

Highways To Happiness

Most Christian churches admit that the law is God's standard for us, and yet their theologians declare that the law was done away or nailed to the cross when Jesus was crucified, and therefore has no claim on us. This idea, if true, would throw discredit on many Bible teachings.

Some may ask, "Doesn't the Bible teach that the law was abrogated, or done away with?" When Christ died on the cross the law of ceremonies which pointed to Christ and His death, often referred to as the law of Moses, was done away with, for there was no more need for it. Jesus made it very clear, however, in Matthew 5: 17, 18 that the law would never be done away with, that is, the Ten Commandment law. "Think not," He said, "that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled!"

In spite of this teaching that the law was nailed to the cross, almost any Christian will tell you that we ought to keep all the commandments. We should not worship idols or have other gods. We should not take God's name in vain. We must not kill or steal or commit adultery or lie or covet. A good many of these same people will tell you, however, that you do not need to keep the fourth commandment, for it was done away with. Here is what this fourth commandment says:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shall not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 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." Ex. 20: 8-11.

A young man was talking to me about this matter recently. He said that when he was ten years old he went to his mother one day and asked her which was the seventh day of the week. He had been learning the commandments in Sunday school.

"Saturday is the seventh day of the week, of course," she answered.

"Well, mother," he went on, "if Saturday is the seventh day, then why do we go to church on Sunday, for the Bible says the seventh day is the Sabbath."

"Harry," she answered, "you can ask more questions than all my other children put together. What puts these silly questions in your mind?"

The questions were not silly. He was only a boy, but he could see that something was wrong. They had been teaching him a commandment, saying he should keep the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath, and yet he was going to church on the first day. It just did not make sense, even to a ten-year-old.

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When he got a bit older he studied into the matter for himself, and found that the Bible gives no command for worshipping on the first day of the week; but that Saturday, or the seventh day, is the day God originally set apart and blessed, and that it has been kept by some people in all times and ages right down to the present.

If the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath that God instituted and blessed, you will naturally wonder why practically all Christian churches keep the first day of the week, or Sunday, for the Sabbath. Can the majority be wrong about this matter? Well, we do know that the majority has often been in the wrong. Right has usually been in the minority.

I do not want to appear to preach to you, but I would like to answer some questions which I know come to your mind.

For four thousand years before Christ, and for some time after He lived here on earth, practically all Christians did keep the original seventh-day Sabbath. Jesus kept the Sabbath, and after He was crucified, He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day. Luke, in writing about the matter, says that they buried Him on the preparation day, and that He lay in the tomb on the Sabbath, and that they came on the morning of the first day planning to anoint Him. (Luke 23: 54-56; 24: 1.)

In the sixteenth chapter of Mark and the first and second verses it is said: "When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." In other words, on the morning of the first day of the week; the Sabbath, or the seventh day, was already past.

When we want to have our own way we begin to make excuses and alibis. So when you ask some Christian people why we are keeping the first day, they say, "Why, didn't you know Christ changed the day?" But they cannot give you a single text to prove this statement. Christ did not change the day. In fact He said that not "one jot or one tittle" of the law would be changed as long as heaven and earth existed. (Matthew 5: 18.) No, you can read the Bible through from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find one single text telling that the Sabbath has been changed or the law changed. One man was so sure of this that he offered one thousand dollars for a text of this kind. No one ever asked for the money.

God in His Word, thousands of years ago, said that man would seek to change His times and His laws. (Daniel 7: 25.)

He also says that when He comes back to the earth again there will be a people here who will be keeping the commandments, and that He will take them to heaven with Him. (Revelation 22: 14.)

Some people will argue, too, that one day is just as good as another, and that God is not particular which day we keep for a Sabbath. With men this might be true, but God blessed the Sabbath and set it apart, and He expects us to worship on that day.

Soon after Christ's time there were non-Christian people who worshipped on the first day of the week, which they called Sunday. And in the year 321 the Roman emperor Constantine passed a law commanding his people to keep the first day, or Sunday, as a rest day instead of the seventh day. Gradually some Christians, who feared to disobey the laws of man, and take the consequences, began to worship on Sunday. Today most Christians are worshipping on this day for which there is no Scriptural authority.

The Catholic Church assumes the responsibility for changing the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. You may read it in their catechism.

"Q. How prove you that the Church hath power to command feasts and holy days?"

"A. By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church." - HENRY TUBERVILLE, "Abridgment of Christian Doctrine," page 58.

"Q. Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?"

"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. "-STEPHEN KEENAN, "A Doctrinal Catechism," page 174.

"It [the Roman Catholic Church] reversed the Fourth Commandment by doing away with the Sabbath of God's word, and instituting Sunday as a holiday."-N. SUMMERBELL, "History of the Christian Church." (1873), page 415.

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“The Catholic Church, . . . by virtue of her divine mission changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. “Catholic Mirror, official organ of Cardinal Gibbons, Sept. 23, 1893.

“Question. Which is the Sabbath day?

“Ans.-Saturday is the Sabbath day.

“Question. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

“Answer. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.”-PETER GMERMANN, “The Convert’s Catechism of Catholic Doctrine” (1946 ed.), page 50.

I quote from Cardinal James Gibbons in “The Faith of Our Fathers,” page 108, edition of 1879: “You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify.” Protestants are surely not consistent, for they declare the Bible to be their rule of faith, and yet observe the first day of the week for the Sabbath when there is no Bible command for it. Our Catholic friends do not take the Bible as their only rule of faith, but believe the church has the authority to change even God’s laws.

Some Protestants do admit that there is no Scriptural authority for keeping holy the first day of the week. Here is a statement from a Protestant writer:

“The Lord’s Day is not sanctified by any specific command or by any inevitable inference. In all the New Testament there is no hint or suggestion of a legal obligation binding any man, whether saint or sinner, to observe the Day. Its sanctity arises only out of what it means to the true believer.”-J. J. TAYLOR (Baptist), “The Sabbath Question,” page 72.

Isaac Williams, an Anglican, makes the following statement:

“And where are we told in the Scriptures that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day.... The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things, not because the Bible, but because the church, has enjoined it.” – “Plain Sermons on the Catechism,” Volume 1, pages 334-336.

Another Protestant says:

“It is quite clear that, however rigidly or devoutly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath. The Sabbath was founded on a specific, divine command. We can plead no such command for the obligation to observe Sunday. There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday.”-It. W. DALE, M.A. (Congregationalist), “The Ten Commandments” (1871), pages 106, 107.

We might quote many other authorities from other churches. A number of arguments are presented to prove that it is not necessary to keep this fourth commandment. Men may try to argue away the commandments, but God says in John 14: 15, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” In the space allowed for this subject in this volume we cannot hope to consider these manmade arguments. If you wish to study further along this line, write the publishers of this book for more information. They will gladly send it. Decide above all else that you will do what God wants you to do rather than follow the example or commandments of men. And above all, be fair enough to consider all the facts before making any decision. Do not let prejudice close your mind to the facts.