

14. THE BIBLE SABBATH

“He answered and said, Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.” Matthew 15:13. The scribes had come to Jesus with the complaint, “Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?” Jesus answered them with another question, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?”

They had thought that Christ was introducing novelties, preaching new things, contrary to established church custom and practice. He showed them that He really stood for the old and established things of God's Word, and that their own religious customs, however old, were really the novelties, without divine authority. He said, “In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” And finally He added the words quoted above, “Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.”

Let the principles be applied to the question of Sabbath observance. Sometimes in our day those

Our Day In The Light Of Prophecy

who preach the word of God regarding the abiding holiness of the seventh day Sabbath are accused of preaching new doctrines, contrary to the traditions and customs of the church. But, really, the observance of Sunday, the first day, is the innovation; the seventh day Sabbath is of ancient foundation.

Is the Seventh-day Sabbath From God

Which of these two institutions has our heavenly Father planted? It is possible to ascertain to a surety; for every plant of His planting, every doctrine of His truth, will be found rooted in the Holy Scriptures. 2 Timothy 3: 16, 17.

The Old Testament Record

From the Beginning. When the Creator made the earth and man upon it, He made the seventh day of the weekly cycle His holy Sabbath. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." Genesis 2:1-3.

To sanctify is "to set apart," and so the day made holy and blessed by God was set apart for man. Then it was, as Jesus said that "the Sabbath was made for man." Mark 2:27. Here the Sabbath institution was planted at the beginning of the world. At the Exodus. The people of Israel, in their bondage in Egypt, had fallen away from the knowledge of God and become corrupted by the idolatrous worship of Egypt. Hence, as the Lord called them out to be His people, He tested their loyalty to His law by observing how they regarded His holy Sabbath:

"Then said the Lord unto Moses, behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or no." Exodus 16: 4. So through the forty years the Lord sent the manna for them to gather on the six working days, withholding it on the Sabbath. (This scripture shows also that the Sabbath was a part of God's law before He spoke it from Sinai.) At Sinai. When the time came that the Lord would speak His holy law from heaven, the eternal foundation of His moral government, the Sabbath precept was enshrined in the heart of it:

"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." Exodus 20: 8-11.

Through Israel's History.- Sabbath keeping was the great mark of loyalty to God. When Israel fell into idolatry, they "observed times" (see 2 Kings 21: 6), doubtless such heathen festivals to the sun god and other deities as were common among the idolatrous nations. These observances of other days meant Sabbath breaking. "Neither shall you observe times. You shall keep My Sabbaths." Leviticus 19: 26-30. The Lord had promised concerning Jerusalem:

"If you diligently hearken unto Me, said the Lord, and bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein. Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, and this city shall remain forever." Jeremiah 17:24,25. The divine pleading was slighted, and Jerusalem's fall and the Babylonian captivity came as the result of the Israelites' disregard of God's holy day. Thus throughout the inspired record of the Old Testament the seventh-day Sabbath appears as a plant of the heavenly Father's own planting.