been, and is not now, commanded to keep the Sabbath day.

And this ought to be self evident.

The Sabbath was only for a people separated from the world and brought nigh to God.

It was not for a world far off in sin, a world that knew not God, nor his statutes.

It is as absurd and spiritually illogical to ask a world dead in trespass and in sin to keep the Sabbath, as it would be to exhort a dead man to bring forth the evidences of life; or to ask an unregenerated man to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

9. *The Church of Christ is not commanded to keep the Sabbath.*

The fact that the Sabbath has been given exclusively to Israel would be reason and argument enough; but there are many, and cogent reasons.

a. Because, the Sabbath is a part of the Law.

To be under the Sabbath is to be under the Law.

But the Church is positively *not* under the Law.

“For ye are not under the law.” Romans vi: 14.

b. Because, the Sabbath is the day of A DEAD CHRIST.

It was on the Sabbath that Jesus lay dead in the tomb.

To keep the Sabbath is to memorialize his silence, and his dead body, still in the tomb.

The Church does not stand for a dead Christ.

The Church stands for a Christ risen from the dead.

To keep the Sabbath is to join hands with the unbelieving Jew, and seek, with the seals of Rome, to keep the Saviour of the world in the cerements of the grave.

c. Because, the Sabbath was a memorial of the old creation under doom.

But the Church stands for a New Creation freed from doom.

d. Because, Christ did not rise from the dead on the Sabbath.

To keep the Sabbath is to deny the resurrection of Christ.

Those who keep the Sabbath are saying every moment by their attitude: “He is here (here in the tomb), he is *not* risen.”

e. Because, the Sabbath has to do with the ceremonial law, with Aaron and all earthly priesthood.

But the Church of Christ has nothing to do with the Aaronic, or Levitical priesthood; the Church has to do alone with the Melchizedeck priesthood of Christ in heaven.

f. Because, the Sabbath has to do with the man on the earth, and not with the man in heaven.

But the Church is linked up with the man in heaven, and not with the man on earth; the Church is called, not to dwell in earthly places, but with the risen One in heavenly places.

g. Because, the Sabbath is made for a man in the flesh.

But the standing of the Church and every Christian, is not in the flesh at all, but in the Spirit.

h. Because, the Sabbath has to do with the First man, Adam.

But the Church has to do exclusively with the Second man, Christ.

For these reasons, and the principles they include, the Church is never commanded to keep the Sabbath.

10. *After his Resurrection, Christ and his disciples never met on the Sabbath.*

If the Sabbath had been intended for the Church, the Church would have met on that day.

11. *The Church met to worship, to break bread, on the First day of the week.*

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.” Acts xx: 7.

Each time therefore that the Church met under Apostolic ordination it denied the Sabbath as the day of the Church; and it denied it too, not after the Roman heresy had come in, but long before, centuries before, and under Apostolic authority.

12. *So far from keeping the Sabbath, Christians are directly commanded not to keep it.*

“Let no man therefore judge (rule, command, authorize) you in respect of the Sabbath.” Colossians ii: 16.

Read the context and you will see that these are ordinances in relation to the earth and to an earthly people; but the Christian has passed through the judgment with Christ, he has been baptized into his death, he has taken part with him in the resurrection; yea, he has ascended with him into heavenly places above the law and ordinances of the earth; and therefore, in the next chapter, in the opening verse, he is exhorted to seek the things that are above, to recognize himself as in the heavens with the risen Christ.

To such a person the keeping of the Sabbath would indeed be a coming down to the earth and the plane of the flesh; it would be selling the birthright of a Son of God for a mess of pottage.

Raised up with Christ, and in Him taken to the heavenly places outside the realm of the law, the Christian in the very nature of the case has nothing to do with the Sabbath.

But further, the context shows that the system of law and ordinances of which the Sabbath was a part were against us, and that Christ has blotted out their handwriting and nailed them to the cross.

As it is written:

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and TOOK IT OUT OF THE WAY, NAILING IT TO HIS CROSS.” v. 14.

In the far East when a mortgage is to be cancelled, it is taken and nailed up over the door of the house and then blotted out, made illegible; so that every passer-by may know that it no longer has any claim on the inmate.

Precisely so, in that far day on the cross, the Son of God for us men and our salvation, took this law and all its ordinances of condemnation and restriction, and

nailed them to his cross, blotting them out in the blood which, answering to every demand of justice against us, cries, "It is finished."

That old law and that old Sabbath are crucified to every Christian, and buried in the grave of Jesus Christ, from whence we have risen with him in the liberty of the Spirit and of life, above all ordinances for the flesh.

Looking at that law, looking at that Sabbath ordinance which was a part of it, seeing them nailed together on the cross of Christ and marred, blotted by his streaming blood, we cry:

"Cancelled, cancelled by the blood."

To those who have been immersed in the name of Christ there ought to be no possibility of misapprehension.

"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him." v. 12.

Dead.

Buried.

Risen.

Ascended.

Seated with Christ in heavenly places.

To keep the Sabbath is to deny all this; to deny that we are risen with Christ; to affirm that we are under the ministration and bond of death.

13. *The Sabbath is the Seventh day, not the First.*

Nothing can be more unscriptural, and nothing can be more dishonoring to the Word in nomenclature, than to speak of the Sabbath under such titles as "The European Sabbath," "The American Sabbath," "The New Testament Sabbath."

14. *The Sabbath was never changed from the Seventh day to the First.*

In the nature of the case there is no such record in the word of God.

15. *The Children of Israel will yet keep the Sabbath in their own land.*

"And they shall hallow my Sabbaths." Ezekiel xlv: 24.

"There remaineth therefore a rest" (margin: *Sabbath keeping*) "to the people of God" (Hebrews, to whom this epistle is written). Hebrews iv: 9.

16. *The First day of the week is the day to be observed by the Church.*

The proof has already been seen in the fact that the Apostolic Church met on the First day of the week to "break bread."

17. *The First day of the week is called the Lord's day.*

A day made and set apart by the Lord for himself.

"The Lord's Day." Revelation i: 10.

"This is the day the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Ps. cxviii: 24.

Beginning at the twenty-second verse the Psalm reads:

"The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner."

"This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."

The stone is Christ.

The builders are the Jews.

The stone refused, is Christ rejected by the Jews.

Become the headstone of the corner, is Christ raised from the dead after his rejection.

The Lord's doing so marvellous in their eyes, rather, marvellous in the eyes of the prophetic remnant that is seen in this Psalm, is the mighty act of God whereby he raised his son from the dead.

This day is the day of the "marvellous" doing.

That marvellous doing is the lifting of the rejected stone into the place of the corner in the building of God; and as that is resurrection, then the day is the day of resurrection; as the resurrection day was the First day of the week, then this day the Lord hath "made," "the day of his marvellous doing," is the First day of the week; and as the Lord hath made the day; as the Psalmist distinctly states that the Lord made it; and as whatever the Lord makes is his, then this day, this day of the raising up of the stone (for it had to be raised up before it could become the headstone of the corner), this day is the Lord's day; and as the First day of the week and the day of the raising up of the stone are identical, and this identical day is the First day of the week, then the First day of the week is THE LORD'S DAY; and as the Psalmist speaking by the Spirit commands those who love the Lord to rejoice and be glad in it; and as a command to rejoice and be glad in that day is the recognition of the day above all other days, then as the Christian Church stands for love to the Lord, it follows that the Church, every Christian, is commanded to keep the First day of the week as the Lord's day.

The First day of the week is anticipated in the Old Testament as the "EIGHTH DAY;" as the day "AFTER THE SABBATH."

"Ye shall bring a sheaf of the FIRST FRUITS of your harvest unto the priest; And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the MORROW AFTER THE SABBATH the priest shall wave it." Leviticus xxiii: 10, 11.

Let it be remembered that when the priest "waved" the sheaf he lifted it from the ground where it had been lying and *raised it up before God.*

In the light of this read I Corinthians xv: 20.

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become THE FIRST FRUITS."

And when did Christ rise from the dead and become the first fruits but on "THE MORROW AFTER THE SABBATH?"

"In the END OF THE SABBATH, as it began to dawn toward the First day of the week. Matthew xxviii: 1.

Thus in the book of Leviticus, in the book of the Psalms, the resurrection of Christ is anticipated and the day of the resurrection declared as plainly as language can declare it, to be the First day of the week, the Lord's Day.

18. *The First day of the week is a witness to the Church of the resurrection of Christ and Christians.*

19. *The First day of the week is the witness of Redemption achieved.*

20. *The First day of the week is the memorial of the beginning of a New Creation of God.*

The Sabbath stood for the completion and, at the same time, for the END of the OLD creation; the First day of the week stands for the BEGINNING of a NEW Creation and, at the same time, for the consummation, the completion, and the glory of the New.

21. *The First day of the week links the Christian to THE MAN IN THE GLORY and to the INHERITANCE IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES."*

22. *The First day of the week links him to the un-failing intercession of the HEAVENLY PRIESTHOOD.*

And now mark the contrast between the Sabbath and the Lord's Day.

The Sabbath stands for,
The Earth.

Flesh.

Man in sin.

Man under Law.

Man under doom.

Man under sentence of death.

Man, the sentenced criminal, bound up with the old creation on which is the curse of God.

A dead Christ.

Death; nothing but death. *Aye! the penalty for its violation has never for a moment been suspended.*

But look at the Lord's Day

It stands for,

Heaven.

Spirit.

Man in Christ.

Man above Law.

Man in Grace.

Man in Life.

Man in the New Creation.

Glory.

Eternity of Blessing.

Put the two days side by side and lo! THE GRAVE OF CHRIST IS BETWEEN THEM.

The Sabbath is on THIS SIDE OF THE GRAVE.

The Lord's Day is on THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GRAVE.

The Sabbath is on this side of the grave and KNOWS NOTHING OF THE RESURRECTION.

The Lord's Day is on the other side of the grave and, thank God! KNOWS THAT IT IS EMPTY, AND THAT THE MAN WHO LAY IN IT ON THE SABBATH DAY HAS RISEN OUT OF IT.

Ah! the one day, the Sabbath, is as MIDNIGHT.

The other day, the Lord's Day, is as MID-NOON.

Those who teach the Sabbath substitute Law for Grace, Moses for Christ, works for Faith, Earth for Heaven, the Old Creation for the New, a Dead Christ for a Living Christ.

To teach the Sabbath as obligatory either to the Church or the world, is to be guilty of perverting the Word of God; and in the light of that Word, proving a blindness and spiritual darkness without excuse.

Let us turn then to the First Day of the week and prize it as never before, saying with the inspired Psalmist:

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."