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A Study of the Basic Concept of the New Testament Sabbath

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A STUDY OF THE BASIC CONCEPT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT SABBATH

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem. In the contemporary religious picture there is a revival of interest in the sabbath question. The purpose of this study has been to determine what Jesus and the apostles taught with reference to the New Testament sabbath. The problem was to determine how and when the New Testament sabbath was observed.

Justification of the Problem. Frequently people are heard to declare that this present dispensation of grace does not demand an observance of the sabbath according to Old Testament law; that the positive teachings of Jesus are to be the only standards of authority. There is therefore a need to determine if any basic differences exist between the Jewish Sabbath and the New Testament sabbath as taught by Jesus.

Certain Protestant groups today are advocating that the Jewish Sabbath, or the seventh day, should also be the Christian sabbath. Since these groups have been steadily growing in number, there is an increasing need for pastors and teachers to be able to give adequate reason for observing a particular day of the week, namely, Sunday. Furthermore, Christian testimony has been considerably weakened because of an improper attitude toward the sabbath and sabbath keeping. A better understanding of the New Testament sabbath would raise the standard of sabbath observance and render greater significance to the day.

The Method of Procedure. Since this has been chiefly a Biblical study, there has been a constant attempt to determine what the Bible record contains concerning the sabbath. Positive teaching has been sought regarding the sabbath of the Old and New Testaments, and the extra-Biblical sources have been noted chiefly for interpretation. Strong's Concordance was utilized to search out every available reference to the sabbath in both the Old and New Testament. The Greek text was referred to with profitable results.

The Old Testament teaching concerning the Jewish Sabbath was considered as basic in the study of the New Testament sabbath. As the study progressed, the following questions were kept in mind: What basic concepts of the Jewish Sabbath have been carried over to the New Testament teaching? What are the basic differences between the Old and New Testament teaching concerning the sabbath? And, just where does the sabbath law fit into the Christian doctrine?

The writings of the Early Church Fathers were studied with the purpose of determining their interpretation of sabbath observance, for here was a group of individuals who were closely related to both Jewish and Christian teaching. Some of them were disciples of the Apostles and received personal instruction from them, and all of them lived close enough to the Christian events to be vitally aware of the implications of the Christian faith.

Basic Assumptions. It has been assumed that the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, and as such, it is the final authority on whatever matter it speaks. In those instances where the Bible re-

mains silent on an issue, no positive statement was made. Unless otherwise specified, all Biblical references quoted have been taken from the 1901 edition of the American Standard Version of the Bible.

The writings of the Early Church Fathers were accepted as reasonably reliable documents. Their testimony bears a ring of truth which suggests authority.

Definition of Terms. The term 'concept' has been used to indicate a thought or idea. The frequent use of 'basic concept' as it was associated with the sabbath simply meant an understanding or meaning of the ways in which the sabbath was to be observed.

The term 'sabbath' has been used extensively in this study to indicate a day of rest. It has not, however, been used to denote a particular day, such as the seventh day, unless positively specified. The Jewish Sabbath always represented the seventh day, but the Christian sabbath did not always refer to the first day, although it was generally intended to do so. The term 'sabbath' was used to refer to a day, but not necessarily to a particular day.

Statement of Organization. The term 'sabbath' had its origin in the Old Testament. The study of the Jewish Sabbath included a study of the etymology of the term 'sabbath', a study of the origin of the sabbath including critical theories concerning it, a study of the sabbath up to the time of Jesus' ministry, and a study of the basic concepts of the sabbath as given in the various precepts of the law. A study of the New Testament was then made to glean the direct and indirect teaching of Jesus and the apostles concerning the sab-

bath, giving place for the implications of the first day of the week. Finally, a study was made of the writings of certain of the Early Church Fathers to climax the work. The results of the study were then assembled in definite conclusions.

CHAPTER II

THE JEWISH SABBATH

It has been wisely said that the New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, and the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed. A study of the basic concept of the New Testament Sabbath necessarily involves a study of the Old Testament, for the Jewish Sabbath has undeniably influenced today's conception of the New Testament Sabbath. The study of the Jewish Sabbath has been limited chiefly to the Old Testament writings, although some information has been gleaned from the Maccabean books and the contributions of various Bible Scholars.

This chapter deals with (1) the etymology of the term 'sabbath'; (2) the origin of the Jewish Sabbath; (3) critical theories concerning the Jewish Sabbath; (4) the history of the Jewish Sabbath; and (5) the basic concept of the Jewish Sabbath.

THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE TERM SABBATH

The term 'sabbath' in the Hebrew language is shabbath. The Hebrew root of this word means to desist or cease; the implication expresses an intensive or complete cessation, or a making to cease. This making to cease, however, is not the positive 'rest' of relaxation or refreshment, but is rather the negative 'rest' of cessation from work or activity.¹ The above definition expresses the term in

¹R. S. Driver, "Sabbath," Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902) IV, 317.

the light of the knowledge on the subject, but there is an uncertainty as to whether it expresses the original meaning or not. In an article in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, Mr. R. S. Driver expressed his viewpoint on the etymology of this word 'sabbath' in the following words: "Whether, however, this etymology expresses the original meaning of 'sabbath', must remain for the present an open question."¹ It is interesting to note that there are at least three instances in the Old Testament where the Hebrew has been translated 'sabbath' by the King James Version, and 'rest' by the American Standard Version (Lev. 23:24; 23:29, (2)).

The Greek word for 'sabbath' is sabbaton (*σάββατον*). Like the Hebrew shabbath, sabbaton expresses a cessation from labor; or rest.² Josephus, the well known early historian, was a man well versed in both the Hebrew and Greek languages. He defined 'sabbath' as "a day of rest from all labor."³ The word 'sabbath' which originally meant a cessation from all labor, had by Josephus' day come to be accepted as 'a day of rest.' The Old Testament Scriptures bear out the fact that with the very first recorded mention of the sabbath by Moses, it was considered as a day of rest. On the sixth day on which Jehovah had sent manna to the children of Israel, he said: "Tomorrow is a solemn rest, a holy sabbath unto Jehovah"

¹Ibid.

²The Analytical Greek Lexicon (New York: Harper and Brothers, n. d.) p. 361.

³Flavius Josephus, Josephus' Complete Works, trans. by William Whiston (no publishing data), p. 299.

(Ex. 16:23). On the following day, which was the seventh day, Jehovah again said: "Today is a sabbath unto Jehovah" (Ex. 16:25). In Exodus 16:30 the following statement is recorded: "So the people rested the seventh day." The first written command for sabbath observance was given to Moses by Jehovah on Mount Sinai, and begins, "Remember the sabbath day" (Ex. 20:8). Other references concerning the sabbath as a day of rest are cited in another part of this chapter under the heading, "The Sabbath as a Day of Rest," but one more will suffice at this point. "Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to Jehovah: whosoever doeth any work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death" (Ex. 31:15).

The Old Testament references cited above record two facts about the Jewish Sabbath as a "day of rest." First, the sabbath was to be a solemn rest, and secondly, the sabbath is referred to as a day--the sabbath day, which was also the seventh day. It is evident that the sabbath was to be "a day of rest." Just as six days were specified as days for work, the seventh day was ordered of Jehovah to be a day of rest--the Jewish Sabbath.

THE ORIGIN OF THE JEWISH SABBATH

The origin of the Jewish Sabbath has been the object of considerable conflicting thought. There is scarcely even a hint of a weekly sabbath before Moses' day, so that it is difficult for Bible students to approach the sabbath question without the bias of their whole intellectual and spiritual background.

The word 'sabbath' in the Old Testament is first mentioned in reference to the giving of the manna in the wilderness (Ex. 16:21-30). However, at the termination of the creation account God rested the seventh day, and though the word 'sabbath' is not used, many Bible critics have recognized this as the original sabbath. James H. Potts was convinced that Genesis 2:2,3 referred specifically to God's sabbath, and not man's, but that the former is doubtless a good reason for the latter.¹ Jehovah did rest from his creative labors, but at that time He gave no written command for man to rest from his labors at a specified time. In an interview with Dr. Eldon Fuhrman, Professor of Theology at Western Evangelical Seminary, Dr. Fuhrman pointed out that there is presumptive evidence which seems to indicate that such a command was given orally.² He bases his opinion, first, upon man's necessity for a day of physical rest and, secondly, upon the opinion of Benjamin Field, who has observed traces of the sabbath existing among the pagan nations of antiquity.³

A seven-day period is mentioned nine times in the Book of Genesis, including three times in Genesis 2:2,3. The account of the flood makes mention of a seven-day period four times (Gen. 7:4,10;

¹James H. Potts, Faith Made Easy (Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe, 1888), p. 352.

²Quotation from Dr. Eldon R. Fuhrman, Professor at Western Evangelical Seminary, Portland, Oregon, in a personal interview with the author, June 1, 1955.

³Benjamin Field, Handbook of Christian Theology (New York: Phillips and Hunt, n.d.), pp. 294, 295.

8:10,12). Genesis 29:27 refers to a week, although the reference is to a seven-year period of time. Genesis 31:23 refers to a journey of seven days, and Genesis 50:10 to seven days of mourning. In the Book of Exodus a seven-day period is mentioned five times. Exodus 7:25 refers to the seven-day period of waiting after Jehovah had smitten the water of Egypt and turned it into blood; the remaining four instances refer to the eating of unleavened bread for a period of seven days (Ex. 12:15,19; 13:6,7).

In the account of the offering sacrificed by Cain and Abel, a specified time was set when the offerings were to be made. "In the process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought.....and Abel, he also brought....." (Gen. 4:3-5). "In the process of time" has been interpreted, "at the end of days," or, "at the end of a certain number of days." Certain scholars such as Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown maintain that this is probably a direct reference to the sabbath.¹ The Old Testament has not given any other even veiled reference to a pre-Mosaic sabbath observance. The "argument from silence", however, is not necessarily a final argument against the possibility of a sabbath observance before the sending of the manna.

The incident of the sending of the manna is the first recorded reference to the sabbath (Ex. 16:14-31). The manna is stated to have fallen for six days, but on the seventh day the first recorded seventh-day sabbath was celebrated. It is interesting to note that no recorded command was given for the people to gather a double supply of manna

¹Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, Commentary of the Whole Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.) I, 20.

on the sixth day, but it was gathered at any rate. When the people reported to Moses what had transpired, Moses spoke for Jehovah: "Tomorrow is a solemn rest, a holy sabbath unto Jehovah" (Ex. 16:23).

Whereas the extra manna gathered before this time had bred worms and become foul, with the instigation of the sabbath, all the manna gathered on the sixth day for the seventh day remained good to eat. In fact, those who sought for manna on the seventh day found none, and they succeeded only in arousing the anger of Jehovah:

How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that 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. So the people rested on the seventh day." Exodus 16:28-30.

Exodus 16:15-30 reveals certain basic facts concerning the origin of the Jewish Sabbath. First, it is the first recorded reference of the Jewish Sabbath. Secondly, it was instigated by Jehovah. Third, it was to be a day of solemn rest; a holy day. Provision was made so that no one needed to so much as gather food on the sabbath day. Fourth, the people were expected to obey Jehovah's commands concerning the sabbath day. In the light of the Scriptural evidence presented, certain assumptions may be made. First, the incidents involved in the giving of the manna presume Jehovah's seal upon the sabbath. At any rate, He used it as a powerful illustration as to how He desired the sabbath to be observed. Secondly, no apparent command for sabbath worship was given--every man was to remain "in his place." At least it may be assumed that the sabbath did not at first involve corporate worship.

CRITICAL THEORIES CONCERNING THE JEWISH SABBATH

Some scholars such as Professor C. H. Toy have regarded the sabbath day as originally a lunar festival similar to an old Babylonian custom. The basis for this theory is an old cuneiform document which contains a word which appears to be nearly identical to the Hebrew word for sabbath. Thus, when the phrase "day of rest for the heart" was translated, no distinction was made between the Hebrew sabbath and the Babylonian custom.¹ Other scholars such as Schrader and Sayce interpreted the phrase to mean "day of the appeasement of the mind." They believed it to refer to the idea of a day when one was not to arouse the anger of the god of that particular day.² It is interesting to note that this reference to a Babylonian special day did not stress a time of rest, nor was it connected with the seventh day of a week.

Professor M. Jastrow wrote a paper in which he attempted to prove that the Hebrew Sabbath was originally an unfavorable or unlucky day; a day when Jehovah's anger might flash forth against man.³ The Word of God does not bear out this argument. Exodus 16:28 bears out the fact that Jehovah was displeased when the people refused to obey His commandments concerning the sabbath, but there seems to be no indication that the sabbath was instituted to be an unfavorable

¹John R. Sampey, "Sabbath," The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1952), IV, 2630.

²Ibid. p. 2630.

³Ibid. p. 2630.

day of anger and punishment. It is true that Jehovah's anger might flash against deliberate disobedience, but He was primarily concerned that the sabbath should be His day; two times it is stated that it was to be a "sabbath unto Jehovah" (Ex. 16:23,25). In the light of the evidence in Exodus 20:10,11, it would seem that Jehovah recognized man's need for rest, and also instituted the sabbath with a humanitarian point of view in mind. Even as Jehovah had rested after six days of labor, so must man. It may therefore be assumed that Jehovah, in instituting the sabbath, took the liberty to appoint a day unto Himself, in part, at least, for man's own good, and reserving the right to punish all who would disobey His commandments to observe the day.

Meinhold's theory of the origin of the sabbath held that the close association between the new moon and the sabbath, in many Biblical references, was conclusive proof that in early Israel, as in Babylonia, the sabbath was the full moon festival and nothing more.¹ Dr. Skinner, another scholar, sought to refute Meinhold's theory by pointing out that there is no certainty of knowing that prophets of Israel ever identified the sabbath with the festival of the full moon.² It is, however, interesting to note that numerous references are made to new moon or new moons, and the sabbath is frequently mentioned in connection with one or the other. Ezekiel 46:3 is a typical example: "And the people of the land shall worship at the door of that gate before Jehovah on the sabbaths and on the new

¹Ibid. p. 2631.

²Ibid. p. 2631.

moons". The very fact that sabbaths and new moons are mentioned together, as well as singularly, implies that they were two different institutions. Furthermore, Exodus 16:15-30 makes no mention of new moons, and what is more significant, there is no direct reference to new moons until the time of David (I Chron. 23:31).

These critical theories are contrary to the Word of God, and therefore cannot be accepted. A wealth of learning and ingenuity has been expended in search for the origin of the sabbath without yielding much more than man can glean from an industrious study of the Word of God.

THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH SABBATH

It is interesting to note the place of the Jewish Sabbath in the history of the Israelite nation. In some instances the use of the sabbath seems to have determined the spiritual health of the people.

It has already been pointed out in this chapter that the first mention of the sabbath was in connection with the giving of the manna in the wilderness of Sin. Likewise, it was also pointed out that there is only presumptive evidence of a sabbath observance prior to the manna event. Jehovah put the sabbath into an official document when He gave 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 day 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 they
that are strangers within thy gates: for in six
days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and

all that in them is, and rested the seventh:
wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and
hallowed it. Exodus 20:8-11.

Following the sin of the golden-calf incident Jehovah restated the Sabbath Law, wherein he stressed again the chief duties required of Israel (Ex. 34:21). Exodus 31:13-17 records again the manner in which the sabbath was to be observed, as well as giving the basic purpose for its observance. Death was promised to those who dared to work on "a sabbath of solemn rest to Jehovah" (Ex. 35:2), and Leviticus 15:32-36 relates an actual case of a man stoned to death for breaking the sabbath. The word further points out that the sabbath was to be a reminder of the deliverance from Egypt:

And thou shalt remember that thou was a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out hence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day. Deuteronomy 5:15.

Just why did Jehovah need to put a "reminder of the deliverance" into the sabbath requirements? The Israelites had been quick to murmur against Jehovah from time to time, and to remind Jehovah that they would be better off as slaves in Egypt. It was necessary that the Israelites remember the horrible details of suffering and bondage back in Egypt, and to remember the miraculous way in which Jehovah had delivered them by the plagues, then through the Red Sea, and later by providing bountiful provisions of water and food in the wilderness.

Isaiah wrote considerable concerning the sabbath. Isaiah 1:13 implies that the profaning of the sabbath was one of the causes of Israel's captivity. Isaiah 56:2-4 exalts the men who, among

other things, "keep my sabbaths." Isaiah further held that the sabbath should be a day when man refrained from doing his own pleasure in order to delight himself in Jehovah (Isaiah 58:13,14).

Jeremiah uttered terrible judgments against stiffnecked Judah, and reminded the people how they were to hallow the sabbath day. If the people would hearken unto Jehovah to hallow the sabbath day, and to do no work therein, Jeremiah prophesied that Jerusalem would remain forever. However, if the people refused to hallow the sabbath, insisting to do work therein, they would be subject to a fearful calamity: "Then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched" (Jeremiah 17:21-27). Jeremiah here implied that the keeping of the sabbath was a test of spirituality. If the people would keep the sabbath--blessing; if they refused to keep the sabbath--judgment. In accordance with Israel's sin and captivity in Babylon, Jeremiah cried out:

And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden: he hath destroyed his place of assembly: Jehovah hath caused solemn assembly and sabbath to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest. Lamentations 2:16.

Ezekiel reminded the people of Jehovah's longsuffering in relation to keeping His sabbaths. Ezekiel 20:12-26 relates how Jehovah had threatened to pour out his wrath when Israel had profaned His sabbaths, and how, in mercy, He had withheld His hand. However, when their sinfulness only increased, Jehovah saw fit to scatter them.

Moreover also I gave them statutes that were not good, and ordinances wherein they should not live; and I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that

openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate,
to the end that they might know that I am Jehovah.
Ezekiel 20:25,26.

After the Babylonian captivity Nehemiah led the people in the reobservance of the sabbath. The ninth chapter records a prayer by the children of Israel in which they praised Jehovah that he had "made known unto them thy holy sabbath" (Neh. 9:14). When some of the people profaned the sabbath, Nehemiah rebuked them and locked them out of the city, for he insisted that it would surely bring down the wrath of Jehovah if not prohibited. Nehemiah went so far as to restrain the sabbath breakers from even coming near to Jerusalem on the sabbath day (Neh. 13:15-22). R. S. Driver has pointed out that it was evident at that early date that the original character and objectives of the sabbath had receded into the background, and the priestly law had become more distinctly ceremonial, with the regulations for its observance made more strict.¹

The Maccabees and their followers were examples of the pious nature with which some of the Israelites observed the sabbath. When Antiochus the Great overran Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, he profaned the temple and the sabbaths, and led many of the people to forsake their laws and worship idols. Mattathias Maccabees and his sons were among those who rebelled against the enemy abuse and fled from the city. The enemy pursued them, and came upon them on the sabbath. The Israelites fell prey to the enemy onslaught, because they refused to make resistance on their sabbath day.

And they hastened to give them battle. And

¹Driver, "Sabbath," op. cit., pp. 318, 319.

they answered then not, neither cast they a stone at them, nor stopped up the secret places, saying, Let us die all in our innocency: heaven and earth witness over us, that ye put us to death without trial. And they rose up against them in battle on the sabbath, and they died, they and their wives and their children, and their cattle, to the number of a thousand souls. I Macc. 2:35-38.

Mattathias and his friends mourned the slaughter of their countrymen, and they made a vow to defend their lives on the sabbath from that time forth.

And one said to another, if we all do as our brethren have done, and fight not against the gentiles for our lives and our ordinances, they will now quickly destroy us from off the earth. And they took counsel on that day, saying, whosoever shall come against us to battle on the sabbath day, let us fight against him, and we shall in no wise all die, as our brethren died in the secret places. I Macc. 2:40,41.

Josephus has considerable to say about the Jewish Sabbath. Concerning Mattathias and his decision to fight on the sabbath, he has the following to say:

But many of those that escaped joined themselves to Mattathias, and appointed him to be their ruler, who taught them to fight, even on the Sabbath day; and told them, that 'unless they would do so, they would become their own enemies, by observing the law (so rigorously,) while their adversaries would still assault them on this day, and they would not then defend themselves, and that nothing could then hinder but they must then all perish without fighting. And this rule continues among us to this day, that if there be a necessity, we may fight on Sabbath days.¹

According to Josephus the Jews were hereafter allowed to repel the advances of the enemy on the sabbath, but under no conditions were

¹Josephus, op. cit., p. 299.

they to attack on that day.¹

Josephus observed some interesting characteristics of the Jews' observance of the sabbath. At the beginning of every seventh day (sabbath day), in the evening twilight, the priests signaled with a trumpet to give notice to the people when they were to leave off work, and when they were to resume their labors.² The Jews were required by their law to dine at the sixth hour on the sabbath day. On one occasion Josephus relates how the strict observance of this dining law prevented a tumult.³ The Jews were not to march, or journey, on the sabbath, or on such a great festival as was equivalent to the sabbath, any farther than a sabbath day's journey, which was 2000 cubits.⁴ Of the Essenes, it is said that they were stricter than any other of the Jews in resting from their labors on the seventh day. Not only were they careful to prepare their food the day before, in order that there would be no necessity to kindle a fire on the sabbath, but they would not so much as remove a vessel from its place on that day.⁵

It is the Talmud, however, which best explains the strict observance of the laws of the sabbath. During the period between Ezra and the Christian Era, the spirit of Jewish legalism flourished, and numerous rules and restrictions concerning sabbath conduct were form-

¹Ibid., p. 340.

²Ibid., p. 634.

³Ibid., p. 18.

⁴Ibid., p. 324.

⁵Ibid., p. 556.

ulated.¹ Dr. Edersheim has gleaned many interesting facts from his study of the Talmud, and, included in them, are the Rabbinical teachings on how to observe the sabbath. As to the extent of the teaching, he has stated the following:

In not less than twenty-four chapters, matters are seriously discussed as of vital religious importance, which one could scarcely imagine a sane intellect would seriously entertain. Through 64½ folio columns in the Jerusalem (Talmud), and 156 double pages of folio in the Babylon Talmud does the enumeration and discussion of possible cases drag on, almost unrelieved even by Haggadah (the Rabbinical exposition of Scripture). The Talmud itself bears witness to this, when it speaks (no doubt exaggeratedly) of a certain Rabbi who spent no less than two and a half years in the study of only one of those twenty-four chapters!²

Since the Lord had commanded that no work should be done on the sabbath, it therefore became necessary to define what activities were to be considered work. Every possible case was tediously worked out in detail, usually by specialists whose duty it was to interpret the law. These specialists were content only with legal exactness. They were sadly out of touch with everyday affairs, and so the law was developed beyond the practicability of ordinary life. Some of the specialists did realize the burdensome effect of their work, and they made exceptions and interpretations designed to make the law more humane and practical. However, the numerous legal implications and the humane interpretations produced a set of laws so large and complicated that only the specialists could comprehend them all.

¹Sampay, "Sabbath," op. cit., 2631.

²Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (New York: Langmans, Green, and Co., 1896), II, 778.

One writer in the Talmud characterized these regulations as "mountains suspended by a hair," meaning that the Bible verses were few, but the rules were many.¹

Since the Old Testament definitely forbade the kindling of a fire on the sabbath (Ex. 35:3), it is interesting to note how this commandment was observed. Edersheim has the following to say about the matter:

The next two chapters in the tractate on the sabbath discuss the manner in which food may be kept warm for the Sabbath, since no fire might be lighted. If the food had been partially cooked, or was such as would improve by increased heat, there would be temptation to attend to the fire, and this must be avoided. Hence the oven was immediately before the Sabbath only to be heated with straw or chaff; if otherwise, the coals were to be removed or covered with ashes. Clothes ought not to be dried by the hot air of a stove. At any rate, care must be taken that the neighbors do not see it. An egg may not be boiled by putting it near a hot kettle, nor in a cloth, nor in sand heated by the sun.²

Edersheim has given one more description of sabbath observance which is worthy of mention, in which he has enumerated the thirty-nine areas of work forbidden on the sabbath by Jewish tradition.

The seventh chapter of the tractate contains the most important part of the whole. It opens by laying down the principle that, if a person has either not known, or forgotten, the whole Sabbath law, all the breaches of it which he has committed during ever so many weeks are to be considered as only one error or one sin. If he has broken the Sabbath law by mistaking the day, every Sabbath thus profaned must be atoned for; but if he has broken the law because he thought that what he did

¹Ibid., p. 778.

²Ibid., p. 780.

was permissible, then every separate infringement constitutes a separate sin, although labors which stand related as species to the genus are regarded as only one work. It follows, that guilt attaches to the state of mind rather than to the outward deed. Next, forty less one chief or 'fathers' of work (Aboth) are enumerated, all of which are supposed to be forbidden in the Bible. They are: sowing, ploughing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, sifting (selecting), grinding, sifting in a sieve, kneading, baking; shearing the wool, washing it, dyeing it, beating it, spinning, putting it on the weaver's beam, making two thrum threads, weaving two threads, separating two threads, making a knot, undoing a knot, sewing two stitches, tearing in order to sew two stitches; catching deer, killing, skinning, salting it, preparing its skin, scraping off its hair, cutting it up, writing two letters, scraping in order to write two letters; building, pulling down, extinguishing fire, lighting fire, beating with the hammer, and carrying from one possession into the other.¹

The number thirty-nine (of the Sabbatical Laws) is said to represent the number of times that the word 'labour' occurs in the Biblical text.²

In the study of the history of the sabbath several things are evident. Although Jehovah had instituted the sabbath unto Himself, had sought to preserve it even by threat of death, and had made it a day to the Creator and His mighty deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, by the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah, Israel had turned her back upon Jehovah and had deliberately profaned His sabbath. Jeremiah, in his plea for Israel to forsake her evil ways, stipulated that the observance of the sabbath should be the first step in returning to Jehovah, and also implied that it was a test of spirituality. After

¹Ibid., p. 782

²Ibid., p. 782

the Babylonian Captivity, Nehemiah led the people once more to honor and observe the sabbath. From Nehemiah's time to the beginning of the Christian Era, the Jewish people became more and more strict in their observance of the sabbath, until it became little more than a legalistic form. Isaiah had proclaimed the sabbath a day of delight, but Israel had only succeeded in making it a burden.

THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF THE JEWISH SABBATH

Certain basic concepts of the Jewish Sabbath have been emphasized in the Old Testament writings. These basic concepts give an insight into how the sabbath was to be observed, as well as man's attitude towards it. There are four clearly determined basic concepts: (1) The sabbath was to be a holy day; (2) The sabbath was a sign; (3) The sabbath was to be a day of rest; and (4) The sabbath was to be a day of worship.

The Sabbath as a Holy Day. With the first written command for the observance of the sabbath, Moses explained to the questioning Israelites that Jehovah was proclaiming a "holy sabbath unto Jehovah" (Ex. 16:23). It is necessary to keep in mind the fact that when Jehovah rested from His creative labors, He blessed and hallowed the seventh day. The fourth commandment likewise expresses the idea of a holy day--"Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8). In order to perceive the significance of keeping the sabbath day holy, it is necessary to comprehend what God meant when He made the command to keep it holy.

In pronouncing the sabbath a holy day, Jehovah set it apart for Himself--"a holy sabbath unto Jehovah" (Ex. 16:23). "Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to Jehovah" (Ex. 31:15). Leviticus 19:1-3 is significant in the matter of a day set apart unto Jehovah.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy. Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father; and ye shall keep my sabbaths: I am Jehovah your God. Leviticus 19:1-3.

The implication here is that because Jehovah is holy, to be in accordance with His nature, His day must be holy. "A sabbath of solemn rest, holy to Jehovah" seems to imply that the matter of 'rest' was unto Jehovah, too. This would further imply that the cessation from works of labor, at least in part, was a matter of putting aside everything that might imperil spiritual observances. Benjamin Field held that the sabbath is a day of sanctity (God blessed it and sanctified it--Gen. 2:3), and that there must, therefore, be the laying aside of everything that may impede the spiritual observance.¹ The Old Testament discloses some definite statements concerning the perils of profaning the sabbath. Jehovah definitely commanded that no man should work on the sabbath, but what is more significant, Isaiah has informed man of the possibility of displeasing Jehovah by pleasing himself and speaking his own words on that day.

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, and the holy of Jehovah

¹Field, op. cit., p. 303.

honorable; and shalt honor it, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah....." Isaiah 58:13,14.

Even as there was the negative aspect of keeping the sabbath holy, the above passage from Isaiah implies that there is a positive aspect as well. According to Benjamin Field, there must also be the observance of whatever would promote the highest interests of man's being.¹ This, of course, would include the matter of worship which has been considered later on in this chapter.

Not only was the sabbath to be a holy day unto Jehovah, but it was to be a holy day unto man also.

Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that profaneth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Exodus 31:14.

This verse contains three facts concerning the sabbath as a holy day, as well as three respective implications. It was first of all a holy day unto man, which implied that man had the obligation of keeping the day holy unto himself, as well as unto Jehovah. Secondly, the day was to be kept holy even at the cost of death. In fact, Numbers 15:32-36 records an incident wherein a man was stoned to death by the people for gathering sticks on the sabbath day. The matter of the death penalty regarding the sabbath suggests the extremely high esteem with which Jehovah regarded the sabbath, and with which He expected his people to regard it. Thirdly, in the light of the sabbath pollution in the days prior to the captivity of Judah and

¹Ibid., p. 304.

Israel, Jehovah did not carry out His death penalty in every case of sabbath desecration. The implication here is difficult to determine. Jehovah was still holy for He does not change (Mal. 3:6). It is reasonable to believe that the sabbath became no less holy, even though the death penalty was not enforced.

Jeremiah 17:27 discloses that severe calamity would still result from sabbath desecration, and Nehemiah stated that the Babylonian captivity was, at least in part, due to the profaning of the sabbath:

Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. Nehemiah 13:17,18.

If the death penalty was no more in effect, it is certain from the above Scripture that Jehovah's wrath was not withheld from those who profaned His sabbath.

The Scriptural evidence presented has led to the following conclusions. (1) The sabbath was a holy day, because it was first of all blessed and hallowed of Jehovah (Ex. 20:11). (2) Jehovah commanded that the sabbath should be kept holy--"Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." (3) Jehovah presented the sabbath as His day--to be kept holy unto Himself. This involved the matter of refraining from observance which might imperil the holiness of the day, as well as doing those things which would promote man's spiritual relationship to Jehovah. (4) The sabbath was likewise a holy day unto man, involving responsibility not only to Jehovah, but also

to himself. (5) Punishment was certain and sure for those who would profane the holy sabbath--originally by death, and later by calamities such as drought, famine, or invasion.

The Sabbath as a Sign. The word 'sign' is used extensively in both the Old and New Testaments, and it is significant in the basic concept of the sabbath. Webster said that a sign is "that by which anything is known or represented." Charles M. Stuart, in an article written in The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, referred to a sign as "a mark by which persons or things are distinguished and made known. In Scripture used generally of an address to the senses to attest the existence of supersensible and therefore Divine power."¹ The plagues of Egypt were "signs" of Divine displeasure against the Egyptians (Ex. 4:8,9), and the miracles of Jesus were "signs" to attest His unique relationship with God (Matt. 21:38; John 2:18).

The Old Testament distinctly declares that the sabbath was to be a sign between Jehovah and Israel. The sabbath was first of all a sign that the people might know that He was God.

Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily ye shall keep my sabbaths: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifieth you. Exodus 31:13.

And hallow my sabbaths, and they shall be a sign between me and you that ye may know that I am the Lord your God. Ezekiel 20:20.

Here the sabbath is set forth as a day to become acquainted with

¹Charles M. Stuart, "Sign," The Standard International Bible Encyclopaedia (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952) IV, 2789.

Jehovah--that ye may know that I am the Lord your God. It was to be Jehovah's sabbath; it was to be kept holy--a definite weekly reminder that He was their God. The sabbath was a sign of the close relationship between Jehovah and Israel. According to Ezekiel, the significance of this relationship depended upon whether the people would hallow the sabbath (Ezekiel 20:20).

The sabbath was associated with the creation; it was a memorial of Jehovah's power as creator. "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" (Ex. 20:11). This portion of the fourth commandment bears out the fact that Jehovah blessed and hallowed the sabbath as a reminder of His creative genius and power, and Exodus 17 signifies it as a sign. "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." This reminder of Jehovah's creative power was likewise another reminder that "I am the Lord your God."

The sabbath was also a reminder of Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord 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.

The 'sign' here was in part historical, for it was made significant through the association of the sabbath with the experiences of the Israelites under Egyptian bondage. A scholar by the name of I.

Abrahams has stated that, in his opinion, there is nothing so beautiful and significant as the use of Israel's suffering in Egypt.¹ The Israelites suffered many years at the hands of their Egyptian taskmasters. Moses' request of Pharaoh for a period of release succeeded only in doubling the affliction. The story of Jehovah's dealing with Egypt by means of the plagues terminates with Israel's gracious deliverance through the passover, later to be an important religious ceremony. The Israelites, too, had good need for remembering their miraculous deliverance through the sea, and likewise their daily provision of food and water in the wilderness. Again, Jehovah used the sabbath to remind His people He was God.

The sabbath is an oft-recurring proclamation of Jehovah's gracious thought for the well-being of man. The Israelites hallowed the sabbath as a sign of the people's sanctification by Jehovah. "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" (Ezek. 20:12). Exodus 31:15 likewise states: ".....that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." Abrahams maintained that the sanctifying of Jehovah implied the setting apart--the marking off of Israel from the rest of the world.² The sabbath, therefore, to the Jews signified a day set apart by Jehovah for His people whom He had sanctified and set apart to keep His commandments. The giving of a double portion of manna on the sixth day to provide for

¹I. Abrahams, "Sabbath," Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928). X, 891.

²Ibid., p. 891.

the seventh day, or the sabbath day, was a sign in itself. It was Jehovah's seal of approval on that which He had instituted. As such, it was an indirect promise to provide for man's well-being, in compliance with Jehovah's will for the sabbath.

Furthermore, the sabbath was to be a perpetual covenant; it was to be forever. "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant" (Ex. 31:16). Verse 17 continues: "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever....." The Scripture implies that the sabbath would always be in effect; that its observance would always be a sign of relationship between Jehovah and His people.

The sabbath was primarily a sign unto Israel showing them that Jehovah was their God. They remembered their God by their memory of creation, by recalling the incidents which were a part of their deliverance from Egypt, by acknowledging that He was the God who sanctified them. The sabbath was also a reminder that their relationship with Jehovah was to last forever. "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever."

The Sabbath as a Day of Rest. It has already been noted that the Hebrew shabbath and the Greek sabbaton basically mean rest. It is well to keep in mind at this point that Jehovah rested. Genesis 2:3 implies that one purpose for resting the seventh day was that He might bless and hallow the seventh day. "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." Exodus 31:17 employed a bold fig-

ure and described Jehovah as "refreshing himself" after six days of labor. John R. Sampey has expressed Jehovah's rest as a "catching His breath."¹ The fact that Jehovah rested from His labors no doubt was significant to those He commanded to rest from their labors. It must be assumed, however, that Jehovah's rest was not so much a matter of refreshing Himself as His regarding with satisfaction the work of His hand.

The Old Testament does not define labor, but certain acts ordinarily considered as labor were to be refrained from in keeping with the sabbath of rest. Specific commands were given concerning the gathering of sticks (Num. 15:22), the kindling of fire (Ex. 35:3), cooking (Ex. 16:23), traveling (Ex. 16:29), bearing burdens (Jer. 17:21), and conducting business (Neh. 13:15; Amos. 8:5). As to the matter of being able to save life on the sabbath, Abrahams had this to say:

It must here suffice to indicate that no Sabbatical regulation was, in Rabbinic law, permitted to stand in the way of saving life in cases of illness or danger. The Law, it was held, was given that man might live by it (Lev. 18:5); Hence the Sabbath must not be pleaded as a reason for permitting man to die thereon.²

Jesus asked the question: "Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill?" This question, asked of the Jews, implied that 'to do good' and 'to save' life had been a customary practice in Old Testament observance of the sabbath.

¹Sampey, "Sabbath," op. cit., p. 2630.

²Abrahams, "Sabbath," op. cit., p. 892.

A study of the Old Testament reveals that Jehovah intended that man should rest as He had rested, but too hasty a study may leave the impression that man was to rest chiefly because Jehovah had rested. Man was also to rest in order that he might best keep the sabbath day holy. This fact has already been dealt with, but it is necessary that it be kept in mind in the study of the sabbath as a day of rest.

The Old Testament stresses the fact that rest was enjoined because of man's physical requirements. Even as Jehovah rested and was refreshed, man requires physical rest that he, too, may be refreshed. "Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may have rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the sojourner, may be refreshed" (Ex. 23: 12). The book of Deuteronomy bears out the same truth of man's need for rest.

But the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. Deuteronomy 5:14.

In this sense, the fourth commandment was a humanitarian law, for it even barred the servant and the stranger from labor of any sort. Not only that, but similarly, animals were to be given their period of rest, too.

An interesting side light on the matter of rest is presented by way of a personal testimony by Reverend F. Everal Wines, who is presently serving a church in the Montana Evangelical United Breth-

ren Conference at Rapelje, Montana. Reverend Wines' testimony has no direct bearing on this study, but is of sufficient value and interest to merit its insertion at this point. A portion of a letter which he wrote to the author is as follows:

While pastoring the EUB Church at Lissie, Texas, 1930 to 1933, Mr. Anderson gave me the following testimony of his experience concerning the Lord's day.

Lissie is located in the center of a large irrigation section where much rice is grown. The section around Chesterfield (5 miles north west of Lissie) was not serviced by canals so each farmer had his own deep well from which he pumped water for his own rice fields. In the early years before electricity came in these pumps were run by large gasoline engines. A few of them were still in operation in 1930. Water was kept on the rice from June to August, and many of the farmers felt it necessary to keep the pumps operating all the time--day and night for the seven days a week until the crop was matured. Mr. Anderson did this for a few years and told me that he learned a great lesson in stewardship from it.

He said that there was a little piece of hard steel that held the governors from tripping the intake and ignition to cause the engine to fire thus regulating the speed. There were periods when the engines were not kept going continuously - for water needed to be drained off after the first flooding. During these periods the little hardened piece of steel seldom if ever broke, but during the season when the engine operated continuously that piece wouldn't stand the strain and kept breaking and had to be replaced. Mr. Anderson was a conscientious Christian and operating the engines over Sunday bothered him, so he decided to shut down the one day each week. When he did so he found that there was no more breakage and the time that had been lost in repairs was more than made up - and his crop was just as good as before. He found through experience that even the metal needs a rest as well as we humans.

During the years from 1928 to 1930 I worked nights in the press room of the large Fisher Body plant in Cleveland, Ohio. The regular hours

of work were 8 hours for the day shift and 12 for the night for five nights a week. The large presses that would turn out half a Chevrolet body at a time kept drumming away, and we were always busy. There were few shut downs because of die trouble, but the story changed just as soon as the rush season came on and the day and night shifts each worked the full week - 12 hours a day for the seven days - and the presses never shut down. The dies were subjected to terrific pressures and strain, and when the presses kept up that tempo without stopping there was an increasing number of break downs caused by spots in the dies giving out or chipping. Inspectors were always at the presses, and the die welders and repairmen were kept busy ready to weld any spot that showed up. We often had periods of from a few minutes to a few hours when the presses were idle and being repaired, but just as soon as the rush season was passed and there were even short periods when the great presses were shut down there was almost no breakage of the dies.

I found from that experience that God has so made the material universe that it too needs periods of stated rest. The dies would not stand that tempo and strain continuously, but did fairly well when the strain was released for at least one day a week.

Since God has so created the material universe we will do well to learn these lessons and get in step with His laws of operation even for our own good - for the sabbath was made for man.¹

It is significant to note that the material as well as the physical has need of its period of rest.

It is interesting to note that Jehovah made no exceptions for busy seasons; plowing time and harvest carried the same command for rest on the sabbath day. "Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in plowing time and in harvest thou shalt rest" (Ex. 34:21).

The study of the sabbath as a day of rest has indicated four

¹Personal correspondence of F. Everal Wines, Rapelje, Montana, to the author, September 5, 1955.

basic facts. (1) Jehovah rested after his creative labors, and was refreshed. (2) Man and his household has been given the privilege, as well as the command, to rest on the sabbath. Even the animals are to be given a period of rest, and certain incidents seem to indicate that machinery, too, profits by a period of rest. (3) The sabbath of rest was an efficient way in which to keep the sabbath holy, for man was to refrain from his labors that day. (4) Finally, it was noted that the Old Testament makes no exception for work on the sabbath day (that is, for man's own benefit, for the Old Testament does imply that he was to do good, and to save life) and even in the busiest seasons man was to rest.

The Sabbath as a Day of Worship. The Old Testament distinctly declares that the sabbath was to be a day of worship. The following is a reference to sacrifice being made on the sabbath.

And on the sabbath day two he-lambs a year old without blemish, and two tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof: this is the burnt-offering of every sabbath, besides the continual burnt-offering, and the drink-offering thereof. Numbers 28:9,10.

The Book of Ezekiel gives another instance of sacrifice being made on the sabbath: "And the burnt-offering that the prince shall offer unto Jehovah shall be on the sabbath day six lambs without blemish and a ram without blemish" (Ezek. 46:4). The information as to why the sacrifice was made is found in Ezekiel 46:3: "And the people of the land shall worship at the door of that gate before Jehovah on the sabbaths and new moons." Again, in Isaiah 66:23: "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 me, saith the Lord."

Leviticus 23:3 records the fact that the sabbath of solemn rest was also a day of holy convocation. Jehovah made the connection between His sabbath and His sanctuary in the following manner: "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am Jehovah" (Lev. 19:30). In the light of this connection between the sabbath and Jehovah's sanctuary, it may be assumed that when David sang, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of Jehovah", he referred to the sabbath as well as to the house of Jehovah.

No doubt the crowning evidence for the sabbath as a day of worship lies in the command to remember the mighty hand and outstretched arm of Jehovah in behalf of His people (Deut. 5:15). It has already been stated that the sabbath was a time when "Ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifieth you" (Ex. 31:13). H. S. Coffin has adequately explained the Hebrew expression of the sabbath in the following words:

Husbands and wives like to recall their wedding anniversary. It is not that they do not love each other as truly on the other three hundred and sixty-four days in the year, nor expect as constantly and carefully to fulfil their mutual obligations. But their sentiment naturally marks this day from other days as commemorating their wedded happiness. The especially remembered day has something to do with their loving fidelity to each other on all the other days. A sabbath, a day of rest, set apart to call to mind the union of a man's life with God, seems as inevitable and as natural a mode of expressing our religious sentiment. When the Hebrews spoke of the sabbath as a part of the original creation, made in the same week with sky and earth and sea, and pictured God

Himself as resting on the seventh day, they were expressing in their way what we feel when we say that a specifically hallowed day is congruous with every fabric of our beings.¹

In spite of the strict regulations concerning the sabbath, it was intended to be a day of blessing for man, and certainly not a burden. In fact, Isaiah proclaimed that the sabbath could be a day of delight.

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, and the holy of Jehovah honorable; and shalt honor it, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah; and I will make thee to ride upon the high places of the earth; and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it. Isaiah 58:13, 14.

Some scholars such as I. Abrahams held that David suggested a delight in the sabbath when he wrote Psalm 27:4: "One thing have I asked of Jehovah, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of Jehovah and to enquire in his temple".²

The ninety-second Psalm is known as a song for the sabbath day. This Psalm denotes praise for Jehovah's goodness, and begins with the words, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto Jehovah, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High." Inserted here is a typical hymn of praise which particularly honors the Jewish Sabbath.

This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,

¹Henry Sloane Coffin, The Ten Commandments (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1929), pp. 74, 75.

²Abrahams, "Sabbath," op. cit., p. 892.

A Sabbath of rest.
 Thou badest us standing assembled at Sinai
 That all the years through we should keep
 thy behest--
 To set out a table full-laden, to honor
 The Sabbath of rest.
 This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,
 A Sabbath of rest.

Treasure of heart for the broken people,
 Gift of new soul for the souls distressed,
 Soother of sighs for the prisoned spirit--
 The Sabbath of rest.
 This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,
 A Sabbath of rest.

When the work of the worlds in their wonder
 was finished,
 Thou madest this day to be holy and blest,
 And those heavy-laden found safety and
 stillness,
 The Sabbath of rest.
 This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,
 A Sabbath of rest.

If I keep my command I inherit a kingdom,
 If I treasure the Sabbath I bring thee the
 best--
 The noblest of offerings, the sweetest of
 incense--
 The Sabbath of rest.
 This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,
 A Sabbath of rest.

Restore us our shrine--O remember our ruin
 And save now and comfort the sorely oppressed
 Now sitting at Sabbath, all singing and praising,
 The Sabbath of rest.
 This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,
 A Sabbath of rest.¹

The Old Testament scriptures give definite evidence that worship is a basic concept of the sabbath. It has been noted that (1) the sabbath was a day when sacrifices were made; (2) there was a distinct relationship between the sabbath and the sanctuary of Jehovah;

¹Ibid., p. 892.

it has been noted that according to Exodus 16:29, corporate worship was not originally instituted as a part of sabbath observance; (3) the sabbath was a day to especially remember Jehovah and His gracious dealings with His people; (4) the sabbath, in spite of its restrictions and commands, was not to be a burden, but a day of blessing--a day of delight; and (5) the sabbath was a day of praise and thanksgiving.

Summary. The Old Testament definitely presents the fact of the Jewish Sabbath, and according to the Mosaic Law, the sabbath fell on the seventh day. Whether or not there was any sabbath observance before the manna incident in the wilderness has not been proven, but there is, however, some presumptive evidence of such an observance. Critical opinions have been formulated which have sought to prove that the sabbath was merely of paganistic origin. The evidence of the Scriptures points out the fact that the sabbath was instituted by Jehovah, and that it is His sabbath--His day. Biblical and secular history bear out the fact that the sabbath has been abused and misused, but it has always been a part of the Jewish faith. In time the sabbath observance became more and more legalistic and complicated, but still basically important and significant. In general, there are four basic concepts of the Jewish Sabbath. It was proclaimed by Jehovah as (1) a holy day--holy unto Jehovah, and, likewise, holy unto man; (2) a sign of the covenant between Jehovah and the children of Israel--a reminder that He was the God who sanctified them; (3) a day of rest and refreshing--not to be profaned by any work; (4) a day of worship--a day of blessing, of delight, and

of thanksgiving. The Jewish Sabbath was not primarily a negative command--thou shalt not--but rather a positive command to remember Jehovah and delight one's self in Him.

CHAPTER III

THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CONCERNING THE SABBATH

The Jewish Sabbath, with its basic concepts, its commands and promises, and its practices, observances and implications, has been presented in Chapter II. Sufficient evidence has been produced to prove that the Jewish Sabbath was definitely a part of the Mosaic Law. That the Old Testament Law, or Mosaic Law, has had a significant influence upon the New Testament teachings of the sabbath was made clear when Jesus said: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished" (Matt. 5:17,18).

The purpose of this chapter was to note what Jesus' interpretation of the Law was in relation to the sabbath. This chapter deals with the following information: (1) Jesus and sabbath keeping; (2) Jesus' conflict with the Jews concerning the sabbath; (3) Jesus accused of discrediting the sabbath; (4) Jesus' authority over the sabbath; (5) Jesus' observance of the sabbath; and (6) teaching concerning the first day of the week. The information for this study has been collected chiefly from the New Testament, the Old Testament, and supplementary material contributed by Bible scholars.

JESUS KEPT THE SABBATH

The teachings of Jesus concerning the sabbath bear out the fact

that He kept the sabbath. Jesus made known the importance He placed upon the sabbath when, on the first recorded sabbath after His wilderness temptation, He made His way into the synagogue. "Straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught" (Mark 1:21). It must be granted that He might have gone to the synagogue merely to contact the people who had assembled there. However, the Word quickly clears Him of such an implication. On a visit to His home town, Nazareth, Jesus went to the synagogue on the sabbath. He went not by chance, but "as his custom was." "And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read." "As his custom was" implies that this was Jesus' regular procedure; that He had been to a synagogue on previous occasions.

Jesus' adversaries complained of Him that He did not keep the sabbath, although the Pharisees, who were His chief opponents, could not agree in their accusations. "Some therefore of the Pharisees said, this man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them" (John 9:16). This complaint, though legitimate in the thinking of the Pharisees, was ungrounded, for had Jesus failed to keep the sabbath in its true sense, according to the Old Testament Law, He would have sinned. Jesus Himself said: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19). Both the Old and New Testament bear out the

sinlessness of Jesus. Isaiah 53, which deals specifically with the prophecy concerning the crucifixion of Christ, emphasizes His sinless sacrifice. Had Jesus actually desecrated the sabbath as He was accused, He would have had no right to command the people: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48), and then supplement those words later by saying: "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). Although Jesus indirectly dealt with the matter of His own sinlessness, others were more specific. The book of Hebrews has recorded the following: "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

The whole basis of the accusation against Jesus was a matter of interpretation; it was not so much a matter of the justice or injustice of His acts, as to whether He observed the sabbath according to the strictness of the traditional Jewish Law. The traditional Jewish Law was that series of complicated laws which stemmed out of the Jewish interpretation of the original law. Jesus did not keep the traditional sabbath, but according to the original sabbath law, He was guiltless. He kept the sabbath in its original intention, which was not according to the letter of the law, but according to the spirit of the law--that which prompted the law.

JESUS' CONFLICT WITH THE JEWS CONCERNING THE SABBATH

Unless it was His claim to be God, there was no subject which brought Jesus into such conflict with the Jewish leaders as in the

matter of sabbath observance. The Jewish leaders were made up primarily of three political and religious groups; the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. Of these three, the Pharisees were the most prominent opposers of Jesus. Their position concerning the sabbath is best understood by recognizing their beliefs and duties.

Lars P. Qualben, in his book entitled, A History of the Christian Church, described the Pharisees as "Separatists;" an orthodox group which tried to exclude foreign influences and build "hedges" around the Mosaic Law as high as possible.¹ The following is a list of the leading views of the Pharisees:

1. They constituted the nucleus of the religious and academic aristocracy.
2. They taught that the soul is immortal. Hence there is a resurrection from the dead, and a future reward and punishment.
3. They believed in the existence of angels and spirits, good and bad.
4. They were predestinarians almost to the verge of fatalism. Yet they asserted that man has a free will and that he is morally responsible.
5. They coordinated the Oral Law (Tradition) and the Written Law (Old Testament) as joint rules of faith and practice.
6. They magnified traditional Judaism and made it the basis of a vast system of minute laws which were to regulate all life in Israel. Man was reduced to a legal machine.
7. They tried to gain salvation by good works, and this externalized their entire religious and moral life.
8. They confined their activities mostly to the synagogue. They were strong

¹Lars P. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1942), p. 25.

religious and political leaders.¹

The Sadducees, like the Pharisees, composed an influential group at the time of Christ. They tried to recognize and to assimilate what was considered good in the culture and religion of other peoples. Their leading views were:

1. They constituted the nucleus of the priestly, political, and social aristocracy.
2. They taught that there is no resurrection from the dead, and no future reward or punishment. Hence, live for this life.
3. They claimed that there were no angels and no spirits.
4. They emphasized the absolute freedom of the will and self-determination. The divine element had no influence upon man's choice for good or evil.
5. They maintained that the Old Testament as the inspired record of revelation, was the only infalible rule of faith and practice.
6. They broke down the "hedges" around the traditional Judaism, and placed Hellenistic culture side by side, if not above Traditionalism. They were rationalists.
7. They tried to live for this life only, since they denied the resurrection from the dead, and this rationalized their religious and moral life.
8. They confined their activities mostly to the Temple. They were the "chief priests," and from their midst, the high priest was chosen.²

Of lesser importance than the Pharisees and Sadducees, were the Scribes. The Scribes were the religious lawyers of the day. Unlike the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Scribes did not constitute a religious party. They were professional people.³

It was within the ranks of these three groups that Jesus discovered the greatest opponents of His teaching. He aligned Himself

¹Ibid., p. 27.

²Ibid., p. 27.

³Ibid., p. 26.

particularly against the Pharisees and their strict traditional law concerning the Jewish observance of the sabbath. Sincere as they may have been, these religious leaders took the attitude that the sabbath was an end in itself, and every pious Israelite was bound to subject all his personal interests to this institution. The people might suffer inconvenience and hardship, but the sabbath was to be kept inviolate. Their attitude signified that it was chiefly a matter of man being made for the sabbath. Contrary to this, Jesus taught that "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27). He likewise taught that should there arise a conflict between man's needs and the letter of the law, man's higher interests and needs must take precedence over sabbath tradition. Jesus asked the question: "Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save life, or to kill? (Mark 3:4). The answer Jesus expected was obvious, and angry and grieved at the hardness of the people's hearts, he deliberately healed the man with the withered hand on the sabbath.

The previously afflicted man went away that day with two good hands, but the Pharisees took counsel with the Herodians (a pro-Herod group) to plan means to destroy Jesus (Mark 3:5,6). M'Clintock and Strong have indicated that there was some controversy concerning the meaning behind Jesus' words, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." The question which has been raised is; "Just who did Jesus mean by man?" M'Clintock and Strong have answered the question in the following manner:

This seems to teach that the sabbath was made for man not as a Jew or as a Christian, but as a

man, and therefore entitled to his regard in all conditions and through all ages.¹

Jesus Did Not Discredit the Sabbath. It is generally agreed that Jesus did not intend to discredit the sabbath as an institution. He emphatically disputed the authenticity of the complicated and ritualistic observance of the sabbath, but he did not criticize the sabbath as an institution. In fact, Jesus stated that "the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath" (Mark 2:28). It is obvious that Jesus would not have discredited an institution of which He had proclaimed Himself Lord. Dr. J. Rigg came to Jesus' defense regarding the sabbath in words emphatic and yet beautiful.

It is monstrous to pretend that He who 'was made under the law,' and who came to 'fulfill the law,' and to 'fulfill all righteousness,' even legal righteousness, violated the law of the sabbath. He observed it most strictly. He vindicated it in its true sense, as it had been from the beginning, and in its benignant purpose. At the same time He added to it a lustre of blessing by His deeds of mercy, and spiritual glory by His sabbath teachings, such as it had never known before. His miracles in no sense violated the rest of the sabbath. He did no servile work in performing them; they involved no toil or fatigue; they were not done for wages; they were not what Isaiah denounces as 'doing one's own work', but they were refreshment. So far from being opposed to rest, they were in harmony with it in its deepest and richest sense. They sent healing and refreshment home to the secret springs of body and soul; they filled the spirit with a well-spring of gladness; they filled the heart with peace. They brightened the Sabbath with the heavenly glory. They made it indeed a rest and a refreshment. They beautified the sabbath-day both to

¹John M'Clintock and James Strong, "Sabbath," Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1894), IX, 195.

the healer and the healed.¹

Jesus Held Authority Over the Sabbath. The day of worship is not such that man can change its order or observance. Jesus, however, announced to the multitude that "The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath" (Mark 2:28). The question might be asked, "Just why did Christ have any authority over the sabbath?" The answer is simple. As pre-existent Logos, Jesus was creator. "All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made" (John 1:3). Colossians 1:16,17 states:

For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist.

As Creator and Lord, Jesus held the distinct right to designate the sabbath day and how it should be observed.

On the other hand, it must be kept in mind that Jesus did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. In an effort to refute the theory that Jesus expressed authority over the sabbath with the intent to discontinue it, M'Clintock and Strong have made the following statements:

It seems as if some cannot think of power in connection with the sabbath unless exercised in abrogation. If it be placed in Christ's charge, they take it for granted that more or less extinction must be the consequence. They speak as if

¹J. Rigg, Sunday Magazine, quoted in Benjamin Field, The Student's Handbook of Christian Theology (New York: Cranston and Stowe, n.d.), p. 298.

Christ's septre were an axe, and the only question were how much it would hew down and devastate. We maintain, on the contrary, that Christ would not be the Lord of the sabbath to be its destroyer. In the language of the New Testament, this title points to assured prosperity. But though he will not superintend in order to annihilate either worship or worshippers, the designation "Lord" does suppose a manifested supremacy, and leads us to expect ameliorating modification with essential preservation--in other words, a Christian sabbath or Lord's day.¹

The matter of changing the sabbath day has been given further consideration in the latter section of this chapter. As Lord of the sabbath, Jesus had the right to do what He would with the sabbath, or any day. On the other hand, man's every attempt to order the day or elongate or contract God's week has utterly failed.

JESUS' OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH

The New Testament has recorded a few brief statements relating to Jesus' observance of the sabbath. It has also recorded certain instructions regarding sabbath observance. Since Jesus is Lord of the sabbath, His law is supreme. A. Delbert Rice, in a term paper submitted to Western Evangelical Seminary, emphasized this fact when he stated that the law of Christ is a higher interpretation of the Moral law than was the Mosaic covenant.² It must be kept in mind that Jesus observed the sabbath according to His own higher interpretation of the Moral law.

¹M'Clintock and Strong, "Sabbath," op. cit., p. 196.

²A. Delbert Rice, "The Sabbath and Sunday," a term paper submitted to Western Evangelical Seminary, Portland, Oregon, September, 1953.

Jesus observed the sabbath in the following manner: (1) He worshipped; (2) He relieved suffering; (3) He kept the sabbath holy; (4) He rested on the sabbath; and (5) He worked.

1. Jesus Worshipped. It must be remembered that Jesus customarily went to the synagogue on the sabbath. At Nazareth He entered the synagogue, read the Word from Isaiah, and then proceeded to speak to the congregation with words of authority and grace (Luke 4:16-22). At Capernaum He taught the astonished people with "authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:21). The above scriptural references record an assembly in the synagogue, the reading of the Word of God, and teaching and preaching--all of which are characteristics of worship. Jesus defined the basic concept of worship when He declared: "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Dr. H. Orton Wiley has stated that Jesus here taught the true inwardness of the sabbath--a spiritual rest of the soul, from which flows that worship which is in spirit and in truth.¹ Jesus pointed out that it was not so important where man worshipped, but how and whom he worshipped (John 4:20-24). The fact to keep in mind is that Jesus did worship on the sabbath, and He emphasized the inward, spiritual value of worship.

2. Jesus Relieved Suffering. The New Testament records instance after instance when Jesus relieved suffering on the sabbath.

¹H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1951). III, 150.

It is interesting to note, however, that Mark 1:32 states that the people of their own accord waited until evening--or until the end of the sabbath--to bring their sick and suffering to Jesus. On this occasion He healed a great many of their diseases, and cast out many demons. According to their strict observance of the sabbath law, the people refrained from bringing their sick to Jesus on that day, but Jesus refused to be bound by Jewish tradition. He could not disregard the man who had struggled in his infirmity for thirty-eight years; He healed him on the sabbath (John 5:2-9). Neither could He pass by the suffering dropsy victim; He healed him on the sabbath (Luke 14:1-6). Jesus was filled with compassion when He gazed upon the woman so taken in her infirmity that she had been unable to lift herself up for eighteen years; He healed her on the sabbath (Luke 13:11-13).

The anger of the Jewish leaders was aroused when Jesus took this liberty to relieve suffering on the sabbath day. They condemned the man healed from thirty-eight years of infirmity for carrying his bed on the sabbath, as Jesus had commanded him (John 5:10). The ruler of the synagogue reprimanded the people immediately after Jesus' healing of the woman with the eighteen-year infirmity. "There are six days in which man ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the day of the sabbath" (Luke 13:14). Jesus' adversaries were put to shame when Jesus pointed out that they were placing a more humane value on their animals than on their fellow men.

But the Lord answered him and said, Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being the daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been

loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath?
(Luke 13:15,16)

Jesus continued:

What man shall there be of you which shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day (Matt. 12:11,12).

"I ask you," said Jesus, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to destroy it?" (Luke 6:9) Jesus did not receive an answer; He did not expect an answer. He summed up the whole matter by making a proclamation: "Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath" (Matt.12:12).

Jesus' disciples were condemned by the Pharisees for plucking and eating the ears as they walked through the grainfields. Dr. Edersheim has pointed out that just the act of rubbing the grain in the hands was contrary to Jewish traditional law.¹ Jesus quickly defended the right to relieve one's hunger on the sabbath.

Have ye not read even this, what David did, when he was hungry, he, and they that were with him; how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the showbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which is not lawful to eat save for the priests alone? (Luke 6:3,4)

The above incident seems to imply the release from the ceremonial law and ritual observance.

Jesus upbraided the Pharisees for not knowing the meaning of the scriptures. "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire

¹Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus The Messiah (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), II, 783.

mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath" (Matt. 12:7,8). Jesus plainly defended the right to relieve hunger on the sabbath. The New Testament records two instances when He was invited to eat meals in homes of acquaintances on the sabbath; once, in the home of one of the rulers (Luke 14:1), and the other in the home of Peter (Mark 1:29-31). It cannot be determined just how much preparation was involved in the preparation of those meals, but in the case of Simon's mother-in-law, there was a ministering to those present. Dr. Wiley has given an interesting comment concerning the scripture, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: so that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath."

Here it is clearly taught that those things which pertain to man's highest welfare, that is, his spiritual interests, are to be permitted on the sabbath day; and this is a true and sure test as to the kind and extent of secular labor on the sabbath.¹

Jesus observed the sabbath day by relieving suffering. His teaching concerning the relieving of suffering has presented the following evidence. (1) He healed men of their infirmities on the sabbath. Out of respect for their sabbath day law, the people deferred from coming to be healed on the sabbath day, but Jesus openly healed the people on the sabbath as on any other day. (2) He defended the right to relieve hunger on the sabbath day. (3) Jesus placed a higher value on man's welfare. The Jewish traditional law concerning the sabbath gave animals greater privileges than man. Jesus

¹Wiley, loc. cit.

taught that a man is of more value than many animals.

3. Jesus Worked on the Sabbath. By His own testimony, Jesus worked on the sabbath, and He likewise taught that there were certain legitimate labors which might be performed which would not bring condemnation upon the laborer. The Jews persecuted Jesus for His actions on the sabbath, but He surprised them with the following comment: "My Father worketh even until now, and I work" (John 5:17). Jesus reminded the people that the priests carried out certain duties on the sabbath and were not considered guilty. "Or have ye not read in the law, that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless?" (Matt. 12:5) According to Jesus' testimony, the Jews held no compunctions against a man being circumcised on the sabbath, and He declared that there was as much virtue in making a man whole on the sabbath. "If a man receiveth circumcision on the sabbath, (the Jewish Law required that a male child be circumcised the eighth day) that the law of Moses may not be broken; are ye wroth with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the sabbath?" (John 7:23) It must be remembered that Jesus considered His ministry to the suffering a definite part of His earthly responsibility, and this also on the sabbath. In the light of the teachings of Jesus it is evident that sabbath work is permissible (1) to provide worship; (2) to attend to religious duties; and (3) to minister to the suffering.

4. Jesus Kept the Sabbath Holy. It is interesting to note that Jesus gave no direct command to keep the sabbath holy. However, it must be kept in mind that He came not "to destroy, but to fulfill"

the Law. The word 'fulfill' seems to indicate much more than formal obedience. Jesus was acting in accordance with the Moral law which is back of the written law.

Jesus did give some indirect teaching concerning this matter of keeping the sabbath day holy. In the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew Jesus reiterated the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel. Of the flight in Judaea, Jesus said: "And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath" (Matt. 24:20). The above scripture implies that such an occasion would cause the people to desecrate the sabbath. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown have stated that prayer was to be made that this abominable day might not fall on the sabbath, because, from fear of a breach of its sacred rest, they might be induced to remain at the scene of destruction.¹ In this indirect manner, Jesus upheld the holiness of the sabbath day.

All four of the Gospels give reference to the Preparation (Matt. 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:42). Two of these references, Mark 15:42 and Luke 23:54, refer to the Preparation as the day before the sabbath. Walter R. Betteridge has stated that the Preparation occurs with technical significance in the Gospel narratives; it is a technical term indicating the day of the preparation for the sabbath.² Joseph of Arimathaea procured the body of Jesus on the Preparation day (Mark 15:42-46). A group of women, including

¹Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, Commentary on the Whole Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), II, 87.

²Walter R. Betteridge, "Preparation," The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), IV, 2437.

Mary Magdalene, prepared spices on the Preparation day which they brought to the tomb on the first day of the week. Between the Preparation day and the first day of the week was the sabbath, and on that day they rested. ".....and on the sabbath day they rested according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56). The fact that these people prepared for the sabbath, and then rested on the sabbath, indicates that this was all done in order to keep the sabbath day holy. Since these people were acquainted with Jesus and His teachings (Matt. 27:57; Luke 23:55), it is evident that Jesus had implied at some time that the sabbath must be kept holy.

5. Jesus Rested on the Sabbath. It must be noted immediately that Jesus gave no direct reference to having rested on the sabbath day. As in the matter of keeping the sabbath day holy, Mathew 5:17 must be relied heavily upon. "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." In keeping with the law and the prophets, it may be assumed that Jesus observed the sabbath of rest. In the light of Luke 23:56, it is evident that He expressed His approval of observing the sabbath as a day of rest. ".....And on the sabbath day they rested according to the commandment." The above verse is the only reference to the sabbath as a day of rest in the New Testament. It may, however, be assumed that Jesus would not violate the physical law of man's need for a weekly day of rest, as indicated in Chapter II.

The New Testament has pointed out the fact that Jesus observed the sabbath in five distinct ways. (1) Jesus customarily entered the House of God on the sabbath and committed certain acts considered

as worship. He also emphasized the true attitude of worship--in the spirit. (2) Jesus relieved suffering on the sabbath; He openly healed people on that day. In healing on the sabbath, He was guilty of breaking the traditional law of the Jews, and brought down their criticism upon Himself. He taught the people that it was commendable to do good on the sabbath. In defending the right to do good on the sabbath, He placed a higher value on man--the sabbath was made for man; not man for the sabbath. He likewise defended the right to relieve hunger on the sabbath. (3) Jesus worked on the sabbath, but it must be made clear that it was His work. He put His sanction on sabbath work if (a) it is to provide worship; (b) it is to attend to religious duties; and (c) it is to minister to the suffering. Although (4) Jesus kept the sabbath holy; and (5) Jesus kept the sabbath as a day of rest, it must be kept in mind that Jesus gave no direct teaching concerning the matter of the sabbath as a holy day or a day of rest, but He did give sufficient indirect teaching to assure that He advocated both.

JESUS AND THE FIRST DAY

In a day when most of Christendom recognizes Sunday as the Lord's day, it is necessary to include a study of the First Day in connection with the teachings of Jesus. Although the sabbath was frequently mentioned in connection with the actions of Jesus before the resurrection, not once in the weeks following that event was He referred to on that day. The detailed records of His last meetings with the disciples make known the fact that they occurred on the first

day of the week. Late on the day of His resurrection, Jesus accompanied two of the disciples to Emmaus, where He revealed His identity. Later that same evening He made His appearance to all the eleven (except Thomas). Eight days later, commonly believed to be the second 'first day' after the resurrection, Jesus made another appearance to the group, this time with Thomas being present.¹ Of the remaining 'first days' before His ascension, no record has been given as to whether Jesus made any other appearances on those days. It would be interesting to know on just what day Jesus met with the five hundred (I Cor. 15:6).

The real message of the sabbath is obtained by a right interpretation of the Greek text. It must be noted that in studying the Greek text there is a distinction between two types of sabbaths, that pertaining to the Jewish Sabbath, and that of a new order of the sabbath. This study deals entirely with the four Gospels.

Matthew. Matthew 28:1 has been interpreted: "Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene. . . ." The Greek text reads: "after the close of sabbaths, as it began to dawn unto the first of sabbaths, came Mary Magdalene. . . ." This translation implies the closing of the old order of sabbaths, and a beginning of a new order. Dr. H. E. Mueller, Professor at Western Evangelical Seminary, has stated that the above scripture refers to the transpiration of the old Jewish

¹Wiley, op. cit., p. 147.

Sabbath, and the ushering in of the new 'first day sabbath.'¹ The King James translation gives a more correct translation of the first phrase of the verse than does the American Standard Version. However, the two versions have essentially agreed in their interpretation of the second phrase.

Mark. Mark 16:9 has been translated: "Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week. . . ." The Greek text reads: "Now when he was risen early on the first sabbath....." The Greek word for 'first' is significant in that it refers to rank or importance. When reference was made to the 'first sabbath' it implied that it was a sabbath of importance, or one highest in rank. Keep in mind that this refers to the day after the Jewish Sabbath which was the first day of the week.

Luke. In Luke 23:56-24:1 is recorded: ". . .and on the sabbath, they rested according to the commandment. But on the first day of the week, . . ." The Greek text reads: ". . .and on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment, but on the first of sabbaths, . . ." It is significant to note here that the women rested on the sabbath day, which was the Jewish Sabbath and the seventh day, and this according to the commandment of the law. But with the resurrection of Jesus came the first of sabbaths, or a new order of sabbaths.

¹Quotation from Dr. H. E. Mueller, Professor, Western Evangelical Seminary, Portland, Oregon, in a personal interview with the author, January 5, 1956.

Jeremiah referred to a new covenant which would be given to Israel.

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 heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jeremiah 31:31-33).

Hebrews 12:24 refers to Jesus as the mediator of a new covenant, and Hebrews 13:20 speaks of the blood of an eternal covenant through the Lord Jesus. The Scriptures indicate that the old covenant perished with Jesus, and a new covenant was ushered in with His resurrection. Dr. Mueller is of the opinion that the women rested on the last sabbath of the old covenant, and made their way to the tomb very early on the morning of the first sabbath under the new covenant.¹

John. The Gospel of John records two instances wherein the first day is mentioned. In either case they have been translated "the first day of the week," but according to the Greek text, should be "first of sabbaths" (John 20:1,19). These two verses only substantiate the teaching of the other Gospels.

This study of the 'first day' has produced the following evidence. (1) The Jewish Sabbath is not once mentioned in connection with Jesus after His resurrection; (2) Jesus made at least two appear-

¹Mueller, op. cit.

ances to groups assembled on the first day; the fact that the Jewish Sabbath is not mentioned in connection with Jesus after His resurrection, may have been because they assembled together only on the first day; (3) with the death and resurrection of Jesus, the old law of the covenant transpired, and a new covenant was ushered in. The Greek text makes certain implications: (1) that the old Jewish Sabbath died with the crucifixion of Jesus; and (2) that His resurrection ushered in a new order of sabbaths, to be observed on the first day of the week.

Summary. This chapter has dealt with the teachings of Jesus concerning the sabbath. Certain basic facts and implications have been set forth. (1) Jesus kept the sabbath--not according to the strictness of Jewish tradition, but in His own right as Lord of the sabbath. (2) Jesus drew considerable criticism from the Jewish leaders because of His actions on the sabbath; His opponents took the attitude that the sabbath was an end in itself, but He taught that the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. (3) Jesus held authority over the sabbath, because He was Lord of the sabbath; He made the sabbath. However, He did not hold that authority to destroy the sabbath, but to make it meaningful. (4) Jesus observed the sabbath in the following way: (a) He worshipped; it was His custom; (b) He relieved suffering, which included the ministry to the suffering and the relieving of hunger; He presented a great truth when He pointed out that, in the light of the sabbath, man was of much more value than animals--a fact not practiced according to Jewish Sabbath traditionalism; (c) Jesus worked on the sabbath; His work included

His ministry to the sick, but He also taught that the providing of worship and the attending to religious duties were permissible on the sabbath; (d) Jesus kept the sabbath holy; this is true chiefly in the light of Matthew 5:17, for He gave no direct teaching on the subject; and (e) Jesus rested on the sabbath day, this likewise being true chiefly according to Matthew 5:17, (5) the Scriptures give some significant information on the first day of the week. After the resurrection, Jesus made His appearance to certain groups on the first day, but no record has been given of such an appearance on the seventh day. The Greek text bears out two implications: (a) that the old Jewish Sabbath died with the Mosaic covenant at the death of Jesus; and (b) that the resurrection of Jesus ushered in a new 'first day' sabbath with a new and eternal covenant.

CHAPTER IV

THE TEACHINGS OF THE APOSTLES CONCERNING THE SABBATH

The purpose of this chapter was to present the teachings of the apostles concerning the sabbath. This study has been limited chiefly to the New Testament, although some information has been derived from the Old Testament, and the contributions of certain Bible scholars have been utilized. The first section deals with information based upon the actions of Paul as he attempted to reach the Jews for Christ. It also deals with the basic concepts of the sabbath as taught by the apostles, including the sabbath (1) as a day of worship; (2) as a day of rest; and (3) as a day to be kept holy. The second section deals with the implications of the 'first day,' including the teachings concerning (1) the first day of the week; (2) the Lord's Day; and (3) Pentecost.

I. THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF THE SABBATH AS TAUGHT BY THE APOSTLES

Scarcely any direct teaching on the matter of the sabbath has been recorded by the apostles. Luke, Paul, and the writer of Hebrews have mentioned the sabbath in their writings, but the only direct teaching concerning the day has been gleaned from the Acts of the Apostles. Some New Testament students, such as Edgar P. Ellyson, maintain that Paul proclaimed the end of the sabbath in Colossians 2:16,17.¹ Let

¹Edgar P. Ellyson, Theological Compend (Chicago: The Christian Witness Co., 1908), p. 185.

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. However, Dr. H. E. Mueller does not agree that this scripture tends to do away with the sabbath. He rather believes that Paul was merely encouraging the Colossians to claim the better things in Christ instead of the observance of the less desirable things of the old covenant.¹

There is a similar teaching by Paul in Romans 14:5,6.

One man esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Paul was writing to some who were "weak in the faith" (Rom. 14:1) in order that they might know "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17).

Again in Galatians 4:5 Paul made another similar reference. "Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years." Here Paul was concerned over the fact that the Galatians were content to go back to the "weak and beggarly rudiments,.....to be in bondage over again" (Gal. 4:9) after having known God. These are the only references in which Paul has even vaguely taught concerning the matter of the sabbath. Whether or not the sabbath was an issue with Paul cannot be determined. The Jerusalem council did not even discuss the matter of the sabbath (Acts 15). The life of Paul does bear out certain

¹Quotation from Dr. H. E. Mueller, Professor of Languages, Western Evangelical Seminary, Portland, Oregon, in a personal interview with the author, January 5, 1956.

ways in which the apostles observed the sabbath.

The Sabbath as a Day of Worship. The apostles have recorded a considerable amount of information concerning the basic concept of worship on the sabbath, but it is interesting to note that the Book of Acts contains most of that information. The word of God distinctly declares that Paul customarily entered the synagogue on the sabbath. "And Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the scriptures" (Acts 17:2). There are seven distinct references which record an assembly on the sabbath (Acts 13:14; 13:27; 13:42; 13:44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4). Within the above stated references are found four distinct ways in which worship was observed, namely, (1) prayer; (2) the reading of the scriptures; (3) the preaching of the Word; and (4) persuading for Christ. There is also an indication that baptisms were performed on the sabbath.

Prayer in connection with the sabbath is recorded but one time, but that reference indicates that it was a common procedure. "And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together" (Acts 16:13). There is some reason to believe that the place of prayer was utilized on other days than the sabbath as indicated by Acts 16:16. This refers to a group going to "the place of prayer", but does not specify the day as being the sabbath. This, however does not detract from the fact that prayer was commonly made on the sabbath.

The reading of the scriptures was a definite part of the sab-

bath worship. The Jews read from the scriptures sabbath after sabbath. "For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him" (Acts 13:27). James, speaking at the Council of Jerusalem, made mention of this same faithfulness of reading the scriptures. "For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath" (Acts 15:21). Acts 13:15 declares that Paul was invited to speak on one occasion "after the reading of the law and the prophets." One more reference: Paul is said to have "reasoned with them from the scriptures," indicating that the scriptures were read in connection with the 'reasoning,' There is no doubt that the reading of the scriptures was a vital part of worship.

Recorded in the Book of Acts are several instances when Paul preached the Word on the sabbath. At Antioch of Pisidia, Paul and his company entered the synagogue on the sabbath, and when they were invited to exhort, Paul preached an impressive sermon (Acts 13:16-41). As the apostles left the synagogue that day, the people requested that "these words" might be spoken the next sabbath, at which time the "whole city gathered together to hear the word of God" (Acts 13:44). At Thessalonica Paul preached in the synagogue for three sabbath days, reasoning with them from the scriptures (Acts 17:2). At Corinth, Paul lived with Aquila and Priscilla, and "he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath" (Acts 18:4). At Philippi Paul and his company made their way to the place of prayer on the sabbath day, where they spoke to several women, including Lydia (Acts 16:13,14). In

the light of the evidence presented there can be no doubt that the word of God was preached as a regular part of the sabbath worship.

Paul preached to persuade men for Christ. Romans 10:13-15 bears out the great purpose of his preaching:

"...Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!

The Apostles preached to persuade men to Christ, and the scriptures give evidence of many believing on Him through the means of preaching. At Philippi the Word was preached, and it found response in Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul." As a result, she and her household were baptized (Acts 16:14,15). Paul's preaching at Thessalonica resulted in the fact that "some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few" (Acts 17:4).

At Antioch of Pisidia the Jews were jealous of those who came to hear the preaching of the word of God, and they contradicted the things Paul said. But Paul merely turned his attention to the Greeks, many of whom were persuaded to Christ. "And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). Acts 18:4 merely states that Paul "reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks." In each instance referred to, a number of people were persuaded to believe. It is interesting to

note that the success of the preaching depended upon two factors. First, it was the word of God which the people desired to hear (Acts 13:42,44); and, secondly, the Lord needed to open the heart in order that men might give heed unto the words which were spoken (Acts 16:14). The winning of men to Christ gave a new emphasis--a christian emphasis--to the sabbath day, and had its definite place in the sabbath day worship.

Acts 16:15 implies that Lydia and her household may have been baptized on the sabbath. At any rate, the scriptures record no incidents between the time of Lydia's conversion and her baptism. In the light of the fact that Jesus did not condemn circumcision on the sabbath, and He, Himself, made men 'every whit whole on the sabbath' (John 7:23), it is highly probable that the apostles baptized on the sabbath.

The Acts of the Apostles definitely upholds the sabbath as a day of worship. As such, the apostles observed it (1) by prayer; (2) by the reading of the scriptures--the people desired to hear the word of God; (3) by the preaching of the Word--Paul reasoned out of the scriptures; (4) by persuading men to Christ, a fact that was dependent upon the word of God and the opening of the heart by the Lord. The scriptures imply that the apostles baptized on the sabbath.

The Sabbath As a Day of Rest. There is no direct teaching of the apostles on the matter of the sabbath as a day of rest. The writer of Hebrews has given the only indirect teaching, and then only to illustrate the state of rest which is possible through Christ. The fourth chapter of Hebrews uses the sabbath of rest as a type of

the rest which the Christian believer finds in Christ. The Hebrew people are being challenged to put away their disobedience, and their bondage to the Law, and as God rested from his works, they, too, might enter into a rest through faith in Christ. This teaching is significant only in that it upholds the virtue of the sabbath of rest. The implication here is that just as man sees the need of a physical sabbath of rest, so ought he to realize his need for the sabbath of rest in Christ.

The Sabbath as a Holy Day. The apostles were silent on the matter of the sabbath as a holy day, or rather, as a day to be kept holy. However, it is significant to note that the law serves to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin (Rom. 7:13), and holiness is the underlying theme of both the Old and New Testaments. The Moral Law of Christ which underlies the Mosaic Law, is written on the heart of every Christian through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Paul kept the ten commandments without personal conviction. It was another law, the Moral law of Christ, that awakened him to his sin. It may therefore be assumed that the apostles kept the sabbath in a manner which would comply with the holiness of God. J. R. Sampey held that the early Christians brought over into their observance the best elements of the Jewish Sabbath, without its onerous restrictions.¹

¹J. R. Sampey, "Sabbath," The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), IV, 2631.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE 'FIRST DAY'

The teachings of the apostles would not be complete without presenting their teaching on the 'first day.' This study deals with (1) the teachings concerning the first day of the week; (2) the Lord's Day; and (3) Pentecost.

The First Day of the Week. The first day of the week is mentioned two times--both in relation to Paul. Acts 20:7 states: "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow: and prolonged his speech until midnight." From this portion of scripture three things are evident. (a) The meeting took place on the first day, lasting until midnight. (b) The people gathered to break bread. It is possible that the breaking of bread referred to the Lord's Supper, although the scriptures do not state that this was the case. Neither do the scriptures presuppose that the 'breaking of bread' usually took place on the first day of the week, although Paul and his group were in Troas seven days before mention is made of gathering together to 'break bread.' (c) Paul discoursed with the people. Whether or not Paul commonly preached to the people on the first day of the week, the scriptures do not say. The scriptures only give record of the fact that Paul assembled with a group to break bread with them and to preach to them. If the first day of the week was the Christian sabbath, then the above scripture could be said to show how the early Christians observed the Christian's sabbath.

Another reference to the first day of the week is found in

I Corinthians 16:1,2. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, said:

"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 collections be made when I come." Dr. Wiley has stated that this clearly indicates that Paul sanctioned the first day as the Christian sabbath.¹ However, Dr. Wiley has collected evidence outside the scriptures to strengthen his assumption, and this is discussed more fully in Chapter V. Dr. Jonathan Weaver, former Bishop of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, was of the opinion that the order to Galatia and Corinth was evidence that the general custom among the apostolic churches was to meet for worship on the first day of the week.² Dr. Weaver, as in the case of Dr. Wiley, had to presuppose something that the scriptures do not directly bear out.

The Lord's Day. The term 'Lord's Day' occurs only once in the New Testament. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day....." (Rev. 1:10). Jonathan Weaver, former Bishop, stated that commentators and theologians generally agree that what was called the Lord's day was the first day of the week.³ It must be remembered that John did not write the Book of Revelation until approximately the year 90 A.D. By that time the matter of a set day of worship would have been well founded.

¹H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1951), III, 148.

²Jonathan Weaver, Christian Theology (Dayton: United Brethren Publishing House, 1900), p. 274.

³Weaver, loc. cit.

Dr. Wiley maintains that when the phrase 'Lord's day' was used by John without any reference to the first day, it is evident that when The Revelation of John was written, the 'first day' was generally known as the 'Lord's day' in contradistinction to the Jewish seventh day.¹ Dr. Mueller has stated that John's use of the term 'Lord's day' does not necessarily refer to the first day of the week.² However, the 'Lord's day' was in common usage with the post-Apostolic fathers in referring to the 'first day' or 'Sunday.' (See Chapter V).

It is interesting to note what Burton Scott Easton has stated concerning the linguistic significance of the term 'Lord's day.' Although formerly supposed to be purely a Christian word, it has been proven to be otherwise.

Recent discoveries have proved that it was in fairly common use in the Roman Empire before Christian influence had been felt. In secular use it signified "imperial," "belonging to the lord"--the emperor--and so its adoption by Christianity in the sense "belonging to the Lord"--to Christ--was perfectly easy. Indeed, there is reason to suppose that in the days of Domitian, when the issue had been sharply defined as "Who is Lord? Caesar or Christ?" the use of the adjective by the church was a part of the protest against Caesar-worship. And it is even possible that the full phrase, "the Lord's day," was coined as a contrast to the phrase, "the Augustean day", a term that seems to have been used in some parts of the Empire to denote days especially dedicated in honor of Caesar-worship.³

¹Wiley, op. cit., p. 148.

²Quotation from class lecture, Dr. H. E. Mueller, "Greek Exegesis," Western Evangelical Seminary, November, 1954.

³Burton Scott Easton, "Lord's Day," The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), III, 1919.

Further consideration of the 'Lord's day' is given in Chapter V. Suffice it to say that the New Testament has given only presumptive evidence of the 'Lord's day' as the first day of the week, or as a regular day of worship.

Pentecost. Pentecost has been considered as evidence for the observance of the first day of the week as the Christian 'sabbath.' James H. Potts was one of those who have pointed out that Jesus honored the first day when He chose that particular day to send the promised Comforter. Dr. Potts stated:

And after the ascension, it being the seventh Sunday after the resurrection, the day of Pentecost, the disciples were again assembled "with one accord," "for prayer and supplication," when Jesus shed upon them the promised comforter--the fulness of the Divine Spirit--which was ever after to characterize the covenant then in force. This is the "rest that remaineth." This is the day "now sacred to Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, gathering into itself the memory of the three great works of the Trinity--creation, redemption, and spiritual baptism--and pouring forth for Christians the fulness of his manifold grace." "Thus by example did Jesus hallow the first day of the week as a divine rest for Christians throughout the evangelic age, and by the authority of God sanctioned the change so made."¹

A problem emerges at this point. Just what authority does the church have to say that Jesus honored the first day with the sending of the Holy Spirit? Not once does the New Testament mention the first day in connection with Pentecost. The tradition of the ancient church, however, has placed the first Christian Pentecost

¹James H. Potts, Faith Made Easy (Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe, 1888), p. 359.

on a Sunday.¹ The Jewish Pentecost was known as the feast of weeks, and it was closely connected with the Passover. "The morrow after the sabbath" after the Passover feast marked the beginning of the harvest and a fifty day period began with a wave offering unto the Lord with a sheaf from the first fruits of the new harvest (Lev. 23:9-11). The statement following was the command of God to Moses.

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall there be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meal offering unto Jehovah (Lev. 23:15,16).

This new meal offering unto Jehovah constituted the day of Pentecost or the feast of weeks, and according to Deuteronomy 16:10-12, this day was to be a day of rejoicing and tribute to Jehovah, as well as a reminder of the years of bondage in Egypt. If the word 'sabbath' in the quotation from Leviticus 23:15,16 refers to the seventh day, the feast of weeks, or Pentecost, would always fall on the first day of the week. However, to present a fair argument for Pentecost falling on the first day of the week, certain complications must be stated. Dr. Charles R. Barnes, in an article in The People's Bible Encyclopedia, has stated that some scholars have held that 'sabbaths' (Lev. 23:15) signifies weeks. Consequently, if that were so, the "morrow after the seventh sabbath" would be the day after the seventh week, not after the seventh sabbath.

¹Henry E. Dosker, "Pentecost," The International Bible Encyclopedia (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), IV, 2318.

Thus it is, that according to Jewish canon, the fiftieth day may fall on any one of several days.¹ This is evidence that the first Christian Pentecost could have fallen on the first day, but there is no certainty that it did. H. G. Cowan has worked out a Jewish calendar in which he has made the claim that the Pentecost in which the Holy Spirit was given did fall on the first day of the week.² Dr. Barnes stated that the Karaites explained the "sabbath" of Leviticus 23:15 as pointing to the sabbath of the paschal week, and, therefore, always celebrated Pentecost on Sunday.³ Likewise, the Boethusians and the Sadducees in the time of the second temple have taken "sabbath" in the sense of the seventh day of the week; this would cause Pentecost to perpetually fall on the first day of the week.⁴

From the evidence presented, it is certain that Pentecost may have fallen on the first day of the week, although there is no proof that it did. It is, however, reasonable to believe that Jesus would send the promised Comforter on the Christian sabbath, if it be true that He did.

Edgar P. Ellyson has summed up the matter of the first in the following words:

Up to the time of the crucifixion Christ

¹Charles Randall Barnes, "Pentecost," The People's Bible Encyclopedia (Chicago: The People's Publication Society, 1910), I, 361.

²H. G. Cowan, The Scriptural Sabbath (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1925) pp. 85-89.

³Barnes, op. cit., p. 361.

⁴Barnes, loc. cit.

and His Apostles kept the legal Jewish sabbath, the seventh day, Mark 6:2; Luke 4:16. But after the resurrection the seventh day begins to drop out and the first to come into notice among the Christians. The early Christians, in working among the Jews, took advantage of their coming together on the seventh day to preach to them, Acts 13:14,44; 17:1,2; 18:4; 20:19,26; Acts 20:7. The ground for this change is the resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week. As God had previously completed creation, now Christ has completed redemption, and day becomes the Rest-day. The first day of every week observed as a Rest-day is a testimony to the world that Christ lived, died, and rose again. Though there is no formal decree of this change, yet Jesus sanctioned the change by His appearance to the disciples when they were assembled observing the first day of the week, Luke 24:13,33,36; John 20:19,26. Also the Holy Spirit came, began the New Dispensation, and organized the Church on the first day of the week, Acts 2:1-4. Pentecost was fifty days after the resurrection which would bring it on the first day of the week. Thus the first real meeting of the Church was upon the first day of the week.¹

Excluding the Gospels, the first day of the week is mentioned two times in the New Testament. Paul held a meeting with the people of Troas on the first day of the week, but the Scriptures do not bear out the fact that it was a Christian sabbath service. However, if this was a regular day of sabbath observance, it was observed by (1) an assembly; (2) the breaking of bread; and (3) an exhortation by Paul. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, commanded them to lay aside their collections for the saints on the first day of the week; this commandment was also made to the Galatians. The order given by Paul merely requests the churches of Corinth and Galatia to do a sim-

¹Edgar P. Ellyson, Theological Compend (Chicago: the Christian Witness Co., 1908), pp. 187, 188.

ple act. However, if the first day of the week was the Christian sabbath, it may be assumed that the taking of collections was a part of the worship procedure.

The 'Lord's Day' occurs only once in the New Testament, being used by John on the isle of Patmos. Although commentators and theologians generally agree that the 'Lord's Day' referred to the first day of the week, the Scriptures do not distinguish it as such. The linguistic study of the word has disclosed that it was first of all a pagan word used to signify Augustus' day. However, the Christians sharply defined it as Christ's day and not Caesar's day.

It has been generally agreed that Pentecost fell on the first day of the week. The study of the Pentecost has made clear the fact that there is considerable conflict as to determining the day. However, the conflict of opinions does not detract from the fact that Pentecost could have fallen on the first day of the week, even as some are sure that it did.

Summary. It cannot be determined from the Scriptures whether there was any conflict over the day of sabbath observance. It has been definitely determined how Paul observed the Jewish Sabbath. It was (1) a day of worship; the worshipping included: (a) prayer; (b) the reading of the Scriptures; (c) the preaching of the word; (d) persuading men to Christ; (e) possible baptisms; (2) a day of rest; and (3) a holy day. The Bible is silent on any direct information concerning the first day of the week, the Lord's day, or Pentecost, in their relationship to the sabbath. Therefore the fact that the Word has seemed to indicate that these terms are suggestive of the

Christian sabbath can only be circumstantial evidence, and must necessarily lack the peculiar authority of direct command. If, however, the terms are significant of the Christian sabbath, it may be assumed that it was observed in the following manner: by (1) an assembly; (2) the breaking of bread; (3) an exhortation; and (4) the taking of collections.

CHAPTER V

THE TEACHINGS OF THE EARLY CHURCH CONCERNING THE SABBATH

The study of the teachings of the early church concerning the sabbath has been rather a difficult one. It was necessary to resort entirely to extra-Biblical sources of information which, in general include a good number of the post-Apostolic Fathers. The outline is an attempt to quote the teaching of the early church writers concerning the sabbath observance of the post-apostolic period, and to present it in a chronological order according to the time in which they lived. It will be noted that without exception the writers quoted lived before the time of Constantine, and it may be assumed that the contributions they made concerning the sabbath necessarily reflect the teachings of the Apostles, and even of Jesus Himself.

The writings of each author have been dealt with separately. In certain instances the information set forth has not been attributed to a single author, but in each case it has been dealt with as a unit. The central truth or truths in each instance have been noted, with a special emphasis on finding the basic concepts and observances of the sabbath. It will be noted that in some instances the authors quoted concentrated on merely describing the activities of the day; at other times they intended chiefly to defend Sunday as the day of worship; and at still other times there was a genuine attempt to discredit the seventh-day sabbath entirely. The different testimonies

tend to broaden the concepts of the sabbath day.

Ignatius. One of the earliest writers of the post-apostolic age who dealt with the subject of the sabbath was a man by the name of Ignatius. It is believed that he did very little writing until on his way to Rome to be martyred. As bishop of Antioch, he was an important leader among the Christians. He has been credited with having written seven letters, in which he encouraged the people to stand firm against the heresies then threatening the church. He died about 110-117 A.D.

If, therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death--whom some deny, by which mystery we have obtained faith, and therefore endure, that we may be found the disciples of Jesus Christ, our only Master--how shall we be able to live apart from Him, whose disciples the prophets themselves in the Spirit did wait for Him as their Teacher. . . The prophets were His servants, and foresaw Him by the Spirit, and waited for Him as their Teacher, and expected Him as their Lord and Saviour, saying, "He will come and save us." Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner, and rejoice in days of idleness; for "he that does not work, let him not eat." . . But let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner, rejoicing in meditation on the law, not in relaxation of the body, admiring the workmanship of God, and not eating things prepared the day before, nor using lukewarm drinks, and walking within a prescribed space; nor finding delight in dancing and plaudits which have no sense in them. And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day as a festival, the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days (of the week.) Looking forward to this, the prophet declared, "To the end, for the eighth day," on which our life both sprang up again, and the victory over death was obtained in Christ, whom the children of perdition, the enemies of the

Saviour, deny . . .¹

Ignatius taught that there was a very close relationship between the Lord's Day and the resurrection, and that as a believer in Christ, he advocated that there was no need of keeping the sabbath after the Jewish manner of outward observance. On the contrary, it was to be kept after a spiritual manner, and not as a day of bondage. Every friend of Christ was to keep a sabbath observance on the Lord's Day, which was to be a festival in honor of the resurrection-day, also known as the eighth day. It was to be a time of rejoicing in meditation on the law.

Barnabas. Barnabas made his contribution about the end of the first century. A part of his writing was an explanation of the Old Testament. He began the following remarks with a quotation from Isaiah 1:13.

"Your new moons and your Sabbaths I can not endure." Ye perceive how he speaks: your present Sabbaths are not acceptable to me; but that is which I have made; namely, this: when giving rest to all things, I shall make a beginning of the eighth day; that is, a beginning of another world. Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead.²

Barnabas treats the Jewish Sabbath somewhat shabbily in his testimony. On the other hand, he implied that the eighth day obser-

¹Ignatius, "Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians," The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), I, 62,63.

²Barnabas, "The Epistle of Barnabas," The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), I, 147.

vance began a new dispensation. It was a day of joyfulness, and a memorial day of the resurrection.

Pliny. Pliny the younger was a historian and not a Christian, but he has given some valuable information concerning the manner in which the Christians observed their sabbath. At a time when the Christians were being forced to suffer persecution, Pliny came to their defense, and in so doing, gave somewhat of a vivid description of their sabbath observance.

They were wont to meet together on a stated day before it is light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ, as to God, and bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft, robbery, or adultery; never to falsify their word, not to deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it. I examined, by torture, two maid-servants, which were called ministers; but I have discovered nothing besides a bad superstition. Many of all ages and every rank, of both sexes likewise, are accused and will be accused. Nor has this contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country; nevertheless, it seems to me that it may be restrained and corrected.¹

Pliny, not a Christian, considered Christianity as merely a dangerous superstition, but he did testify that the Christians had a set day for worship. Their worship service consisted chiefly of the singing of hymns and earnest consecration or rededication of their lives.

The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. The Teaching of the

¹John M'Clintock and James Strong, "Pliny," Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1894) VIII, 294.

Twelve Apostles, or perhaps better known as The Didache, was a small church manual prepared as a summary of Christian morals then being taught. It originated out of the need for a handbook which would regulate church rites and practices.¹ This work also contributed some significant information concerning the Lord's day.

But every Lord's day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. But let no one that is at variance with his fellow come together with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be profaned. For this is that which was spoken by the Lord: In every place and time offer to me a pure sacrifice; for I am a great King, saith the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the nations.²

The above statement points out an assembly on the Lord's day, on which there was breaking of bread, thanksgiving, confession and reconciliation.

The Teaching of the Apostles. About the end of the first century, a group of Christians more in the Jewish tradition thought it necessary to draw up a set of rules of conduct which the Christian should follow implicitly. The rules were predominantly negative, depicting the Way of Life in rigid commands and prohibitions. It seemed to be an attempt to reduce the living faith of Christianity to the keeping of a set of rules according to the old Jewish leg-

¹Edgar J. Goodspeed, The Apostolic Fathers (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1940), p. 9.

²"The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles," The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), VII, 381.

alism.¹ The following statements were given in the form of a command, but they also disclose the manner in which the first day was observed.

On the first day of the week let there be service, and the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and the oblation: because on the first day of the week our Lord arose from the place of the dead, and on the first day of the week He arose upon the world, and on the first day of the week He ascended up to heaven, and on the first day of the week He will appear at last with the angels of heaven.²

The first day of the week, in the above instance, was a day of service (no doubt to the Lord), the time for the reading of the Word, and for the giving of offerings. The first-day was used because Jesus had honored that day in so many ways. The idea that Jesus will come again on the first day of the week might be regarded as presumptuous. It is interesting to note that no mention of the Jewish Sabbath was made in either of the quotations from the Teachings of the Apostles.

Justin Martyr. Justin Martyr was a well known Christian apologist. As such, he was a keen opponent of Gnosticism, and an unwearied defender of Christian doctrine. He was a prominent teacher of his day, and during his later years did considerable writing. He was martyred in 165 A.D. because of his faith. He has made a valuable contribution as to the use of Sunday as the day of sabbath obser-

¹Ibid., p. 1.

²"The Teaching of the Apostles," The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), VIII, 668.

vance. The following quotation from his writings is one that is most frequently given in defense of Sunday as the true sabbath.

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in the cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But 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 apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.¹

According to Justin the Christians had a regular order of worship on Sunday. It consisted of an assembly, the reading of the Word, a period of instruction and exhortation, and a season of prayer. Then followed a ceremony similar to a communion service, wherein the

¹Justin Martyr, "The First Apology of Justin," The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), I, 186.

emblems of bread and wine were partaken of with prayers and thanksgiving, with provision being made for those absent. Opportunity was made to present offerings for the needy, and one of the number was authorized to make the distribution. Justin also supplied the reason for this assembly on Sunday. This, he wrote, was to honor the resurrection of Jesus, and to serve as a reminder that God wrought a change in the world on the first day of creation.

The quotation of Justin ended with a most significant statement. "He (Jesus) taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration." Justin implied that the action of the Christians on Sundays was done according to the instruction of Jesus Himself. If this implication could definitely be proven, considerable authority would be given, both to Sunday as the true sabbath day, and to the type of service presented by Justin.

Constitutions of the Holy Apostles. These writings are believed to have been compiled some time during the period between 150-200

A.D.¹ The following are quotations from those writings.

But assemble yourselves together every day, morning and evening, singing psalms and praying in the Lord's house: in the morning saying the sixty-second Psalm, and in the evening the hundred and fortieth, but principally on the Sabbath-day. And on the day of our Lord's resurrection, which is the Lord's day, meet more diligently, sending praise to God that made the universe by Jesus, and sent Him to us, and condescended to let Him suffer, and raised Him from the dead. Otherwise what apology will he make to God who does not assemble on that day to hear the saving word concerning the resur-

¹Isaac H. Beardsley, The True Sabbath (Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe, 1891), p. 141.

rection, on which we pray thrice standing in memory of Him who arose in three days, in which is performed the reading of the prophets, the preaching of the Gospel, the oblation of the sacrifice, the gift of the holy food?¹

It is interesting to note that daily assembling was advocated. This would no doubt be in accordance with the activities of the new-born church which found the disciples in the temple daily, praising God and winning souls to Christ.² The following quotation from the Encyclopedia Britannica has given some light on the matter of daily assemblings:

When Christianity had been carried to other places, where from the nature of the case daily meetings for worship were impossible, the first day of the week was everywhere set apart for this purpose.³

The fact that the Sabbath-day, no doubt meaning the Jewish Sabbath, was to be observed, seems only to be another testimony that Christians were impelled to meet on the seventh day in order to get a hearing with the majority of the people.

One of the strongest reasons for meeting on the Lord's day was to honor the Lord's resurrection. A strong plea was made for the worshipper to acknowledge Him who had suffered in his behalf, lest he sin against Him. On this occasion those assembled read from the Word, heard the Gospel preached, gave their offering, and par-

¹Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), VII, 423.

²Acts 2:46, 47.

³"Sunday", Encyclopedia Britannica (Chicago: R. S. Peale Company, 1892), XXII, 653.

took of the Lord's Supper.

On the day of the resurrection of the Lord, that is, the Lord's day, assemble yourselves together, without fail, giving thanks to God, and praising Him for those mercies God has bestowed upon you through Christ, and has delivered you from ignorance, error, and bondage, that your sacrifice may be unspotted, and acceptable to God, who has said concerning His universal Church: "In every place shall incense and a pure sacrifice be offered unto me; for I am a great King, saith the Lord Almighty, and my name is wonderful among the heathen.¹

Again, the day of assembly was the Lord's day, which was the first day, because it was the day of the resurrection. The assembly was to meet without fail to praise and thank God for his mercy and deliverance from error and bondage. What was even more important, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving was to be real and genuine for a great and wonderful Lord.

Tertullian. Tertullian lived approximately 145-220 A.D. He was a native of Carthage, Africa. At one time he was a presbyter of Rome, and later he became bishop of Carthage. Tertullian had a good deal to say concerning the Jewish Sabbath, particularly in discrediting it as a day for Christian observance. He likewise defended Sunday as the true sabbath.

The Holy Spirit upbraids the Jews with their holy-days. 'Your Sabbaths, and new moons, and ceremonies,' says he, 'my soul hateth'. . . . This, therefore, before this temporal Sabbath, there was withal an eternal Sabbath foreshown and foretold; just as before the carnal circumcision foreshown; that the precept was not eternal and spiritual, but temporary, which would one day cease.

¹Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, op. cit., VII, p. 471.

Whence it is manifest that the force of such precepts was temporary, and respected the necessity of present circumstances; and that it was not with a view to its observance in perpetuity that God formerly gave them such a law.¹

Tertullian was very clear on one point, namely, that the Jewish Sabbath was temporary. He further states:

Not the Lord's-day, not Pentecost, even if they had known them, would they have shared with us; for they would fear lest they should seem to be Christians.²

The above accusation implies that the Christians were distinguished from the heathen and from the Jews, by the keeping of the Lord's-day, upon which Pentecost evidently also fell. In defense of Sunday as the Christian sabbath, Tertullian wrote:

Suppose that the sun is the God of the Christians, because it is a well-known fact that we pray toward the East, or because we make Sunday a day of festivity (worship)--what then? Do you do less than this? You who reproach us with the sun and Sunday should consider your proximity to us. We are not far off from your Saturn (Saturday) and your days of rest.³

The significant fact in the previous quote is that it denies any relationship of Sunday, and the Christian's worship, to the sun. Tertullian's argument was that it held no more significance than Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, to Saturn.

Tertullian's writings emphasized three things; (1) In his opinion, God did not intend the Jewish Sabbath to be a perpetual obser-

¹Tertullian, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, quoted in Isaac H. Beardsley, The True Sabbath (Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe, 1891), p. 145.

²Ibid. p. 144.

³Ibid. pp. 146, 147.

vance; (2) the Jews were distinguished from the Christians by the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, and likewise the refusal to approve Sunday as the true sabbath; and (3) he defended Sunday as the true sabbath.

Clement of Alexandria. Clement (A.D. 153-193-217) was originally a pagan philosopher, who later became the illustrious head of the catechetical school of Alexandria. He traveled extensively over Greece, Italy, Egypt, Palestine, and other regions of the East. One brief quotation from his writings has been inserted here.

He, (the Christian) in fulfilment of the precept, according to the Gospel, keeps the Lord's day, . . . glorifying the Lord's resurrection in himself.¹

Clement taught that the Christian held an obligation to keep the Lord's day according to the Gospel, and this, chiefly by the reality of Christ's resurrection manifest in his life.

Irenaeus. Irenaeus lived in the second century, dying about 202 A.D. He was an apostle of Polycarp, who, in turn, was a disciple of John. He writes:

On the Lord's-day every one of us Christians keeps the Sabbath, meditating in the law, and rejoicing in the works of God.²

Irenaeus was explicit in claiming that every Christian of his

¹Clement of Alexandria, "The Stromata," The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), II, p. 545.

²James H. Potts, Faith Made Easy (Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe, 1888), p. 363.

time kept the Lord's-day sabbath. It was also a time of meditation on the law and of rejoicing in what God had done.

Origen. Origen, who served under Clement of Alexandria, about the year 220 A.D. and succeeded him as head of the Alexandria school, penned the following words:

We ourselves are accustomed to observe certain days, as for example, the Lord's-day. The perfect Christian, who is ever, in his thoughts, words, and deeds, serving his natural Lord, God the Word, is always keeping the Lord's-day.¹

Origen has merely stated that the perfect Christian necessarily kept the Lord's-day. However, nothing was noted as to how the day was observed.

Eusebius. Eusebius, living about 263-340 A.D. has added the following statements:

The Word (Christ) by the new covenant translated and transferred the feast of the Sabbath to the morning light, and gave us the symbol of true rest--the saving Lord's day--the first day of light in which the Saviour obtained the victory over death. On this day, which is the first of the light, and of the true Son, we assemble, after an interval of six days, and celebrate the holy and spiritual Sabbath; even all nations redeemed by Him throughout the world, assemble and do those things according to the spiritual law which was decreed for the priests to do on the Sabbath (that is the Jewish Sabbath) these we have transferred to the Lord's day, as more appropriately belonging to it, because it has the precedence, and is the first in rank, and more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath.²

¹Origen, "The Apology of Origen", The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), IV, p. 647.

²H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, n.d.), III, 148.

Eusebius has given a decisive passage in favor of the spiritual significance of the Lord's day sabbath. He claimed that the Lord Jesus gave it its spiritual significance by means of His victory over death. Because the Lord's day is more honorable in rank than the Jewish Sabbath, it is to have the precedence, but the spiritual concepts of the Jewish Sabbath have been transferred to the Lord's day. This implies that the legality of the Jewish Sabbath was discarded, leaving only the moral and spiritual elements of its observance to be retained in the Lord's day.

One more quotation is worthy of recognition. Tertullian gave adequate answer to the accusation of the Jews who claimed that the Christians did not observe the concept of rest. Quoting Moses, he said: "Remember the day of the sabbaths, to sanctify it: every servile work ye shall not do therein, except what pertaineth unto life." Then in comment, "Whence we (Christians) understand that we still more ought to observe a sabbath from all 'servile work' always, and not only every seventh day, but through all time."¹

Tertullian did not mention the particular day on which the sabbath was to be observed--that is, in this instance--but he did note the fact that every seventh day the Christians observed a sabbath that was free from all servile work. He maintained that the Christian held a greater obligation to keep the sabbath than anyone else.

¹Tertullian, "An Answer to the Jews", Ante-Nicene Christian Library, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1870), III, p. 211.

Constantine the Great played a prominent role in the history of sabbath observance. Constantine became emperor of Rome in 312 A.D., and prior to this, he claimed to have been converted to Christianity. In 313 A.D. he issued his famous decree of toleration of the Christians, putting Christianity on equal footing with other religions. In 321 A.D. he proclaimed a law which keenly affected Sunday observance. Isaac H. Beardsley has made the following statements.

In May, 321 A.D., he proclaimed the first European Sunday Civil Law, requiring his subjects to abstain from their usual occupations, and devote Sunday to the service of God according to the teachings of Christianity, as he understood them. Works of mercy were permitted --such as "the emancipation of slaves and of children, and the merciful visitation of prisoners." His armies were required "to pray on that day." The facts are, that the Roman people had never known any Sabbath at all. Our ideas of a "Sabbath rest" were foreign to them. Their greatest festive-day, after the introduction of astronomy among them, was "the venerable day of the sun."

The edict recognized by law what had been in practice for centuries among his Christian subjects, who had observed Sunday as their "stated day" for religious services. All it demanded was that the people should observe the day more religiously than before.

Constantine the Great never changed the Sabbath.¹

Constantine's proclamation made Sunday the legal day of worship. Certain basic rules for that day were also set forth. It was a day of cessation from labor; a day of service to God; a day when various acts of mercy were performed; a day for prayer--particularly

¹Beardsley, The True Sabbath (Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe, 1891), p. 149.

for military men. Although it has been argued that Sunday was legalized as the Christian sabbath according to paganistic precepts, the practice of Sunday rest and worship was in effect more than two hundred years prior to Constantine's sabbath law.

R. S. Driver has given a most interesting point of view concerning sabbath observance during this period.

The true view appears to be that the Sunday is not substituted for the Jewish sabbath; the sabbath is abolished; and the observance of the First Day of the week is an analogous institution, based on the consecration of that day by our Lord's resurrection, sanctioned by apostolic usage (Acts 20:7, I Cor. 16:2), and accepted by the early church, --the day being set apart for similar objects-- rest from labour, and the service of God, -- in a manner consonant with the higher and more spiritual teaching of Christ, and to be observed in the spirit of loyal Christian freedom, rather than by obedience to a system of precise statutes. Dr. Hussy has made it abundantly clear during the first three Christian centuries the Lord's Day was never confounded with the sabbath, but carefully distinguished from it; and that it was only after the third century, and even then only gradually, that the Christian and the Jewish institutions were confused, and that tendencies towards 'Sabbatarianism' began.¹

Mr. Driver maintained that the Jewish Sabbath was intended to be abolished, to be replaced by the First Day, or Sunday. He based his opinion on three factors: first, the consecration of the First Day by the resurrection; secondly, the sanction of apostolic usage; and third, its acceptance by the early church. He further held that Christ taught that the First Day held a higher spiritual significance than the Jewish Sabbath, to be observed in loyal Christ-

¹R. S. Driver, "Sunday," Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), Vol. IV, 322.

ian freedom, rather than obedience to precise statutes. He likewise agreed with Dr. Hussy, who stated that the Lord's Day was always carefully distinguished from the Jewish Sabbath. According to Mr. Driver, the First Day had two distinguishing features, namely, a day of rest from labor, and a day of service to God. The above statements would agree in substance with the writings of the early church fathers.

Summary. The writers of the early church have given some very definite information concerning sabbath observance. This information can be divided into three categories, namely, (1) the Jewish Sabbath was not to be the Christian Sabbath; (2) the defense of Sunday as the Christian sabbath; and (3) the manner in which the Christians observed the sabbath.

While some writers were silent on the matter of the Jewish Sabbath, others declared that it was intended only to be a temporary sabbath. It was condemned as a day of bondage when those who observed it did so in outward manifestation only. The Christian sabbath was considered more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath, but the Christians were instructed to retain all the spiritual elements of the Jewish Sabbath, being very careful, however, to discard all its legality.

The Christian sabbath was signified by three terms, "Sunday", "the first day of the week", and "the eighth day". The observance of this day was clearly distinguished from Jewish and heathen observances, as well as from the daily observances noted in Acts. Sunday was defended as the true sabbath, and every Christian was to observe

it without fail. As the first day of the week, it was first of all a memorial of the resurrection of Jesus, and likewise, a memorial of the first day of creation, but this to a lesser degree. The first day was significant in that Jesus saw fit to honor it in so many different ways--His resurrection, His meetings with the disciples, and the giving of the Holy Spirit (so assumed). Constantine the Great made an official proclamation in 321 A.D., making Sunday the legal day of sabbath observance. The writings of the Early Church fathers bear out the fact that Constantine's decree served merely to put a stamp of approval upon something which the Christians had been doing for nearly three centuries.

The writers of the early church have disclosed several distinct ways in which they observed their sabbath. There was first of all an assembly, sometimes meeting at a very early hour. It was a time of singing, of prayer, and of thanksgiving; it was a time of rejoicing and meditation upon the law; a time of reading the Word. It was a time of confession and reconciliation; it was a time of earnest consecration and rededication. It was a time to acknowledge Him who had suffered for the sins of the people; failure to do this would likely end in sin. Likewise, there was to be an acknowledgment of His mercy and His deliverance from error and bondage. The assembly gave place for instruction and exhortation, for the giving of offerings, chiefly for the support of the needy, and for the breaking of bread, presumably the Lord's Supper. Sunday was to be a day of rest, when no servile work was permitted except for the saving of life. Constantine's army was prohibited from profaning the sabbath with any manner of work. It was, however, to be a day of ser-

vice, presumably the Lord's service. Justin Martyr gave authority to most of the above characteristics of the Christian sabbath observance by stating that "Jesus taught them these things."

In the light of the evidence presented, certain basic concepts of sabbath observance have been noted. It was (1) a day of worship; (2) a sign of memorial of Christ's resurrection; (3) a day of rest; (4) a day to be kept holy; and (5) a day of service. The Christian observed these concepts without the legality of the Jewish Sabbath, but with all the freedom of a personal relationship to Christ.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapters II, III, IV, and V have dealt with the basic concepts of the New Testament sabbath. Chapter II was a study of the Old Testament to observe the basic concepts of the Jewish Sabbath. A study was then made to determine the relationship of the Jewish Sabbath to: the teachings of Jesus (Chapter III); the teachings of the Apostles (Chapter IV); the teachings of the Early Church Fathers (Chapter V). The Bible was the chief source material for Chapters II, III, and IV, but some supplementary information was presented from extra-Biblical sources. The subject matter of Chapter V demanded an entirely extra-Biblical study.

A. SUMMARY

The Jewish Sabbath. The first recorded observance of the Jewish Sabbath took place at the command of God in the wilderness of Sin. Apart from the fact that God rested the seventh day from His creative labors, there is only presumptive evidence of any earlier observance than that in the wilderness of Sin. Sabbath observance was put into an official document when the Ten Commandments were given to Israel.

The Jewish sabbath was not at first observed with an assembly of corporate worship, although it soon became a day of holy convocation. It was set apart as God's day. He was to be exalted as Creator, and His day became a day of rest because He had rested from

His labors. It was to be a reminder of Israel's deliverance out of the hands of the Egyptians. It was a day in which the people might know that Jehovah was God. It was a day to refrain from one's own pleasure in order to delight one's self in God. Profaning the sabbath was one of the causes of the Babylonian Captivity. In fact, the Israelites were threatened with death for profaning the sabbath. Keeping the sabbath was a sign of spiritual health.

After the Babylonian Captivity, Nehemiah was the leader in Israel's return to strict sabbath observance. By the beginning of the Maccabean period the Jews chose death rather than to defend themselves on the sabbath. However, the sabbath law was revised to permit the people to protect themselves on the sabbath, though they were not to attack on that day. By the time Jesus began His ministry, sabbath observance had become a burden and a legalistic form. It had lost its deep spiritual significance which was originally intended.

The sabbath was instituted a holy day; it was Jehovah's day, to be kept holy unto Himself. Furthermore, the sabbath was to be a holy day unto man, involving responsibilities to himself as well as to God. Keeping the sabbath holy involved doing those things which would strengthen man's spiritual relationship to God, as well as refraining from any observance which would hinder that relationship or mar the holiness of the day. God's judgment was sure for sabbath breakers, at first by death, and later by calamity and captivity.

As a sign, the sabbath was a reminder of the everlasting covenant between God and the children of Israel. It was a reminder that Jehovah was their God. They were likewise reminded that He was the

God of creation and their deliverer from Egypt and every other enemy.

The sabbath, which essentially means rest, was to be a day of rest. Not only did God rest after His creative labors, but man was commanded to observe a day of rest, and to provide for a similar privilege for beasts of burden. Even the stranger within his gates was obligated to refrain from his labors and enjoy the privileges of rest. Man was permitted to do good and to save life on the sabbath, but otherwise no exceptions for labors for his own benefit was allowed, not even during busy farming seasons. In keeping the sabbath as a day of rest, man also went a long way toward keeping it holy.

Worship was a basic concept of the Jewish Sabbath. There was a distinct relationship between the sabbath and the House of God, and the sabbath was a day of sacrifice. In spite of strict commands, the sabbath was not intended to be a burdensome day, but a day of delight; a day of praise and thanksgiving; a day of meditating upon the gracious dealing of God with His people.

The Teachings of Jesus Concerning the Sabbath. Jesus was faced with considerable opposition from the Jews because of their accusation that He did not keep the sabbath. The whole basis of their charges was a matter of interpretation. The Jewish leaders were unable to find any injustice in Jesus' actions on the sabbath, except that they were contrary to strict Jewish tradition. Refusing to be bound by legalism and tradition, Jesus acted according to the concepts of the original sabbath law. Whereas the Jews had bound themselves to the sabbath, Jesus taught that the sabbath was made

for man, to be used by man to do good and to save life. Jesus proclaimed Himself as Lord of the sabbath, thereby giving authority to His teaching. It was not a matter of keeping the letter of the law, but the spirit of the law, or that which prompted the law. Jesus' actions necessarily conformed to His true nature--that of Holiness; He was the sinless Christ.

Jesus observed the sabbath with acts of worship. In fact, He taught the true inward and spiritual value of worship. It was not so much a matter of where man worshipped, as to how and whom he worshipped; man must worship in spirit and truth.

Jesus relieved suffering on the sabbath, and it was here that He came into conflict with the Jews. Jesus defended the right to perform acts of healing and to do those necessary acts of labor to relieve hunger on the sabbath. In so doing Jesus placed a higher value upon Man's welfare. Under Jewish traditional law animals were treated with greater concern than was humanity. The sabbath, as made for man, permitted any act which pertained to man's highest good and spiritual welfare.

Jesus, according to His own testimony, worked on the sabbath. However, His acts of labor were limited chiefly to His ministry to the suffering. Man holds the responsibility of performing such acts of mercy which would relieve suffering and preserve life. Jesus taught that man should be permitted to provide for worship and attend to religious duties on the sabbath without being charged with profaning the sabbath. It must be remembered that Jesus indirectly taught that the sabbath was to be a day of rest and a day to be kept holy. Likewise, it must be understood that Jesus' acts were strictly in accord-

ance with His holiness.

The Scriptures specify that Jesus met with His disciples on the first day of the week after His resurrection. In fact Jesus is not mentioned in connection with the Jewish sabbath after the resurrection. A significant message was found in the study of the Greek text. The Greek text indicates that the old order of the sabbath, or the Jewish Sabbath, was abolished with the crucifixion of Jesus, and that a new order of sabbaths was ushered in with His resurrection, this new order of sabbaths to come on the first day of the week rather than the seventh. The resurrection day is indicated as the 'first' sabbath, meaning the first in importance, and the day now to be observed as the true sabbath. The establishing of a new order of sabbaths conforms to Old Testament teaching which prophesies of a new covenant to be written on the heart of man. New Testament teaching proclaims that a new covenant was born out of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The new covenant naturally makes place for a new sabbath day.

The Teachings of the Apostles Concerning the Sabbath. Paul has given some indirect teaching of the sabbath, but his actions, as recorded in the book of Acts, have provided the necessary information to give the manner in which the sabbath was observed by the apostles. It cannot be determined by the writings of the apostles whether the sabbath day was any source of conflict. Paul made his way to the place of worship on the Jewish Sabbath, but it must necessarily be understood that he could not have effectively contacted a group of people for Christ on any other day. Paul's indirect teaching indicates that he favored the first day of the week.

The apostles observed the sabbath as a day of worship. As a day of worship, the sabbath was utilized for prayer and the reading of the scriptures. The preaching of the Word was an important part of worship, and the New Testament scriptures indicate that the people gladly heard Paul preach. The Word was preached to persuade men to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. It was through the preaching of the Word that the Lord opened the hearts of the listeners to heed the truth, so that they were able to believe. It is highly probable that baptisms were frequent occurrences on the sabbath.

As in the case of Jesus, the apostles have only given indirect teaching concerning the sabbath as a day of rest and a holy day. However, the scriptures seem to indicate that the apostles observed the sabbath according to the moral law which had been written on their hearts by the Holy Spirit. It is altogether possible that this involved compliance with the holiness of God, including suitable rest.

Paul mentioned the first day of the week, but he did not indicate whether that day was observed as the sabbath. The fact that he mentioned offerings seems to indicate that it very likely was the sabbath. Paul's meeting in Troas had some of the elements of a worship service, so that many scholars are of the opinion that it was a regular 'first' day sabbath service. In the two instances cited, four distinct elements of worship were noted. There was an assembly on the first day of the week, the breaking of bread, a discourse by Paul, and provision for a collection.

The Lord's day is a Biblical term which is used only once. It was used by John on the isle of Patmos, and has been used consid-

erably to denote the first day of the week. It was also a name used in pagan circles to signify the emperor's day, but soon came to be distinguished as the Christian's day of worship.

Pentecost today is generally observed on the first day of the week. Scholars are not agreed that the Pentecost of Acts 2 fell on the first day, but all are agreed that it is altogether possible that it may have been. To be certain that the Holy Spirit was given on the first day of the week would not prove that it was God's intention to make it the Christian sabbath. However, there are those who believe that God used Pentecost as His seal of approval upon the first day of the week as the regular Christian sabbath. This supposition is altogether possible and reasonable, but cannot be stated as factual.

The Teachings of the Early Church Concerning the Sabbath. The Early Church Fathers have disclosed definite statements concerning their sabbath observance and practices. Since Chapter V was an extra-biblical study, it lacks the authority of the written Word, but the early Christian writings possess a ring of truth. It also contains brief quotations from these early writers, with a short summary after each contribution.

The early writers were careful to distinguish between the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sabbath. They did this by their strong defense of Sunday as the true sabbath, and their claim that the Jewish Sabbath was intended to be a temporary precept, to be replaced by a new precept through the efforts of Christ. The Christian sabbath was exalted as being more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath, because

it had cast off the legalism and bondage of the Jewish Sabbath for an observance stemming out of a spiritual heart experience. This did not mean that the elements of the Jewish Sabbath were entirely discarded, but that all its spiritual elements were appropriated without retaining any of the Jewish legalism.

The early writers referred to Sunday as the 'first day', the 'eighth day', and the Lord's Day, all Biblical terms. It was to be observed without fail, chiefly as a memorial of the resurrection of Jesus, although it was significant for other reasons. Constantine proclaimed Sunday as the official Christian sabbath early in the fourth century, but he merely placed the Roman stamp of approval on something which the Christians had been observing for many years.

The early Christians observed the sabbath with nearly all the elements of worship used today. There was singing, prayer, meditation, thanksgiving, rejoicing and praise, Scripture reading, confession, reconciliation, consecration, dedication, giving, Communion, or the Lord's Supper, and instruction and exhortation. The worship service was emphasized as a time to acknowledge Christ's mercy and deliverance, and His awful suffering for the sins of the people. The sabbath was to be a holy day, and as such, it was a day of rest, with no servile work permitted except for the preserving of life. The sabbath was observed as a day of service for the Lord, to be promoted with all the freedom of a personal relationship to Christ.

B. CONCLUSIONS

This study of the basic concept of the New Testament sabbath

has resulted in the following conclusions:

1. The New Testament sabbath was given that men might remember their God. Not only was God acknowledged as Creator, Sanctifier, Deliverer, and Provider, as did the Jews, but Jesus was exalted as the living Lord--the victorious, resurrected Christ.

2. The New Testament sabbath was a sign of God's relationship with His people. It signified man's dependence upon God, and God's willingness to supply man's need.

3. The New Testament sabbath was God's day. As such, it was to be observed in conformity to His holiness. Man disregarded God when he disregarded His sabbath.

4. The New Testament sabbath was man's day. It was a day of spiritual refreshing as well as a day of physical refreshing.

5. The New Testament sabbath was a day of worship and devotion.

6. The New Testament sabbath was a day of delight in the Lord. Rejoicing and praise excluded any heaviness or burden of the day.

7. The New Testament sabbath was a day of service unto the Lord, including the providing of worship, the relieving of suffering, and the effort to win men to Christ by means of the preached Word.

8. The New Testament sabbath was observed with a deep inward manifestation. The time, the place, and the day of worship was of lesser importance than the spirit in which it was observed.

9. The New Testament sabbath was a test of spirituality. Disregard for the sabbath prefaced a backsliding condition; sabbath observance was the initial step in man's return to God.

10. The New Testament sabbath was observed on the first day of the week as evidenced by the following facts: (a) A new covenant was ushered in with the death and resurrection of Jesus, replacing the old Mosaic covenant; (b) the Greek text indicates that Jesus rose from the dead on the 'first of sabbaths'; (c) after His resurrection, Jesus met with His disciples on at least two consecutive 'first days'; (d) apostolic teaching indicated the possibility of Sunday observance; and (e) the Early Church Fathers observed the first day of the week with clear conscience.

Suggestions for Further Study. Information was discovered which indicated that a forty-eight hour sabbath occurred once a year in order to properly regulate the Jewish calendar year with the solar year. An interesting and profitable study might be made of the Jewish calendar and its Biblical usage, in its possible influence upon the sabbath and Pentecost.

Jesus taught that they that worship the Lord should worship Him in spirit and in truth. A study might be made to note the significance of the complicated ritual of the Old Testament Law as it pertained to worship.

Speaking of the law and the prophets, Jesus said: "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." A comparison might be made of the Moral Law of Christ and the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament to determine the relationship of each to the other.

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