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Supplement

THE CHANGE OF THE SABBATH

WHO AUTHORIZED IT?

By A. F. Dugger Sr. Deceased

The change of the Sabbath (seventh day) to Sunday was a gradual work, and it was not for many centuries that this institution was able to displace the Sabbath of the Lord; in fact it never entirely succeeded in doing this. We shall now notice some of the steps that led to this change.

The very name Sunday suggests its heathen origin. Webster in his Unabridged Dictionary thus defines it: "Sunday, so-called because this day was anciently dedicated to the sun, or its worship, the first day of the week." Webster's Dictionary has the following: "Sunday: so named because anciently dedicated to the sun, or its worship; the first day of the week." Morer says: "It is not to be denied that we borrow the name of this day from the ancient Greeks and Romans, and we allow that the old Egyptians worshipped the sun, and as a standing memorial of the veneration dedicated this day to him." Dialogues on the Lord's Day, page 22.

These authorities teach that Sunday was anciently dedicated by the heathen to the worship of the sun. And we learn from the Scriptures that this worship was in direct opposition to

the true worship of God. When Josiah the king destroyed the idol worship in Judah, it is recorded that “he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense... in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon and to the planets, and to all the hosts of heaven.” — 2 Kings 23: 5.

We learn from this passage that even the people of God had for a time followed the heathen in worshipping the sun and the hosts of heaven, and also that the image of Baal was dedicated to the worship of the sun. This is the image that Elijah proclaimed against: “If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.” 1 Kings 18:21.

This heathen festival Sunday was to a limited extent brought into the church in the latter part of the second century of the Christian era by the professed conversion of some heathen who continued to observe some of their pagan rites and festivals. But it was left for Constantine, Emperor of Rome, to pave the way for this change of the Sabbath. Constantine issued an edict in favor of this heathen festival, A. D. 321, as follows:

“Let all the judges and town people; and the occupation of all trades, rest on the venerable day of the sun but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty attend to the business of agriculture because it often happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines; lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted by heaven.”

This is the first law for the observance of Sunday as a rest day, and this was given in favor of paganism, as is evident from the language used, for he speaks of it as the "venerable day of the sun."

In the Library of Universal Knowledge, under the article of Sabbath, we find the following concerning this edict:

“But whatever may have been the opinion and practice of these early Christians in regard to cessation from labor on the Sunday, unquestionably the first law, either ecclesiastical or civil, by which the Sabbatical observance of that day is known to have been ordained, is the edict of Constantine, 321 A.D... But it was not till the year 538 that abstinence from agricultural labor on Sunday was recommended, rather than enjoined by ecclesiastical authority (the third Council of Orleans), and this expressly that the people might have more leisure to go to church and say their prayers; nor was it till the end of the ninth century that the Emperor Leo, 'the philosopher,' repealed the exemption which it enjoyed under the edict of Constantine.”

From the above extracts we learn:

First — The law of Constantine, A.D. 321, was the first religious or civil law for the observance of Sunday of which we have any record.

Second — It was only binding on town people, but left all country people free to labor at their agricultural business on Sunday.

Third — That this privilege, for country people to work on Sunday, was permitted until the ninth century; although the church council at Orleans, A.D. 538, recommended the people rest on Sunday.

Coleman says: “Down even to the fifth century the Jewish Sabbath was continued in the Christian Church but with a rigor and solemnity gradually diminished until it was wholly discontinued.” — Ancient Chris. Exam. Chapter 26, sec. 2.

Edward Brerewood, professor in Gresham College, London, says: “It is commonly believed that the Jewish Sabbath was changed into the Lord's day by Christian emperors, and they know little who do not know that the

ancient Sabbath did remain and was observed by the eastern churches three hundred years after our Savior's passion." Treatise on the Sabbath, page 77.

The American Presbyterian Board of Publication, in tract no. 118, states that "The observance of the seventh day Sabbath did not cease till it was abolished after the empire became Christian."

Dr. Cox says: — "The early fathers give no support, direct or indirect, to the notion that the Sabbath had been transferred at all; but it is not surprising that those who wrote after the enactment by Constantine that Sunday should be kept as a Sabbath, were more apt to discover reasons for observing it." Lit. Vol. 1, p.257 (note).

Dr. Neander says: "Opposition to Judaism introduced the particular festival of Sunday, very early, indeed, into the place of Sabbath. The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday. Perhaps at the end of the second century, a false application of this kind had begun to take place: for men appear by that time to have considered laboring on Sunday a sin." Church History, p.168.

Sir Wm. Domville says: "Centuries of the Christian era passed away before the Sunday was observed by the Christian church as a Sabbath. History does not furnish us a single proof or indication that it was at any time so observed previous to the sabbatical edict of Constantine in A.D. 321." Examination of the Six Texts, page 291.

The American Encyclopedia, art. "Sabbath" says: "Constantine the great made a law for the whole empire (A.D. 321), that Sunday should be kept as a day of rest in all cities

and towns; but he allowed the country people to follow their work.”

Prynne says: “The seventh day Sabbath was... solemnized by Christ, the apostles and primitive Christians, till the Laodicean Council did, in a manner, quite abolish the observance of it... The Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364)... first settled the observation of the Lord's day.” —Dissertation on the Lord's Day, 1633, page 163.

Dr. Gregory and Ruter's Church History says: “Constantine commanded the first day of the week to be celebrated with peculiar solemnity; and in time this practice extended over the whole Christian world.” Page 103.

It will be observed from the above extracts that while Constantine played a conspicuous part in exalting Sunday as a Sabbath in his empire, yet it was the ecclesiastical Councils that substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of the Lord's Sabbath. That this may appear more apparent to the reader, we refer him to Daniel the prophet, who spoke of a power which “shall think to change times and laws” Dan. 7:25. It is universally believed and taught by Protestants that the above prophecy is fulfilled in the Catholic church. This power then should attempt to change times and must refer to the Sabbath, as that is the only divine time we have in this dispensation. We shall now quote from their catechisms, in which they teach that they made this change. In a book entitled, “The Catholic Christian Instructed,” which is published and endorsed by that church, we find:

Question. — What warrant have you for keeping the Sunday preferable to the ancient Sabbath which was Saturday?

Answer. — We have for it the authority of the Catholic church and apostolic tradition.

Q. — Does the Scripture anywhere command the Sunday to be kept for the Sabbath?

A. — The Scripture commands us to hear the church (Matt. 18:17; Luke 10:16), and hold fast the tradition of the apostles (II Thess. 2:15); but the Scripture does not in particular mention this change of the Sabbath. John speaks of the Lord's day (Rev. 1:10), but he does not tell us what day of the week this was, much less does he tell us that it was to take the place of the Sabbath ordained in the commandment. Luke also speaks of the disciples meeting together to break bread upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), and Paul (I Cor. 16:2) orders that on the first day of the week the Corinthians should lay by in store what they designed to bestow in charity on the faithful in Judea. But neither one of these tells us that the first day of the week was to be henceforth the day of worship and the Christian Sabbath; so that in fact the best authority we have for this ancient custom is the testimony of the church. And therefore those who pretend to be such religious observers of the Sunday, whilst they take no notice of other festivals ordained by the same church authority, show that they act more by humor, than by reason and religion; since Sundays and holy days all stand upon the same foundation, namely, the ordinance of the church. — Page 232.

From the above text we learn that Sunday has for its foundation and authority the Roman Catholic Church.

We shall quote from Doctrinal Catechism which is approved by John Hughes, D.D. Archbishop of N. York.

Question. — Have you any other proofs that they (Protestants) are not guided by the Scriptures?

Answer. — Yes; so many that we cannot admit more than a mere specimen into this small work. They reject much that is clearly contained in the Scriptures and profess more that is nowhere discoverable in that Divine Book.

Q. — Give some examples of both.

A. — They should, if the Scriptures were their only rule, keep not the Sunday, but the Saturday, according to the commandment,

"Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day," for this commandment has not, in Scripture, been changed or abrogated.

Q. — Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precepts?

A. — Had she not such power she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her — she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.

Q. — When Protestants do profane work on Saturday or the seventh day of the week, do they follow Scripture as their only rule of faith — do they find this permission clearly laid down in the sacred volume?

A. — On the contrary, they have only the authority of tradition for the practice. In profaning Saturday they violate one of God's commandments, which He has never clearly abrogated, "Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day."

The American Catholic Quarterly Review for January 1883, contains a paper on "The observance of Sunday laws and Civil Laws for its Enforcement," by John Gilmary Shea, L.L.D., a representative man, and an accomplished writer. The paper was called forth by the late agitation concerning the "Penal Code" in the State of New York. The claims which Mr. Shea makes concerning the relation of Sunday observance to the Catholic Church, accord with the facts of history are worthy of more candid consideration than modern Protestants have been accustomed to give them. We reproduce as much of these claims as space permits. They cannot be answered by a sneer. Here is what he says:

"Strange as it may seem, the State, in passing laws for the due sanctification of Sunday is unwittingly acknowledging the authority of the Catholic Church and carrying out more or less faithfully its prescriptions.

The Sunday, as a day of the week set apart for the obligatory public worship of Almighty God, to be sanctified by suspension of all servile labor, trade, and worldly avocations and exercises of devotion, is purely a creation of the Catholic Church.”

“Nothing in the New Testament forbids work, travel, trade amusement, on the first day of the week. There is nothing which implies such a prohibition. The day as one especially set apart, had no authority but that of the Catholic Church; the laws requiring its observance were passed to enforce decrees of Councils of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church created the Sunday and made the very regulations which have come down on the statute books and she will constantly, from her pulpits, her catechists, chair, and the confessional, call on her faithful to obey them, to sanctify the day and refrain from all that desecrates it.”

The above extracts abundantly prove that the Catholic Church, or “man of sin” as Paul calls it (II Thess. 2:3), has changed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, as the prophecy said he would. Confession is the strongest evidence. Prophecy points to this power as changing the Sabbath; in his works this power confesses that he made the change. This, then, must be sufficient evidence to any man that he made this change. We might have given many more extracts from Catholic works, but the above are abundantly sufficient to convince any unprejudiced mind as to who changed the Sabbath. Now, this Catholic power is called in the Scriptures the “man of sin,” “the son of perdition,” the “abomination of the earth,” “mother of harlots, who hath made all nations drink of the wine of her fornication.” Shall we keep sacredly the day that the Pope of Rome has ordained, and disregard the day that God has ordained? Is not this serving the Pope rather than God? Paul answers this: “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?” (Rom. 6:16). Let us then

obey the Lord in all His Commandments that we may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city.

We shall now give a brief historical view of these two days. In the beginning of the creation of this world the 1st day was ushered in as a work day, for God commenced His creative work on that day, and the prophet Ezekiel calls it a working day (Ex. 20:9; Ezek. 46:1). While on the other hand, the seventh day was ushered in as a Sabbath day, for God rested from His work on that day; He then blessed and sanctified it, and commanded them to keep it holy (Gen. 2:2; Exo. 20:8). It was kept holy by Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Isaiah and all of the Holy prophets who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Not only is the seventh day the Sabbath of the Old Testament but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the New Testament (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1-2). It was Christ's custom to observe the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). It was Paul's manner to observe it (Acts 17:2). The disciples of Christ observed "the Sabbath according to the Commandment" (Luke 23:56). On the contrary, the first day of the week in the New Testament, like in the Old, was regarded as a working day, for the disciples went to perform work on the first day of the week which they would not do on the Sabbath (Luke 23:56; 24:1). It was the day for journeying (Acts 20:13) and business (1 Cor. 16:1).

On entering into secular history we learn that the first day of the week, or Sunday, was dedicated by the ancient heathen to the worship of the sun, and worshipped under the name of Baal; that Constantine was the first to make a law for its observance as a day of rest, and that it was afterwards adopted by the Roman Church instead of the Lord's Sabbath; yet a noble line of devoted Christians have all along protested earnestly against this change, and have kept up the observance of the Sabbath of the Lord amidst opposition, persecution and even death. This devoted line of Sabbath keepers reaches back through every century to the

days of the apostles, and hence back through the Jewish dispensation, the patriarchal, to the very morn of creation, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. For nearly sixty centuries the seventh day Sabbath has been observed by God's people. While, on the other hand, the first day has not been observed more than fifteen centuries under the grab of so-called Christianity.

Dear Reader, which day will you keep? If you are a servant of the Lord, your duty is to obey Him. Why halt ye between two opinions? "If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him."

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