

## HEART TO HEART TALKS

### ORIGIN AND CHARACTER OF THE SABBATH

THERE came a time in God's great plan and purpose when this earth was brought into existence. We have the divine record of His creative act in the first chapter of Genesis. Says the psalmist: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. For he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:6-9.

It was a beautiful earth that came from the hand of the great Creator. No marks of sin had dimmed its appearance, and as the angels of God looked upon that which their Creator had wrought, they were filled with inexpressible joy. To the patriarch Job the Lord puts this question: "Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38:6, 7. And the Creator Himself, as He looked upon His finished work, "saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Genesis 1:31.

It seemed most fitting that there should be a memorial of this great creative act on the part of God. The memorial which was established was the institution of the Sabbath. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day,

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and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.” Genesis 2:1-3.

It was by three definite steps that the Sabbath institution was brought into existence: The Lord Himself rested on that day. This made it His rest day, His Sabbath. He rested and was refreshed. The Creator was not wearied physically, but He was refreshed in spirit as He contemplated the great work He had done. After resting upon the seventh day, God blessed the day. This made the seventh day holy time. Upon no other day of the week did this special blessing of God rest. In the third and final step He sanctified the day. He set it apart for holy use, not for His own sake, but for the sake of the human family. In the words of Christ, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” Mark 2:27.

Thus the Sabbath became the birthday, the great memorial, of creation, and as long as this earth continues and the human family exists, the Sabbath will continue as that memorial. Had the Sabbath been observed through the centuries by the whole human family, it would have proved a continual reminder of the great Creator, the one and only supreme God deserving of worship and adoration.

Note then ten great facts about the Sabbath:

1. The Sabbath institution was given to Adam and Eve, the father and mother of the human family. It was thus designed for all their descendants.

2. The Sabbath was given to mankind before sin entered the world. It was therefore originally given to a holy race. It is interesting to contemplate in this connection that if sin had never entered, those living upon the earth today would all be keeping the Sabbath of the Lord. But sin did its deadly work, alienating man from God.

3. After that alienation came about, as a part of the great plan of salvation, the Sabbath observance was reaffirmed. When God gave His law from Mount Sinai, the Sabbath commandment was a part of that law, and its memorial character was again stated: “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.

4. The Sabbath institution having been given before sin entered the world, had therefore no organic connection with the sin offerings or the sacrificial system, which were given to Israel as a result of sin.

5. The Sabbath was given to mankind centuries before the Jews existed. Therefore it was not, as some contend, a Jewish institution. The Jews as God’s chosen people during their national existence kept the Sabbath, as many Christian people do today.

6. The Sabbath was in no sense Egyptian in its origin. It was observed by Abraham, who kept God’s commandments, statutes, and laws (Genesis 26:5); and by Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants before they entered the land of Egypt. There, in consequence of their hard bondage, many undoubtedly gave up Sabbath observance, but Moses evidently called them back to the observance of the Sabbath, because Pharaoh charged Moses with making the people rest. Because of their resting on that day, their burdens were increased. (Exodus 5:4-9.)

7. The Sabbath was not merely a seventh part of time, but one definite day of the weekly cycle; namely, the seventh day. This was demonstrated in the falling of the manna, as recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus. The manna fell for the first six days of the week and the Israelites were permitted every morning to go out and gather a sufficiency for food, but on the seventh day the manna was withheld. The double portion which they gathered on the sixth day was miraculously preserved and kept fit for eating on the seventh day; whereas, if more than necessary was gathered on any other day of the week, it spoiled and became unfit for food. Some of the Israelites disregarded the divine instructions, and went out on the seventh day to gather manna. They found none, but their violation of the Sabbath command brought this rebuke from the Lord: “How long refuse you to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord has given you the Sabbath, therefore he gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide you every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.” Exodus 16:28-30. This statement reveals that Israel possessed a knowledge of God’s laws and the Sabbath commandment before their exodus from Egypt and previous to the giving of the law from Mount Sinai, as recorded in Exodus 20.

8. When God, with His own voice spoke the law of Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai, the Sabbath commandment was embedded in the center, or heart, of these great moral principles. This shows that the Sabbath institution is not a civil requirement but is moral in its nature.

9. The Sabbath is not alone a memorial of creation. It is also declared to be a sign of sanctification: “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign

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between me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am the Lord that does sanctify you. The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." Exodus 31:13-17.

God's true Israel is not confined to the God-fearing in the Jewish race but includes the children of God of all races throughout the history of the world. "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly. Neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Romans 2:28, 29. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also." Romans 3:28, 29.

Indeed, the Sabbath can become a sign of sanctification only to the Christian believer. The formal professor of religion may refrain from physical work on the Sabbath, but only by Christ's indwelling life can he observe the Sabbath in the spiritual sense. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20.

10. The Sabbath was of universal application. It was designed for all nations of men in this world, and its observance will be continued over into the world made new. "As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, said the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me said the Lord." Isaiah 66:22, 23.

Thus the Sabbath of the Lord spans the centuries like a grand triumphal arch, from Paradise lost to Paradise restored. By the Holy Spirit's enabling power may we share its blessings, both in this world and in the great hereafter.

### IF THE FOUNDATION BE DESTROYED, WHAT CAN THE RIGHTEOUS DO?

THE world is filled today with the spirit of unrest. Particularly in the religious world and in the channels of religious thought and investigation, there is a breaking away from old positions and standards, and the creation of new ideals. This spirit of study and investigation is commendable in so far as it keeps within the limitations of sound logic and does not become wise above that which is written. When, however, the very foundations of Christian faith are assailed, and the great standard for testing truth is discounted, and men are left to their own vain imaginings, the result is that false philosophy and idle speculation are substituted for the vital truth of God. Error takes the place of truth, and men walk in the sparks of their own kindling rather than in the guiding light of divine revelation.

This is the marked tendency of the world around us. We need to guard ourselves that this spirit does not in some measure come into our experience. There is danger that while we deplore the assaults of higher criticism upon the Scriptures of truth, unconsciously the same spirit will affect in some degree our study of the Scriptures and our interpretation of Bible doctrine.

The truth of God never loses anything by honest investigation. Every position of truth will be fortified and strengthened by faithful, conscientious study. The spirit, however, which we bring to the study of the Bible-oftentimes determines in our own estimation the worth of evidence. It is one thing to study a recognized and established position with a view to strengthening the same, and quite another thing to study the subject with a view to undermining and weakening the position that has been held. There is a wide range in the prophecy of the Scriptures. There are many coincidences in history. Before we decide to reject an old interpretation and substitute therefore a new one, let us be sure that we have studied the question so deeply and broadly, and that the preponderance of evidence is so great on the side of the new view, that we are justified in making the change.

#### Our Pioneers

We confidently believe that the great fundamental principles of truth upon which this message is based, and upon which this cause has been built up, are impregnable. They were developed not as a result of speculation, but of long and faithful Bible study and earnest pleading with God for light and leading. The pioneers in this message were fallible men. They had access to no resources of wisdom or power which are denied to us. They, as are we, were compassed about with human limitations. But they were men of prayer and faith and Bible knowledge; and because of this, they found in the Scriptures of truth a great system of