

THE CHANGE OF THE SABBATH

1. OF what is the Sabbath commandment a part?

The law of God. See **Exodus 20:8–11**.

2. What, according to prophecy, was to be Christ's attitude toward the law?

"The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; *He will magnify the law, and make it honorable.*" **Isaiah 42:21**.

3. In His first recorded discourse, what did Christ say of the law?

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." **Matthew 5:17**.

4. How enduring did He say the law is?

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." **Verse 18**.

5. What did He say of those who should break one of the least of God's commandments, and teach men so to do?

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, *he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.*" **Verse 19**.

NOTE — From this it is evident that the entire code of ten commandments is binding in the Christian dispensation, and that Christ had no thought of changing any of them. One of these commands the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath. But the practice of most Christians is different; they keep the first day of the week instead, many of them believing that Christ changed the Sabbath. But, from His own words, we see that He came for no such purpose. The responsibility for this change must therefore be looked for elsewhere.

6. What did God, through the prophet Daniel, say the power represented by the "little horn" would think to do?

"And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High: and *he shall think to change the times and the law.*" **Daniel 7:25**, R.V.

NOTE — For a full explanation of this symbol, see studies on “The Kingdom and Work of Antichrist” and “The Vicar of Christ.”

7. What did the apostle Paul say the “man of sin” would do?

“For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; *who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.*” **2Thessalonians 2:3, 4.**

NOTE — There is only one way by which any power could exalt itself above God, and that is by assuming to change the law of God, and to require obedience to its own law instead of God’s law.

8. What power has claimed authority to change the law of God?

The Papacy.

9. What part of the law of God especially has the Papacy thought to change?

The fourth commandment.

NOTES — “They [the Catholics] allege the Sabbath changed into Sunday, the Lord’s day, contrary to the Decalogue, as it appears; neither is there any example more boasted of than the changing of the Sabbath day. Great, say they, is the power and authority of the church, since it dispensed with one of the ten commandments.” *Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII.*

“It [the Roman Catholic Church] has reversed the fourth commandment, doing away with the Sabbath of God’s Word, and instituting Sunday as a holy day.” *N. Summerbell, in “History of the Christians,” page 418.*

10. Why did God command Israel to hallow the Sabbath?

“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.**

NOTE — As the Sabbath was given that man might keep God in mind as Creator, it can be readily seen that a power endeavoring to exalt itself above God would first try to cover up or remove that which calls man’s special attention to his

Creator. This could be done in no other way so effectually as by setting aside God's memorial—the seventh-day Sabbath. To this work of the Papacy Daniel had reference when he said, "And he shall . . . think to change *times and laws*." **Daniel 7:25.**

11. Does the Papacy acknowledge that it has changed the Sabbath?

It does.

NOTE — "*Question*.— How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days?

Answer.— By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of and therefore they fondly contradict themselves by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feast days commanded by the same church." "*Abridgment of Christian Doctrine*," by Rev. Henry Tuberville, D. D., of Douay College, France (1649), page 58.

"*Ques*.— Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?

"*Ans*.— Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her,— she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority." "*A Doctrinal Catechism*," by Rev. Stephen Keenan, page 174.

"The Catholic Church of its own infallible authority created Sunday a holy day to take the place of the Sabbath of the old law." *Kansas City Catholic*, Feb. 9, 1893.

"The Catholic Church, . . . by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday." *Catholic Mirror*, official organ of Cardinal Gibbons, Sept. 23, 1893.

"*Ques*.— Which is the Sabbath day?

"*Ans*.— Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"*Ques*.— Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"*Ans*.— We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." "*The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*," by Rev. Peter Geiermann, C. SS. R., page 50, third edition, 1913, a work

which received the “apostolic blessing” of Pope Pius X, Jan. 25, 1910.

What was done at the Council of Laodicea was but one of the steps by which the change of the Sabbath was effected. See under questions 17–21. The date usually given for this council is 364 A.D.

12. Do Catholic authorities acknowledge that there is no command in the Bible for the sanctification of Sunday?

They do.

NOTE — “YOU may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify.” *Cardinal Gibbons, in “The Faith of Our Fathers,” edition 1892, page 111.*

“Sunday is a Catholic institution, and its claims to observance can be defended only on Catholic principles. . . . From beginning to end of Scripture there is not a single passage that warrants the transfer of weekly public worship from the last day of the week to the first.” *Catholic Press (Sydney, Australia), Aug. 25, 1900.*

13. Do Protestant writers acknowledge the same?

They do.

NOTE — “Is there no express commandment for observing the first day of the week as Sabbath, instead of the seventh day?—None whatever. Neither Christ, nor His apostles, nor the first Christians celebrated the first day of the week instead of the seventh as the Sabbath.” *New York Weekly Tribune, May 24, 1900.*

“The Scriptures nowhere call the first day of the week the Sabbath. . . . There is no Scriptural authority for so doing, nor of course any Scriptural obligation.” *The Watchman (Baptist).*

“The observance of the first instead of the seventh day rests on the testimony of the church, and the church alone.” *Hobart Church News (Episcopalian), July 2, 1894.*

For additional testimonies, see study on “The Lord’s Day.”

14. How did this change in observance of days come about, suddenly or gradually?

Gradually.

NOTES — “The Christian church made no formal, but a gradual and almost unconscious transference of the one day to the other.” *“The Voice From Sinai,”* by Archdeacon F. W. Farrar, page 167.

This of itself is evidence that there was no divine command for the change of the Sabbath.

15. For how long a time was the seventh-day Sabbath observed in the Christian church?

For many centuries. In fact, its observance has never wholly ceased in the Christian church.

NOTES — Mr. Morer, a learned clergyman of the Church of England, says: “The primitive Christians had a great veneration for the Sabbath, and spent the day in devotion and sermons. And it is not to be doubted that they derived this practice from the apostles themselves.” *“Dialogues on the Lord’s Day,”* page 189.

Prof. E. Brerwood, of Gresham College, London (Episcopal), says: “The Sabbath was religiously observed in the Eastern church three hundred years and more after our Saviour’s passion.” *“Learned Treatise of the Sabbath,”* page 77.

Lyman Coleman, a careful and candid historian, says: “Down even to the fifth century the observance of the Jewish Sabbath was continued in the Christian church, but with a rigor and solemnity gradually diminishing until it was wholly discontinued.” *“Ancient Christianity Exemplified,”* chap. 26, sec. 2.

The historian Socrates, who wrote about the middle of the fifth century, says: “Almost all the churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account

of some ancient tradition, refuse to do this.” *“Ecclesiastical History,”* book 5, chap. 22.

Sozomen, another historian of the same period, writes: “The people of Constantinople, and of several other cities, assemble together on the Sabbath as well as on the next day; which custom is never observed at Rome.” *“Ecclesiastical History,”* book 7, chap. 19.

All this would have been inconceivable and impossible had there been a divine command given for the change of the Sabbath. The last two quotations also show that Rome led in the apostasy and in the change of the Sabbath.

16. What striking testimony is borne by Neander, the noted church historian, regarding the origin of the Sunday sabbath?

“Opposition to Judaism introduced the particular festival of Sunday very early, indeed, into the place of the Sabbath. . . . The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday. Perhaps at the end of the second century a false application of this kind had begun to take place; for men appear by that time to have considered laboring on Sunday as a sin.” *Neander’s “Church History,”* Rose’s translation, page 186.

17. Who first enjoined Sunday-keeping by law?

Constantine the Great.

NOTES — “The earliest recognition of the observance of Sunday as a legal duty is a constitution of Constantine in 321 A.D., enacting that all courts of justice, inhabitants of towns, and workshops were to be at rest on Sunday (*venerabili die Solis*), with an exception in favor of those engaged in agricultural labor.” *Encyclopedia Britannica, ninth edition, article “Sunday.”*

“Constantine the Great made a law for the whole empire (321 A.D.) that Sunday should be kept as a day of rest in all

cities and towns; but he allowed the country people to follow their work." *Encyclopedia Americana*, article "Sabbath."

"Unquestionably the first law, either ecclesiastical or civil, by which the Sabbatical observance of that day is known to have been ordained, is the edict of Constantine, 321 A.D." *Chambers's Encyclopedia*, article "Sabbath."

18. What did Constantine's law require?

"Let all the judges and town people, and the occupation of all trades rest on the venerable day of the sun; but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty, attend to the business of agriculture; because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines; lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted by heaven." *Edict of March 7, 321 A.D., Corpus Juris Civilis Cod., lib. 3, tit. 12, 3.*

NOTE — This edict, issued by Constantine, under whom the Christian church and the Roman state were first united, in a manner supplied the lack of a divine command for Sunday observance, and may be considered the original Sunday law, and the model after which all Sunday laws since then have been patterned. It was one of the important steps in bringing about and establishing the change of the Sabbath.

19. What testimony does Eusebius (270–338), a noted bishop of the church, a flatterer of Constantine, and the reputed father of ecclesiastical history, bear upon this subject?

"All things whatsoever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's day." "Commentary on the Psalms," Cox's "Sabbath Literature," Vol. I, page 361.

NOTE — The change of the Sabbath was the result of the combined efforts of church and state, and it was centuries before it was fully accomplished.

20. When and by what church council was the observance of the seventh day forbidden, and Sunday observance enjoined?

"The seventh-day Sabbath was . . . solemnized by Christ, the apostles, and primitive Christians, till *the Laodicean Council* did, in a manner, quite abolish the observation of it., . . .The Council of

Laodicea [A.D. 364] . . . first settled the observation of the Lord's day." Prynne's *"Dissertation on the Lord's Day Sabbath,"* page 163.

21. What did this council, in its twenty-ninth canon, decree concerning the Sabbath and Christians who continued to observe it?

"Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday [Sabbath], but shall work on that day. . . . If, however, they are found Judaizing, *they shall be shut out from Christ.*" Hefele's *"History of the Councils of the Church,"* Vol. II, page 316.

NOTES — Some of the further steps taken by church and state authorities in bringing about this change may be noted as follows:—

"In 386, under Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius, it was decreed that all litigation and business should cease [on Sunday]. . . .

"Among the doctrines laid down in a letter of Pope Innocent I, written in the last year of his papacy (416), is that Saturday should be observed as a fast-day. . . .

"In 425, under Theodosius the Younger, abstinence from theatricals and the circus [on Sunday] was enjoined. . . .

"In 538, at a council at Orleans, . . . it was ordained that everything previously permitted on Sunday should still be lawful; but that work at the plow, or in the vineyard, and cutting, reaping, threshing, tilling, and hedging should be abstained from, that people might more conveniently attend church.

"About 590 Pope Gregory, in a letter to the Roman people, denounced as the prophets of Antichrist those who maintained that work ought not to be done on the seventh day." *"Law of Sunday,"* by James T. Ringgold, pages 265–267.

The last paragraph of the foregoing quotation indicates that even as late as 590 A.D. there were those in the church who observed and who taught the observance of the Bible Sabbath, the seventh day.

22. What determines whose servants we are?

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, *his servants ye are to whom ye obey?*” **Romans 6:16.**

23. When tempted to bow down and worship Satan, what reply did Christ make?

“*Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.*” **Matthew 4:10, 11.**

24. What do Catholics say of the observance of Sunday by Protestants?

“It was the Catholic Church which, by the authority of Jesus Christ, has transferred this rest to the Sunday in remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord. Thus *the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Catholic] church.*” “*Plain Talk About the Protestantism of Today,*” by Mgr. Segur, page 213.

25. What kind of worship does the Saviour call that which is not according to God’s commandments?

“*But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*” **Matthew 15:9.**

26. When Israel had apostatized, and were almost universally worshiping Baal, what appeal did Elijah make to them?

“How long halt ye between two opinions? *if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.*” **1Kings 18:21.**

NOTE — In times of ignorance God winks at that which otherwise would be sin; but when light comes He commands men everywhere to repent. **Acts 17:30.** The period during which the saints, times, and the law of God were to be in the hands of the Papacy has expired (**Daniel 7:25**); the true light on the Sabbath question is now shining; and God is sending a message to the world, calling upon men to fear and worship Him, and to return to the observance of His holy rest day, the seventh-day Sabbath. **Revelation 14:6–12; Isaiah 56:1; 58:1, 12–14.** See studies on: “The Closing Gospel Message;” “The Seal of God and the Mark of Apostasy;” “Sabbath Reform;” and “Walking In The Light.”

WHO is on the Lord's side
Always true?
There's a right and wrong side,
Where stand you?
Thousands on the wrong side
Choose to stand,
Still 'tis not the strong side,
True and grand.
Come and join the Lord's side:
Ask you why?—
'Tis the only safe side
By, and by.

F. E. BELDEN.