

**God's Gospel Message in His
putting aside of the Sabbath (the
Seventh Day), and His Own choice
of the First Day for His People
now.**

I AM asked, "Do you keep the Sabbath?" I answer, "No," and Seventh Day Adventists at once say, "You are breaking God's law." I answer that they are "breaking" God's gospel, and His law also,—for His people who have received that gospel.

But I am asked for proofs, and we must turn for these to the Holy Scriptures; for "my" opinions and "your" opinions are worthless. "The Word of the Lord endureth for ever."

1. There is no doubt as to the fact that God appointed the Sabbath to Israel (Ex. 20. 8-11), even as it had been sanctified for Adam (Gen. 2. 3). But all this does not prove it is God's appointment for His people now, any more than His appointment then of sacrifices of bulls and goats and lambs. God is *God*, and He has a perfect right to tell His people what they should do, and every believer should gratefully acknowledge this. True, such commandments as "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," and "Thou shalt not steal," are fixed for all time, but commandments which are types and "shadows" can be appointed by Him for one time, and not another. For example, Israel had the passover but Christians do not have this. And again, they have baptism, but Abraham did not receive this command. And Sabbaths *are* called a "shadow" by the Holy Spirit Himself

in Colossians 2. 16, 17. It is altogether wrong to say that the word here means special feast days, and not weekly sabbaths. It is the usual word for the weekly seventh day: and cannot be shown to mean other feast days in any passage of the New Testament. Besides, the other feast days have *already* been mentioned in Col. 2. 16 (“holy days”).

2. There is not one command in the New Testament for children of God to keep the seventh day. Contrast this with God's emphasis in Old Testament times. *All the other* nine Commandments of Exodus 20 are applied to believers now except *this one*. Why the omission? Observe that it is the only command on the two tables which refers to a people possessing an earthly land (“thy stranger that is *within thy gates*”), and thus is not addressed to those who are themselves “strangers and pilgrims” (1 Peter 2. 11). If there is not one command from God to keep it, any addition to His Word is sin (Prov. 30. 5, 6), and according to the commandments of men (Col. 2. 22).
3. Many have been misled by the claim that the Apostles observed the Sabbath. But the Scriptures do not say anything of the kind. The last time the Holy Spirit speaks of observing the seventh day is Luke 23. 56, just *before* the resurrection of Christ, by those who did not understand the gospel-meaning of His resurrection. (And Adventists seem

to have the same misunderstanding, though living after His resurrection). What we do read in the Acts of the Apostles is that God's servants *went to preach* to the Jews then, even as a godly Christian would still do, i.e., at the time when they can be best reached. But the *meetings of Christians* among themselves are never connected with the Sabbath. When the day of these IS mentioned, the Sabbath is passed over *in silence* (Acts 2. 1, the first day of the week, and 20. 6, 7). And the same passing over of the Sabbath is found in 1 Cor. 16. 2, where we have the preparation of a gift for God (associated with a special day for God in Ex. 23. 15, and therefore fittingly here the first day of the week). *No other day* of the week has any special prominence, and the appearances of the Lord Jesus to His gathered people in a house after His resurrection are *not* dated, *except* they were on the first day of the week.

4. One day in Scripture is called "the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1. 10): the word used is only found once elsewhere, for the "Lord's" Supper (1 Cor. 11. 20), which the Holy Spirit Himself connects with the first day in Acts 20. 6, 7. Colossians 2. 16 has already made clear that the Sabbath is NOT the Lord's Day to be observed in the present time; and other verses have shown only *one* day emphasized beyond others for Worship, and that the first day. Acts

13. 33 and Psalms 118. 24 mark out one day specially in connexion with the resurrection of Christ, and the name "Lord," moreover, is specially emphasized in connexion with His resurrection (Rom. 14. 9). It is fitting that as He was "Lord of the Sabbath" in His life (Matt. 12. 8), He should be Lord of the first day in His resurrection.
5. It must be remembered that the contention of Adventists, that Rome changed the day, is quite a false claim. The fact is that Constantine (and those who followed him in the system of Babylonianism of which Romanism is one branch) took the Lord's Day, belonging to believers, and gave it *to the world*. He called it "Sunday." This is parallel with Rome's mixture, to hide the separated path of God's people, and the real meaning of the Lord's Day for a heavenly people, as Christians truly are by God's grace, even while they walk this earth.
 6. And the Holy Spirit's emphasis on the first day is itself a glorious display of God's gospel. (a) It declares that the Lord Jesus has fulfilled the law (Matt. 5. 17), and has become "the End of the law into righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10. 4). It is this display of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4. 4) that Satan ever wishes to hide. If you are trying to save yourself, and have become heartbroken at your utter failure here, dear reader, is God's own gospel for your troubled

and burdened soul. This gospel is God's delight, though men hate it. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "It is finished" (John 19. 30), and He meant what He said. Have you noticed that His body rested in the grave that last Sabbath before His resurrection? Why? Because He had indeed fulfilled the words "Six days shalt thou labour, and DO ALL THY WORK" (Ex. 20. 9, John 17. 4). Not one part was omitted. He had nothing more to do; His body had been prepared, to fulfil the work (Heb. 10. 5), and so that body rested on the Sabbath. Do you not see God's clear proclamation of His glorious salvation by Christ's finished work? Is this YOUR joy? YOUR resting place? And so His people are united to Him in His resurrection, as John 12. 24 shows. It is all so wonderful. The Lord Jesus did not come to His people the seventh day, but the first of a NEW week. They cannot help to fulfil the law: He HAS DONE that, and they stand in a new position of a new creation (2 Cor. 5. 17), with a new week, and a new responsibility, "in Christ Jesus."

(b) The LAW said, "This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10. 28). Mark the order—DO—LIVE. 6 plus 1—Obedience followed by Rest and Reward. But the gospel says, "Live, and thou shalt do this." Hence we may put it thus:—1 plus 6—rest in Christ, followed by love's obedience to Him (1 Cor. 9. 21, Gal. 6. 2). The gift of a new

day to His people, and that day the first, shows that they begin on resurrection ground, and then live to please their Lord. If we go *back* to the seventh day without His commandment, we actually deny the finished work of Christ for us, and deny that He has brought us to the righteousness of which Romans 10. 3, 4 speaks. We make ourselves like to those who are trusting to their own obedience to enter into rest. We make ourselves "debtors" (cf. Gal. 5. 3) instead of those who rejoice in deliverance from condemnation of God's holy law (Rom. 8. 1). If *I put myself* under the seventh day now, I put myself under a law that condemns for every sin, and works wrath (Rom. 4. 15), and this means *no forgiveness*. It is a serious thing to obscure God's GRACE. The matter is more serious than many think. It is a setting of man's words against God's words, if I take up a commandment not given to me at the present time; just as dangerous as when Israel misused the brazen serpent (2 Kings 18. 4). It is, as we have seen, the setting of man's works against God's grace, and thus an indirect attack on the Lord Jesus, and also on HIS commandments for the people whom He has redeemed with His precious blood (John 14. 15, 21, 23).

But, dear reader, if you are not yet trusting in Him for your soul's salvation, how can I close this message without again showing you His loving and completed work? He ful-

filled every part of God's holy law, and bore all the heavy judgment, that sinners might be able to obey from the new standpoint of a new life first. Hence "1 plus 6" is no mere accident, but the Holy Spirit's crystallizing of a gospel message. NOTHING BEFORE rest and peace with God (Rom. 3. 24)! Justification fully by His grace! The first day leaves no room for our work first, no room at all; but it leaves plenty of room afterwards for the whole week of grateful obedience in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is God's gospel. Grace first—that is the gospel. Man's efforts are not good enough for God, whatever men do is imperfect—and worse. But when there is salvation there is a wondrous call to live, in the power of the Lord Jesus, a new life. Seventh Day Adventism hides this precious thought. But by grace we will proclaim it. The "*first day*" gives no encouragement to those who trust in themselves: the self-satisfied are sent empty away. The Lord Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous but *sinners* to repentance." And such, heart-broken, hear the music of God's love, that the claims of law, working wrath, are satisfied and that the humble soul receives everything *in Christ*, that the whole life may please, in view of His coming again. Dear reader, is He your Saviour by His precious blood? And are you looking to Him for daily strength, and longing to see Him when He comes back?