



THE
SABBATH
IN THE
BIBLE

*A Survey for
Preachers and Bible Students*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Having matriculated at the South African College High School in Cape Town, he attended the University of Cape Town, where he obtained the two degrees B.A. (*inter alia* in Constitutional History) and LL.B. (in Roman-Dutch Law). Thereafter he went to the Dutch Reformed Theological Seminary, where he obtained his diploma in sacred theology (Dip. Th.), *cum laude*.

After this, he obtained his licentiate in theology (Lic. Th.), his bachelor's degree in divinity (B.D.) and his master's degree in theology (M.Th.), all *cum laude* at the University of Stellenbosch. His B.D. thesis (in systematic dogmatic theology) dealt with "The Sabbath before Sinai" and was written in English, whereas his M.Th. thesis (in missionary science) was a polemic written in Afrikaans and entitled "Muhammad in the Bible?"

In 1963 he married and became a licensed minister of the Dutch Reformed (Calvinist) Church of the Republic of South Africa. However, having been awarded an Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Fellowship, he remained a full-time student and passed all his doctoral examinations in dogmatological theology (Th. Drs.) *cum laude* in 1965, after an extended tour of England, Europe and the Near East.

His doctoral thesis in Theology (Th.D.) was on "The Sabbath and the Covenant" (a historico-dogmatic study, in English) at the University of Stellenbosch and his master's degree in arts (M.A. Philosophy) was on "Communist genesiology" (in English) at the University of Cape Town.

FOREWORD

This booklet is designed to give to the student a summary—with extensive references—of the teaching of Holy Scripture about the Lord's Day. It traces such teaching systematically from stage to stage, commencing with Creation and ending with the eschatological significance of the Sabbath. The emphasis is upon theological teaching, but practical matters, as the manner in which the Day should be kept and the reason for keeping the first day of the week, are not overlooked.

The Publishers trust it will be a little handbook providing helpful teaching, assistance in sermon-making, and a ready source of reference on many of the issues involved in an important subject.

The Author is a scholar of no mean quality and yet sets forth the subject in a clear and understandable manner.

H. J. W. L.

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"THE SABBATH IN THE BIBLE"

by N. Lee

Part I. God and Creation

Prior to the creation of the heavens and the earth, the Lord God existed as an immutable Triune Being from all eternity. As then He was both perpetually at work as well as simultaneously at rest in His eternal Intratrinitarian, Interpersonal and Autopersonal counsel (1). Throughout this pretemporal and timeless eternity, the perpetually energetic Lord God rested in Himself and in His eternal counsel (2).

In the beginning of time the energetically resting God commenced *labour* and created the heavens and the earth. Then God commenced the formation, the progressive ordination of specifically earthly matter, which He sustained from the beginning and completed in Six Divine working Days. This Six Days' work was prepared for and culminated in the formation of man from earthly matter, who, as the image of God, was nonetheless destined to exercise dominion thereover, just as God Himself exercises dominion over heavenly as well as over earthly matter (3).

After the Six Days' formation of the earth as the abode of man, God ceased His creative work. God rested in man as His highest and final creature, as His Own image. After the creation of His Own image as the last work of creation in the last moment of creation on the Last Day of creation, on the Seventh Day God entered into His continuous rest from creation, in which He is resting even unto now (4). Every Seventh Day as the microscopic weekly picture of this Divine rest, God calls man, His image, to rest in Him from his own earthly labour, so that man, after completion of his life's work on earth, after the course of his perpetual "creative" work on earth, may enter into eternal rest alongside of God, and thenceforth rest from his labours, as God does from his (4).

Textual References

(1) **Intratrinitarian:** the activity of the Triune God within Himself; **Interpersonal:** the active relationship between one Person of the Godhead and the Other(s); **Autopersonal:** the activity of each Person of the Trinity towards that same Person. (2) Ps. 90:2; John 17:5; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:15,16; Heb. 9:14. (3) Gen. 1:1, 26-28. (4) Heb. 4:4-11.

Part II. The Sabbath and Man

God created Adam in perfect holiness, righteousness and knowledge (5) as a living soul (6). As a living soul Adam was able to forfeit this life by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and thereby dying (7), but on the other hand he could also be confirmed in this life by eating of the tree of life and thereby living unto all eternity (8); in other words, by entering into the eternal sabbath rest alongside of God (9).

This ultimate destination of Adam in connection with his conviction in or loss of this life, was dependent upon his obedience to the *covenant* which God made with him (10). This covenant required positively that Adam should begin to exercise his dominion over the earth by dressing and keeping the garden (11), and negatively that he should deny himself the tree of good and evil (12). The punishment for disobedience to the covenant was *death* (13), but the reward for obedience to the covenant was *eternal life* (14), i.e., *eternal rest* (15).

Prior to the fall of man, the weekly sabbath or day of rest reminded Adam of his ultimate destiny of eternal rest; but it was also the day of life—*his life began therewith!*—and this reminded him of eternal life. Even then in the state of rectitude, it was (just as our present Sunday should be!) a day of *living* for Adam, and not a day of idle inactivity; but it was also a day of *restful living*, and not of everyday labour.

Just as our Sunday is the first day of the week of the Christian life, so too was the supralapsarian Edenic sabbath the *first day of the week(s)* of Adam's life. Adam's existence began with life, in which he merely had to be confirmed as a result of his obedience. For this reason the weeks of Adam's life also began with the weekly day of the restful life, the sabbath. *If Adam sinned, he would lose his life in principle as a present possession, and he would also lose the day of rest on the first day of the weeks of his life as a present possession.*

Physically, in spite of the fall, Adam would, however,

never be able to forfeit the sabbath idea as such (i.e., apart from whether it was to remain the first day of his weeks or to become the last day of his weeks), for God constructed him physically on a sevenfold pattern which is even accentuated as a result of the fall (e.g., the pulse beat alters every seventh day; illness patterns change every seven days, etc.) (16).

Religiously, in spite of the fall, Adam would still remain the image of God, even though corrupted (17); and as the image of God Who laboured for six days and then rested, fallen man, in contrast with the animals, would likewise have to rest every seventh day too.

Eschatologically, in spite of the fall, Adam would nevertheless enter into eternal rest, into the eternal sabbath, eternal life; for in the fullness of time God Himself would enter that eternal rest as the Second Adam on behalf of the first Adam and his elect seed, enter in the Person of Jesus Christ by virtue of His perfect human obedience to the Adamitic covenant. *Hence Adam may lose his "Sunday", but not his sabbath — and the Second Adam would then come and unify Sunday and the sabbath once more.* Nay more! He would also enter into the eternal sabbath rest (which even unfallen Adam did not as then possess) and donate it in His Resurrection Day to believers, so that they too may rest from their works, like God from His! (18).

Textual References

(5) cf. Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10. (6) Gen. 2:7. (7) Gen. 2:17; (8) Gen. 3:22. (9) Gen. 2:1-3; Ps. 95:11; Heb. 3 & 4. (10) Hos. 6:7 (R.V.). (11) Gen. 2:15. (12) Gen. 2:17 (13) Gen. 3:3; 5:5; Rom. 5:12,14. (14) Gen. 2:9; 3:22; Rev. 2:7; 22:2. (15) Heb. 4:4-11 cf. Rev. 14:13. (16) Cf. Deut. 5:12-15. (17) Gen. 9:6; Jas. 3:9; cf. note 5. (18) Heb. 4:10,14; Gen. 1:26-2:3; Ps. 95:11.

Part III. The Pre-Sinaitic Sabbath

With the fall, Adam lost his "Sunday", his present possession of life, but the weekly sabbath as such is indestructible—for physical, religious and eschatological reasons, as outlined above. Even after the fall, God is still in *His* sabbath rest (9), and He still calls even fallen man week by week to enter into that

rest alongside of Him (19). For this reason, the week—and hence the sabbath too as the demarcating day thereof—continues to exist. Traces hereof are encountered before and during the flood (20). Thereafter, even after the dispersion of the nations at Babel (21) we encounter striking similarities to the Biblical sabbath also amongst the heathen (e.g., amongst the Babylonians and the Assyrians, etc.), especially near the site of ancient Babel.

It is precisely from Babel, out of Ur of the Chaldees, whence God called Abraham, and hence it is historically and archeologically certain that he must have been acquainted with the sabbath, however corrupted. Without doubt Abraham taught this ordinance to his son Isaac, and he to his son Jacob, and he to his son Joseph (22), just as Abraham's brother Nahor must have taught it to his son Bethuel, and he to his son Laban (23). It is even probable that the day of rest was known to the non-Jewish Semites, Job (24) and Balaam (25). Even the ten-daily day of rest of the Egyptians and the nine-daily day of rest of the later Romans were probably no more than corrupted remnants of the universal primeval sabbath of Eden which God preserved in His love towards all men by virtue of His general revelation and common grace (26).

As it appears that Joseph and the patriarchs of the Jews originally still knew of the sabbath while in Egypt (22), the later enslavement of that people by a later Pharoah made their keeping of the day of rest impossible (27). But even in those days it seems that the *conception* of the sabbath was never forgotten by the people of God. Moreover, it appears to us as if the urge to be free of the perpetual slave labour and to go and celebrate the weekly sabbath once again, was the *basic motive* of the exodus (28).

The Antinomian position that the sabbath was unknown before the giving of the law at Sinai, is thus false. Not only does this appear from the wording of the 4th commandment (29) (where the word "remember" in the expression "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" clearly points back to a previously known truth), but the keeping of the sabbath in connection

with the manna is already described in Ex. 16—at least a full month before the arrival at Sinai and the receiving of the law (30).

Textual References

(19) Cf. perhaps Gen. 4:3—"miqueets Jaaimjm" (at the end of days), (20) Gen. 7:4,10; 8:7-12. (21) Gen. 11:7-9. (22) Gen. 18:17-19; 26:2-5; 50:10. (23) Gen. 29:20-28; 31:23. (24) Job 2:13; 42:8. (25) Num. 23:29. (26) Mk. 2:27. (27) Ex. 1; 5:1-4. (28) Cf. Ex. 5:5—"shaabath"; cf. 7:25 with 8:1; 12:16,17; Deut. 5:15 cf. Hos. 2:10-14; Ex. 15:23; 15:25,27; 16:1ff. (29) Ex. 20:8-11. (30) Ex. 16:1,5; 19:1,11; 12:17,18.

Part IV. The Decalogue Distinguished

In connection with the giving of the law on Sinai (31) the ten commandments on the one hand must be carefully distinguished from the rest of the law on the other. From Col. 2, Gal. 5, Heb. 7-10 and other places, it is clear that *at least* the whole Mosaic law, except the ten commandments, have been fulfilled and abolished in Christ, and that, as shadows pointing to the coming Christ, Who has now come, they no longer obtain under the N.T. dispensation. The whole question is: Does the same apply to the ten commandments too? A thorough investigation of the Old Testament reveals that only the ten commandments, in contradistinction to the rest of the law, were written by the *finger of God* (32), and that the ten commandments in both Ex. 20 and Deut. 5 are in prime position and are clearly demarcated from the rest of the law.

The New Testament reveals that it is precisely the ten commandments—in contradistinction to the ceremonial remainder of the law—which are of permanent significance. 2 Cor. 3:7 teaches that it is in actual fact "the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; *which glory was to be done away*"; and not the ten commandments, as the Antinomians maintain. To the contrary, it is precisely the latter which is to be written on the heart of the believer (33)! *Christ* fulfilled the ten commandments but never abolished them (34). He exhibited the ten commandments as the standard of life to the rich young ruler (35), and the summary thereof as the permanent rule of conduct for every believer (36). *Paul*, referring to the ten commandments, mentions that even the non-Jewish heathen recognize the work of the law in their hearts and consciences (37), that this law is also established

for the believers (38), and that it is holy and righteous and good and spiritual (39), while he also specifies the 5th commandment as a rule of conduct for the Christians at Ephesus (40).

The testimony of James the servant of Jesus Christ (41), however, is *conclusive*. Writing to his brethren, to the justified Christians, to those who possess "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory" (42), he assures them: "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself—ye do well" (43). By way of elucidation, James then refers to the prohibition of killing and adultery as hereby to be understood (44). The conclusion is inescapable: The royal law is the ten commandments, the law of the Messiah King which *He* gave at Sinai and which *He* taught and lived out during His earthly life, and hence it must be kept by the justified children of the kingdom as the permanent rule of their lives too (45).

Whereas both the Old and New Testaments so clearly distinguish the ten commandments from the rest of the law, the question arises as to whether the former (and hence the sabbath commandment therein contained) as such are automatically indissolubly attached to the Mosaic law with which they were first mentioned in Scripture. When one considers that the ceremonial Mosaic law was only in force as from Sinai up to Calvary, and even then only for the Jews, it is striking that the ten commandments have existed in some or other form *since the beginning of the world* (46), that they are also recognized amongst the unsaved heathen apart from the Mosaic law (47), and that they continue to obtain as the rule of conduct for the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (48). Hence it is clear that the ten commandments represent God's eternal will for all people of all times—and thus also for the Jews during the dispensation of the Mosaic legislation!—and that, as such, they must necessarily remain in force until the end of the world.

Whereas the ten commandments can so clearly be distinguished from the ceremonial law, we must also clearly distinguish the fourth commandment concerning the weekly sabbath from the Mosaic

regulations relating to it—such as, e.g., the specifically Israelitic significance thereof for the Mosaic dispensation (49) and the regulations requiring the killing of those who make fires (50) and other sabbath-breakers (51). One must also be careful before ascribing normative value to historic occurrences, such as the punishment of death which was meted out to a person caught collecting wood on the sabbath (52). A further distinction must be drawn between the weekly sabbath of the 4th commandment on the one hand and the ceremonial sabbaths on the other, such as the festive-days (53), the sabbath years and the jubilee years (54). In short, only the 5th commandment is permanently normative for the sabbath ordinance.

The question now arises: What exactly does the fourth commandment teach as God's unalterable will for all people? Before we can answer this, we must first distinguish between the form and the content of the ten commandments. The *form* of the fifth commandment in Ex. 20:12, for example, differs slightly from the form given by Paul (55), but the *content* of the commandments, viz., honour to parents, is the same. So too the form of the tenth commandment in Ex. 20:17, differs from Moses' inspired rendering thereof in Deut. 5:21, but the content of the commandment, viz., the prohibition of illegal desire, remains the same. The form of the ten commandments is historically attached to the Mosaic times during which they were first permanently reduced to writing (e.g., of, the ox and the ass of the tenth commandment), and hence does not belong to the *essence* of the commandment. But the *content* of the commandment is the unalterable will of God for all people of all times.

Textual References

(31) Ex. 19 ff. (32) Ex. 31:18 cf. vv. 12-17; 32:16; 34:1,28,29; Deut. 9:9-11.
(33) 2 Cor. 3:3. (34) Mt. 5:17-37. (35) Mt. 19:16f. (36) Mt. 22:34-40 cf.
Rom. 13:8-10. (37) (Rom. 2:14,15,21,22. (38) Rom. 3:31. (39) Rom. 7:7,
10,12. (40) Eph. 6:1-4. (41) Jas. 1:1. (42) Jas. 2:1. (43) Jas. 2:8.
(44) Jas. 2:8-11. (45) Gal. 4:5; Col. 2. (46) sabbath—Gen. 2:1-3; 8:7-12,
etc.; adultery—Gen. 2:24,25 cf. Mt. 19:4-6; murder—Gen. 4:8-13, etc. (47)
Cf. n. 37. (48) Cf. n 44. (49) Ex. 31:13,14. (50) Ex. 35:3. (51) Ex. 31:13,
14. (52) Num. 15:32. (53) Lev. 23. (54) Lev. 25. (55) Eph. 6:1-4.

Part V. The Sabbath in the Week

In respect of the sabbath commandment, we see that its *form* in Ex. 20:8-11 (with creation motive)

differs considerably from its *form* in Deut. 5:12-15 (with redemption motive). However, the *content*, which is absolutely normative, is the same in both cases, viz., to put aside our daily task every seventh day and to rest, so that we can sanctify the sabbath. The commandment thus regulates the relationship between labour and rest. Hence it automatically joins up with the labour (56) and the rest (57) of man before the fall, as the creation motive in the Exodus decalogue would also imply (58). But it also applies to the labour and rest of man after Christ's redemption from the fall (59), as the redemption motive in the Deuteronomy decalogue would also indicate (60). Neither the form nor the content of the sabbath commandment, however, gives any indication whatsoever of *which* day of the week is to be the day of rest. The sabbath commandment merely establishes that the seventh day *in relation to* six days of labour (and *not*: "the seventh day of the week"!) is the sabbath of the Lord (61). Nowhere in the sabbath commandment does God appoint *specifically* Saturday as the sabbath.

As to *which* day of the week is the sabbath at a specific point in time cannot be established by the 4th commandment as such, but only by other factors.

Before the fall we know that God's creation sabbath began on the seventh day of His creation week, but as opposed to the aforesaid Divine working days, the termination thereof is not mentioned, and it endures right through into N. T. times (62). As regards unfallen man's first sabbath, we only know that it fell on the *first* day of the week(s) of his life, and hence resembled our first-day Sunday rest (63).

After the fall but before the redemption in Christ after man had in principle lost his life as a present possession, he also lost the day of rest on the first day of the weeks of his life (64). Man's hope of life was now delayed until the coming of the Messiah, Who brought the unlosable eternal life (65). With this delay in the granting of eternal life as a result of the fall, the weekly sabbath as the commemorative day of that eternal life and that eternal rest (66) was also delayed until the end of the week (67).

After the Second Adam's (Christ's) resurrection the

first day of the week (in commemoration of His resurrection) has again become the day of rest (68), and so it shall remain until His Second Coming at the end of the world.

Hence, throughout the Bible, from the beginning unto the end of the world, the day of rest has been kept. In the state of rectitude, it was the first day of man's week(s); thereafter, up to the crucifixion of Christ, the last day of the week; and finally, after the resurrection of Christ from the dead as the Second Adam, as man in our stead, the day of rest is once more the first day of the week. *In order to cover all three of these periods of time*, the fourth commandment merely stipulates the celebration of the sabbath day every seventh day, *without mentioning* which day of the week, viz., the first or the last, is to be the weekly day of rest, which must then be determined for the periods concerned from other data in the Scriptures.

The change of the weekly sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday is rich in meaning. Previously the people of God expected their salvation after the fall at the *end* of the age; hence they expected the weekly sabbath day as the sign thereof at the *end* of the week. But now, after the arrival of salvation with the advent of Christ and His resurrection at the *beginning* of the New Testament, the weekly sabbath as sign thereof is henceforth celebrated at the *beginning* of the (N.T.) week(s).

But there is also *continuity* in the series of weeks. On the change of the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday, the relationship "six days of labour to one of rest" has been preserved. The weeks, previously demarcated by a holy termination day of the week, swing round the resurrection of Christ, as the hinge of history as it were, and, never broken, they are henceforth demarcated by a holy commencement day of the week (67). On the arrival of that last Saturday sabbath, Christ died—and the Saturday sabbath died with Him (69). On termination of that last Saturday sabbath, "in the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week" (70), the Sun of righteousness made all things new on that first Sunday of His righteousness. The risen Christ, the

Lord of the Sabbath, then sanctified Sunday as the day of the Lord, as the new miniature picture of His entry into His rest as the Second Adam (63). Sunday, the day of the Lord, henceforth witnesses that God's "great" Sabbath, God's Eighth Day, *the Day of the Lord*, the Day of His Second Coming with the eternal rest for His children, has in principle commenced with His resurrection. Hence Sunday has become a day of rest, because week by week it testifies that eternal rest has already in principle been obtained for man by Christ. For this reason, after the resurrection of Christ, Sunday became from the very beginning—albeit with ever-increasing consciousness—a *dedicated* day for the discussion of Biblical subjects, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for the holding of holy gatherings, and for spiritual refreshment (68), *all of which clearly imply a laying aside of common labour*. Nowhere in the New Testament is Sunday described as a day of common labour, but everywhere only as a day of exceptional fruitfulness in the things of the Lord. The inherent necessity of weekly physical rest is automatically transferred to Sunday (63), and Sunday automatically links up with the Edenic day of rest (71).

It is true that *Sunday*, although a day of rest (67), is nowhere called the "Sabbath" as such, although, however, as "the first (day) of the week" it is *literally* called: "the first of the (N.T.) sabbaths" (72), which indeed it is. Yet the expression "the sabbath" as such is only used to describe the Mosaic sabbath. Although the sabbath itself is pre-Mosaic, it was however connected with the Mosaic legislation for such a long time that the expression "sabbath", even after the fulfilment and abolition of that legislation on Calvary, is still used *in the New Testament* with the meaning of specifically the Mosaic sabbath, the Jewish sabbath.

As a compulsory ordinance for the New Testament Christian, the *Saturday* sabbath falls away in the New Testament after Calvary, Col. 2:16; Rom. 14:5-13; Gal. 4:10,11. These texts do *not*, however, refer to Sunday for nowhere in the New Testament is Sunday described as a (Saturday) sabbath; and from Acts 20:6,7 and 1 Cor. 16:1,2, etc., it is clear that *Sunday* observance

has not fallen away, and that it is therefore not in question in connection with the "sabbath texts", Gal. 4:10, Rom. 14:5,6, and Col. 2:16. Hence the *Mosaic* sabbath, the Saturday day of rest, has disappeared after Calvary. At Calvary Christ rested in His death on the last (Saturday) sabbath, *that* sabbath died with Him, and, as the Second Adam, He now rests eternally in His finished work. Hence the last Saturday sabbath was swallowed up by and through the victory of His Sunday resurrection, "when the sabbath was past" (73)—past for ever! In this way the Sunday day of rest reaches back over the head of the *Mosaic* sabbath, and links up with the Edenic day of rest, the first day of the week(s) of Adam's life before the fall (4). Sometimes the Christians evangelized the Jews at the Saturday-sabbath meetings of the latter (74)—just as the present-day Seventh-day Adventists have no objection against publicly addressing Sunday-keepers on Sunday!—but according to the New Testament, the Christians gathered for their regular weekly worship on Sunday, and on Sunday alone. Sunday—and Sunday alone—is the weekly day of the Lord and the day of the church of the Lord. The text Matt. 24:20,21 does not (as some Adventists think) deal with the Christian's obligation to keep the Saturday-sabbath at least until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.—just as little as it deals with a *prohibition* against escaping during the winter!—but the text deals with the *difficulty* of the Christians escaping during the hampering winter weather, as well as with the difficulty of their escaping from the Jewish-controlled Jerusalem on the Jews' Saturday-sabbath—probably because the city gates which the Jews shut on Saturday-sabbaths to prevent commerce as in Nehemiah's day (75), would hamper the escape of the Christians from the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Textual References

(56) Gen. 2:15. (57) Gen. 1:27,28; 2:1-3 cf. Mk. 2:28. (58) Ex. 20:8-11, cf. Gen. 2:1-3. (59) Cf. n. 4. (60) Deut. 5:15. (61) Ex. 20:9,10. (62) Cf. n. 3 & 9. (63) Luke 24:1,5,26 & n. 18. (64) Gen. 1:26-2:3; 4:3. (65) Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4; John 11:25. (66) Heb. 4:4-11. (67) Mk. 16:1,2; Luk. 23:56; 24:1; Gen. 4:3 cf. Ex. 20:8-11. (68) Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1,9; Luk. 24:1,13, 26-46; John 20:1,19,26; Acts 2:1ff cf. Lev. 23:15-21; Acts 20:6, 7:1 Cor. 16:1,2; Rev. 1:10 & n. 15. (69) John 19:31; Luk. 23:54. (70) Mt. 28:1. (71) n. 9, 67. (72) Luke 24:1Gk. (73) Mk. 16:1. (74) Acts 13:44; 16:13; 17:2. (75) Neh. 13:19.

Part VI. The Eighth Day

The Seventh Day of God's creation week will continue until the end of this creation (9), because it represents His rest from creation, His restful delight in His creation, His rest from further creative work. However, with the termination of the development of creation, there will be a break-through of the *new* creation, of eternal life, of the Day of the Lord. Then heaven and earth will be united; God will dwell amongst men, and Christ Himself will function as sunlight and moonlight. In this *new* creation, the creative God will fashion His creation anew with a further step of formation after the termination of His Seventh Day of rest of this present creation. In other words, His Seventh Day will yield to the Day of the Lord, to God's Eighth Day, His eternal Day—the complete sabbath rest which remains for the people of God (76).

By way of obedience the fallible yet unfallen and hence always living Adam—"posse non mori"—would have entered the eternal rest alongside of God at the end of the time of his probation. In this way he would have partaken of the unlosable eternal life—"non posse mori". Thereupon the entire earthly order (which was prepared for man so that he may enter into eternal life) would have entered into eternal life—sun and moon would no longer have been necessary, for night would have vanished, etc.—in other words, the entire *creation* would have developed a step further. Man and the rest of creation would have entered into the sabbath rest of God alongside of Him—but in this way the necessity of the weekly (solar) sabbath would have disappeared together with the necessity of the daily sun. In this way the eternal Day, the Day of the Lord, God's Eighth Day, the unlosable eternal sabbath would have arrived.

[Author's Note:—There are very few details given in the Scriptures as to what would have happened if the Fall had not occurred. The view propounded in the above paragraph is, of course, the personal opinion of the writer, which he considers to be a legitimate development of the views of John Kelman (a), Abraham Kuyper (b), Herman Bavinck (c), Karl Barth (d), Okke Jager (e), etc.

(a) "The Sabbath of Scripture", Elliot, Edinburgh, 1870, pp. 7-14, 194-8.

- (b) "Gomer voor den Sabbath", Wormser, Amsterdam, 1889, pp. 35-8. (cf. his: "Tractaat van den Sabbath", and his: "De Leer der Verbonden".)
- (c) "Handleiding bij het Onderwijs in den Christelijke Godsdienst", Kok, Kampen, 1932, pp. 95-7 (cf. his: "Magnalia Dei", Kok, Kampen, 1909, pp. 235-7, 644-6.)
- (d) "Church Dogmatics" (Jas. Clarke, Edinburgh, 1958 F.F.), Vol. III—Part I, pp. 98 f., 213 ff.,
221 ff.;
—Part II, p. 456 f.;
—Part IV, pp. 50 ff., 378.
- (e) "Het eeuwige leven", Kok, Kampen, 1962, pp. 569, 575.]

Adam failed. Man did not enter into the sabbath rest alongside of God. God's Eighth Day could not therefore arrive. But nevertheless the Day of the Lord, God's Eighth Day, although it will only be realized *eschatologically* at the end of the world, has however already dawned in *principle* at the time of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. For when the Son of God also became the Son of man, i.e., the Son of Adam, He completed His time of probation on earth as the Second Adam without sinning, hence entering into the eternal sabbath rest alongside of God as man, *on behalf* of man, and *for* man (76). In this way He restored fallen mankind and the whole creation from the fall—nay more. He *perfected* them (77). In principle the *sun* disappeared at His victory on Calvary (78) and acknowledged Him at His resurrection, acknowledged Him as *THE* sun, the Sun of righteousness (79), the Eternal Light (80) Who will one day illuminate the heavenly city (81). His resurrection is the seal and earnest, the guarantee of the resurrection of all flesh. The day of His resurrection, the day of the Lord, is the guarantee of and signpost to the Day of the resurrection of all flesh, *the Day of the Lord* (82). The day of Christ's resurrection is the first of the last days (83) which point to and culminate in *the Last Day*. The day of Christ's resurrection, the eighth day of the week, is the sign and miniature picture of *the resurrection day*, of God's Eighth Day.

But God's Eighth Day only began *in principle* with Christ's resurrection on the eighth day of the week. *In reality* God's Seventh Day, co-extensive with the duration of creation itself (9), will last until the Eighth Day of the Lord arrives *in reality* at the end of the

world. But God's Eighth Day has nevertheless already arrived *in principle*, and God's Seventh Day is progressively dying out while His Eighth Day is progressively growing stronger. At the moment they overlap one another, and whereas God's Seventh Day is now overshadowed by His Eighth Day, so too is the weekly miniature picture of His Seventh Day now overshadowed by the weekly miniature picture of His Eighth Day. Hence the seventh-day Saturday-sabbath is now overshadowed by the eighth-day Sunday day of rest, the day of the Lord's resurrection, the Lord's day. Hence Sunday, the eighth day of the week (i.e., the first day of the *New week*, the N.T. week!) has now become the weekly day of rest. The Sunday-day-of-rest was born while the Saturday-sabbath died.

Hence we read (84) that Christ, the Sun of righteousness was resurrected on Sunday, on which day He appeared to His congregated church; that eight days later, i.e., on the following Sunday, He again appeared to His congregated church; that, after His ascension, He gave His Spirit to His congregated church on Pentecostal Sunday; that He caused His Holy Supper to be celebrated in His congregated church on Sunday; that He caused contributions to be made every Sunday in His congregated church at Corinth and in all His congregated churches throughout Galatia; and that He Himself appeared on Sunday, the Lord's Day, to His messenger John in order to transmit the seven letters to His congregated churches in Asia Minor. In short, the weekly Sunday became the weekly sabbath day—the day of the congregation of the Church in order to worship her God in a restful manner (85).

Textual References

(76) Cf. n. 3 & 9. (77) Col. 1:20. (78) Mt. 27:45. (79) Mal. 4:2. (80) John 8:12; 1:1 ff. (81) Rev. 21:23. (82) Rev. 6:17. (83) Heb. 1:1; Mal. 3:1,2,17 — 4:5. (84) Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1,9; Luk. 24:1,13,26-46; John 20:1,19,26; Acts 2:1ff cf. Lev. 23:15-21; Acts 20:6,7; 1 Cor. 16:1,2; Rev. 1:10 & n. 15. (85) We use the term "Sunday" in order to clarify our meaning in accordance with modern terminology. This name for the first day of the week was, of course, used, in New Testament times, only by the heathen—*dies solis*—Christians using the more appropriate *dies dominicum*. Ed.

Part VII. Manner of Observance

The *spirit* in which the 4th commandment is to be kept, is very important. The commandment does not require the laying aside of daily work for the sake of

idleness, but merely so that the sabbath day can thereby be dedicated to God and to His service without being hampered. We sanctify the sabbath *not* by simply resting from all work thereon, but we rest from our daily work precisely so that we may sanctify the sabbath by serving God *actively*. In short, the sabbath rest—taking into account our own *physical need* of rest—exists only for the sake of sanctifying the sabbath, and not vice-versa.

However, the Lord's sabbath day is to be kept holy, and never to be desecrated. Each must decide for himself what may and may not be done on God's holy day, but *he himself* must refrain from even legitimate but uncommanded pursuits (such as swimming at the beach, wearing unbecoming clothes, etc.) which may cause his weaker *brother* to stumble, and so cause the latter to desecrate the sabbath. All *trading* (such as buying petrol even in order to travel to Church, purchasing Sunday—and reading Saturday!—newspapers, patronizing cafés and public swimming baths on Sunday—thus forcing the poor petrol-pump attendant, newspaper vendor, waiter or swimming bath ticket seller respectively to sacrifice their essential sabbath rest for our own non-essential sabbath-desecrating convenience), should be firmly avoided. Even many worthwhile activities recommendable on other days of the week (such as visiting friends for purely social reasons, secular picnics and reading educational though non-religious books and magazines) should not be indulged in on the Lord's Day, cf. Isa. 58:13,14. After all, it is the *Lord's* day, not ours! It is *His* day, and must be kept *holy*. Like St. John the divine, we too should be in the *Spirit* on the Lord's day, and not in the flesh!

On the other hand, one must beware of imitating the Pharisees, who were of the opinion that man had been made for the sake of the sabbath and the sabbath *rest*. Our Lord had to show them by His example that the sabbath and its *sanctification* were made for the sake of *man*, not vice-versa, and that works of *mercy* (e.g., healing (86)) and *necessity* (e.g., warfare and temple service (87)) were not only no transgression of the 4th commandment, but are in fact *required* thereby (88)! The statement by some antinomians,

that Christ in so doing *broke* the sabbath, is thus not only blasphemous, but is also in conflict with what the antinomians themselves teach, viz. that Christ perfectly kept and fulfilled the entire law: for if Christ broke the sabbath *commandment*, then it is clear that He did not keep the *whole* law! If however the antinomians (correctly!) maintain that Christ perfectly kept the entire law, as indeed He did, then they are thereby logically pressed to admit that *His* sabbath doctrine and sabbath practice completely agrees with that demanded by the 4th commandment!

Textual References

(86) Mk. 3:4. (87) Josh. 6:2-4; Mt. 12:5. (88) Mk. 2:25-28; John 5:15-17.

Part VIII. The Sabbath and the State

At the end of Part V above, reference was made to Nehemiah xiii, where the city gates of Jerusalem were shut on the sabbath day to prevent commerce. This brings us to the duty of the government in connection with *Sunday* legislation in the New Testament dispensation. The question as to what extent the governmental data of the Mosaic period are applicable here is indeed difficult—for the death penalty for sabbath transgression, e.g., has clearly been fulfilled and abolished in the death of Christ (89), of which it was a foreshadowing (90). Nevertheless it must be pointed out that government as such was instituted in principle long before the Mosaic period, viz., just after the flood (91), during which the *whole* of saved humanity apparently kept the sabbath under Noah's patriarchal government inside the ark (20). For this reason we are of the opinion that the primeval patriarchal government enforced the sabbath commandment to the honour of God, and that the government must do so even today. In the Christian state (cf. the Christian preamble to the constitution of the Republic of South Africa), and especially in those Christian states which are also democratic, the Christian government and/or the Christian voters must do all in their power to sanctify the day of rest even in public life (closing swimming pools, theatres and picture-houses, etc.), though taking into account works of necessity (such as police work) and mercy (such as hospital work) which have to be

performed on that day. No false tolerance or liberalism discharges them of their duty towards Almighty God in terms of the fourth commandment! In a non-Christian democracy (cf. India), as a minority group, the Christian voters and politicians must do all in their power to christianize the law of their land in an anti-revolutionary manner (92). In a non-Christian non-democratic state (cf. an oligarchy or a Nazi or Communist tyranny), the Christians must do their best to sanctify the sabbath themselves and witness to others, and abide their time until God uses non-Christian instruments to bring about the downfall of that government and the institution of a new one; and in this way God will give the Christians a greater say in public life.

Textual References

(89) Col. 2:16. (90) Heb. 10:1,9,14. (91) Gen. 9:5,6. (92) Rom.13ff.

Part IX. The Sabbath: Prophetic; Eschatological

The alteration of the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday is *prophesied* in the Old Testament. Whereas Adam kept the first day of his life as a sabbath before the fall (93), it is to be expected that this supralapsarian usage of the "Sunday" sabbath would be restored to man after his redemption from the fall by Jesus Christ.

We probably have a symbolic reference to the resurrection of Christ in the *eighth* day after birth on which circumcision was administered to little children as the sign of a cleansed life (94).

From the particulars of Leviticus 23, a considerable amount of fore-shadowings of the New Testament "Sunday" emerge from the great festive days. The feast of Pentecost or Shavuoth, for example, had to be held on "the morrow after the seventh sabbath", thus on a first day of the week (95), a day on which "no manner of work" was to be done (96). It was precisely on such a first day of the week, on Pentecostal "Sunday"—that the Christian Church was born centuries later (97). Other references to the celebration of a first, eighth or fifteenth day (in contradistinc-

tion to a seventh or fourteenth day) as a day of rest on which no manner of work was to be done, are found in the feast of trumpets (98), twice in the feast of tabernacles (99) and also in the 15th of the month Nisan, the day after the feast of the Passover held on the 14th Nisan (100)—cf. the day of the last, the Calvary, Passover (101)!

In the Messianic Psalm 118, reference is made to the stone which the builders cast out—which has become the head stone of the corner, and which is the Lord's doing—and *the day which the Lord hath made*, concerning which we are to rejoice and be glad in it (102). Whereas this reference is cited in Acts 4:10,11 in connection with the death and resurrection of Christ, the conclusion is clear, viz., that this day which the Lord hath made, is the resurrection day of Christ, the first day of the week.

There is probably also an indirect reference to Sunday as the N.T. day of rest in chapter four of Hebrews. After he has referred to the creation works and the continuous seventh-day creation rest in verses 3 and 4, the writer mentions that God has appointed again a *certain day* (103), *another day* on which the people of God are to enter into the *remaining sabbath* rest (Authorized Version, margin: “*a keeping of the sabbath*”), “*for he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his*” (104). From other New Testament texts (68) we know that it was precisely on the first day of the week (our Sunday) that the people of God entered into that sabbath rest (in Christ) week by week—either for the first time or by way of renewal.

The Old Testament also prophesies that *Israel's sabbaths* will cease on the one hand (105), but that *all nations* will celebrate the sabbath in the last days on the other hand (106)—and the last days (and hence the universal sabbath too) began with the first advent of Christ (107), Who as Lord of the Sabbath appointed “*Sunday*” as the Lord's Day (108) and hence also as the miniature picture of *the Last Day, the Day of the Lord*.

The mention of the Last Day brings us to a consider-

ation of the future state in heaven and the eternal life on the new earth. As far as the former is concerned, after completion of his earthly work, the believer enters into the eternal rest alongside of God (9). Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, that they may rest from their *labours* (109).

However, their *works* do *follow them* (110). At the end of the age, on the termination of God's seventh day of creation, Jesus Christ the Lord of the sabbath will come again to earth to transform His creation and to reward every one according to his *works*. Then the eternal Day of the Lord will really begin, God's Eighth Day, the Day of the resurrection of all flesh which has previously been prophesied and sealed by the day of the resurrection of Christ-according-to-the-flesh. Then the present labouring world with all its raw materials, its culture and its science will enter into *its* eternal sabbath, the morning of the eternal Divine Day, through the consummation. Indeed, everything in heaven above and on earth below which was reconciled at Calvary (111), will then be regenerated as the new heaven and the new earth by that Christ Who was Himself—as man—“regenerated” on Easter “Sunday”. Many of the differences in creation which God pronounced as “very good” in His great seventh-day rest from creation, will then be harmonized, integrated or transformed—sun and moon, winter and summer, day and night, working day and day of rest (112).

The Triune God Who was energetically at rest before time began, will then have consummated His eternal counsel through creation and re-creation in the times of the restitution of all things, Acts 3:21. Thenceforth He will rest dynamically unto all eternity—rest in His Intratrinitarian, Interpersonal and Autopersonal (1) counsel, just as He did before creation, except that He will then also rest in His consummated creation and re-creation. Christ, the Lord of the sabbath, will then be all, and in all (113). Thenceforth God will be praised, served and enjoyed without cessation (114)—without labour, without rest; in restful activity and in active rest.

Come, Lord of the sabbath, come with Thy eternal

day and Thy eternal sabbath! Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus (115)!

Textual References

(93) Gen. 1:26-2:3. (94) Gen. 17:12f; Col. 2:11,12. (95) Lev. 23:15,16. (96) Lev. 23:21. (97) Acts 2:1-4. (98) Lev. 23:24. (99) Lev. 23:34-40. (100) Ex. 12:16,29,41. (101) 1 Cor. 5:7,8; 11:20, cf. Acts 20:6,7; John 18:28; 19:31; 20:1. (102) Ps. 118:22-24. (103) Heb. 4:7. (104) Heb. 4:7-10. (105) Hos. 2:11; 6:1-3 cf.; Ezek. 43:27 and Col. 2:12-17. (106) Isa. 56:2-7; 66:22,23; Mk. 11:17. (107) Heb. 1:1. (108) Rev. 1:10. (109) Rev. 14:13a. (110) Rev. 14:13b. (111) Col. 1:20. (112) Rev. 21:23; 7:16, cf.; Gen. 8:22; 1:14-18; Rev. 21:25; 22:5; 4:8; 22:3b,5; Heb. 4:8-11,14. (113) Col. 3:11. (114) Rev. 4:8-11. (115) Rev. 22:20.

For a full exposition of the Scriptural doctrine of the Sabbath, the reader is recommended to obtain

"THE COVENANT SABBATH"

by Dr. Lee (343pp., £2, from
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