

66. TRUE SABBATH OBSERVANCE

1. What is first commanded in the Sabbath commandment?

"Remember the Sabbath day." Ex. 20: 8.

2. Which day is the Sabbath?

"The seventh day is the Sabbath." Verse 10.

3. For what purpose are we to remember the Sabbath day?

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Verse 8.

NOTE-All through the week we are to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." This means that all our plans are to be laid and all our business adjusted with reference to the Sabbath, the object of which is to help us to keep in mind the truth that God is the creator of all things. This is just as essential to spiritual growth during the six working days as upon the Sabbath itself. We are to remember that day, also, that when it comes we may not be tempted by circumstances of our own creating to treat it, or any part of it, as secular, or common time. Thus the Sabbath commandment is to be obeyed every day, though the Sabbath itself can be kept, or observed, only upon the seventh day, for "the seventh day is the Sabbath!"

4. Who made the Sabbath day holy?

"Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Verse 11.

NOTE-God made the Sabbath day holy; we are to keep it holy.

5. What is it that makes a thing holy?

God's Presence in it. See Ex. 3:5; 29:43-46; Joshua 5: 13-15.

6. Then in order to keep the Sabbath day holy, what must be recognized?

God's presence in the day; His blessing upon it; and His sanctification of it.

7. When, according to the Bible, does the Sabbath begin?

"And the evening and the morning were the first day." "And the evening and the morning were the second day," etc. See Gen. 1: 5, 8,13,19, 23, 31.

NOTE-The evening begins "at the going down of the sun." See Deut. 16:6; Mark 1:32; Deut. 23: 11; 1 Kings 22: 35, 36; 2 Chron. 18: 34.

8. Does the Bible recognize this as the proper time for beginning and ending the Sabbath?

"From even unto even, shall you celebrate your Sabbath." Lev. 23: 32.

NOTE - One great advantage of keeping the Sabbath according to the Bible method of reckoning the day, that is, from sunset to sunset, over keeping it according to the Roman reckoning, or from midnight to midnight, is that by the former one is awake to welcome and to bid adieu to the day when it comes and goes, while by the latter he is asleep when the day begins and ends. God's ways are always best. The setting of the sun is a great natural sign for marking the division of time into days.

9. What kind of labor is to be done through the week?

"Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work." Ex. 20: 9.

10. Is any of this kind of work to be done on the Sabbath?

"In it thou shall not do any work." Verse 10.

NOTE - If the Sabbath is to be kept "holy," mere physical rest one day in seven cannot be the great object of the Sabbath institution.

11. How does the Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, indicate what is true Sabbath-keeping?

"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 shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words: then shall 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." Isa. 58: 13, 14.

NOTE - "Whether the Sabbath becomes a delight or a burden depends upon the spirit with which a man meets it. Indeed, the spirit of the man settles the question as to the benefits to come from any duty he may perform. One man cannot understand why his neighbor should prefer the park or the ball ground to the church, simply because his spirit is different. He has cultivated the higher nature until he loves spiritual things above all others, and to him the Sabbath is indeed a delight. It comes to his weary soul as a reminder of God, and brings him nearer to heaven in heart and mind than does any other day." - Sabbath Recorder, December 12, 1910.

12. What is the character of God, and how only can He be truly worshipped?

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." John 4: 24.

NOTE - This is one reason why the attempt to produce Sabbath-keeping by human Sabbath laws is altogether out of place. Such laws can never produce true Sabbath-keeping, for that is spiritual, and must be of the mind and from the heart, and not Perfunctory, mechanical, nor of force.

13. What is one thing for which God has given the Sabbath to be a sign?

That He sanctifies His people, or makes them holy. See Ex. 31: 13; Eze. 20: 12; and page 114.

14. What does the "psalm for the Sabbath day" suggest as proper acts and themes for thought and meditation on the Sabbath?

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most High: to show forth Thy loving kindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness every night, upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp With a solemn sound. For Thou, Lord, has made me glad through Thy work: I will triumph in the works of Thy hands. O Lord, how great are Thy works! and Thy thoughts are very deep." Ps. 92: 1-5.

15. What do the works of God declare?

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." Ps. 19:1-3. See margin.

NOTE - God designed that the Sabbath should direct the minds of men to His created works, and through these to Him, the Creator. Nature itself speaks to our senses, telling us that there is a God, the Creator and Supreme Ruler of the universe. The Sabbath, ever pointing to God through nature, was designed to keep the Creator constantly in mind. The proper keeping of it, therefore, must naturally tend to prevent idolatry, atheism, agnosticism, infidelity, irreligion, and irreverence; and, promoting the knowledge and fear of God, must of necessity be a deterrent to sin. In this may its value and importance be seen.

16. Was the Sabbath designed to be a day for public worship?

"Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation." Lev. 23: 3.

NOTE - The word convocation means "a calling together," and is always used in the Bible with reference to meetings of a religious character.

17. What example did Christ set in Sabbath observance?

"And, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." Luke 4: 16.

18. What else did Jesus do on the Sabbath?

"And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes." John 9: 14.

NOTE - A large share of Christ's ministry consisted of miracles and acts of mercy performed for the relief of suffering humanity; and not a few of these were done on the Sabbath. On this day, as on other days, He "went about doing good!" See next reading.

19. With what words did He justify acts of mercy on the Sabbath day?

"Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days." Matt. 12:12.

NOTE - Not a little of Christ's earthly ministry was devoted to uplifting the Sabbath, and showing the beneficent character of the Sabbath institution. It was not meant to be a day of sorrow, austerity, or gloom. Disinterested works of love and mercy toward man or beast are always in place on the Sabbath. Lawful means, according to law."

20. What day is especially indicated as the day to prepare for the Sabbath?

"And that day [the sixth day] was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." Luke 23: 54. See also Ex. 16: 22, 23.

NOTE - In order to keep the Sabbath day holy, it must be remembered all through the week; and on the sixth day, or the day just before the Sabbath, special preparation should be made to be ready to welcome and observe the day when it comes.

21. How did the Israelites in the wilderness on the sixth day prepare for the Sabbath?

"And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man." Ex. 16: 22.

NOTES - The Sabbath should not be a day of either ordinary labor, idleness, or amusement, but one of rest, reflection, holy joy, worship, and helpfulness. It should be the happiest, the brightest, and the best of all the week. Such it should be made for young and old. Very early the children can be taught the stories of creation and redemption, and taken out amid the handiwork of God and taught to see Him and to commune with Him through nature. Preparation for the Sabbath, therefore, is an essential to its proper observance. God's blessing is upon the first moments of the Sabbath as well as upon the last; and, as far as possible, everything should be got in readiness so that the entire day may be devoted to God and humanity in the manner indicated.

In making the Sabbath, God rested upon, blessed, and sanctified the day. Gen. 2: 1-3; Ex. 20: 11. Whoever, then, keeps the Sabbath aright, may expect that there will be brought into his life God's rest, blessing, and sanctification.