

The Sabbath and  
The Lord's Day

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# The Sabbath and The Lord's Day \*

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## DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE

Probably the greatest contrast in the Word of God is that which exists between law and grace, yet it is the one that is least understood and most often confused. The principles of law and grace are mutually destructive; it is impossible for them to exist together. For "if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. 11:6). To mix these two principles is to dull the keen, hard edge of the law and to destroy the blessed and glorious liberty of grace. Against such the Apostle Paul declared: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so I say now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8,9).

The extremely solemn nature of this anathema is more readily evident to us when we remember that it has never been revoked, but stands today as irrevocable a warning as when the apostle penned it. It

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behooves us, then, to study well these two principles that we may the better give each its proper place. There are several necessary distinctions between law and grace that are relevant to our discussion. To these let us now turn our attention.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF LAW AND GRACE

According to the unmistakable testimony of Scripture the law (by which we mean the Mosaic system of statutes, ordinances, and commandments) had a definite beginning in point of time and also a definite termination. Grace likewise had its inception at a specific time and will be displayed until a specifically predicted time. Many are of the opinion that the law has always existed. It has not. Law, as a principle of works, has existed from the day that God commanded Adam to refrain from eating of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden. But the law, designated as the Mosaic code, came into being with Moses. Scripture states: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Of course, this verse does not imply that law never existed before Moses, any more than it implies that grace and truth were not in the world before the manifestation in the flesh of the blessed eternal God the Son.

The law of the Jewish commonwealth did begin with Moses, and the specific display of grace and truth as seen in the New Testament did come by Jesus Christ. The law as an active force has ceased to exist, because the death of Christ fulfilled all the requirements of the law. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). Paul tells us in Galatians that the law "was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to

whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3:19). The seed is explained to us when Scripture states: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). The termination of the law, then occurred with the death of Christ on Calvary. Grace began to be manifested when the law was done away. (Concerning the reign of the law in the kingdom age we shall speak more particularly later).

The Epistle to Titus affirms that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (2:11). That grace which came by Jesus Christ and now offers salvation to all, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Rom. 10:12); that grace, I say, will terminate at the catching away of the body of Christ to be ever with the Lord. This distinction between law and grace is of primary importance.\*

## THE LAW FOR ISRAEL

Law and grace are to be distinguished in regard to the respective groups to which each addresses itself. The law was addressed and given to one people and only one—Israel. Moses asked Israel: "And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (Deut. 4:8). He specified further that "this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel; These are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt"

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\*See the author's *Premillennialism or Amillennialism?*

(Deut. 4:44, 45). The Lord Jesus in His upper-room discourse said: "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law" (John 15:25).

Paul, in enumerating the advantages of Israel before Christ's ministry, declares that to them "pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. 9:4, 5). In spite of these clear and unequivocal statements of Scripture there are those who insist the law was meant for all mankind. To whom, now, is grace offered? Paul announces that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11). Since God has concluded all "under sin" and since all have come short of the glory of God, the grace of God is manifested to all and is appropriated by "him which believeth in Jesus." All are under the same divine judicial sentence and the remedy is universal in its application. How different here are the principles of law and grace!

## **THE REQUIREMENTS OF LAW AND GRACE**

Law stands in contradistinction to grace in respect to its requirements. The former, ministering to those of the old creation, the natural man, is limited in its adaptation to its subjects. These requirements must first be met before the blessings of God can be received. It is "Do and live" and "Do to be." Moses described it well when he said: "That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Rom. 10:5). In complying with the requirements as best as the natural man can in his most limited ability, he is

seeking to gain acceptance with God. In the Mosaic system it is: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:18).

In grace, however, where the requirements are such because one has been accepted of God, the teachings are superhuman requirements. Grace says: "Live and do" and "Be to do." In the Epistle to the Romans, the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the Epistle to the Colossians, the Spirit first tells us what God has done for the believer, then He declares what we are to do. In grace the requirements are never to be met in the sense of paying a debt or an already due obligation. The standard of the requirements in the law was the whole Mosaic legal system; in grace the standard is no less than a walk worthy of and in conformity with the high, holy, and glorious calling of sons of God in Christ Jesus.

Christ said: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34). Paul says: "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).

The Spirit of God further reveals through Paul that believers are to reckon themselves dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. That they are to yield themselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness to God. That they are to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the

flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. That they are to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. That they are through the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body and live. That they are to recognize that they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. That they are to put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and being renewed in the spirit of their minds, to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. That they are to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Less than these requirements could not be asked of those who have been constituted sons of God, citizens of heaven, those seated in the heavenlies with Christ. In its requirements the law commands; grace exhorts. Failure to comply with the enactments of the law brings punishment; in grace failure robs of joy and abounding peace, and stunts spiritual growth. Is it possible to find two such principles that differ so decidedly in their essential characteristics?

## ENABLEMENT IN LAW AND GRACE

But this is not all. Law is unlike grace in the enablement that is offered to those who are under it. Although the requirements under law fall below those under grace, there is no divine enablement in keeping the law. One can search for even the slightest hint of divine enablement in all of the six hundred and thirteen laws of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and he will not find it. On the other hand, although the requirements in grace are so far

above those under the law, there is abundant enablement provided. The indwelling Holy Spirit is He "which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). When the one under grace is walking by means of the Spirit, He empowers unto every good word and work. For instance, if the believer is to love his brother in Christ even as Christ loved him, then he has the enablement to do it, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5).

## BASES OF LAW AND GRACE

The basis of the law is the principle of works; that of grace is the covenant of grace. Human merit is the foundation stone of the law; the merit of Christ is the foundation stone of grace. The law spoke on this wise: "And all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God"; "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee" (Deut. 28:2, 15).

The principle of works is grounded in confidence in what the flesh can do; the covenant of grace is based upon faith in what God has done and is willing to do. When the children of Israel were at the foot of Mount Sinai, they were told how graciously God had dealt with them. He said to Moses: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself" (Exod. 19:4). Yet when they were told of the law which would require them to acquire merit before God, they con-

fidently asserted: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

This consummate confidence in the flesh is seen again after the law has been given: "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do" (Exod. 24:3). Paul tells believers under grace that "we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). The reason is not far to seek, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3, 4).

## THE PURPOSE OF LAW AND GRACE

Perhaps one of the greatest distinction between the principles of law and grace is that in respect to the purpose of each. Many are of the opinion among Jews, Gentiles, and even Christians that the law was given by God that man might come to God and be wholly accepted of Him. Righteousness, they maintain, was the inevitable, not to say intended, outcome of the diligent keeping of the law by conformity to all of its manifold precepts and injunctions. To tell such people that the purpose of the law is altogether foreign to their conception of it, is to brand one's self as an antinomian with the professed desire of abolishing all law, even moral law.

But what saith the Scriptures? Paul tells us by the Spirit "that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth

may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). Again he says: "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound" (Rom. 5:20). Yet again he declares: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made"; "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:19, 24). The law, therefore, was introduced to show man his utter lack of merit before God and the impossibility of gaining any by reliance upon his own strength. It was added to give sin the added character of transgression against the law of God.

So many writers fail to see that while the law itself, coming from God and partaking of His nature, is "holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12), that it cannot render man holy and just and good. The law did not show carnal man his good nature (which he does not have) but his sinful and corrupt nature. Nor need we deceive ourselves into thinking that the law made anything perfect. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of better hope did" (Heb. 7:19). Furthermore, what the law could not do is just as important as what it did. It is the testimony of the apostle that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). This view of the law is the clear and normal one set forth by the Scriptures.

The passages bearing on this subject could be multiplied, but the ones cited above will suffice. But what is the purpose of grace? The full purpose of grace was that by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ all the redeemed by faith might be brought into glory, "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceed-

ing riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ" (Eph. 2:7). Until that time, by grace through faith God has purposed to save those who believe in the finished work of Christ. It is further the avowed purpose of grace to teach us that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:12, 13).

## THE RESULTS OF LAW AND GRACE

There is yet another contrast between law and grace which we must draw. It is the respective results of the operation of these principles upon the individual. Law brings death; grace gives life, "for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" (II Cor. 3:6). The one is "ministration of death"; the other, "the ministration of the Spirit." The former is "the ministraton of condemnation"; the latter, "the ministration of righteousness." This is nowhere so well portrayed as in the events occurring at the giving of the law and those at the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Of the former we read: "there fell of the people that day about three thousand men" (Exod. 32:28). Of the latter we read: "the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). How, oh how, we ask, can men fail to see those positive, clear, and definite distinctions between the principles of law and grace? May God grant us to be zealous for grace and jealous of its infinitely great blessings and benefits.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>L. S. Chafer, *Grace*, p. 244.

## THE JEWISH SABBATH AND CHRISTIAN SUNDAY

Perhaps before this point the reader may with reason have been inquiring as to the necessity for such a lengthy treatment of law and grace in a discussion of the subject of the Sabbath and the Lord's Day. Our answer is candidly that we have deemed it of the utmost importance to our discussion. As one reads the works on the subject of the Sabbath and the Lord's Day, one becomes increasingly convinced of the fact that those who hold the proper scriptural position on this subject are only those who have a clear conception of law and grace. But why choose this particular subject to exemplify the distinction between law and grace? Because "The distinction between the reign of law and the reign of grace is at no point more sharply drawn than in the question of the observance of the seventh day of the week or the first day of the week; for these two days are symbolical of the dispensations to which they are related."

One or two definitions are in order at this point. When we shall refer to the Sabbath, it will be with the understanding that it is the seventh day of the week, the Jewish Sabbath. We know of no day such as the "Christian Sabbath." When mention is made of the Lord's Day, it will refer to the first day of the week, the Christian's Sunday.

## THE SABBATH THROUGH THE AGES

We propose to study the subject of the Sabbath in six time periods; namely, that of creation, that between Adam and Moses, that between Moses and

Christ, that of the earthly ministry of Christ, that of the Church period, and that of the kingdom age. There are some who find a reference to the institution of the Sabbath at creation in the passage Genesis 2:1-3. The passage reads as follows: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them. And on the seventh day of God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

It will be noted that there is no hint that God gave this Sabbath to man. He alone rested. Considered as a day of rest (although God did not rest because He was tired— Isaiah 40:28) the original Sabbath could not logically have been given to man, because as yet he had not labored. Not only do those who keep the seventh day try to read into this passage the institution of the original Sabbath for all mankind, but even others go to this passage for their supposed authority for the Lord's Day. They reason that if the Sabbath received its authority here, and the observance of the seventh day has been changed to the first day, then the observance of the first day must go back to Genesis 2 for its authority.

Another fact that militates against the view that the Sabbath began in Eden, is that we find no mention of it for centuries later. In spite of this, one author tells us: "It shares with the ordinance of marriage alone the characteristic of having been instituted at the creation of the world. Being coeval with creation, the Sabbatical law, like the marriage law, is of universal obligation on all mankind."<sup>2</sup> Proof for such an assertion is not forthcoming.

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<sup>2</sup>R. C. Burr, *The Lord's Day*, p. 5.

## FROM ADAM TO MOSES

A study of the period between Adam and Moses, a period of about twenty-five hundred years, will reveal that the institution of the Sabbath is not mentioned anywhere. One writer seems to find a reference to the Sabbath in the statement in Job: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them" (Job 1:6). It is not declaring too much when we say that this is purely a gratuitous assumption, difficult of substantiation from the Scriptures.

If the Sabbath did exist, then it is more than passing strange that, although we find accounts of the religious life and worship of the patriarchs, in which accounts mention is specifically made to the rite of circumcision, the sacrifices, the offering of the tithe, and the institution of marriage, we should find no mention of the great institution of the Sabbath. It did not exist, for Moses says: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day" (Deut. 5:1-3). Such a plain statement of the Word settles the question once for all.

## THE SABBATH UNDER MOSES

The Sabbath, embodied quite distinctly in the ten commandments, was first instituted at Mount Sinai under Moses. The ten commandments were not for all mankind, but for Israel alone. Proof of this fact is seen in the salutation or heading of the ten commandments: "I am the Lord thy God, which have

brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exod. 20:2). That this was not meant for the Gentiles is further seen from the study of the following two passages: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world"; "And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude: only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone" (Eph. 2:11, 12; Deut. 4:12, 13).

If the Gentiles were strangers to the covenants, and the ten commandments constituted a covenant, how then does the Sabbath pertain to them? In spite of these clear statements there are those who maintain that the Sabbath belongs to all men. **One writer exclaims:** "How erroneous is the reasoning of those who argue that the Fourth Commandment belong solely to the Jews; the fact being that it is the one commandment that is specially signalised as belonging to the whole human race."<sup>3</sup> As for ourselves we fail to see that God made any distinction in Exodus between the fourth and the remaining commandments: they were all for Israel.

Another writer states: "In this respect (the Sabbath), as in so many others, the covenant with Israel was to serve for the enlightenment and blessing of all families of the earth; and the literal Israel was to be the type of the spiritual Israel, which was to include all peoples, nations, and languages, in a

<sup>3</sup>Anonymous, *The Sabbath*, p. 6.

covenant not to pass away till this whole dispensation of time should be lost in eternity.”<sup>4</sup> There is no need to multiply examples of this kind, for to say that they are groundless and unscriptural is sufficient.

## THE SABBATH FOR ISRAEL

The Sabbath was given to Israel for a definite purpose, and it was a religious purpose rather than a physiological or social one. The Lord commanded Moses: “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you” (Exod. 31:13). Ezekiel bears the same testimony, saying: “Wherefore 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 shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even 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 the Lord that sanctify them” (20:10-12). These passages are strikingly devoid of any ambiguity as to the people to whom the Sabbath belonged.

## THE SABBATH A PART OF THE UNIFIED LAW

Many in their zeal to keep the Sabbath forget that it is not an isolated factor in a religious code, but is an integral part of a legal system. The infringement of this law in any particular meant the penalty of death. In Numbers 15:32-36 we read of the incident where a man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath

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<sup>4</sup>A. Barry, *The Christian Sunday*, p. 22.

was stoned to death. This would have been the penalty for one lighting a fire on the Sabbath. Can modern Gentile Sabbath-keepers evade this issue and declare their innocence before the law? They do make a distinction between what is called the "moral law" and the "ceremonial law." Suffice it to say that Scripture knows of no such distinction. Nor does this relieve them of their difficulty because, granted that the regulations for punishment were ceremonial, how about the sacrifices God commanded (Num. 28:9, 10) to be brought on the Sabbath? If these are also declared to be ceremonial, then what was there left in the Sabbath observance to be called "moral"?

We conclude this phase of our discussion with a quotation from a former Seventh-Day observer. "But after keeping it twenty-eight years; after having persuaded more than a thousand others to keep it; after having read my Bible through verse by verse, more than twenty times; after having scrutinized, to the very best of my ability, every text, line and word in the Bible having the remotest bearing upon the Sabbath question; after having looked up all these, both in the original and in many translations; after having search in lexicons, concordances, commentaries and dictionaries; after having read armfuls of books on both sides of the question; after having read every line in all the early church fathers upon this point; and having written several works in favor of the Seventh-Day, which were satisfactory to my brethren; after having debated the question for more than a dozen times; after seeing the fruits of keeping it, and weighing all the evidence in the fear of God, I am fully settled in my own mind and conscience that the evidence is against the keeping of the Seventh-Day."<sup>5</sup> Little wonder it is that this conclusion was reached,

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<sup>5</sup>D. M. Canright, *Seventh-Day Adventists Renounced*, p. 185.

for we have seen that the Sabbath was given to Israel only.

It is to the earthly life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ that many go for their proof that the law and its Sabbath are still in force today. Such a position fails to grasp the truth of the different dispensations, Jewish and Christian, the one on this side of the cross and the other on the other side. Besides, none of the New Testament had been written during the earthly life and ministry of Christ, so that the rule of life for the believer had not yet been given. This is later found in detail in the Epistles. Moreover, those who would keep the Sabbath fail to realize in what role, as it were, Christ ministered upon earth. Paul tells us plainly: "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8).

So we see that we cannot find our rule of life under grace in Christ's keeping of the law. He said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17, 18). These verses are often quoted to substantiate the keeping of the Sabbath. In the first place, it should be noted that Christ is here stating what He came to do and not what He would have us to do. He came to fulfill all the law, because carnal man could not. He came to pay the penalty of the law, so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us by the Spirit, "for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21). Of what vital importance was the death of our precious Lord Jesus!

## THE BURDEN OF RABBINICAL ADDITIONS

Another passage that is often misapplied is that in Mark 2:27, 28 where Christ says: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." It is contended that this surely proves that the *Sabbath* is for all mankind. But does it? "Man" here is used in a specific sense for Israel, just as "man" refers only to believers when Paul states: "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble" (I Cor. 3:12). That there was a need for the Lord to remind the Pharisees that the Sabbath was for man and not *vice versa*, can be seen from some of their regulations concerning the the Sabbath.\*

The Talmud teaches that Rabbi Jehudah said: "If a man stepped into loam, he should wipe his feet on the ground and not on a wall." But Rabha said: "Why should he not do that, because it might be presumed that he plasters the wall and is engaged in building? Nay: this is not ordinary building (but more like field-work). On the contrary: if he wipe his feet on the ground he may perchance smoothen out an incavation, hence he should rather wipe his feet on the wall. For the same reason, he should not wipe his feet on the side of an incavation, lest he smoothen it out."

The rabbis taught that a small man should not wear a large shoe, lest it fall off and he be compelled to carry it on the Sabbath. He may, however, wear a large shirt, since there is no fear of his taking that off and carrying it. A woman should not go out with a torn shoe on the Sabbath, lest she be laughed at and carry the shoe. She also must not accept Chalitzah (Deut. 25:5-10) in such a shoe; but if she did so, the

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\**Seder Mo'ed, Massecheth Sabbath.*

Chalitzta is valid. If a person were in one place, and his hand filled with fruit put forth into another, and the Sabbath overtook him in this position, he would have to drop the fruit, since if he withdrew his full hand from one place to another, he would be carrying a burden on the Sabbath.

Women are forbidden to look into a mirror on the Sabbath, because they might discover a white hair and try to pull it out, which act would be a grievous sin. A radish may be dipped into salt, but not left in too long, since this would be similar to making pickle. If on the Sabbath a wall had fallen on a person, and it were doubtful whether he were under the ruins, whether he were alive or dead, a Jew or Gentile, it would be duty to clear away the rubbish sufficiently to find the body. If the person were not dead, the labor would have to be continued; but if he were dead, nothing further should be done to extricate the body.

And so we could go on (for this is not even one insignificant part of the Sabbath regulations), but do not these examples suffice to reveal the urgent reason Christ said the Sabbath was for Israel and not Israel for the Sabbath, as the rabbinical regulations had actually ordained? From the earthly life and ministry of Christ, then, even though He kept the Sabbath, we cannot find proof that it is binding upon us. In short, what He really did was to keep it, so that it would no longer need to be in force.

## **THE SABBATH NOT FOR THE BELIEVER**

A study of the period from the death of Christ and the descent of the Spirit on Pentecost till the rapture of the Church reveals most unmistakably that the Sabbath has been abolished. It is not incumbent upon

any believer to keep the Sabbath, because it is part of the legal system, and "Since law and grace are opposed to each other at every point, it is impossible for them to coexist, either as the ground of acceptance before God or as the rule of life"; because this is definitely the age of grace, the law "is not in force in the present age in any sense whatsoever."<sup>6</sup>

Paul tells us in II Corinthians 3:7-13: "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." In writing to the Colossians Paul says: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" ( 2:16, 17). That the Sabbath was to be done away was not a truth foreign to the Old Testament either, for Hosea says: "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts" (2:11).

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<sup>6</sup>L. S. Chafer, *Grace*, p. 215.

## THE LEGALISTS OBJECT

But our legalists protest that we must have some law. Surely you cannot expect us to believe that it is not wrong to steal, kill or commit adultery in this age, they contend. We do not expect any such thing. God has taken care of this problem also. Every moral principle contained in the ten commandments has been reiterated under grace by the Spirit in the form of an exhortation with the single exception, *mirabile dictu*, of the commandment to keep the Sabbath. The commandment to have but one God is reiterated in Paul's statement: "There is one God" (I Tim. 2:5). The second commandment is found in the exhortation: "Neither be ye idolaters"; (I Cor. 10:7) the third "But above all things, my brethren, swear not" (Jas. 5:12); the fourth is *nowhere in the New Testament*; the fifth: "Honour thy father and mother" (Eph. 6:2); the sixth "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:15); the seventh: "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4); the eighth: "Let him that stole steal no more" (Eph. 4:28); the ninth: "Lie not one to another" (Col. 3:9); the tenth: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you" (Eph. 5:3).

Does it not show the perversion of thinking of some men that they should lay most stress on the fourth commandment when it is totally done away by God? All the evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, Dr. Charles Hodge tells us: "It is admitted that the precepts of the decalogue bind the Church in all ages; while the specific details contained in the books of Moses, designed to point out the way in which the duty they enjoined was then to be performed, are no longer in force."<sup>7</sup> The law does not lend itself to any

<sup>7</sup>C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, p. 337.

such loose manipulation, for he that offends in one point is guilty of all, and having undertaken to keep a part of the law, it being an integral whole, he is of necessity a debtor to keep the whole law. To exhort Christians to keep the Sabbath or to observe the Lord's Day in the manner of the Sabbath is a practice wholly foreign to grace. In short, it is to encourage Christians to fall from grace.

## THE KINGDOM AGE

That the Sabbath will be reinstated shortly before the kingdom age (during the Great Tribulation, (Matt. 24:20) and during the kingdom age is the testimony of the Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments. Isaiah prophesied: "Blessed in the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from His people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine

altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people" (56:2-7).

That this scripture refers to the kingdom age when there will be a temple, sacrifices, the Sabbath, and a more stringent law than that of Moses, is assuredly the teaching of this passage. Isaiah foretold further: "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord" (66:23). One writer commenting on this passage says: "All that we are warranted, therefore, to draw from the verse before us is, that as the people of Judea at set times repaired to Jerusalem to worship, and as they observed their new moons and Sabbaths, so in a future age all flesh, or men of every land, shall connect themselves with the church of God, and engage from month to month, and from week to week, in 'its stated observances and solemn feasts.'"

This same ingenious method of exegesis cause the writer to say in another place: "That Christians are under the law of the ten commandments is the doctrine of the New Testament."<sup>8</sup> If we were to comment on this writer in Biblical phraseology, we should say: "Every man set forth his exegesis according to that which was right in his own eyes." What floundering in the Scriptures do we find when men are not anchored to the moorings of grace and dispensational truth

## THE LORD'S DAY IN PROPHECY AND TYPE

With the subject of the Sabbath firmly fixed in our minds, the question of the Lord's Day is easily comprehended. First of all, it was a subject of Old Testa-

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<sup>8</sup>J Gilfillan, *The Sabbath*, pp. 295, 301.

ment prophecy and typology. The Psalmist declares: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:22-24). That this Scripture refers to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the witness of the Holy Spirit Himself by the mouth of the Apostle Peter in Acts 4:11. Moses writes in Leviticus 23:10, 11: "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the 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." Here is undoubtedly a type of Christ risen from the dead, and become the "firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20).

## **THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK IN THE GOSPELS**

The four Gospels are one in declaring that the Lord Jesus arose from the dead. The celebration of the first day of the week is in commemoration of this blessed event. If the resurrection seem to be a small event in the eyes of some, let them be reminded that it, as an inextricable part of redemption, was a greater display of God's infinite power than creation (compare Ps. 8:3 with with Isa. 53:1). Redemption in Scripture is always given a higher place of importance than creation. There are only two chapters in the Bible on creation, but the remainder of it is devoted to the redemption of fallen man. Six days sufficed to create the world; it has taken centuries to gather out a body of redeemed people for His praise and glory.

When we consider the definite estrangement of man from God with its concomitant disastrous results, when we contemplate what it meant for the Lord Jesus to leave His glory which He had with the Father as the eternal God the son, when we seek to comprehend but a little what the death of the cross meant, when we attempt to realize what it has meant for the Lord Jesus to break the fetters of death that His own ineffably glorious resurrection life might be imparted to us, can we really doubt for a moment the wisdom of commemorating the resurrection by observing with joy and gladness the first day of the week?

### **EVENTS ON THE FIRST DAY**

The first day of the week gains further significance when we note the important events that occurred upon it. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ has been mentioned. It was on the first day of the week that the Lord opened the Scriptures to the disciples going to Emmaus; it was on the first day of the week that Christ appeared to His disciples after His resurrection; it was on the first day of the week that the blessed Holy Spirit descended to abide with and in the Church; it was on the first day of the week that the Lord saved three thousand souls through the preaching of Spirit-filled Peter; it was on the first day of the week that the disciples were wont to come together to break bread; it was on the first day of the week that the matchless and glorious revelation of Jesus Christ was given to John on the isle of Patmos. When we note how little we read of the first day of the week in the records of the Lord's earthly ministry and yet how much it comes into prominence after the death of Christ, are we not persuaded that

this day is for the believer looking back at the cross as an accomplished fact?

## THE LORD'S DAY A PART OF PLAN OF GRACE

Furthermore, the Lord's Day is wholly in accord with the whole concept of grace. Just as the Sabbath belonged to the old creation, so the Lord's Day belongs to the new creation. The Lord's Day is on resurrection ground; the Sabbath is not. In speaking of the resurrection of the body of the believer Paul says: "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" (I Cor. 15:46). We believe that this same principle holds true throughout the entire Word of God. First, there was the old creation, then the new creation; first, the natural man in Adam, then the spiritual man in Christ; first the natural seed in Ishmael (and Esau), then the spiritual seed in Isaac (and Jacob); first, the natural people of God or Israel, then the spiritual people of God or the Church; first, the natural birth, then the spiritual birth, first, the Sabbath, then the Lord's Day.

Many cannot see how the Lord's Day can be kept without any hedges about it, without commandments, and without detailed regulations. "If it be claimed that there is no direct commandment for the keeping of the Lord's Day, it should be observed that there is explicit command against the observance of the sabbath day, and that the lack of commandment concerning the Lord's Day is both in accordance with the character of the new day, and the entire order of grace which it represents and to which it is related."<sup>9</sup>

At the beginning of the Church's history the Lord's

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<sup>9</sup>L. S. Chafer, *Grace*, p. 272.

Day was celebrated with joy and thankfulness and in spiritual activity. Later, when such groups arose as The Society For The Observance Of The Christian Sabbath, then regulations were added that caused it to conform (witness the Scotch and Puritan Sabbath) more and more to the Jewish Sabbath. There was an adding on to the Lord's Day, just as there had been to the Sabbath by the Pharisees. Men are determined, it seems, to gain merit before God by their works. But let it be remembered that no Old Testament regulations concerning the Jewish Sabbath can teach us how to keep the Lord's Day, because the Church period and its rule of life for the believer were not foreseen in Old Testament times, and because the New Testament does provide a rule of life under grace that teaches us how to keep all the days in the week.

Paul says: "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it"; "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Rom. 14:5; Col. 3:17).

## THE LORD'S DAY NOT OF MAN

There have been many attempts made on the part of Seventh-Dayists to attribute the keeping of the Lord's Day to the institution of man, namely to Constantine and the Pope of Rome. Historical evidence does not substantiate this position. The evidence, moreover, is scattered over two or three centuries and is abundant in quantity. We quote representative testimonies.

## THE EVIDENCE FROM HISTORY

Pliny, governor of Bithynia, Asia Minor, wrote in A.D. 107 to Trajan concerning the Christians: "They were wont to meet together, on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as God . . . When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate and then to come together again to a meal which they ate in common without any disorder."

Ignatius, died about A.D. 110, wrote in his Epistle to the Magnesians: "Be not deceived with heterodox opinions, nor old unprofitable fables. For if we still live according to Judaism we confess that we have not received grace. For even the most holy prophets were persecuted, being inspired by His grace, to assure the disobedient that there is one God, who is His Eternal Word . . . If they then who were concerned in old things, arrived at a newness of hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living according to the Lord's Day, by which our life sprung up by Him and by His death (whom certain persons deny) . . . how can we live without Him, whose disciples even the prophets were, and in spirit waited for Him as their Teacher? Wherefore, He whom they justly waited for, when He came, raised them up from the dead . . . We have been made His disciples, let us live according to Christianity."

Barnabas, A.D. 120, wrote: "Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day, also, on which Jesus rose again from the dead."

The Teaching Of The Apostles, A.D. 125, says: "But every Lord's Day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving."

Justin Martyr, A.D. 140, wrote: "Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a

change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ, our Saviour, on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the sun, having appeared to His disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration."

The Catholic Encyclopedia, whose contributors should know whether the Pope instituted Sunday or not, says: "Sunday was the first day of the week according to the Jewish method of reckoning, but for Christians it began to take the place of the Jewish Sabbath in Apostolic times as the day set apart for the public and solemn worship of God."<sup>10</sup>

Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth; Bardesanes of Edessa; Clement of Alexandria; Tertullian of Africa; Origen; Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage; Anatolius, Bishop of Laodicea Victorinus, Bishop of Petau; Peter, Bishop of Alexandria; and others bear a similar corroborating testimony to the observance of the first day of the week in the early centuries of the Church.

## THE LORD'S DAY OF GOD

All the available evidence on the subject shows definitely, whether from the Scriptures or the early church fathers, that the Lord's Day was not instituted by man. Moreover, it is the clear statement of the Word that God inaugurated this day. "This is the day which the Lord hath made" (Ps. 118:24). It is little wonder, then, that it is called the Lord's Day. Someone has said: "The best argument that has ever been written on the reality of the Christian religion" (and we add, on the origin of the Lord's

<sup>10</sup> D. M. Canright, *The Lord's Day From Neither Catholic Nor Pagans*, p. 129ff.



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