

SABBATH REFORM

1. WHAT kind of worship does Christ say results from doctrines based on the commandments of men?

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

2. What commandment did Christ say the Pharisees had made void by their teaching?

“For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother. . . . But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free.” **Verses 4–6.**

3. What was the result of their course?

“Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.” **Verse 6.**

NOTE — By a gift or dedication of property to the temple service, they taught that a man might be freed from the duties enjoined by the fifth commandment.

4. What question did the disciples soon afterward ask Christ?

“Knowest Thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?” **Verse 12.**

5. What answer did the Saviour make?

“But He answered and said, Every plant, which My Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.” **Verse 13.**

NOTE — What is true of the fifth commandment is true of every other commandment. If through tradition men set aside any other of God’s commandments the words of Christ to the Pharisees are applicable to them. They are guilty of making void the commandment of God, and of instituting vain worship.

6. When, and by whom, was the Sabbath “planted”?

“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” **Exodus 20:11.**

7. Who claims to have planted the Sunday institution?

“*Question.*—Has the [Catholic] church power to make any alterations in the commandments of God?

“*Answer.*— Instead of the seventh day, and other festivals appointed by the old law, the church has prescribed the Sundays and holy days to be set apart for God’s worship; and these we are now obliged to keep in consequence of God’s commandment, instead of the ancient Sabbath.” “*Catholic Christian Instructed,*” by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Challoner, page 211.

NOTE — “We Catholics, then, have precisely the same authority for keeping Sunday holy instead of Saturday, as we have for every other article of our creed; namely, the authority of ‘the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth’ (1Timothy 3:15); whereas, you who are Protestants have really no authority for it whatever; for there is no authority for it in the Bible, and you will not allow that there can be authority for it anywhere else. Both you and we do, in fact, follow tradition in this matter; but we follow it, believing it to be a part of God’s word, and the church to be its divinely appointed guardian and interpreter; you follow it, denouncing it all the time as a fallible and treacherous guide, which often ‘makes the commandment of God of none effect.’ ” “*Clifton Tracts,*” Vol. IV, article “A Question for All Bible Christians,” page 15. For further quotations on this, see studies on “The Change of the Sabbath,” and Walking As He Walked.”

8. When is final salvation to be brought to God’s people?

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1Peter 1:5.

9. When God’s salvation is near to come, upon whom does He pronounce a blessing?

“Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. *Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.*” Isaiah 56:1, 2.

10. Is this promised blessing confined to any one class?

“Also the sons of the **STRANGER** that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, *every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of My covenant; even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer.*” **Verses 6, 7.**

NOTE — It is evident from these scriptures that in the last day, when men are waiting for the Saviour to appear, there will be a call for those who really love the Lord to separate themselves from the world, to observe the Lord’s true Sabbath, and to depart from all evil.

11. What does God tell His ministers to do at this time?

“*Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*” **Isaiah 58:1.**

12. What message of Sabbath reform does He send?

“If thou *turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*” **Verses 13, 14.**

NOTE — The Sabbath of Jehovah is not now, by the majority even of professed Christians, called holy and honorable. By many it is stigmatized as “Jewish.” The Lord foresaw how this would be in this age, and inspired the prophet to write as he did. “*If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath.*” This is a strong expression, indicating that many would be trampling upon God’s day, and doing their own pleasure upon it, instead of seeking God, and honoring Him by keeping the Sabbath holy.

13. What will those be called who engage in this reformation?

“And thou shalt be called, *The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.*” **Verse 12.**

14. What does another prophet say professed teachers among God's people have done?

“Her priests have *violated My law*, and have *profaned Mine holy things*: they have *put no difference between the holy and profane*; neither have they shown difference between the unclean and the clean, *and have hid their eyes from My Sabbaths*, and I am profaned among them.” **Ezekiel 22:26.**

15. What have they done to maintain their theories?

“And her prophets have *daubed them with untempered mortar*, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, *Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken.*” **Verse 28.**

NOTES — Untempered mortar is that which is improperly worked, and will not therefore hold together or stand the test. Thus it is with the reasons advanced for keeping Sunday instead of the Bible Sabbath, the seventh day. They are not only unsound and untenable in themselves, but are utterly inconsistent, contradictory, and destructive one of the other, among themselves. They are like the witnesses employed by the Jewish leaders to condemn Christ. Of these the record says: “The chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put Him to death; and found none. For many bare *false witness* against Him, but *their witness agreed not together.*” **Mark 14:55, 56.** The lack of *agreement* among them was evidence in itself of the *falsity* of their testimony. In nothing, perhaps, is a lack of agreement better illustrated than in the reasons assigned for Sunday-keeping. Note the following:—

One says the Sabbath has been *changed* from the seventh to the first day of the week.

Another says that the Sabbath commandment requires only one day of rest after six of labor, and hence *there has been no change.*

Some reason that all ought to keep Sunday, because although, as they affirm, God did not appoint a *particular* day, yet *agreement* is necessary, and to have any or every day a sabbath would be equal to no sabbath at all.

Others, to avoid the claims of God's law, assert that the Sabbath precept is one of those ordinances which was *against us, contrary to us, blotted out, and nailed to the cross*. Still, they admit that a day of rest and convocation is necessary, and therefore the day of Christ's resurrection, they say, has been chosen.

Another class say they believe it is impossible to know which is the *seventh day*, although they have no difficulty in ascertaining which is the *first*.

Some are so bold even as to declare that *Sunday is the original seventh day*.

Others, with equal certainty, say that those who keep the seventh day are endeavoring to be *justified by the law*, and are *fallen from grace*.

Another class, with more liberal views, say they believe that every one should be fully persuaded in his own mind, whether he keep this day, or that, or none at all.

Still again, as if having found the great desideratum or missing link in the argument, men credited with even more than ordinary intelligence, will sometimes declare that it is *impossible to keep the seventh day on a round and rolling earth*; and yet, strange to say, they find no difficulty in keeping *Sunday anywhere*, and believe that this day should be observed *the world over!*

Lastly, and more terrible and presumptuous than all the rest, some, like Herod of old in slaying all the children of Bethlehem in order to make sure of killing Christ, have gone so far as to teach that *all ten commandments have been abolished*, in order to avoid the duty enjoined in the *fourth*. But as in the case of Herod, God's Anointed escaped the murderous blow of this wicked king, so in the judgment such will have to meet God over His broken law, and will find that the Sabbath precept stands there unchanged with the rest.

Said Christ, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be

called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” **Matthew 5:19.**

16. What does the Lord say will become of this wall thus daubed with untempered mortar?

“Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that *it shall fall*: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, *O great hailstones, shall fall*; and a stormy wind shall rend it.” **Ezekiel 13:11.**

17. When are these hailstones to fall?

“Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen *the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?*” **Job 38:22, 23.**

18. Under which of the seven last plagues will this hail fall?

“And *the seventh angel* poured out his vial into the air; . . . and the cities of the nations fell: . . . and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men *a great hail* out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent.” **Revelation 16:17–21.**

19. In order to prepare His people for that terrible time, what does God expect His ministers to do?

“Ye have not *gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge* for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord.” **Ezekiel 13:5.**

20. Instead of trying to close up this breach made in God’s law [the loss of the Sabbath], and so make up the hedge, what have they done?

“They have seen vanity and lying divination, *saying, The Lord saith: and the Lord hath not sent them*: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word.” **Verse 6.**

21. During these closing scenes, what message is God sending to the world to turn men from false worship to the worship of the true and living God?

“Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea,

and the fountains of waters. . . . Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. . . . If any man worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his out without mixture into the cup of His indignation.” **Revelation 14:7–10.**

NOTE — This is the last gospel message to be sent to the world before the Lord comes. Under it will be developed two classes of people, one having the mark of the beast (the Papacy), and the other keeping the commandments of God, and having His seal, the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. See studies on “The Closing Gospel Message,” and “The Seal of God” and “The Mark of Apostasy.”

22. What, besides attending and taking part in religious services (Luke 4:16), did Christ do on the Sabbath day?

“Who *went about doing good.*” **Acts 10:38.** See **Matthew 8:14–17; 12:1–15; Mark 2:23–28; 3:1–6; Luke 6:1–11; 13:11–17; 14:1–6; John 5:1–18; 9:1–41.**

NOTE — When we come to study the life of Christ, we find that He did not make the Sabbath a day of idleness, nor even a day confined wholly to public and private worship, but one of active service in blessing others. On this day especially He went about doing good, ministering to the sick, and bringing relief to those long bound by Satan. **Luke 13:15, 16; John 5:5, 6.** And as He is our pattern in all things, we, too, like Him, should seek to make the Sabbath a day for helping and blessing others. To loose the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, deal bread to the hungry, clothe the naked, and let the oppressed go free, is the fast which God has chosen, and the Sabbath-keeping most acceptable to Him, **Isaiah 58:1–12.** In this kind of work and ministry there is room for a world-wide Sabbath reform.

BROTHER! Up to the breach
For God’s freedom and truth;
Let us act as we teach,
With the wisdom of age, and the vigor of youth.
Heed not their cannon-balls;

Ask not who stands or falls;
Grasp the sword of the Lord,
And—Forward!