

THE SABBATH WAS A SHADOW

A. S. Copley

We hereby add some helpful words to the above testimony. A sister sent us a paper called "Present Truth." We answered her saying, "That paper which you sent us does not show the Truth; otherwise, it would not mix law with grace. Why do you try to keep a shadow, the sabbath, since the living Substance, Christ, has come to keep you?" To my answer, she made the following reply.

"No one is saved, or ever was saved, by keeping the commandments. That was not God's plan. We are saved by grace. We are saved because Jesus died for us. We cannot save ourselves. But, if we love God, we will love His Word. We will love His commandments. We will keep His commandments, and they will not be grievous to us. I am tired of hearing the professing children of God talk about the commandments of God being a yoke, a bondage. Any transgression of the law is sin. It is sin that burdens us - not obedience, but disobedience. We should believe what God says - "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" - Exodus 20:8. The sabbath day is from sundown Friday evening to sundown Saturday evening."

No doubt, the lady was sincere in writing the above, as others also are; but, many people are sincerely wrong, because they are woefully ignorant. The commandments of Jesus and those given by the apostles have no reference to the ten commandments which Moses gave to Israel. Therefore, the exhortation to "remember the sabbath day to keep it holy" is not addressed to the Church. The sabbath day is classed with the shadows, which had their fulfillment in Christ. Hence, Paul says, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" - Col. 2:16, 17. He also terms these ordinances, "weak and beggarly elements" or "rudiments" - Gal. 4:9-11; Col. 2:20. He inquires of the Galatians, why they turn back to them and desire to be in bondage to them. If Christ died for us and we died with Him and we were raised with Him to walk in newness of life, why turn back and be subject to shadows? Why turn away from the Substance, Christ, and expect any help or comfort from a shadowy ordinance?

SABBATH-KEEPING IS WEAKNESS

In tender compassion, the apostle made provision for such as try to keep the sabbath or be subject to ordinances. But he pronounces such saints, "Weak in the faith." Study Romans 14:1-7. Why are they "weak in the faith"? Because either they do not understand the word of grace or, if they do understand, they refuse to accept it. Some people seem to prefer bondage to freedom. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" - Romans 10:17. A heart knowledge of the Word shows us our place in Christ; so that, as we were saved by grace through faith, we also live every day by grace through faith. We "walk in the Spirit," and do "not fulfill the lust of the flesh" - Gal. 5:16. We do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Christ is our Life, our Sabbath, our All. To the Hebrews, Paul said, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" - Hebrews 4:9. "We which have believed do enter into rest, as He said" - Hebrews 4:3. Therefore, instead of enduring an outward shadowy rest one day in the week, we now enjoy seven days of inward rest. We

enjoy seven "sabbath" days every week. Jesus said, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" - Mark 2:27. Likewise, Christ came to give rest or be the true Rest to all who accept Him. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour (to be saved, or keep saved) and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" - Matthew 11:28.

SEVERAL QUESTIONS ANSWERED

How do we know that Saturday is the last day of the week? If it is, why then do we not worship God on the seventh day as He commanded? Did Christ change it? If not, what right have human beings to do so? Did not Peter and Paul worship on the sabbath? Were not the Catholics the first ones to observe Sunday as the day of worship? To these queries, we give the following answers:

First. In the Scriptures, the days were distinguished as the first day of the week, the second day of the week, etc. Only the seventh day had a name. It was called "Sabbath," from the Hebrew "shabbath" meaning "cessation." Since Jesus came, men have named the days after certain planets or heathen gods. Sunday, or day of the sun, is the first day of the week. Monday, named after the moon, is the second. Saturday, named after Saturn one of the major planets, is the seventh. For convenience, Christians have adopted these titles.

Second. The Hebrews called the seventh day of the week the "Sabbath." They were instructed to keep the seventh or sabbath day free from toil - "keep it holy" - as we saw before, in memory of God's natural creative work which He finished on that day - Genesis 2:2; Exodus 20:8-11. He rested from all His work on that day, counting His work "very good." But His resting was typical of a spiritual rest for man - a rest of soul - to be obtained by faith in Jesus Christ. Study Hebrews 4:4-11.

Third. Keeping the sabbath was enjoined on Israel only, and that only until the promised One should come. It was never required to be kept after Jesus came, because He is the believer's Sabbath or Rest. He exclaimed, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour (to be saved, or kept saved) and are heavy laden (with religious rites), and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke (of grace) is easy, and My burden (or load of blessing) is light" - Matthew 11:28-30. Indeed, believers are instructed NOT to observe days and months, etc., which the Holy Spirit terms "weak and beggarly elements," the observance of which is bondage - Gal. 4:9,10. Those were but "a shadow of things to come," which were fulfilled in Christ and unto which we died with Christ - Colossians 2:16-23. Those shadowy ordinances were all nailed to the Cross in Jesus' death for us - Eph. 2:13-15. They who are in bondage to Old Testament rites, as eating and observing days, are called "weak in faith" - Romans 14:1-8. Why are they weak? Because they fail to realize that they are a heavenly, a spiritual people - living by the life of Christ; and not by keeping anything, or doing anything, or not doing anything - Gal. 2:21. Sabbath-keeping and all the shadows under the Old Covenant ended with the coming of Jesus Christ - "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" - Romans 10:4.

Fourth. Christ arose from the grave on the first day of the week, and became the Head of a new creation - Mark 16:9. The Holy Spirit descended exactly fifty days later, on the first day of the week. Compare Leviticus 23:15,16 with Acts 2:1. After Christ's resurrection,

the disciples met on the first day of the week - John 20:19; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2. The only times they went to a place of worship on the seventh day was when they sought opportunity to give the Jews the news that their Messiah had come - Acts 13:14,42; 17:2; 18:4. The women who were accustomed to praying on the sabbath, with whom Paul and Silas met, were Jewish worshipers - Acts 16:13. Their hearts were closed to the New Covenant truth until the apostles came their way. For these various reasons, Christians from the beginning have never worshiped on the seventh day as being different from other days. Of course, the Catholics did not change the day. There were no Catholics until after the fourth century.

Fifth. It is interesting to know that the followers and successors of the apostles and disciples testified that they gathered for worship on the first day of the week, the day on which Christ was raised from the dead. The sabbath, together with the Old Testament ordinances, ceased to be observed. The witness of Justin the Martyr, 140 A.D., is too rich to pass by. Speaking of the Jews, he said, "As their circumcision began with Abraham and the sabbath with Moses, so it was necessary in accordance with the Fathers will that they (circumcision and sabbath-keeping) should end in Him who was born of a virgin. Upon the day called Sunday, all that live in either city or country meet together in the same place. Upon Sunday, we all assemble, that being the first day in which God set Himself to work upon the dark void in order to make the world and in which Jesus Christ our Saviour rose again from the dead."

Sixth. We wish to correct another error here. The first day of the week is not the Christians sabbath, as some teach. Christ is our Sabbath, or Rest, as we noted before - Matthew 11:28-30. Therefore, we enjoy seven days of rest in the week. Neither is the first day of the week "the Lord's day" - Revelation 1:10. That day, called also "the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6; II Thess. 2:2) and "the day of the Lord" (Joel 1:15), means the period of Christ's reign for a thousand years. That will be a Sabbath of great joy to our heavenly Father of which His rest in the beginning was a shadow - Genesis 2:2. He will glory in the Millennial reign of His well-beloved and deserving Son.

Finally. Let us ever bear in mind what is written - "There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God. For he that is entered into His rest hath himself also rested from his works (of keeping sabbaths, and other days, and all religious rites), as God did from His. Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience" as was manifested in the wilderness - Hebrews 4:9-11
Revised Version.