

BAPTIST REFORMATION REVIEW

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BAPTIST REFORMATION REVIEW

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OUTREACH REVIEW

This news from missionaries is published so that you can be informed of the work of the Lord in the lives of these men who labor in the gospel. We ask that you pray for them and their families. If you wish to contribute to the work of any of these men, write *directly* to them. You may send first class mail to the men in Puerto Rico. Air mail postage to the other countries is 31¢ for the first half-ounce. Do not send contributions for the support of these men to this magazine.

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DAVID ELLIS

October, 1980

Dear Friends,

Since last writing to you we have been greatly encouraged here in the work, especially among the young people. There is an evident thirst for the Word of God in some of them and these are giving a good lead to the others. Please pray for this group as we meet on Fridays.

This school year has seen a number of students come to our services. They are American, English, African and even French! These help swell numbers, but they are here only a short time and it is not possible to build a solid and lasting work

with them. We pray that our Lord will enable us to be of help to them so that they may be a blessing in the places where they go after their studies.

The Lord is wonderfully blessing the ministry of the Word. Several have experienced real blessing, and one elderly man who was wandering from the Lord has been gloriously brought to repentance, and is now joyfully back among us. There are others who have grown cold. Please pray for them that the work of grace in them may bring them back to the cross, for it is only there that burdens are lifted and doubts are dissipated.

This coming month will see us ministering in other places. On the 16th I shall be in Marseille, St. Jerome, where there are a number of practical problems that need to be dealt with. A small church in Beziers is seeking help also, and the work in Bagnols-sur-Ceze has once again solicited our help. Andre Loverini will be going there soon. The church at Nimes has been through some severe trials during the past few months, but we are thankful to God that these have been purifying experiences, and it would seem that the dross is being sifted out.

Barbara is kept very busy entertaining in our home, helping keep order in some other homes, and patiently bearing with a husband who is not always on time for meals, and who springs unexpected visits on here now and again!. We have all been enjoying relatively good health and this is a real blessing from the Lord.

Thank you for your interest in us and your prayers for us. We value more than we can express your continued support.

David & Barbara Ellis

BILL CLARK

October, 1980

Dear Friends,

During the past month we have, as usual, been very busy. At the moment there is a lot going on in the preparation of books in missionary languages. In French we have 5 books being prepared at the moment and one with the typesetter. In Spanish there are 4 books with the printer, one being typeset, and another is already set and waiting to go to the printer. We have 2 Portuguese and 2 Italian books with the printer. There is also a very large shipment of books on the way to Nigeria, and we are working on a new catalogue for the Philippines.

One of our biggest problems at the moment is the rising cost of printing. We have been looking at ways to get around this problem, and as result none of the books mentioned above are being printed in Europe. Some are being printed in Chicago and others in Singapore! We really are an international lot! However, all this effort is necessary because of our objective to get the Gospel of the sovereign grace of God in Christ into the hands of those who really need it. Since salaries in third-world countries are very low, we must ensure that the prices of the books are not prohibitive. Just yesterday I was working on a new publicity leaflet in French, and I had to prepare two separate price lists, one for French-speaking Europe and the other for French-speaking Africa. The African prices are considerably less, and we hope to be able to pay for this through the sales of our books in Europe. We are *not* just interested in distributing books, but our object is to spread the message of the sovereign grace of God. Please pray that these books will be used to that end.

The French radio work continues to grow. We seem to be getting

more and more letters from listeners. These go first to our French address and then are forwarded to us here. There were 64 letters in this morning's mail and each will receive a personal reply. Many of these people will receive follow-up cassettes. I could fill many pages with excerpts from these letters. Recently we received two letters from a member of the government in Ivory Coast who seems to be interested in the things of the Lord. Letters continue to reach us from over 20 countries.

Next month I plan to go to France and Spain. Please continue to pray for us.

Bill & Evelyn Clark

KEITH UNDERHILL

September, 1980

Dear Brethren,

Once again there has been a delay of a month — partly because I had hoped to have news of the *registration* of the church, and partly because of continuing busyness. We still await a formal response to our appeal against the rejection of our registration. As we seek to patiently wait for the time when it will be granted, there is no doubt that God has given us a spirit of pleading with Him in prayer, which has been a great blessing.

Church. We continue to be very encouraged by the contacts we have — for last Sunday's service 25 adults and at least 15 children. As yet we still cannot point to anyone definitely converted, and there is no one who has applied for church membership. I continue to need patience to be willing to sow and water the seed, in expectancy that God will bring forth the harvest in due season.

We are slowly beginning to have a ministry in the Doonholm Estate itself. One Christian family has begun to come, and also another wo-

man last Sunday. There is a possibility of starting a regular Bible study for the Estate in this family's home. We understand that the plot reserved for a church building in this Estate is still available — but we must be registered in order to apply.

Outside contacts. I have been invited to the *Church of Christ in Africa's* General Assembly and Pastor's Refresher course in December. They want me to teach the pastors (over 100 from 5 countries) on evangelism, pastoralia, some basic doctrines, and Reformation history!

I recently attended the *National Pastors Conference*, organized by the National Christian Council of Kenya with about 1000 pastors from over 60 denominations. John Stott gave good bible readings on 1 Thessalonians, but apart from that there was little Bible exposition. It seemed to be assumed that all believe the same gospel, but what that gospel is was never explained — at least there was nothing at all about justification by faith.

Yours in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Keith & Priscilla Underhill

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

EDITORIAL

New Address. Our address has changed! We have moved to Oregon, where I am serving as pastor in the Malin Baptist Church. Please note our new address and phone number:

P.O. Box 498

Malin, Or., 97632; (503) 798-5452

I am sorry to be late with the winter issue, but the move consumed much time, and it took time to get set up here. Lord willing, the first issue of 1981 will be on schedule.

"One Another." The study guide by brother Morey must not be taken as a denial or playing down of the importance of specific leadership in the church (i.e., Acts 20:17,28; 1 Thess.5:12-13). But it is meant to stimulate us concerning an obvious New Testament emphasis on brotherly duties that, sadly, are not being practiced in our churches as they should.

"Sabbath/Lord's Day." The issues flowing out of the articles by

brothers Price and Leland are immediately *practical*, and should help us to see that the New Testament emphasis is not on the keeping of days, but on being our brother's keeper. Since the "day" matter is being discussed among brethren, I believe Dr. Gary Long's words give us an appropriate, mature perspective as we study:

1. [We could] continue the controversy without bringing all issues and arguments under the searchlight of Scripture. This is not an acceptable alternative and must, therefore, be avoided.

2. [We can] continue the controversy in a spirit of love for the truth by bringing all issues and arguments under the searchlight of Scripture (*The Christian Sabbath/Lord's Day Controversy*, p.24).

May the love of Christ constrain us in all things, even in our searching of Scripture to what is indeed taught.

DISCUSSION GUIDE ON "ONE TO ANOTHER"

Robert A. Morey
Shermansdale, Pa.

The phrase "one another," which is a translation of the Greek word *allelon*, is found fifty-eight times in the New Testament. Of these fifty-eight times, forty of them are found in the writings of the apostle Paul.

What does this tell you about the importance of this phrase "one another"? _____

1. The first and foundational "one-anothering" to which Christ calls you is to _____

(John 13:34-35; 15:12; Rom.13:8; 1 Thess.3:12; 4:10; 1 Pet.1:22; 4:8; 1 John 3:11; 3:23; 4:7,11; 2 John 5).

Give a definition of Christian "love." _____

Is love a "feeling," or something else? _____

Have you ever felt "loved" by fellow Christians? _____

Explain the experience: _____

How can you develop Christ-like love to others? _____

Does 1 Cor.13 describe your church experience? _____

Explain: _____

If you do not "love" one another, will the world ever stop and notice your testimony? (John 13:34-35) _____

What things in society, in your church, and in you hinder your obedience to the command to "love one another"? _____

How can you overcome these hindrances? _____

2. "So we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually _____." (Rom.12:5).

The local church is pictured in Scripture in terms of the _____
(Rom. 12:5).

How many times is the word "body" used to describe the church in 1 Cor. 12:12-27? _____

In 1 Cor. 12:12-27, what does the word "members" mean? _____

What are some of Paul's main points in 1 Cor. 12:12-27? _____

How does 1 Cor. 12:12-27 relate to 1 Cor. 12:1-11? _____

The way you became a part of the "body" was by the _____
(1 Cor. 12:13).

Have you ever felt that you were a living "member" of a real "body" of believers? _____
Explain: _____

How does American individualism affect being a "member"?

What in your personality or background could hinder you from functioning as a full and true "member of the body"?

How can you overcome these hindrances to obeying the Scriptural directive to be "members one of another"?

3. In brotherly love, we must be _____
(Rom. 12:10).

"In many churches today, Christians are not devoted to one another." Is this true? _____
Explain: _____

Being devoted to one another arises out of a special kind of love. What kind of love is this? (Rom. 12:10) _____
This "brotherly love" arises out of the experience of feeling that you are a member of _____
(1 Pet. 4:17).

As a member of the "family of God" we are all brothers and sisters. The term "brothers" is found approximately 230 times in the New Testament. What does this fact mean to you? _____

Have you ever felt that you were a "brother" or experienced a

"family-feeling" in a church? _____ Explain: _____

Other translations of Rom.12:10 indicate that believers are to show their love and devotion by being affectionate to one another. In the culture of the New Testament how did believers show their affection to each other? (Rom.16:16; 1 Cor.16:20; 2 Cor.13:12; 1 Pet.5:14) _____

How can you express your affection for fellow Christians in the context of modern society? _____

Are you a "devoted family member" to others in the church? _____

What things are holding you back from obeying Christ in this area of your life? _____

How can you overcome your hangups? _____

4. Once we are devoted to one another, we will naturally _____ for one another (James 5:16).

Do you pray for the other members of the body? _____
Why, or why not? _____

Do you think that anyone is regularly praying for you? _____
Explain: _____

Perhaps you do not know how to pray for others. There are two ways to find out how to pray for one another. First, study Paul's prayers for others with attention to the requests he made to God for the saints. Read through and then discuss the prayer requests in Eph.1:15-19; 3:14-19; Col.1:9-12; and 2 Thess.1:11-12.

Secondly, as a group, stop right now and share with each other your prayer requests. Covenant to pray for each other every day. Each week check each other's requests. What do you expect will happen to you and the other members of your group? _____

Have you ever felt that someone really cared about you enough to pray for you daily? _____ Explain: _____

Since you are a priest and a minister, according to 1 Pet.2:5, who is supposed to exercise your spiritual gift, do you feel it is important to have others pray for you? _____ Explain: _____

5. Once you are convinced that someone loves you, and is so devoted to you in brotherly love that he or she prays for you, you will be willing to _____
(James 5:16a).

Does James 5:16 mean that you should describe your sins in detail? _____ *What does it mean?* _____

Does the Bible plainly tell us of the sins of godly men? _____

If you are burdened with a sin which is causing you problems, do you think that the prayers of others will help you? _____
Explain: _____

Have you ever trusted another Christian to the degree that you actually confessed your sins to him or her? _____
Did it help? _____ *Explain:* _____

Is James 5:16 a command or an optional activity? _____

What things in society, the church and in your background could keep you from obeying God's Word in this area of your life? _____

Do you think that your group will develop enough Christian maturity for you and others to open up and ask for prayer concerning your besetting sins? _____ *Explain:* _____

6. Once we confess our sins to each other, we can _____
(Heb.3:13; 10:24-25).

To exhort someone means to encourage them to go on in the Christian life, or to correct them in the way of the Christian life.

Has anyone ever sought to encourage you? _____
Explain: _____

Have you ever made a point of encouraging someone in the things of God? _____ *Explain:* _____

In what ways do you want others to encourage (exhort) you? _____

What could hinder you from receiving exhortations? _____

What can prevent you from going to others to encourage them? _____

How can you overcome these things and obey Christ's directive to you? _____

7. When your relationship to your brothers and sisters is on the level of communication and fellowship that the Bible describes as the normal Christian church life, you can even _____ (Rom.15:14; Col.1:28; 3:16; 1 Thess.5:14; 2 Thess.3:15).

When a brother or sister falls into sin or is losing the battle with sin, we must go to them and admonish them. To admonish is to correct someone by the Word.

Has anyone ever cared enough about your Christian life that they admonished you? _____ Explain: _____

Have you ever gone to others and admonished them? _____ Explain: _____

In what way would you want others to admonish you? (Gal.6:1)

How will you seek to admonish others? _____

What would result in the church if believers lovingly admonished one another? _____

8. When believers are experiencing a normal Christian church life, they begin to _____ (1 Thess. 5:11; Rom.14:19; 15:2).

Not only are we to build up (edify) one another, but we are to seek to edify _____ (Eph.4:12-13).

In small groups or in worship services, one rule or principle which should guide us is _____ (1 Cor. 14:26).

Have you experienced edification by the ministry of others?
Describe your experience: _____

Have you ever gone out of your way to edify another Christian?
Explain what you did: _____

9. One way to edify one another is to _____ (Col.3:16; Heb.5:11-14).

Does the Bible assume that all Christians should become teachers in some way? _____ (Heb.5:11-14).

Having learned the truth, what is our responsibility? (Titus 2:1)?

Since you must teach others, this implies that you will _____
(2 Tim.2:15).

Has anyone ever cared enough for you that they took time to teach you from the Scriptures? _____ Explain: _____

Have you ever taught others? _____

What in society, the church or in you would hinder your obedience in this area? _____

Do you think that in an informal small group you will be able to teach others? _____ Explain: _____

10. By teaching one another, we _____
(Gal.5:13).

Do you look upon yourself as a "servant" to your fellow believers?
What did Jesus teach in this regard (John 13:1-17)? _____

Discuss 1 Pet.4:10-11: _____

11. One way to serve one another is to _____
_____ (1 Pet.4:9; Matt.25:34-40).

Do you enjoy opening your home to others? _____
Explain: _____

When was the last time you had fellow Christians over to your home? _____

What in society, the church or in you could hinder your obedience to Christ who commands you to show hospitality? _____

12. When you show hospitality to someone you are _____
_____ (Rom.12:10b).

Showing honor for others requires sacrifice. Describe some of your personal experiences where you were shown hospitality and what it meant to you. _____

13. Discuss each of the following Scriptures in terms of what they

command, and in terms of your personal experience with each "one-anothering" activity:

Eph.5:21 — _____

1 Pet.5:5 — _____

Gal.6:2 — _____

1 Cor.12:25 — _____

Eph.4:2 — _____

Eph.4:32 — _____

Col.3:13 — _____

Rom.15:5 — _____

Rom.15:7 — _____

14. We are also told *not* to do certain things "one to another." Discuss each of the following passages:

Rom.14:13 — _____

Gal.5:15,26 — _____

Col.3:9 — _____

James 4:11; 5:9 — _____

CONCLUSION

As a Christian, a *vital* and *necessary* part of your growth in grace depends upon your experiencing the care, support and correction afforded by "one another" in the local church. The New Testament commands all Christians repeatedly to practice "one-anothering" in the context of the local church. "One-anothering," according to Christ (John 13:34-35), is *the* badge of orthodoxy among New Covenant communities. When discussing the "marks" of a true church, we cannot omit the concrete love of one another as being most critical (1 John 3:16-18). Your church experience must result in rich and deep interdepend-

ent relationships with fellow Christians. In this way *alone* — by our love manifested to one another — will the world know that we are indeed Christ's disciples (John 13:35).

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SEARCHING FOR THE *IMPERATIVE* —
Interaction With Lord's Day Argumentation

D. Vincent Price
Sacramento, Ca.

Introduction

Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone) has always been the evangelical reference point regarding the believer's rule of life. For those giving serious attention to this matter in the realm of *law* and *covenants*, the thinking of many Christians has been definitively changed. Many who had formerly maintained and defended the Westminster-Puritan teaching concerning the "Christian Sabbath" now find this position untenable. Yet to raise so much as an eyebrow respecting the Biblical evidence for this doctrine has been suspect of "dispensational" beliefs at best, or, at worst, pure "antinomianism." All this is lamentable to say the least. Those brethren who have come to a dissenting position regarding first-day Sabbatarianism have a genuine concern for the Bible and wish to avoid becoming "reactionary." This has produced the alternative of distinguishing between Sunday as the Sabbath and Sunday as the Lord's Day. Thus Dr. Gary Long's recent booklet, *The Christian Sabbath/Lord's Day controversy*, affirms that one is in no way giving license to ignore first-day worship as New Covenant law by denying that Sunday is the "Christian Sabbath."

However, in my estimation, this affirmation to bind the believer to first-day worship by calling it the "Lord's Day" does *not* solve the more basic underlying issue of *providing explicit New Testament justification for our doctrines and practices*. It has been *assumed* that the church, by apostolic sanction, early settled on Sunday as the day of gathering under the New Covenant. But is this really representative of *all* the historical reasons which eventually embedded first-day worship into the practice of the Reformed church? I think not. For as T.F. Torrance has expressed it:

There can be no doubt that every one of the great Churches of the Reformation . . . has developed its own masterful tradition, and that that tradition today exercises massive influence not only over its way of interpreting the Bible and formulating its doctrine, but over the whole shape and direction of its life. Those who shut their eyes to this fact are precisely those who are most enslaved to the dominant power of tradition just because it has become an unconscious canon and norm of their thinking. It is high time we asked again whether the Word of God really does have free course among us and whether it is not after all bound and fettered by the traditions of men. The tragedy, apparently, is that the very structures of our Churches represent the fossilization of traditions that have grown up by practice and procedure, have become so hardened in self-justification that even the Word of

God can hardly crack them open (quoted in *Verdict*, Vol.3, #4, Oct., 1980, p.19).

It is not wrong or sinful to have ideological distinctives. But Torrance's insight shows how we can be swallowed up with a preconceived "system" so that it is well-nigh impossible to see a text other than through the literary medium of our enshrined Confessions and Creeds. It cannot necessarily be assumed that because a teaching is embedded in post-apostolic *history* that this guarantees its Biblical roots. The evidence for anything must be found in *Scripture alone*. Here I want to state in brief compass some of the problems which remain unsolved by those who opt for a "law" (imperative) approach to first-day worship, while distinguishing themselves from Sunday Sabbatarians.

1. *There is a "double think" with reference to strict adherence to the principles of Biblical interpretation.* Those who have come to a dissenting stance respecting the exegetical and hermeneutical basis for affirming the "Christian Sabbath" because there is no direct command given in the New Testament to replace Saturday with Sunday, nevertheless themselves affirm the binding nature of Sunday through an *extra-textual* identification of Sunday with the "Lord's Day" of Rev.1:10. Yet there is no command in the New Testament with reference to the observance of Sunday, whether called the "Sabbath" or the "Lord's Day." And it is not at all certain that the adjective "Lord's" used in reference to the noun "Day" in Rev.1:10 has in view a literal twenty-four hour day.

There is a hermeneutical difficulty, therefore, in asserting that Sunday as the "Christian Sabbath" is *not* binding, but Sunday as "Lord's Day" *is*. Can we not see how this line of reasoning is exposing believers to the same method of interpretation which opens the door for the sufficiency of "implicit" evidence instead of "explicit" textual evidence from Scripture?

2. *The authority of Scripture as sola fidei regula (the only rule of faith) becomes prima fidei regula (the primary rule of faith).* No matter how "learned and holy" men may be, the fact remains that Scripture is supreme, and all doctrine and practice must be brought before the bar of the Word. Submission to *sola Scriptura* is present or absent more in our use of the Bible than in our *high regard* for it.

It seems to me that there is a lack of depth evident in the standard citation of the proof texts employed to enjoin Sunday observance as a Christian duty. The theological weight that may or may not be assigned to a text must be determined by a serious preoccupation with its proper exegesis. "There must be a sound exegetical examination of every text that is cited or else we are guilty of superficial treatment of Scripture. The use of proof texts is only as good as the exegesis undergirding their citation" (Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, p.178).

After much study, I feel constrained to suggest that the Biblical data cannot be squared with *any* position which advocates a fixed day of

worship imposed by *law* under the New Covenant. This *cannot* be construed as advocating Christian *autonomy*. We would stress that the New Covenant specifically enjoins believers *not to forsake the assemblies* (Heb.10:24-25). But we believe that there is no command anywhere in the New Testament obligating Christians to worship on a *special day* (e.g., Gal.4:10-11; Rom.14:5-6). Or to put it negatively, the New Testament nowhere states that Christians commit sin by meeting on days *other* than Sunday. And, it must be made clear that this repudiation does *not* call into question first-day worship as a local church *liberty in Christ*. We merely question the affirmation that the New Covenant community is referenced to observe Sunday (or any other day) *by divine law*.

Admittedly, such a position "goes against the grain" of established opinion. But I would ask you all to consider the necessary principle that *what is not explicitly taught in Scripture cannot be urged upon the conscience as the voice of God*. Merrill F. Unger brings this crucial point to a head in these words:

This controversy hinges on the basic issue: Shall *every* doctrine of Biblical theology be formulated only as a result of painstaking inductive study of all its Scriptural particulars, or shall exceptions be made to this rule? Shall doctrines remain in our creed which have been deductively formulated from premises which cannot stand up under the test of the full Scriptural testimony? (*Principles of Expository Preaching*, p.98).

Lastly, and most importantly, it must be remembered that *all* interaction among the brethren must be couched in the sphere of *love for one another*. I approach all of you in the love of Christ, and ask that we might together have the maturity to think through the Biblical/textual material. Whatever our final differences might be, may love pervade our discussions. Thus I warmly welcome any thoughts where the reader believes my understanding needs Biblical sharpening. I do not claim to have all the answers. What follows is but a brief review and interaction with selective representative argumentation concerning Sunday observance. It is not the shooting down of strawmen. I deem these men to be my brethren. And it is hoped that as together we shake the lamp of God's light, it shall burn ever the more bright.

Grammatical Considerations

The "first day of the week" is found seven times in the New Testament: Matt.28:1 (*mian sabbaton*); Mark 16:2 (*mia ton sabbaton*); Luke 24:1 (*mia ton sabbaton*); John 20:1 (*mia ton sabbaton*); John 20:19 (*mia sabbaton*); Acts 20:7 (*mia ton sabbaton*); and 1 Cor.16:2 (*mia sabbatou*). Four of these tell of visits made to the tomb by the women. John 20:19 reports an appearance of Jesus to the disciples. Acts 20:7 gives a time reference to a meeting at Troas. 1 Cor.16:2 gives instructions concerning the "poor fund" collection for the Jerusalem church.

Obviously, the phrase *mia sabbaton* differentiates Sunday from Saturday. "The Jews had no names for the weekdays and therefore designated them with reference to the Sabbath, thus . . . 'on the first (day) with reference to the Sabbath,' i.e., the first that follows the Sabbath'" (R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel*, p.1333).

The following analysis illustrates the *mood* of the verses where the "first day" is mentioned. Remember that the *indicative* in Greek makes a statement or asks a question; the *imperative* issues a command (a law) or makes a request. Since "theological exegesis can be nothing else but the extension of the line of grammatical exegesis" (Ramm, *Hermeneutics*, p.27), is it not very significant from a practical standpoint that we have "no command anywhere in the New Testament obligating believers to observe Sunday" (Lenski, *The Interpretation of Acts*, p. 285; emphasis mine). There is simply no *imperative* connected with the occurrences of "first day" in the New Testament. Can you think of *any* duty that Christ has laid on your conscience that is not rooted in a Scriptural *imperative*?

An Analysis of the "first day" references in the New Testament

(1) Matt.28:1 — "In the end of the Sabbath as it was drawing toward the first day of the week."

Mood: *indicative*

(2) Mark 16:2 — "Very early on the first day of the week."

Mood: *indicative*

(3) Luke 24:1 — "Upon the first day of the week very early in the morning."

Mood: *indicative*

(4) John 20:1 — "Early on the first day of the week while it was yet dark."

Mood: *indicative*

(5) John 20:19 — "On the evening of that first day of the week."

Mood: *indicative*

(6) Acts 20:7 — "On the first day of the week we came together to break bread."

Mood: *indicative*

(7) 1 Cor.16:2 — "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside."

Mood: *imperative*

Comment on (1) - (4): The four gospels simply report certain visits made to the sepulchre. They do not issue any command or supply us with the precise time of the resurrection. The earliest word is, "He has risen, He is not here" (Mark 16:6).

Comment on (5): This reports an appearance by Christ to certain disciples. No reference is made to a day of worship.

Comment on (6): Lenski states, "it is true that this is the first Christian service, held on a Sunday, that is recorded in Acts; yet little can be proved from it since it was a special service in every way" (*Acts*, p. 825). While he believes that "regular Sunday worship" early became the practice of the churches, he nonetheless maintains that "in the old covenant Saturday was fixed by divine law for the Jews. In the new covenant no day is fixed in any manner by any law. The supposition that Christ or his apostles transferred the legal sanction from Saturday to Sunday is without support. To call our Sunday the Christian 'Sabbath' is to apply a wrong and misleading name . . . Thus without any legal constraint whatever, in the most natural and voluntary manner, and in the sensible and wholesome exercise of our New Testament liberty, with the greatest unanimity since the earliest apostolic days, Sunday is our day of public worship. We refuse to attach anything legal to it that may be in conflict with Col.2:16 or Gal.5:1" (*Acts*, pp.825-826).

Comment on (7): This Pauline imperative ("lay aside") refers not to corporate worship, but to a special collection for the needs of the Jerusalem church.

There is no evidence that an *imperative* is issued to the churches that they *must* worship on Sunday. On the other hand, there are three verses in the New Testament that speak to the liberty of Christians with reference to days, or the dangers attached to observing days in a legalistic fashion. Two of these verses, Rom.14:5-6 and Col.2:16, do issue an *imperative* with reference to days — but not concerning Sunday worship. Let us examine these verses briefly.

(1) Rom.14:5-6 — "one judges one day above another; another judges every day alike . . . therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another."

Comment: If it is imperative and mandatory under the new covenant to observe Sunday (and thus commit *sin* by failure to do this), then the simplicity of Paul's statement that brethren are free to esteem a day, or to view every day the same, would be modified. Lenski says, "we see no reason for refusing to assume that the distinction here touched upon refers to the Jewish Sabbath . . . There was never a legislation regarding the whole matter. All was done in Christian liberty with an eye 'to the Lord.' In this spirit of liberty we still observe Sunday, not as being commanded, but as serving our need for regular public worship" (*Romans*, pp.821,823).

(2) Gal.4:10-11 — "you are carefully observing days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid concerning you!"

Comment: "[Paul's] meaning is that the Galatians had accepted the Jewish system as far as it was marked by these terms referring to time" (Lenski, *Interpretation of Galatians*, p.214).

While the Romans passage cited above mentioned the freedom of

brethren to observe a day, this passage indicates the danger when "days" are made *mandatory*.

- (3) Col.2:16-17 — "therefore let no one judge you with reference to eating, drinking, or in the matter of festival or new moon or Sabbath, which things are a shadow of those coming, now the body is Christ's."

Comment: The Christian has been delivered from the "elements" (Greek, *stoichia*) of the old age, and therefore these matters *cannot* and *must not* become a norm of judgment upon the Christian conscience. The Sabbath was a "shadow," and Christ has brought the *reality*. To judge brethren with reference to Sabbaths is in violation of Paul's *imperative* here in this text.

In light of the *lack* of imperative with reference to the "first day," and the *presence* of the imperative with reference to avoiding mandatory "days," must we not be slow to attach "moral imperative" to Sunday worship? Robert Rayburn makes an astute observation which ought to at least capture the attention of *Baptists*!

It is only fair to state that neither is there any *direct command* to baptize infant children of believers. Many there are who would insist that we must have such a command before we practice the ordinance. But not so! There are other doctrines of the Church, precious to those who deny infant baptism, for which there is no "Thus saith the Lord." For example, nowhere does the New Testament contain a commandment changing the Sabbath from the seventh-day observance of the Jews to the Lord's Day, which is the first day of the week. *There is much more evidence in the New Testament to support infant baptism in the believer's household than there is to support the observance of the Lord's Day* (*What About Baptism?*, Baker, 1979, p.52).

Now think about the implications of that statement! If Baptists believe that there is, for all practical purposes, *no* evidence for infant baptism, where does that put the level of evidence for *mandatory* Sunday worship? If the Lord willed for His churches to meet on a certain day, could He not make such an important matter *clear*? It was *very clear* under the old covenant!

(1) Interaction With

An Apology Or Defense for the New Testament Theology and Practice of Certain Brethren and Churches Among Reformed or Calvinistic Baptists, by Pastor Thomas N. Smith

This brochure was distributed in connection with *The 1980 Council On Baptist Theology*, held May 27-30 in Dallas, Texas. First of all, I believe that this brother should be gratefully acknowledged for having written one of the most thought-provoking articles on the attitude of the Berean spirit which Christians should display toward one another. I was personally blessed by what Pastor Smith had to say, and would highly recommend it as stimulating and humbling food-for-thought. Thus, while I am in essential agreement with Pastor Smith's perspective,

liberty of choice to worship on the first day, that is one thing. But to *insist* that the New Covenant church *must* do so is to *command* from tradition what has no *imperative* in the New Testament.

(2) Interaction With
The Christian Sabbath/Lord's Day Controversy,
by Dr. Gary D. Long

Dr. Long states that the purpose of this treatise is "to surface the problem [between the Christian Sabbath and Lord's Day positions] and to stimulate a Biblical solution to a doctrinal controversy among Reformed Baptists." Thus I find much to recommend in the first half of this booklet. Specifically, Pastor Long recognizes that this whole issue ultimately "reduces to the hermeneutical or interpretational method used," and he thus pointedly denies the validity of arguing from silence as a means of setting forth Biblical truth (p.3). In view of this consciousness of rightly dividing the Word of Truth, it seems rather inconsistent that Pastor Long would make the following assertion on p.9:

Old Covenant law made seventh-day Sabbath observance binding upon national Israel by ceremonial practice; *New Covenant law makes first-day of the week worship binding* upon spiritual Israel by Apostolic practice (Emphasis mine).

The "seed thought" for this presupposition can be traced to his concept that the Fourth Commandment "can and does serve as an Old Covenant type for corporately worshipping the Lord one day in seven under the New Covenant" (p.20). However, on what grounds can the seventh-day Sabbath be typologically employed as a New Covenant *principle* for a one-day-in-seven worship cycle principle, particularly when it has already been admitted that the Fourth Word is to be "divinely identified with '*the seventh day of the week*' [not just any day of the week based upon a one-day-in-seven principle]" (p.11)?

Pastor Long acknowledges that "the basis for the Sabbath commandment is covenantal law, not moral law" (p.17). This fact, however, invalidates typological application to a *day* beyond the old covenant. The Pauline contrast in Col.2:16-17 between *skia* (shadow) and *soma* (body) is a contrast between the function of *type* and *antitype*. The apostle calls the Sabbath a *type* rendered unnecessary with the coming into history of its substance, Jesus Christ. Elsewhere Paul informs us that "the law" (of which the Sabbath was a part) was only *until Christ* (*eis Christon*, Gal.3:24). With the Fourth Commandment having reached its reality in a *person* (Christ), it can no longer be identified with a *day* in the new age. To carry on the *time reference* of a shadow into the Messianic era is, in principle, to deny that it has been *fulfilled*. With reference to the shadows of animal sacrifices, we assert that they are *rendered unnecessary* in the gospel age because Christ once for all fulfilled them.

Pastor Long correctly observes that Sabbatarians employ the identical principle used to establish infant baptism and tithing, namely, "the

argument from silence" (p.4). He thus makes the point that Sunday should not be called the "Christian Sabbath" since it is never so identified in the New Testament (cf. Paul Jewett, *The Lord's Day*, p.50). Nevertheless, Dr. Long makes use of the same "principle" to equate Rev.1:10 with Sunday, notwithstanding the fact that nowhere in the New Testament is it identified as such. As Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi patently observes:

The equation of Sunday with the expression "Lord's Day" is based not on internal evidences of the book of Revelation or on the rest of the New Testament, but basically on three second-century patristic testimonies (*From Sabbath to Sunday*, p.113).

I believe that there has been unconscious appeal made to the early fathers, in order to justify our traditional interpretation of Rev.1:10. Certainly it is not wrong to consult the history of the church to see what light may have already been shed on a given point. But insofar as we have been influenced by this patristic interpretation, not backed by Biblical support, we stand guilty of reducing Scripture to the level of *prima fidei regula* (the primary rule of faith) rather than *sola fidei regula* (the only rule of faith).

Finally, on pp.25-26 Pastor Long offers what he considers to be "impeccable grounds" for first day worship:

If there were no other reason than God declaring that He has "raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the Second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten Thee" (Acts 13:33), and the Apostolic practice of meeting on the first day of the week, these two would provide impeccable grounds for assembling together on the first day of the week, the Lord's Day . . .

Let us consider these "grounds" separately.

Acts 13:33. In offering my thoughts on this text, I believe we need to first recognize the context of Acts 13:16-41. Paul is speaking to "men of Israel and you who fear God" (v.16). His interpretation is that the promise made to the fathers has now been fulfilled with the coming of Christ. God has at last "raised up" the true Messiah, the Son of David, as was purposed in the "decree" of Ps.2:7. Christ is for both Jew (v. 33a) and Gentile (v.26). This is confirmed in v.34 by Jesus' resurrection "from the dead." Paul therefore proclaims that God will pour out "the sure blessings promised to David" (v.34b) on any Jew or Gentile "who believes" (v.39). The affirmation of Jesus' resurrection serves to connect the promise with David's dynasty which would occupy God's throne forever (cf. Ps.89:20-37). The apostle quotes from Ps.16:10 to make direct application to Jesus of Nazareth as the "one whom God raised from the dead" (v.37). Thus, I would tend to agree with A.T. Robertson that the "raising up" of v.33 refers "not to resurrection (v.34), but to the sending of Jesus" (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.III, p.193). Similarly, F.F. Bruce believes

at His baptism He was acclaimed by God as His Son and "anointed with the Holy Spirit and power" (Acts 10:38) to enter upon His Messianic ministry. This is probably the point of the quotation in Acts 13:33 too. Note that the A.V. "again" in that verse has no authority; it is in the following verse that the resurrection is introduced (cf. Rom. 1:4). The raising up of v.33 is our Lord's being publicly raised up by God and presented to Israel at the outset of His ministry as the Servant-Messiah (*Answers to Questions*, p.172).

Of course it is to be recognized that "the commentators differ widely on this point: is it the incarnation, Jesus' baptism, His resurrection, or His earthly appearance in general?" (Richard Gaffin, *The Centrality of the Resurrection*, p.113). Yet even if one follows those commentators who understand v.33 as a reference to Jesus' resurrection, there is nothing in the text itself which suggests a relationship to, or an imperative for Sunday worship.

I believe Pastor Long's theological motif behind Acts 13:33 is traceable to its patristic link with Sunday as the day of the resurrection. The historical line of reasoning has been that "the event of the resurrection has determined the choice of Sunday as the day of worship of the first Christian community" (C.S. Mosna, quoted in *From Sabbath to Sunday*, p.74). This kind of thinking is reflected by Achille Blaize in his affirmation that "the disciples were quick to imitate their Lord and Master" by assembling "together for worship on the first day of the week immediately after the resurrection" (*Reformation Today*, May-June, 1977, p.31). Pastor Blaize even asserts that Jesus "endorsed" Sunday worship by His appearances on that day. Pastor Chantry echoes these sentiments by asserting that in the time after the resurrection, "care is taken to emphasize that all was on the first day of the week. This insistence on the first day stands in contrast with what appears to be a command of seventh-day worship in Exodus 20" (*God's Righteous Kingdom*, p.132).

Now I would directly challenge these sentiments as the *only* plausible explanation for the origin of first-day worship. It is not within the scope of this article to discuss such a vast topic (the reader is referred to Bacchiocchi's *From Sabbath to Sunday*, pp.132-269 for a detailed survey of the factors involved in the fixation upon Sunday as the day of Christian worship). However, in brief compass, the following observations may serve as food for thought:

1. Harold Riesenfield has exegetically noted that "'the first day of the week,' in the writings of the New Testament, is never called 'Day of the Resurrection.' This is a term which made its appearance later" (quoted in *From Sabbath to Sunday*, p.75). It is legitimate to ask, then, how can the resurrection serve as a motif for Sunday worship when the Evangelists themselves nowhere designate the first day of the week as the day of the resurrection?

For example, A.T. Robertson notes concerning Matthew 28:1,

"This careful chronological statement according to Jewish days clearly means that before the Sabbath was over, that is before 6 p.m., this visit by the women was made 'to see the sepulchre' (*theoresia ton taphon*)" (*Word Pictures in the N.T.*, Volume 1, p.240). Depending on one's view of the Synoptics, Matthew is the only writer that tells of a visit made to the tomb *prior* to the first day of the week. In any case, the word "toward" (*eis*) is a strong obstacle in the way of a Sunday morning resurrection. As long as it was "drawing on" (*epiphoskousie*) "toward" (*eis*) the first day of the week, it is certain that the first day had not yet arrived (cf. Luke 23:54 where "dawn" (*epiphosko*) is used for the dawning or drawing on of the twenty-four hour day at sunset rather than the dawning of the twelve-hour day at sunrise).

The context in which the first day is mentioned in the Gospels involve events transpiring *after* Christ's resurrection (1 Cor.15:1-8; cf. Acts 1:3). As George Ladd notes, "*the resurrection appearances were not the resurrection itself* . . . no one witnessed the resurrection The experience that proved to the disciples the resurrection was not the empty tomb, nor even the word of the angels; it was their confrontation with the risen Jesus. They met Him not in the act of rising from the dead but after He had risen" (*I Believe in the Resurrection*, pp.100, 94-95).

This is no doubt why some modern scholars have difficulty with the "historicity" of the resurrection. It was an eschatological event observed by no mortal eye. The earliest recorded word is, "He has risen, He is not here" (Mark 16:6). It is clearly the *appearances* of the exalted Christ which are paramount in the Gospel narratives. Indeed, He rose three days after His death. But the Gospel authors' remarkable restraint in identifying Sunday as the day of resurrection strongly suggests, in the words of P. Cotton, that "there is nothing in the idea of the Resurrection that would necessarily produce the observance of Sunday as a Day of Worship" (quoted in *From Sabbath to Sunday*, p.75).

I merely point these things out in light of a dogma that views Sunday worship as "law," and connects this with the *day* of resurrection. But even if we understand Paul's reference to the "third day" in 1 Cor. 15:4 to be a reference to the first day of the week, we must still reckon with the fact that "in the accounts of the resurrection in the Gospels, there are no sayings which direct that this great event of Christ's resurrection should be commemorated on the particular day of the week on which it occurred" (Riesenfield, quoted in *From Sabbath To Sunday*, p. 75). As George Ladd points out, the *intention* of the resurrection appearances on the first day was not to give "us a complete *history* of the resurrection appearances. They select incidents from the tradition known to them for one purpose: *to establish the fact that Jesus, the crucified, was alive again*" (Emphasis mine).

2. The concept advanced by Achille Blaize that Sunday worship began "immediately after the resurrection" does not reflect sensitivity to

the clear Biblical data. The Gospels present us with a different set of facts. In connection with the crucifixion, the disciples forsook Him and fled for safety, lest they too suffer the fate of their Master (Mark 14:50). The death of Jesus meant the death of their highest aspirations. That such discouragement and disillusionment prevailed *after* the resurrection is evident by the narrative of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: "We *had* trusted" (Luke 24:21). Despite continual warnings (Mark 8:31), they remained unprepared for Jesus' death and resurrection. They were "foolish men, and slow of heart to believe" (Luke 24:25). Mark records the immediate reaction of the women to the empty tomb and message of angels to be *fear* and *astonishment* (Mark 16:5,8). Luke reports that the two disciples who knew of the empty tomb did not believe until confronted by Christ Himself (24:22f.). John relates that Mary concluded that Jesus' body had been taken (20:2), while Luke states that the report of Jesus' resurrection was viewed as "an idle tale" (24:29). On at least two occasions we find the disciples "within locked doors" (John 20:19,26) still confused and disbelieving (Luke 24:11), for "fear of the Jews" (John 20:19). This hardly suggests a commemorative event, for when Jesus appeared before them they refused to believe it was Him. Luke says, "they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit" (24:37). Thomas is recorded as saying he cannot believe unless he can actually touch the resurrected Lord for himself (John 20:25). Now, when we consider all these facts in their combined forcefulness, *the nature of such events can hardly suggest any motivation for the observance of a day supposedly memorialized to honor the very thing the disciples themselves were struggling to believe had taken place!* Thus to posit, as Pastor Blaize does, that Sunday worship was initiated immediately is to import a preconceived belief into these texts.

Acts 20:7. This text is used by Pastor Long to suggest that it was the *habitual* practice of the apostles to meet on the first day of the week (p.25). Such thinking is also reflected by Paul Jewett who reasons that "the author of Acts is describing a well-known type of Christian assembly" (*The Lord's Day*, p.61). Due to the stated nature of this gathering ("to break bread") he believes that the breaking of bread on this occasion was essentially "one with the Pauline celebration of the Lord's Supper" (*Lord's Day*, p.60). Consequently, Jewett concludes that we may regard this gathering "as the regular day for such worship among Christians" (*Lord's Day*, p.60).

There are, however, some insurmountable problems associated with this hypothesis. Consider:

1. *The grammatical emphasis.* The sentence structure here emphasizes the verb *klao*, "to break." The formal character of *sunegmenon* ("being gathered together") is employed with reference to *klasai arton* ("to break bread"). Grammatically speaking, as an active infinitive of purpose, the verb emphasizes the significance of this particular meet-

ing: "we came together to break bread." The text therefore does not say that the Troas brethren met to break bread *because* it was their custom to convene on the first day of the week. Luke, therefore, places the emphasis on the *nature* of this meeting ("to break bread"), not on the *time* of its occurrence ("on the first day of the week"). Grammatically, one is not at liberty to reverse this emphasis.

2. *The meaning of "to break bread."* Although this expression eventually became the official designation for the Lord's Table in the patristic literature (cf. J. Behm, *klao*, *TDNT*, III, p.730), we are presented with a dilemma if we insist that Luke specifically has this in view. First, a careful study of this phrase as used in Luke-Acts will show that no *usus loquendi* may be firmly established (cf. Luke 22:19; 24:30,35; Acts 2:42,46; 20:7,11; 27:35). In Acts 20:11 Luke records that after the Eutychus incident Paul "broke bread and ate." This same verb is used elsewhere by Luke to describe a common meal (Acts 10:10; 23:14; Luke 14:24). Any attempt to liturgicalize this term in Acts 20:7 must explain away its meaning in Acts 2:42,46. In light of this, we ought to be cautious in seeking to find in Acts 20:7 an explicit celebration of the Lord's Supper (cf. Behm, *TDNT*, p.731).

Secondly, to maintain that Luke is describing an habitual practice of the apostles must reckon with the stated purpose for gathering: "to break bread." If meeting on the first day was a custom, then the breaking of bread was also a weekly custom. Thus, if this verse is employed to make first-day gathering *mandatory*, then honesty and consistency with the text would *require* the Lord's Table each week. At this point, the majority of those who use this verse as a proof text are shown to be *selective*, for they make a rule of Sunday gathering, but usually have the Lord's Supper once a month, once a quarter, or once a year!

Further, and more importantly, to demand the *weekly* celebration of the Supper appears to be contrary to the *specific time reference* given by Christ in the institution of this ordinance. Jesus said, "as often as you do this" (not "do this often," or "as you do this each week"), which leaves the temporal frequency *indeterminate*. Thus to make a "law" of *weekly* observance of the Supper will not square with the clear speaking of the Savior (1 Cor.11:25-26).

3. *It cannot be necessarily assumed that an apostolic indicative presupposes a New Covenant imperative.* If Paul's meeting with the Troas believers on the first day can be interpreted as a *binding* example, what of those instances where Paul worshipped on the Sabbath with the "Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18:4,19; 17:1,10,17, *et al.*), or when he spent days of Unleavened Bread at Philippi (Acts 20:16), or his hastening to Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts 20:16), or his Nazarite vow (Acts 18:18), or his example of purification to show that he was "living in obedience to the law" (Acts 21:24)? If it is not wise to press the above examples of Paul on *us*, then on what basis can this be done with Acts 20:7? Employing this approach, one could with equal force argue "from example"

that the church is bound to meet "daily" according to Acts 2:46-47 (cf. Heb.3:13).

4. *Incidental references in Scripture cannot be made into pillars of doctrine* (Bernard Ramm, *Hermeneutics*, p.25). For example, Paul speaks of "baptism for the dead" in a highly didactic passage (1 Cor. 15). Mormons "lift out" this indicative reference to support their doctrine of proxy baptism. But Christian theology must draw upon the systematic, not the incidental (cf. E.J. Carnell, *A Case For Orthodox Theology*, "Hermeneutics," pp.58-61). Implicit "evidence" for the import of a teaching must be interpreted in light of what is *explicitly* commanded elsewhere in Scripture. The Troas gathering on the first day cannot be proven exegetically to have been enjoined upon the brethren by apostolic command.

(3) Interaction With *Sunday*, by Erroll Hulse

This insert came with the July-August, 1980, edition of *Reformation Today* magazine. The author assumes a Sabbatarian stance toward first-day worship. However, interaction with his ten reasons for Sunday observance will reveal certain parallel inconsistencies inherent in those arguments borrowed to support a "Lord's Day" theology. These will be discussed in numerical order.

1. "*We should respect Sunday because that is pleasing to God.*" This statement merely assumes what is never proved, namely, that the Sabbath of Isa.58:13-14 is Sunday in the Messianic age. This Isaiah passage has nothing to say about a binding observance of Sunday. The context shows explicitly that the prophet is rebuking national Israel for breaking the "sign" of her covenant-bond to God — the *seventh-day sabbath* (Exod.20:10a). The passage itself has no reference to the first day of the week. Where are we taught in the New Testament that *not* to respect Sunday as a special day is *displeasing* to God?

2. "*We should respect Sunday because it is part of God's creation.*" First, this rests on entirely subjective criteria. By virtue of the same reasoning one could defend the worthiness of Tuesday, Wednesday, etc., since *every day* constitutes part of God's creation. Secondly, implicit in such thinking is the idea of a one-day-in-seven worship cycle intrinsic to man as part of God's creation. But consider the following:

A. The one-day-in-seven worship cycle principle argument cannot be used in order to justify Sunday worship because the Bible is *explicit* that the Fourth Commandment (used to support this concept) is not talking about one-day-in-seven as a Sabbath, but specifically *the seventh day* (Exod.20:10a).

B. The idea of a one-day-in-seven worship cycle which is transferable to Sunday is rooted in a conception which seems to reverse our Lord's statement that "man was not made for the Sabbath." If the one-in-seven cycle is *inherent* in man as a creature, then he was made for the

Sabbath, not the Sabbath for him. But the framework of Scripture views man and creation from a specifically *covenantal* perspective. The Old Testament does not tell us that God gave Israel the Sabbath because of an *inherent* need for one day out of seven. Rather, the Scripture *explicitly* teaches us that the Fourth Commandment was instituted as the "sign" of God's covenant with them (cf. Exod.31:16-17; Isa.56:2-6; Deut.5:15).

3. "*We should respect Sunday because it is part of God's law.*" First, this statement incorrectly assumes that the only objective expression of moral law is the Ten Commandments. But this is an arbitrary usage of the word "law." The Decalogue was *pars pro toto* (part for the whole) of the entire Sinaitic-Mosaic covenant (cf. Exod.34:38; Deut. 4:13; 9:9; 9:15). This whole structure was known as "the law" (*ho nomos*) and was in *legal* effect "until Christ" (Gal.3:24). With the coming of Christ in history, the objective expression of covenant law must be referenced to the stipulations of the New Covenant. To be sure, an ethical continuity obtains between Old and New Covenants. However, the historical reference point is the New Exodus by Christ, which brings with it a "new commandment" (John 13:34; 15:12-13).

Thus the question must be: is a specific day isolated in the Messianic age upon which the church *must* assemble. Only such revelation would constitute Sunday as part of "God's law."

Secondly, Sunday worship has no reference to the Ten Commandments (as God's law). Whether or not one calls Sunday the Christian "Sabbath" makes no difference. The Fourth Commandment was *the seventh day*. There is absolutely no textual warrant to equate Sunday with the Fourth Commandment (which was fulfilled in Christ according to Col.2:16-17), or to regard first-day worship as New Covenant "law."

4. "*We should respect Sunday because the moral law applies to everybody, not just to Christians.*" The Fourth Commandment is the *seventh day*. To be consistent, one should say we ought to respect *Saturday* if the Fourth Commandment constitutes moral law applicable to all men.

Can it be demonstrated exegetically that the one-in-seven principle has been transferred from Sabbath to Sunday? If so much importance is attached to *Sabbath-keeping*, why is it that nowhere is it stated that God will judge the nations for *Sabbath-breaking*? Assuming that Sunday was the "Lord's Day," would this day be pointedly for *Christians*? Is the "Lord's Supper" binding on all men, or was it instituted specifically for *God's people*?

The Biblical concept of "covenant" can be understood in terms of a *will* and *testament*; the idea in both cases being that the disposition is issued unilaterally, sealed by sacrifice or death, and the terms or stipulations are unalterable. As perfect God and perfect man, Christ both *gave* and *kept* His Father's commandments (John 14:24,31; 15:10; 17:8).

If Sunday observance was to be part of New Covenant law, why then do we not find mention of it in the commands of Jesus? We do find baptism and the Lord's Supper being instituted *before* our Lord's death.

Even the "new" commandment to love one another was not introduced after the cross; but rather it came to focus in connection with the New Covenant ratification in His blood (John 13:34; 1 John 2:7-8; 3:11; 2 John 5,6). If a day was to be so important in the new age, then why is the revelation of such a day not readily apparent in the pages of the New Testament?

5. *"We should respect Sunday because in that way we really show whether we love God or not."* This statement blatantly implies that the primary way we can show the world that we are Christians is if we keep Sunday. But when Jesus said, "if you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15) where are we informed that this involved Sunday-keeping as a crucial touchstone? This statement illustrates the judgmental spirit that results when something is emphasized for which the Scriptural evidence is scanty. Such a statement forgets that those who regard one day as "unto the Lord" are no better Christians than those who deem "all days alike" (Rom.14:5-6). A position which makes days *mandatory* will obviously not allow for *liberty to differ*.

6. *"We should respect Sunday because it is the day that belongs to Jesus Christ."* This statement is simply parallel to the reasoning used in #2. However, *every* day belongs to Jesus Christ by virtue of His Lordship over creation (Col.1:16). Just because Jesus kept the Hebrew Sabbath (the *seventh* day) offers no proof concerning why Sunday ought to be observed. To try and buttress the claim that Sunday in a special way belongs to Christ by asserting, as Pastor Hulse does, that more people have been saved on Sunday than on any other day is ludicrous beyond comment.

7. *"We should respect Sunday because it provides the best possible opportunity for gratitude."* Here social convenience is set up as a criteria for Biblical authority. Of course it is a social convenience for Christians to meet on Saturday or Sunday, since the majority of people are given these as non-working days. But there is nothing inherent in Sunday that constitutes it as the "best possible opportunity" for worship and mutual edification. In Heb.3:13 we are told to mutually exhort one another 'daily.' Our decision to worship God corporately on a particular day of the week should be a matter of mutual Christian consideration to be decided within each local body of Christ. There is no liberty to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. This is our revealed *duty*. But is there not, as Lenski put it, "the sensible and wholesome exercise of our New Testament liberty" as to *when* we carry out corporate duties? Would we commit *sin* by carrying out our duties, say on Tuesdays and Thursdays, if that was mutually agreed upon by a local church? What if Friday was a "day-off" in a culture (i.e., Moslem), could the churches of Christ not meet on that day?

8. "*We should respect Sunday because in that way we avoid the displeasure of God.*" This proposition unequivocally implies that the displeasure of God is incurred by fulfilling the imperative of Heb.10:25 on a day other than Sunday. It is a corollary to #5, and indicates that to not observe Sunday is *sin*. But, according to Scripture, "who are you to pass judgment on someone else's servant? Whether he stands or falls is his own master's business. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand" (Rom.14:4).

This highlights a crucial question which cannot be avoided. Are we going to base doctrine on the "silence" or "inference" of the New Testament, then impose it on brethren as "law," and then point to God's displeasure if this "law" is not kept? Must we hedge people about by regulations not explicitly commanded in order to insure that Christians will corporately worship their Lord? Our attitude toward the brethren in this regard will reflect our confidence in the Lord working in His people (cf. Gal.4:11 and 5:10).

9. "*We respect Sunday by taking note of those who have used it best.*" While we are certainly indebted to those men throughout history who have held to Sunday as church duty, this does not mean that we are divinely bound to follow them in every area of thinking. No man, no group of men, no movement, no denomination and no individual church has a monopoly on God's truth. We will be judged by the Word of Christ, not the opinions of men. This does not make the Christian autonomous from the local body through mutual interaction of the brethren. What it does mean is that we may bind and loose only as we judge in line with the Word of God. Thus, to imply that only those who keep Sunday as a Sabbath are "a credit to the Gospel," as Pastor Hulse does, reveals a less than kind approach to those who differ, especially since such a judgment is void of careful textual exegesis.
ive in finding the truth as it is in Christ.

10. "*We should respect Sunday by being positive about it.*" Here again we have an assumptive remark. If mandatory Sunday worship cannot be demonstrated by explicit New Covenant command, then how can we be "positive" about something that lacks concrete imperative? Only by bringing our assumptions to the scrutiny of the Word God has spoken will it become clear whether or not we are holding fast to the Bible alone or to our ecclesiastical traditions.

Practical Considerations Concerning The New Covenant Perspective of Corporate Worship

It has been incorrectly assumed that to argue that the church is no longer referenced to a *day* is tantamount to Christian autonomy, or "antinomianism." But nothing could be further from the truth. The New Testament *explicitly* teaches us that it is the personal duty of believers to habitually assemble for instruction, edification, exhortation and fellowship in the Word of Truth. But this *habit* of assembly is not

referenced to a *day of observance*; rather, it is the call to and need of *mutual exhortation* that makes our assembling together habitual. "Sin is committed if these duties are not fulfilled in the Christian's life; but there is no indication that sin is committed by fulfilling these duties on the 'wrong' day" (Robert A. Morey, *Is Sunday The "Christian Sabbath"*?, p.17). Therefore, please consider with me:

1. *A lesson regarding our duty.*

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another so as to stir up love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb.10:23-25).

Obviously, these words are very important, for they constitute the only command in the New Testament for believers to consistently gather together. The word "consider" speaks of an attentive, *continuous* care for one another (v.24). Christians are called upon to "provoke" (*paraxusmos*: literally, "to incite," "stimulate") each other to the expression of love and good works. But notice that most basic to the accomplishment of this task is that brethren are *not* to *epkataleipo*, that is, "let down" or "abandon" the assembly (v.25). It is the context of "coming together" that affords the brethren the best possible opportunity for showing gratitude to God and care for one another. Clearly, then, the provocation unto mutual exhortation is to come to fruition *in* and *through* the local assembly. *In this context* the outworking of the New Covenant indicative/imperative ethic ("as I have loved you/love one another") comes to visible expression.

The author of Hebrews associates the idea of *confidence* or *full assurance* (*plerophoria*) with Christ's priestly activity over God's house (cf. 10:21 with 3:6). In Heb.6:9, "confidence" in the brethren is connected to God's redemptive purpose in Christ. The "if" in Heb.3:6 is a proposal showing that *perseverance* is vitally related to our functioning in the *new covenant community*. Mutual exhortation is given in 3:13 as the antidote to being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. That is why John could speak of certain individuals in this way: "they went out from among us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us" (1 John 2:19). Thus, involved in "hearing His voice while it is called Today," is the need to function in the body of Christ.

But just how do we *practically* reflect this command not to harden our hearts? In Heb.10:25a the writer gives the *means* whereby faithful attention unto love and good works "pertaining to salvation" (6:9) are to be realized and thereby nurtured; it is seen in "*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.*" This persevering relationship with the brethren is a key *evidence* of genuine union with Christ. Assembling for exhortation must be seen as a God-ordained means of nourishing

tact, November 7, 1980, p.10). That is a strong sentiment, but, as we have seen, the exegetical basis for the setting apart of one particular day, upon which the health of the church is dependent, is *less* than the evidence for infant baptism.

The churches of Christ *must* assemble together as the community perseveres to the "rest" that awaits the people of God. Assembling together requires *time*. We must, therefore, meet regularly. But no imperative can be found to connect the duties of Heb.3:13, 10:24-25 with *one* day that pleases God over the others. The churches cannot sin by fulfilling their duties on the *wrong* day. Again, if a certain day was so critical, Christ would have made that *clear*.

3. A lesson in "understanding what the Lord's will is" (Eph.5:16). In studying various practical issues that face the churches, we hopefully should mature in our ability to handle Scripture accurately. The issue of "days" under the New Covenant affords another opportunity to apply the interpretive principle, *sola Scriptura*. The fruit of this study should lead us to pursue the duty of brotherly care by assembling, and to avoid getting caught up in an emphasis on a day which cannot be textually established.

4. A lesson on kindness with one another as we wrestle with what the Scripture teaches on various issues. It would be my understanding that it is sinful for those who regard Saturday as *the* required worship day to harshly judge those who esteem every day the same; that it is sinful for those who regard the Sabbath as having been switched to Sunday to label as "lawless" those who cannot accept special days in this age; and that it is right for us to uphold the liberty of brothers to esteem one day above another "unto the Lord." Thus, as soon as we make a day (or days) mandatory, or when we deny the freedom of individual Christians to observe days, we will fall into the sins of *judging* and *looking down* on other believers (Rom.14:1-6,10,13). Paul deals with the *attitudes* of brethren. He does not require the meat-eating brother to stop eating meat; he does not require the vegetable-eating brother to stop eating vegetables. But he exhorts them to *cultivate a proper attitude toward one another*, that is, to grow in maturity by "accepting" one another (Rom.15:7), even when there are differences.

I have stated my convictions. I stand open to correction. I trust that we will together approach this matter in Christian maturity and love. If you say in your heart, "if we do not have a day, the churches will crumble and we will have chaos," then I ask you to re-examine where your confidence lies. The sheep hear the Shepherd's voice; His voice commands the flock to come together; they *will* do it. And if any man says, "I know Him, but I don't need other people's ministry in my life," and refuses to function together with Christ's body (by assembling), that man is a liar and the truth is not in him.

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parts. *First.* The ten commandments engraven on stone. *Second.* The sixty precepts written in a book and sprinkled with blood, designed for the government of their commonwealth. *Third.* Their religious usages, containing bleeding victims, smoking altars, divers washings, and carnal ordinances; to be continued until what they prefigured should take place. Sometimes the whole of Moses' writings, without distinction, are called *Moses*, or *the law*.

When it first took rise to call the ten commandments *moral*, distinct from the other parts of the law, or why it is continued, I cannot tell.

The word *moral* is not in the Bible, but it is a word of general use, in these days, and of a variety of meanings. In the religious department it is used by many divines to express the eternal rule of right which proceeds from the relation that exists between God and men, and between man and man, and that will continue as long as the perfections of God and the faculties of men exist, without change, amendment or repeal. In this point of light I receive and use the word in my research.

Why men should pay more deference to the decalogue than to the other parts of the law, I cannot ascertain. True, the ten commandments were spoken aloud by God, amidst awful emblems of His power; so also the sixty precepts were written in a book, by a holy man of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and sprinkled with blood. When our Lord was asked by a lawyer which was the first and great commandment, our Lord did not answer him from any of the ten commandments, but from Deut.6:5 and Lev.19:18, where Moses was not treating of the decalogue.

The law of eternal right and equi-

ty is seen running through the Bible like a golden cord, and is binding on all the progeny of Adam, whether they are favored with the oracles of God or not: but it never enjoins on man to do that which the laws of nature render impossible, nor does it ever give way to *absolute precepts*.

Many difficulties arise against the conclusion that the fourth commandment in the decalogue was of moral obligation.

1. *Moral obligations never intermit, but are every day, and all the time binding.*

2. *In the case of circumcision and the annual atonement, works were commanded, contrary to the prohibition of the fourth commandment.* Would God, by an absolute precept, defeat the principles of eternal right?

3. *In Deut.5:3, Moses says, "The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day."* What words could be plainer, and what sense of them more judicious, than to believe that none of the fathers before Moses were under the obligations to keep the fourth commandment (which was part of the covenant that Moses was speaking of), which would have been the case if it had been *moral* in its nature?

4. *None of the laws of Moses were written and engraven on stones but the ten commandments; and yet it is expressly said (2 Cor. 3:7,11) that the ministration of what was there written is done away and abolished, which will never be the case with moral law.*

5. *The prophets of the Lord faithfully and abundantly reprov'd the Jews for Sabbath breaking; but while they point out many of the crimes of the Egyptians, Moabites, Edomites, Assyrians, Ninevites,*

Chaldeans, Tyrians, and others, they never mention Sabbath breaking. The apostle of the Gentiles also draws a black picture of them. In Rom. 1:29-31, he lays to their charge twenty-two sins, but Sabbath-breaking is not among the number. This is true of Gal. 5:19-21 where seventeen sins are mentioned.

6. *The Sabbaths appointed by Moses were limited by evening.* Whether the evening began at mid-day, at the setting of the sun, when the stars appeared, or at any other season, is immaterial: the Israelites, no doubt understood the expression used by their law-giver, *from evening to evening*. That it intends a whole day is evident . . .

7. *There is nothing in the starry heavens — in the atmosphere, or the productions of the earth, that marks one day in seven to be more holy than another . . .*

8. *The law of the Sabbath, when given by Moses, could be kept by all Israel.* The tribes in their encampment did not cover a district, it is presumed, more than ten miles square; and after they took possession of Canaan, their whole country was but a very small part of the habitable world; of course they could all rest a specific day with ease, which would be impossible for all the nations of the earth to do.

9. *The precepts of Moses were divinely binding on those for whom they were intended, for the length of time designed; and all of them that are evangelized in the New Testament are binding on Christians: the rest of them belong to the Jews, and other nations, and individuals to whom they were addressed, or have ceased by their limitation.*

10. *All the ten commandments, except the fourth, are brought forward and enjoined in the New Testament . . . But where shall we find a precept given by Him who was*

greater than Moses — who was faithful in all His house — that His followers should abstain from labor and keep holy the seventh day of every week? or that the first day of every week should supersede the seventh, to be kept in remembrance of His resurrection? He appointed one meeting for His disciples on a mountain in Galilee: and He appeared to above 500 brethren at once; but on what day of the week I know not.

11. *A day, limited by the unchangeable monuments of nature, could be observed by the nation of Israel in their section of the country; but as the Gospel was for all the world, no one day could be observed by the inhabitants at large . . .*

12. *If the fourth commandment is moral (still binding, without change or decay), servants, cattle, and gates must exist forever, as long as the perfections of God and the faculties of men endure . . .*

17. *There is a scattering class all over christendom, and in some parts they are numerous, who strictly regard the first day of every week, in obedience to the fourth commandment.* They have changed the seventh day for the first, placed the resurrection of Christ for the object instead of God's rest and the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, altered the penalty from death to a small fine, changed a rest within their gates for a go-abroad to perform Christian worship, and added the commandment: "Except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy." But they have not told us who is to be the judge, to decide whether the works done on the first day are works of mercy, or not. Is the parent to be judge for the child? the church for its members? and the magistrate for the populace? — why a weekly day should be appointed to

celebrate one event in the scheme of redemption and no day to commemorate other events, equally important, seems strange. If, however, there is a divine precept for it, our reasoning must be quiet: *but where do we find the command, that the disciples of Christ should keep the first day of every week in remembrance of the resurrection of Christ?* The class of Christians that I am now treating of, wherever they are numerous enough, make the observance of their first day an article of jurisprudence. The day is legalized, and the offender punished; regardless of the good maxim "That neither legislators, judges, nor jurors, in their official capacity, have anything to do with souls and eternity; for where conscience begins, empire ends."

18. *Another respectable sect is ever found in christendom who keep every seventh day of the week as holy time; believing that the fourth commandment is unalterable in its nature, and binding on all nations . . . [they] punish those who disregard their holy day with nothing but non-fellowship. They also appeal to the first centuries of Christianity for precedent as much as their first day brethren.*

19. *Among the rest there has been, and still is, a goodly number who believe the divinity of the fourth commandment, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and worship Him in public and private, in spirit and in truth, who, nevertheless, believe that there is no sanctity in one day more than another; they see that God blesses the assembled saints on one day of the week, as well as another, and that individuals have access to God, and receive joy of believing, without a diary reckoning.*

20. . . . As we read of the whole church, the presumption is that each church knew her own members.

The inspired apostles, by word and epistles, gave much instruction to those churches . . .

21. *As individuals, their right temper of mind and private devotion is described, their relative and civil behavior is enforced, and their various duties, as members of churches, are imperiously enjoined.*

22. *There are duties enjoined on the disciples, when assembled together, that required fixed days for their performance.* These days must be fixed by divine appointment, by legal authority, or by mutual agreement. When Christ and His apostles were on earth, the power of making laws was in the hands of the heathen, who were enemies of Christ, and opposed to His cause; and in their hands it continued until the fourth century. Of course, during that length of time, there could be no laws made to regulate Christianity, either in times or proceedings.

23. *That Christ gave any command to His disciples to assemble every first day of the week in commemoration of His resurrection, is not to be found — but He had many things to say to them which they were not able to bear, which He assured them should be revealed to them by the Spirit of truth after His ascension. To the inspired writings of the Acts and Epistles of the apostles we therefore apply for aid, as our last and sure guide.*

24. [Acts 21:20; 15:10; Gal. 4:10] From these texts, without any comment, it appears highly probable — almost certain — that the Jews who embraced Christianity assembled on the Sabbath, and not on the first day of the week. If our translation of the New Testament is correct, there is a marked difference between the Sabbath and the first day of the week [*mia sabbaton*].

25. *The order which Paul gave to*

the churches of Galatia, reads thus: [Cal.6:6,10].

The order he refers to and enjoins on the church of Corinth, in the following words: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, so do ye. On the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor.16:2). (If any other order was given to the Galatians, it is not recorded). This order to the Galatians had no respect to the time of doing, but to the work to be done; but to the Corinthians, the time (first day of the week) is particularly noticed. The work to be done was not reading the Scriptures — preaching — exhortation — prophesying — praying nor singing, but laying by in store as God had prospered everyone. The articles to be laid in store were all good things; clothing, food and money, for the poor saints in Judea. Whether this work was to be repeated on the first day of more weeks than one is not said. The business of the day seems to have been measuring, weighing, deducting, casting, and conveying the proceeds to the depot, that all might be ready for Paul to receive and carry to the poor saints in Judea

26. *Nothing appears more likely to me, than that the several churches appointed their own days to assemble together.* The churches in Judea preferred their old Sabbath, the Corinthians the first day of the week, etc.; contiguous churches taking care to appoint different days, that men of leisure and piety might attend several meetings in a week. By this mode one preacher would do all the essential work that seven do on a different plan. *Daily* (not weekly) in the temple and in every house, they would not cease

to teach and preach Jesus.

27. *One man esteems one day above another — another esteems every day alike.* Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

The foregoing remarks are now written when I am more than 83 years old; but they contain the exercises, views and conclusions of my mind, when I was in full vigor of those powers of mind which God was pleased to give me.

August, 1837.

. . . . 29. *Considering the laws of the states, and the long usages of this country, it is not probable that the suggestion made in the foregoing (No.26) will take effect until some revolution takes place in the religious department.* The most that can be expected is that legislatures will cease making sabbatical laws, and churches decline in making the observance of one day or another, or no day a test of fellowship; leaving individuals to judge and act for themselves.

30. *I have only to add, that in some of my writings that have been published heretofore, I have given more credit to the arguments in favor of the appointment of the first-day Sabbath, and its general observance, than I can now admit of.*

June, 1838.

ON SABBATICAL LAWS

The Mosaic institution, which formed the tribes into a theocracy, was very different from the government of any other nation, and from the government of Gospel churches

Exclusive of their "divers washings and carnal ordinances," which were typical of good things, they had many laws to regulate them as a body politic, particularly adapted to their circumstances, and binding on no other nation. Their laws for trying jealousy by bitter water; for de-

ciding the cause between the man-slayer and avenger of blood, at the gates of the city of refuge; against taking usury; to oblige a man to marry the widow of his deceased brother; to release lands at jubilee, etc., no other nation has seen cause to adopt, nor felt themselves bound to obey. The incompleteness of the political part of the Mosaic code to govern other nations by, requires no other proof, but just to observe that the people were forbidden to have commerce with other nations, of course had no commercial laws. Any laws, therefore, which the Jews had to enforce the observance of the Sabbath, or punish the Sabbath-breaker, give no grounds to Christians to exercise like force. The king of Israel gave that people their laws and orders, but Christ has given laws for the regulation of Christianity. Now, if there be any account in the New Testament that Jesus called upon the rulers of state to make and enforce laws, to oblige the people to keep the first day of the week holy, and fine or punish them if they did not; such an account would be in point, but such an account we have not.

It has been noticed, in a foregoing page, that the evidence was so clear that the Christians assembled in course on the first day of the week, that it hardly admitted of doubt, and the evidence about as clear, *that it was done voluntarily, as a matter of prudence, without any divine command; hence a disregard of the day was not esteemed a matter of offence.* In Gal.4:10-11, Paul reproves the Galatians for observing days, months, times and years, as the Jews did; for Jewish times, no doubt, are intended. But in Rom. 14:5, a day is spoken of, which some regarded, and some regarded not, *but none of them were reprov'd by Paul . . .* in the case before us,

a regard, or disregard to the day, was not a cause of judging and setting at naught a brother, whom the Lord accepted. If, then, a disregard to the Lord's Day was not censurable by the church, can we possibly suppose that it ought to be punished by the laws of the state? . . .

The work of the legislature is to make laws for the security of life, liberty and property, and leave religion to the consciences of individuals. If the sacred code, in the New Testament, is not sufficient to govern Christians in all their religious affairs, either the wisdom or goodness of Christ is deficient.

Much confusion arises in government when sins and crimes are blended together. Every state crime is a moral evil or sin (provided the laws of state are legitimate), but every sin is not a crime to be punished by law. Malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, pride, impenitence, unbelief, etc., are sins, but not crimes. Suppose, then, that a disregard of the first day of the week is a sin as flagrant as enmity, bigotry or ill-will, yet it is not a crime to be punished by law; for I would here request an instance where Jesus, or the inspired apostles, ever called on the civil rulers to punish Sabbath-breakers, or those who disregarded the first day of the week. If there is such an instance, let it be pointed to; but, if not, let clamor cease . . .

When Christianity was set up in the world, it was small. The power of making laws was in the hands of the enemies of Christianity. Laws to guard the Christian religion could not have been expected, but Christ knew what would come. He knew that about 300 years thereafter Christianity would rise triumphant; why did He not then give some precept, at least some small hint, that when Christianity should become so general, that *then the rulers*

of state should make laws to establish Christianity, and force the observance of the first day? We look in vain to find anything like it in the New Testament, and it is generally confessed that when the event did take place — when Constantine the Great established Christianity in the empire and forced an observance of the first day — Christianity was disrobed of her virgin beauty, and prostituted to the unhallowed principle of state policy, where it has remained in a criminal commerce until the present moment.

Men of little reading, and less thought, conclude that if there is no law of state to force the observance of the Sabbath (for so they name the first day of the week), it would entirely run out, and not be regarded at all. Why did it not then run out in the first three centuries? . . .

Legal force is not the armor with which the Captain of our salvation clothes the soldiers of the cross. An honest appeal to the reasons and judgments of men is all the force that Christians should use to induce others to believe in and worship God as they themselves do. All the punishment that pious Christians inflict on the irreligious is pity, forgiveness, and prayer, unless the irreligious man breaks out into overt acts, in which case he is to be punished according to his crime

. . . when I see a man with the insignia of his office, arrest a fellow-man for non-attendance on worship, or labor or amusement on Sunday, it strains every fiber of my soul. Who that ever read the New Testament, which describes the meekness, patience, forbearance and sufferings of the first Christians would ever have expected to see those who call themselves Christians, avail themselves of such weapons to suppress vice and support Christian morality? . . .

The public assembling of Christians for religious worship is certainly appointed in the New Testament by precept, and abundantly by example. And, as has been noticed, the evidence is nearly conclusive that the first Christians generally assembled on the first day, *not with a view that it was of moral obligation — not in obedience to the fourth command of the decalogue, which enjoined the observance and rest of the seventh day — nor in obedience to any command given them by Christ, but voluntarily, as a prudential thing, to perpetuate the event of Christ's resurrection.* Their public assembling, however, was not confined to the first day, but daily, in the temple and other places both day and night, as opportunity served, they assembled for Christian worship. There were some among them who did not discover any advantages in their assembling on the first day more than any other day, and, as the day was not divinely appointed, those who regarded it did not judge and set at nought those who regarded it not, but let every man be persuaded in his own mind.

SUMMARY

1. God, for once, rested on the seventh day.

2. No proof that God commanded men to rest on the seventh day during the patriarchal age.

3. About 2400 years after creation the holy Sabbath was enjoined on the tribes of Israel.

4. The fourth commandment was not moral, but absolute [covenantal].

5. The Sabbath was not a day of public worship, but of rest.

6. After the return of the Jews from Babylon, of their own accord they built synagogues, and assembled in them every Sabbath, to read and hear the law of Moses and

the prophets, for which they had no command, and received no reproof.

7. The Gentiles were never re-proved for Sabbath-breaking.

8. The first day of the week was never appointed by Christ, to be kept different from other days.

9. Proof, nearly conclusive, that the first Christians paid particular attention to the first day; those who did not regard the day were not judged and set at naught by those who regarded it.

10. The observance of the first day perpetuates the resurrection of Christ. [Cf., however, his points #17 and #23 in "The Sabbath Examined"].

11. The appointment of religious days, no article of legislation.

12. The observance of the first day was never enforced by law until the reign of constantine, in the beginning of the fourth century.

13. Tithing-men [men appointed in New England churches to monitor behaviour on the "Sabbath"] are obliged by their oaths to profane the time which they conceive to be holy.

14. The public assembling of Christians for religious worship is enjoined by New Testament precept and abundant examples.

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BOOK REVIEWS

DOGMATIC THEOLOGY

by W.G.T. Shedd

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Augsburg Publ., 1979, \$12.50

This is the first of a projected three volume work on the history of Christian ethics. This volume covers the first five centuries of Christian thought. The chapter headings are: "New Testament Ethics," "The Early Christian Fathers," "Tertullian," "Clement of Alexandria," "Origen," "The Fourth Century," "Basil," "John Chrysostom and Augustine."

The author gives as one of his reasons for undertaking this work, "the conviction that . . . one may learn a great deal from the insights and errors of the past . . . Those interested in Christian ethics might learn from the serious efforts of the past how a way of living responsibly in a changing world might be found." I believe the author succeeds in giving a good summary of early Christian thought . . .

Asceticism has always been attractive in certain segments of the church, and one can find the roots of

it in the early church fathers. Many of them were monks, and monasticism and asceticism were fairly prevalent among the early leaders of the church. In **Clement** we find the notion which still has adherents today, namely that sex, even in marriage, is not for pleasure but for procreation. We find the beginning of the idea of celibacy for church leaders in the 4th century, and in Chrysostom. In Origen we find the origin of spiritualizing and allegorizing of Scripture, which has done so much harm in the church . . .

However, the early fathers also wrote things which would receive our wholehearted approval, and appear to be very 20th-century oriented: "you who harness your horses with splendour, and despise your brother when he is ill-dressed, who let your wheat rot, and will not feed the hungry; who hide your gold and despise the distressed." Again: "a woman who deliberately destroys a foetus is answerable for murder. And any fine distinction as to its being completely formed or unformed is not admissible amongst us." That was Basil speaking.

In short, a valuable book for those who want to know the thinking of the leaders in the early church.

— J. Tuininga (*Calvinist Contact*, Nov.7, 1980, p.23)

THE ANABAPTIST VISION

by Harold Bender

Hereald Press, Scottdale, Pa., 15683

After denying other interpretations of Anabaptism, Mr. Bender presents an attractive vision of Ana-

baptism in this 36 page book, which should compell us to look again at our own notions about Christianity.

The emphasis of the Anabaptists was not on "faith," but on "Following." They thought of themselves not so much as "believers," but as "disciples," whose whole lives were to be radically patterned after the life of Christ. The state churches of Lutheran and Reformed persuasions could not produce changed lives; but the holy living of the Anabaptists was testified to by Zwingli and other Reformers.

Another essential doctrine was voluntary church membership of disciples only. For this reason, they rejected infant baptism. Since they did not believe that the world was to be included in the church, the Anabaptists insisted on a standard of living that would separate them from worldly living. Thus, they suffered persecution from the world.

A key Anabaptist teaching, one that is slighted by contemporary Baptists, suggests that neither the Kingdom nor its ethics are to be postponed. They were idealists who lived and died by their idealism. They did not consider the Sermon on the Mount to be only a heavenly vision not meant for us now.

The reader is referred to Leonard Verduin's *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, as an expansion of the *Vision* Mr. Bender presents in short compass.

— Mark McCulley
Nashville, Tn.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

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