

The Sabbath

By Elder William Purington

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(With Prefatory Comments by Elder Stanley C. Phillips)

[In the third chapter of Galatians the apostle rebukes his brethren sharply, and he begins that chapter by using the severe words, *“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”* In the next chapter he says, *“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.”* In the second chapter of Colossians the inspired judge declares that those ordinances were not only blotted out, but nailed to His cross; and says to his dear brethren, *“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath (days): which are a shadow of things to come; but the body (is) of Christ.”* But before he concludes he gives a positive command saying, *“Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using; after the commandments and doctrines of men. Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.”* (Stanley C. Phillips, December 1, 2008).]

Now, shall we receive and believe the interpretation of this inspired apostle concerning the Sabbath, or heed the carnal theory of them who assume to be wise above what is written? The apostle says these things were a shadow, and God said to the Jews it (the Sabbath) was a sign; therefore, neither was the substance (Christ), but pointed down through the

vista of time to the Gospel day, when the children of God should have peace in believing and joy in the Holy Ghost, and Christ, the Substance, would be that unto His dear people. Paul says, "*There remaineth therefore a rest to* [not for] *the people of God;*" and that **rest in Christ** is not one day in seven, but it has been that glorious day of rest to the church for more than eighteen hundred of our literal years.

Lest an improper and unjust charge should be made against them who do emphatically deny the authority of any man, men, or councils of men, to transfer the Jewish Sabbath over to and for the first day of the week, God's dear children in all countries have been a law-abiding people, so long as they have been permitted to worship God openly according to the teaching of the Spirit; and in the United States of America the first day of the week has been set apart as a day to abstain as far as possible from secular labor. I know of no class more willing to obey the national law, as far as they can, than "Bible Baptists" are; but to regard it as a "holy Sabbath," they do not, because they know that there is no apostolic authority for it. The writer remembers with deep sorrow a beautiful Sunday morning in the year 1861; but soon after the glorious "orb of day" had mounted his "fiery chariot" in the heaven and dispelled the darkness of night, the earth was made to tremble, and the "booming of cannon and the rattling of muskets" told the dreadful tale of death and destruction which were going on at and near "Bull Run," in the state of Virginia; and the so-called chaplains in both armies had been praying (?) for victory. Where was the "holy" Sabbath then? O where? The piety of Great Britain, where there is so much "holy unction," and such profound knowledge of spiritual things, does not prevent her soldiers from fighting on their "holy Sabbath." Is it any more of a crime to lie, to steal, to slander, to murder, on the **first day of the week** than on any other day? Certainly not; neither does the law know any distinction. The eternal Jehovah sends the terrible tornado, the destructive earthquake, the fearful volcano and destroys life and property upon the **first day of the week** as much as on any other day. Do not we poor mortals die upon that day? Are we not born in this world upon that day? Do not all things in nature

move on the same as on any other day of the week?

When the dear Redeemer distinctly named the terrible vices and crimes which defile a man, and whence they come, does He say anything about Sabbath breaking? No; but He says, "*Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man.*" It should be noticed that those terrible things are in the heart before they are made manifest. After the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of the dear Redeemer, His inspired judges gave all laws which should be binding upon His disciples throughout the Gospel dispensation; and neither of them has authorized any mortal man or men, in the plenitude of his or their wisdom, to transfer the Jewish Sabbath over to the first day of the week and call that day Sabbath.

In the third chapter of Romans an inspired judge names eight vices and crimes, and in the fifth chapter of Galatians he specifies seventeen startling vices and crimes; yet in neither epistle to which reference has been made does he mention Sabbath breaking; and why? *Because it had been blotted out* – nailed to His (Christ's) cross.

Now, if God enables us, we will show **what** it is to break or transgress in a spiritual or Gospel sense that Sabbath which the church has entered upon and into, and has continued more than eighteen hundred of our literal years. In the Old Testament, we have recorded the following, "*Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. * * * * But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*" During that long, dark, cloudy day of the legal dispensation, the path of the just was shining, and the prophets were enabled to predict with unerring certainty the coming of the Just One, and what should be accomplished; and Malachi (messenger of Jehovah, or My messenger) said, "*Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye*

shall go forth, [from that dark and cloudy day of legality,] and grow up as calves of the stall."

When that glorious Sun arose, the dark night of Judaism passed away, those old Jewish heavens were rolled together as a scroll, no more to mantle the church. When the glorious orb of day mounts his "fiery chariot" in the east, and rises in full orb'd splendor, the stars disappear, being swallowed up in the blazing rays of the sun; so when the Sun of righteousness arose, the carnal rites and ordinances given to the Jews were forever removed from the church. Christ said to the woman, "*But the hour cometh, and **now is**, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such [and He will surely find them, and not be mistaken] to worship Him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him [not them] must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*" But because this is the perfect day of the Mediator's reign and power, as Head over all to the church, it has not changed the vile passions of natural men, any more than the shining of the natural sun in the literal heaven upon the sea and land changes the nature of the monsters of the deep or the poison serpents and ferocious animals on the land; but vile man, in this perfect Gospel day, remains the same wicked creature in nature and deeds, only as our God restrains him. Some dear ones, whom I think I love, think that the perfect day has reference to the entrance of the children of God into immortal glory; but I am not aware of any place or portion of Scripture where the term "day" applies to eternity; but perhaps some reader of this will say the poet sings,

**"All o'er those wide-extended plains
Shines one eternal day."**

Poets have penned many beautiful expressions, so far as language is concerned, and they sound very euphonious; but when tested by the Word of our God they seem to be somewhat "overdrawn," and not supported by divine authority. In this accepted time, this day of salvation, when the first covenant has been removed and the second established, this day of Mediator's power, this perfect day, true worshipers are not to kindle a fire,

that they may compass themselves about with sparks, in order to walk in the light of such fire and the sparks they have kindled; for if they do they certainly will lie down in sorrow, because God has said it shall be thus. Therefore, to-day true worshipers are not to offer an heifer, a goat, a lamb, a turtle-dove, a young pigeon, nor introduce a seventh day Sabbath; for if any such things are done, they become Sabbath breakers in the most absolute sense of the word. The ninth chapter of Hebrews contains the divine exposition of the whole matter; and in the book of Revelation the same curse is pronounced upon him who addeth to, as upon him who taketh away from the words of this book. As has been already stated in this article, no man living to-day can point to the book, chapter and verse in one of the epistles authorizing us to call the **first day** of the literal week Sabbath, or that the Lord Jehovah has told us under the Gospel dispensation one day is more holy than another.

Now, dear brethren and sisters, let us be careful in our outward worship how we undertake to improve upon the precepts, examples and injunctions left on record for the rule of the church in and under this perfect day of Gospel rest; for whenever and wherever we bring in any of that Jewish ritual, we become Sabbath breakers, for the apostle says, "*There remaineth [thanks be to our God, it remains to-day even] therefore a rest to [not for] the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from His.*" The apostle is not dwelling upon the glorified state of believers in heaven, but is talking to the church here in her time state. I have complied with the request, but have not elaborated the subject in all its various branches, but have shown from the apostolic authority that the true church has nothing to do with the seventh day Sabbath, any more than she has to do with offering literal sacrifices; and there I leave the matter.

--William J. Purington,
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