

# The Good News

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## WHY Are So *Few* Being Converted Today?

*The World Tomorrow Broadcast is the biggest religious work on radio. Millions hear it every night. Yet only a few hundred are converted through the broadcast each year! WHY?*

by Herman L. Hoeb

**Y**ES, *WHY*, if this *is* God's Church, are so *few* being converted?

It is time we understand THE REAL PURPOSE of our preaching the gospel of the Kingdom to the world.

Let's recognize it. We are not converting the world. Christ's Message is being rejected by the overwhelming majority. The teachings of this world *do* seem more alluring to most people than God's truths. But that is exactly the reason *why* this gospel must go around the world!

It is the *few*—not the many—who were predestined to understand the truth in this age (I Cor. 1:26). They *must* be warned before it is too late! God holds us responsible for their learning His truth *now*!

To the world our message is going forth only "as a witness" (Mat. 24:14). The world *cannot* receive the truth (John 1:5). Jesus explained why, by saying: "Men love darkness rather than light, *because their deeds are evil*" (John 3:19).

But the world does not believe that its deeds are evil! And no wonder—for the **WHOLE WORLD** has been deceived—and *it does not know it!* That is why people do not recognize truth when they hear it. They have been deceived without realizing it!

But *how, when and where* did this deception begin? How can we distinguish

the *basic difference* between the churches of this world and *our Church*—the true Church of God which Jesus founded?

### Universal Deception Foretold!

The true Church of God, Jesus foretold, was to be persecuted and **SCATTERED**—just as it is today! Most of you brethren are scattered.

On the night in which Jesus was seized to be crucified, He said: "It is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" (Mark 14:27). After *He*, the Shepherd, was smitten by crucifixion, the "sheep"—His **CHURCH**—were to become scattered. Notice Acts 8:1:

"And at that time there was a great persecution against the Church . . . and they were all *scattered abroad*. . . ."

Jesus also warned His "sheep"—*this Church*, you who are in the Church of God today: "Take heed that no man deceive you. For *many* shall come **IN MY NAME**, saying I am Christ"—acknowledging that Jesus is the Christ—"and shall deceive many" (Mat. 24:4-5).

John the apostle witnessed *this very deception* shortly after 70 A. D.! Notice what he wrote:

"**MANY** false prophets [or preachers] are gone out into the world." They professed to be Christ's ministers, they

came in the name of Christ; but they were anti-christs!

John continues to write: "They are of the world: therefore they speak of the world, **AND THE WORLD HEARETH THEM**. We are of God: who knoweth God heareth us; who is not of God"—whoever does not obey Him—"heareth us not" (I John 4:1, 5-6).

Do you grasp the meaning of these verses?

**THE WORLD** *believed the many false ministers*. The *few* listened to and believed the apostles of Christ. For example, compared to the hundreds of thousands of Gentiles and Jews at Ephesus, *only 12 individuals were converted* when Paul first started preaching (Acts 19:7). The world did not believe the apostles! The world accepted, instead, the **FALSE PREACHERS** *who rose up in the Church*. Notice:

"Even now have many antichrists arisen . . . *They went out from us* [they left the true Church of God], but were not of us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that not all are of us" (I John 2:18-19).

This is why there are so many denominations today!

John wrote of the same condition in II John 7: "For **MANY DECEIVERS** are gone forth into the world . . . *Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the*

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*teaching* of Christ, hath not God."

Jude, in his letter, also bears witness to the same widespread deception: "For certain men have crept in secretly, who were of old written of beforehand"—it was prophesied that many would be deceived. "These are they who make separations"—they separated from the true Church of God (Jude 4, 19).

From that early apostasy have sprung a great Mother Church and her hundreds of daughter churches.

### The Plot Develops

Changes in doctrine do not sweep the world overnight. It takes time, often several generations, to obliterate the truth. In fact, it took nearly 1000 years before the last vestige of truth was wiped out!

Here is how the apostasy began:

"For the MYSTERY of lawlessness IS ALREADY AT WORK," wrote Paul in II Thessalonians 2:7. A SECRET influence—a mysterious sinful influence—was at work *in the Church* in Paul's day! It is called the "MYSTERY of BABYLON the Great" in Revelation 17:5. It was the *ancient pagan BABYLONIAN mystery system*—the same rebellious system that commenced at Babylon shortly after the flood—that was at work in the local congregations of the early New Testament Church!

Certain men had crept in unawares, secretly, bringing these mysteries with them. Jude says of them: "These are grumblers, malcontents, following *their own passions*, loud-mouthed boasters, flattering people to gain advantage" (Jude 16, RSV). They yielded to their carnal human nature. They were the

deceived, but the willing tools of Satan.

When they could not make headway in the old state religions of Greece and Rome, *they secretly joined the congregations of God's Church*. "And in covetousness shall they with feigned [or pretended] words make merchandise of [or exploit] you," warned Peter (II Peter 2:3). They wanted the tithes of God's people—they were seeking a living and wanted to indulge their carnal passions. That is why they taught what the people wanted to hear.

### What Is the Meaning of Mystery?

This vile Babylonish system appeals to HUMAN NATURE. And human nature "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). That is why it is called the "mystery of lawlessness," or "iniquity." It is the mystery of why sin *appears right to man*, though it ends in death! It is *indeed* a mystery why human beings want to do what God says is wrong, yet think that they are doing what is right!

The entire history of human experience is wrapped up in this *mysterious*, universally unrealized fact. It is a SECRET that the world does not grasp. "The whole world" is deceived and does not know it. (Revelation 12:9).

People want to follow other people. Many in the early Church were afraid of what other people—their pagan neighbors—might say. They wanted to hear the teachings of the pagans around them.

And what were the pagans believing?—the Babylonian mysteries, the newest and latest fad, brought to Greece and Rome by Roman soldiers who had recently conquered the region of old Babylon! The false preachers brought these mysteries into the Church!

Their next step was to gain control of Church government (II Cor. 11:13-15). They cleverly, and at first secretly, plotted to "draw away disciples after themselves." That is how the "Synagogue of SATAN" was formed!

### The Synagogue of Satan

Those false teachers who left the true Church "professed to know God"—they pretended to obey God—"but by their works they denied Him, being abominable and DISOBEDIENT, and unto every good work disapproved" (Titus 1:16). They professed Christ and the Father; but they rejected the authority of God and His law! They were DISOBEDIENT!

They acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ; they came *in His name*, professing to be the ministers of Christ—but they rejected His message and soon forgot His SABBATH!

Between 70 A.D. and 100 A.D. the

Roman world was filled with those apostate ministers. Here is why they spread and multiplied.

In 69 A. D. the headquarters of God's Church at Jerusalem was forced to flee before the Roman invasion. Persecution became widespread. Many congregations were scattered. The apostles were too few in number to stem the rising tide of apostasy. False teachers and false brethren were everywhere (Rev. 2:20; Dan. 11:34).

The apostasy—secretly at work in Paul's day—now snow-balled into a movement spreading throughout the entire Roman Empire. It was a universal or catholic movement of Roman origin. It compromised with the world. A worldwide organization took shape with its natural headquarters at the capitol of the Roman Empire—Rome!

By the time John wrote the Book of Revelation, this apostate Church—Satan's Church—"the Synagogue of Satan"—already existed side by side with the true Church (Rev. 2:10 and 3:9). This was before 100 A.D.! The "Synagogue of Satan" soon became the BIG Church. *The world* heard it. *This* was the Church destined to "rule the nations" (Rev. 17:18). It is *this* Church, whose records fill the pages of Church history, that we are about to investigate.

The true Church of God, despised, persecuted and scattered by the world—yet NEVER DIVIDED—was soon lost from view! Even the world's historians have never known *where* to look for the true Church, for they do not know *WHAT* the true Church *is*! Today the world still does not recognize which is the Church Jesus is building!

### Differences In Doctrine

The first century has passed. The second century of our era begins. Already we find two separate and distinct Church bodies. One—the true Church—is scattered but not divided. The other—the result of apostasy—is divided into literally dozens of conflicting beliefs and practices, yet trying to maintain an outward form of unity.

All the churches of this world are the daughters of that first great apostasy or *falling away* from the truth. "For the time will come"—and it did come—"that they will not endure sound teaching," said Paul; "but having itching ears they will heap to themselves teachers . . . and turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables" (II Timothy 4:3-4).

In the next article is the evidence of Church History that this great apostasy DID occur—proving that Sunday was never observed in the New Testament Church, and that THE SABBATH WAS OBSERVED BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH FOR CENTURIES AFTER APOSTOLIC DAYS.

# Why Do the Churches Observe SUNDAY?

*Sunday was NEVER observed by the inspired, original New Testament Church. But today it is almost a universal custom among professing Christians! Why? The incredible TRUTH about the origin of Sunday observance is published for the first time in this intriguing article.*

by Herman L. Hoeh

HOW AND WHEN did Sunday replace the Sabbath in this Western Christian-professing world? *Why* did the churches lose the one and only SIGN—the Sabbath—which designates who God's people are?

How did Sunday become known as the "Lord's Day"?

It is time we—in God's Church—peer behind the curtain for the *facts!* It is time we become grounded in the faith and understand HOW, WHEN and WHERE Sunday observance originated. The facts of history will shock you!

## Sunday Is the "Lord's Day!"

The churches today are in a *Babylon of confusion*. And no wonder! For their religion sprang from Babylon! (Rev. 17.)

Most Church doctrines and practices have Christian-sounding names, but they are in reality Babylonish customs *falsely labeled*. This is especially true of Sunday—the "Lord's Day!"

Believe it or not, Sunday was celebrated by pagans as the "Lord's Day" over 2000 years *before* the resurrection of Christ. The apostle Paul saw the heathen observing it. Yet never once did he observe it. And he forbade Christians to celebrate it (Gal. 4:10).

Then why do we find the churches today observing Sunday supposedly in honor of Christ?

The answer is simple. Consider I Corinthians 8:5. The heathen world, in which the New Testament Church began to grow, was filled with pagan *holidays* in honor of "gods many, and lords many."

WHICH "LORD" IS IT, THEN, WHOSE RESURRECTION IS CELEBRATED ON SUNDAY TODAY?

Certainly NOT Jesus Christ! *He* was resurrected near the close of the Sabbath, or Saturday. Jesus Christ *was not there* when the women came to the tomb Sunday morning (Luke 24:1-5).

If Christ is not the "Lord" whose resurrection is honored on Sunday, then who is the "Lord" whom the churches worship today when they observe Sun-

day, the "Lord's Day"?

It is none other than Nimrod, the world's first recorded *false* Messiah! It is *Nimrod's fictitious resurrection*—a clever counterfeit of Christ's resurrection—that the nations celebrated every Sunday in Abraham's day and in Paul's day, and that professing Christians are celebrating today!

But how is it possible that Nimrod—who was known among the heathen as "Baal," the "lord," and the "Sun-God"—came to be honored on Sunday as the "Lord" among Christians? How is it that *his* day—Sunday—instead of God's Sabbath, has become the chief of "Christian holidays"?

Now let us peer behind the curtain and understand the almost unbelievable record of history. If it were revealed it would shatter the traditions of the churches!

## Prophesied to Happen

"Why," it is often asked, "did the Bible not warn us that Sunday would be substituted for the Sabbath?"

The answer is that the Bible DOES WARN US! It was prophesied in advance—over 800 years before Sunday crept into the New Testament Church!

Turn to the Book of Hosea. The prophet had a message for the future—for our day! It is a warning to the churches of our land.

"And I"—God is speaking—"will punish her"—our people Israel—"for the FEAST DAYS OF THE BAALS."

*Sunday* is a feast of Baal.

Israel "forgot Me, says the Lord"—because they rejected the Sabbath. "And in that day"—the very near future when Christ intervenes in world affairs—"you [Israel] will call Me, 'My husband,' and no longer will you call me, 'My Baal.' For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be mentioned by name no more" (Hosea 2:13, 16-17, RSV).

How plain! Israel today, the last bastion of professing Christianity, has adopted the feast days of Baal—and that includes *Sunday!* Here is a prophecy

that the churches of Israel would be celebrating the festivals of Baal—that they would even call God by the names of Baal! That is exactly what they do when they call Sunday the "Lord's Day"—that is, Baal's Day—thinking that they honor Christ.

Our land is filled with the names of Baal. The greatest of Church holidays—Easter—is named after the wife of Baal or Nimrod, and yet Christians think that they honor Christ by celebrating this Babylonish feast!

God warns in this prophecy that He will punish our people—and the ministers who have misled them—for rejecting His way and His Sabbath (Ezck. 20:18-21) and adopting the ways and the feasts of the Gentiles.

Now let us consider when and how it all came about.

## The Surprising Answer

Sunday is directly connected with Easter. Easter is the pagan counterfeit for the Passover. It is at the passover—not the Sabbath—that the apostate ministers struck first!

The Passover is, of course, one of the annual festivals God revealed to His Church. The pagans never observed them. They hated God's festivals—and people today still hate them! They are commonly sneered at as "Jewish" holidays.

The Jews at least made a pretense of observing the festivals God gave His Church through Moses. To turn the people away from observing the paschal MEMORIAL of Christ's DEATH, the false teachers first labeled the New Testament passover as "Jewish," as part of the "law of Moses."

The people, of course, wanted to do what their pagan neighbors were doing. And the pagans were celebrating annual and weekly memorials in honor of the RESURRECTION of the false Babylonian savior Nimrod or Tammuz. The *natural* thing to do was to introduce this pagan custom into all the churches each week in honor of the resurrection of Christ. The people wanted it. The

false ministers quickly taught it! It spread rapidly and widely!

But wait—since Christ was resurrected on Saturday, that would mean the unscriptural weekly communion would customarily be held on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was also the day on which *all* Christians were meeting.

Does that mean that the early apostate churches observed communion *every Saturday*?

Indeed it does!

Here is the testimony of Socrates, the Catholic Historian who lived after 400 A.D.:

"In Asia Minor [that was where Paul mainly preached, and where John spent his last years] most people kept the fourteenth day of the month" exactly as we do today. "While therefore some in Asia Minor observed the above mentioned day, OTHERS IN THE EAST KEPT THE FEAST [THE COUNTERFEIT PASSOVER OR EASTER] ON THE SABBATH indeed. . . ."

Why the Sabbath? Because it was still the common teaching that Jesus rose on the Sabbath!

But this is not all the evidence! Here are more incredible facts from the pen of the Catholic historian Socrates around 400 A.D.

"For although *almost all churches* [the *false* churches, not God's Church] throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries ON THE SABBATH of every week"—this was about 400 years after Christ—"yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, *have ceased to do this* [though they did so at a prior time]. The Egyptians in the neighborhood of Alexandria, and the inhabitants of Thebais *hold their religious assemblies on the Sabbath*, but do not participate of the mysteries in the manner usual among Christians in general." (*Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates, book V, chapter 22. Quoted from Vol. 2 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, pp. 131-132.)

Do you really grasp the astounding significance of this historical record? If the Sabbath had not been kept in the early New Testament Church—and if the resurrection were not on the Sabbath, there would have been no reason to celebrate the pagan "sacred mysteries"—the heathen counterfeit of the passover—on every Sabbath, and also annually on a Sabbath.

Here is absolute testimony to the *Sabbath resurrection* of Christ. If Christ had been resurrected on Sunday, certainly the Catholics would have instituted the "sacred mysteries" on Sunday, the day that their heathen neighbors always celebrated the "sacred mysteries," which originated in Babylon! Though they adopted the "sacred

mysteries"—the mass or communion—from the pagans, they celebrated it on the true day of Christ's resurrection!

But why, today, do the Churches believe that Sunday was observed in the New Testament churches in honor of Christ's resurrection?

Here is the accurate testimony of history.

#### The Testimony of a Roman Governor

In support of Sunday, many preachers and writers turn to a letter written about 112 A.D. by Pliny, the Roman governor of Bythinia-Pontus. This was the area to which Peter addressed his first letter (I Pet. 1:1).

But this letter does not say what most ministers claim!

Pliny wrote to his superior, Emperor Trajan, seeking to know the legal steps he should take against Christians accused of crimes pertaining to their religion. Of the Christians under his jurisdiction he related:

"They affirmed that the whole of their guilt or error was, that they MET ON A CERTAIN STATED DAY, before it was light and addressed themselves in a form of prayer to Christ, as to some god, binding themselves by a solemn oath . . . never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery . . . after which it was *their custom to separate, and then reassemble to eat in common a harmless meal*" (Coleman's *Ancient Christianity*, pp. 35-36).

This letter, it is claimed, proved that Christians observed Sunday as early as 112 A.D.! But it proves no such thing! Pliny's letter merely mentions that Christians—these were apostate Christians—met "on a certain stated day," but he does not tell the Emperor which day it was! Let us not assume.

Many noted scholars now admit that this stated day could easily have been *the seventh day* of the week because it "appears to have been quite as commonly observed at this date as the sun's day (if not even more so)." From Taylor's quotation in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, art. "Sabbath."

Indeed it could have been the Sabbath! As late as 400 A.D. the professing Christians of Bythinia-Pontus, and all the Eastern Roman Empire in general, met on Saturday to celebrate the resurrection of Christ!

On Saturday Gentile converts to Catholicism celebrated, without Biblical authority, the resurrection of Christ with the pagan "sacred mysteries"—the "common meal" mentioned by Pliny, often called the "Lord's Supper."

#### Not True Christians

The New Testament Church never followed these customs. So widely spread

and in such numbers were *these* professing Christians that "the temples were almost deserted, and the sacrificial ritual was interrupted" (Ramsey, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 198). Truly converted Christians were to be a "little flock" (Luke 12:32-40), not multitudes of Gentiles coming wholesale into the churches and bringing heathen customs with them!

Notice also that they met at dawn!—"before it was light." This was the common time for pagans to hold religious services. Then they bound themselves *by an oath*, forbidden in Scripture. After dismissal, they would "reassemble to eat in common a harmless meal—the "sacred mysteries" of Babylon!

But notice especially that these apostates met on the Sabbath—just as some *apostate* churches still meet on the Sabbath today. Sunday—in Pliny's day—had not yet been widely introduced among professing Christians. Pliny's letter then, is not proof for Sunday, but for church services on Saturday!

#### Sunday Emerges for the First Time

At first even the Gentiles at Rome met on the Sabbath to celebrate the passover, according to Sozoman's history. But it is at Rome particularly that we first notice the custom to observe the "sacred mysteries" on Sunday! This was a result, Sozoman wrote, "of an ancient tradition." But how early was the tradition?

Here are the facts!

Irenaeus, a bishop in France, living toward the close of the second century, wrote a letter to bishop Victor of Rome. He names specifically the men who first began to observe not only every Sunday, but also "Easter Sunday" and who forbade the passover and the Sabbath to be observed in accordance with the practice of the apostles! Here is what Irenaeus wrote:

"We mean Anicetus, and Pius, and Hyginus, and Telesphorus, and Xystus. They neither observed it"—the true passover on the 14th of Nisan—"nor did they permit those after them to do so."

Who were these men?—bishops of the Church at Rome!

Here is the first record, by a Catholic, of the fact that the Roman bishops observed the passover *on a Sunday!*

It was bishop Xystus (his name is also spelled *Sixtus*) who was the *first* recorded individual to *prevent* the proper observance of the Sabbath and the passover, and to celebrate the "sacred mysteries" each Sunday morning, and annually on a Sunday. Irenaeus speaks further of him, declaring that his doctrine was in direct "opposition" to the practice of the remainder of the

churches. Bishop Sixtus was living at the *beginning of the second century*, just after the apostle John died! According to Roman Catholic tradition, he enforced his new practice not later than about 115 A.D. and 125 A.D.

It probably was slightly earlier that the custom of Sunday observance was first practised by Gentile converts. The bishops of Rome are always careful to enforce only what ultimately will be accepted by the vast majority.

Here you have the astounding origin of an annual Easter Sunday in the Roman Church.

The "sacred mysteries" were also observed henceforth every Sunday!—instead of every Saturday.

But how did this local Roman custom spread throughout the churches?

While at Rome, Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, discussed the matter of Easter Sunday with the Roman bishop.

Irenaeus continued: "For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe it"—the passover—"because he had always observed it with John the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the apostles, with whom he associated; and neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, who said that he was bound to follow the customs of the presbyters before him" (Quoted from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, book V, chap. 24, in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol 1).

Notice that bishop Anicetus had no Scriptural grounds—he determined to follow the "customs" of men!—Easter Sunday!

#### A Pretended Vision from God

Shortly after Polycarp left, there appeared an amazing letter—said by many scholars to have been a *deliberate forgery*. This letter states:

"Pope Pius, who lived about 147, had made a decree, That the annual solemnity of the *Pasch* [*Pasch* is the Greek word for *Passover*], should be kept only on the Lord's day"—Sunday—"and in confirmation of this he pretended, that Hermes, his brother, who was then an eminent teacher among them, had received instruction from an angel, who commanded that all men should keep the *Pasch* on the Lord's day"—"Baal's Day"! (From pp. 1148-1149 of Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*.)

Of this same hoax we read in *Apostolical Fathers*, by Donaldson, p. 324, "One of the letters forged in the name of Pius, where one Hermas is mentioned as the author; and it is stated that in his book a commandment was given through an angel to observe the *Passover* on a Sunday."

If this letter was a deliberate forgery, it was invented after Polycarp's time in

an effort to lend weight to the new custom of Anicetus, bishop of Rome, who falsely maintained the Sunday observance of the eucharist. If it were not a forgery, then Pius himself was the author of this deceptive letter. (Pius died just prior to the visit of Polycarp to Rome.)

At any rate, Sunday commenced in the church as a "pious fraud"—Satanic trickery!

Sunday made slow headway among the divided, confused apostatizing churches. In the West, particularly at Rome, and in Egypt it gained most rapidly. That is the very area in which the fewest numbers of true Christians originally lived. It was in the populous East—in Asia Minor and in Mesopotamia—that the vast majority of churches maintained the faith considerably longer!

#### Spurious Letters Appear

As soon as the tradition of Good Friday-Easter Sunday began to gain a foothold, fraudulent letters, masquerading as apostolic letters were circulated. These fraudulent letters are often quoted today as proof of the observance of Sunday in the *true* New Testament Church!

These deliberate frauds demonstrate the foulness of the Satanic apostasy. Neither the apostles, nor the Church of God ever had recourse to frauds! Our Sabbath is based on inspired Scripture. Sunday is based on a fraud—a LIE!

Here are quotes from some of the spurious letters which poured forth from the Synagogue of Satan.

The first and most important letter was the spurious "Epistle of Barnabas." Tradition claims that it was the work of the companion of Paul. Anyone reading it knows better. The weight of scholarship proves that *it is a deliberate forgery*—a spurious letter—composed about the commencement of the second century by *another* person assuming the name.

This epistle, or letter, is filled with many inaccuracies, triflings and absurdities. It is a complete contrast to the inspired New Testament epistles. It shows a very misguided knowledge of the practices of the Old Testament. The confused trend of the times is plainly reflected in it.

Here is what the author of this letter says about the Sabbath being counterfeited by Sunday!

From chapter fifteen, we read the following extracts (if they are confusing they were deliberately meant to be in order to deceive the readers!):

"'And He rested on the seventh day.' This meaneth: when His Son, coming [again], shall . . . judge the ungodly . . . then shall He truly rest on the seventh

day. . . . Then we shall be able to sanctify it. . . . Ye perceive how He speaks: 'Your present Sabbaths are not acceptable to Me' . . . I shall make a beginning of the eighth day, that is, a beginning of another world. Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead" (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, pp. 146-147).

Notice the confused ideas and expressions and the misquotations of Scripture in this chapter. This is the kind of religious trash that masqueraded in the name of Christianity in order to deceive Gentile converts. Consider how the writer attempts to set aside the Sabbath. He does not dare claim it is abolished. He merely states THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR HUMAN BEINGS IN THIS MORTAL LIFE TO KEEP IT. Only after the return of Jesus will Christians "be able to sanctify it"—the Sabbath.

This bewildering explanation—which sounds exactly like the doctrine of demons—is totally lacking in DIVINE AUTHORITY for observing the first day of the week. It clearly indicates the extent to which those early men grasped any idea that might have lent even the least weight of argument for laying aside the seventh day! To reject the Sabbath demanded caution! In order to nullify the command, the false Barnabas—claiming the authority of the apostle Barnabas—pretended that the Sabbath was *so holy* that man cannot—and hence, *needs not*—keep it! Its fulfillment awaits the *seventh* thousand-year period, the Millennium.

Now notice the argument in support of Sunday! The writer of this spurious letter contends that "the eighth day" ought to be kept—he does not call it the "Lord's Day"—because after seven thousand years are past, there will be "an eighth day"—a new and eternal world. Observe that the reason for celebrating Sunday rests upon the fact that "an eighth day" will follow 7000 years of human history. Notice how he perverted the truth about God's Plan!

He concludes his epistle with the bold statement that Jesus rose on the first day of the week. But he does not yet venture to use this as a reason for Sunday sacredness! Of course not, for most of the professing Christians had been taught up to this time that the resurrection was on the Sabbath. It took time to explain away the "three days and three nights" during which Jesus was in the grave!

#### Another Forgery

The next letter—or rather forgery—to consider is that of Ignatius. His work, "The Epistle to the Magnesians," written shortly after the turn of the century, is

usually regarded to be one of several spurious letters written by another and attributed to Ignatius. Whether or not Ignatius wrote it is of no importance. For it still typifies the evil spirit of the time which cleverly foisted on the world a day in honor of Baal!

There are two forms of his letters, one Greek, the other Syriac. Each is entirely different from the other. They are probably both forgeries. The Greek form of chapter 15 reads in part:

“. . . Those who were brought up in the ancient order of things”—those who received the truth from the apostles—“have come to the possession of a new hope [a new heresy!], no longer observing Sabbath, but living according to the Lord's [day or life] in which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death . . .” (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1).

This spurious letter is supposedly another proof that the apostles instituted Sunday! But it says no such thing.

In this quotation from Ignatius, the key words in italics after “Lord's” are NOT in the original Greek. Many have assumed that the word to be supplied is “day,” but the context clearly demands “life.” The authoritative *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature* (by Kitto), article “Lord's Day,” states that the original Greek is probably corrupt, and that the word has to be supplied by the reader. Kitto contends that the word “life” must be understood.

This forgery, then, doesn't tell us any thing about Sunday! This is the kind of “authority” that many preachers and denominations rely upon to justify their pagan traditions.

Did you also notice that the forger of this epistle claims to have gone beyond the truth delivered once for all time to the Church? What did John write about those who “abide not in the teaching of Christ”? (II John 9). Here we have the exact fulfillment of what John warned against—men going beyond the teaching of Christ, seeking pagan customs, rejecting the Sabbath—“no longer observing the Sabbath.”

No wonder John had to declare: “Beloved, no new commandment write I to you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye heard” (I John 2:7). It is an eternally new commandment. But the forger of the letter of Ignatius makes it appear as though a new and different commandment for Christians were necessary!

This same forger of Ignatius' letter wrote also: “Your bishops preside in the place of God, and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the Apostles” (chapter 6). To be in the “place of God” is to be an *antichrist*! The original Greek word “anti” means

“in place of,” hence “in opposition to” (*Thayer's Lexicon*). This fraudulent epistle of Ignatius is the diabolical work of the antichrists against whom John warned! Abolition of the Sabbath is a doctrine of antichrist!

### The Amazing Syriac Rendering

The Greek version of Ignatius already quoted is an indication of Western Christianity, influenced by Rome. But there is a longer Eastern version in Syriac that is truly remarkable. It indicated the difference of opinion in the Eastern churches *where the apostolic tradition was strongest*. Here is what it reads in part:

“Those who were conversant with the ancient Scriptures came to newness of hope. . . . Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner, and rejoice in days of idleness; for ‘he that does not work, let him not eat.’ For say the . . . oracles, ‘In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread,’ *But let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner, rejoicing in meditation on the law, not in relaxation of the body, admiring the workmanship of God, and not eating things prepared the day before. . . .* And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day as a festival, the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days of the week. Looking forward to this, the prophet declared, ‘To the end, for the eighth day,’ on which our life both sprang up again, and the victory over death was obtained in Christ.”

These words from the Syriac version of the forgery of Ignatius clearly demonstrate the importance of the Sabbath in the early Catholic churches. The letter was forged in order to persuade the Gentile converts that they should *no longer keep the Sabbath as they had been doing*. Henceforth they should work on the Sabbath day after attending church services on it.

Notice that a pretense is made of honoring the Law of God by having it read on the Sabbath! “But *in vain*,” Jesus warned, “do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commands of men” (Mark 7:7).

Ignatius, or whoever forged this letter in his name, misapplies two Scriptures that do not pertain to the Sabbath in an effort to prove that common labor ought to be done on that day. But he cites no apostolic authority for it!

The date of this spurious letter is disputed, though the contents clearly indicate the observance of Sunday had crept into the Church. But did you notice the authority claimed for Sunday? It is truly amazing. The so-called prophecy about “an eighth day”—Sunday—is no prophecy at all. It is quoted

from the subscription to Psalms 6.

The inspired Hebrew word is “shem-inith.” This word does not mean “the eighth day.” The word is merely “a technical phrase relative . . . to the musical performance of certain Psalms” (*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, article “Shem-inith”).

Here is another illustration of deliberate text-twisting.

Here is another proof that there is no Bible authority for Sunday!

No strange thing indeed, it is, that the forger did not emphasize the resurrection of Christ on a Sunday. He merely mentioned it. Had he stressed it, the people in the churches would not have accepted it, for they were still observing the “sacred mysteries” on every Saturday for nearly 300 years after this spurious writing was published!

### The Apostolic Constitutions

During the second, third and fourth centuries, many documents appeared that purported to be written by the apostles. These were falsely called “Apostolic Constitutions.” They were circulated to create the impression that the pagan tradition of that day had Apostolic blessing! Although deliberate frauds, these documents, nevertheless, express the corrupt church teachings which filled the Christian-professing world during the centuries after the death of the apostles.

The following (from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*) are certain of the constitutions or statutes in part that formed the practices, not of the scattered remains of the true body of Christ, but in the Catholic churches, especially the Eastern. Here is what they say regarding the sabbath *as a day of public worship*:

“I Peter and Paul—remember, *this is a forgery*—“do make the following constitutions. Let the slaves work five days; but on the *Sabbath-day* and the Lord's day let them have leisure to go to church for instruction in piety. We have said that the Sabbath is on account of the creation, and the Lord's day of the resurrection” (Ch. XXXIII, p. 495).

These spurious laws continue:

“*Thou shalt observe the Sabbath*, on account of Him who ceased from His work of creation, but ceased not from His work of providence” (Ch. XXXVI, p. 413).

“On the day of the resurrection of the Lord, that is, the Lord's day, assemble yourselves together, without fail” (Ch. XXX, p. 471).

“You must fast on the day of Preparation, because on that day the Lord suffered the death of the cross under Pontius Pilate. But keep the Sabbath and the Lord's day festival, because the former is the memorial of the creation,

and the latter of the resurrection. But there is only one Sabbath to be observed by you in the whole year, which is that of our Lord's burial, on which men ought to keep a fast, but not a festival" (p. 469).

Notice that Saturday and Sunday are being observed side by side!

"But assemble yourselves together every day, morning and evening, singing psalms and praying in the Lord's house: in the morning saying the sixty-second Psalm, and in the evening the hundred and fortieth, but principally on the Sabbath-day. And on the day of our Lord's resurrection, which is the Lord's day, meet more diligently" (p. 423).

"Every Sabbath-day excepting one, and every Lord's day, hold your solemn assemblies, and rejoice" (p. 449).

The people were not following the laws and judgments of the Scriptures as the standard of God's will. The churches invented their own laws! The prophet Daniel prophetically gazed upon this ecclesiastical system that would "think to change times and laws" (Daniel 7:25).

These statutes, especially representing the Eastern view, were almost a century behind the Western custom of fasting on the sabbath.

### The Testimony of Justin Martyr

A century and a half has nearly passed since the death of Jesus Christ. About this time Justin Martyr addresses his "Apologies" to the Roman Emperors. He explains to them "Christian" practices of the Catholic Church in the West.

Among the customs he relates are these:

"And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits. . . Then we all rise together and pray, and . . . bread and wine and water [a pagan practice of Mithraic sun-worship] are brought . . . But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified"—so claimed Justin Martyr—"on the day before that of Saturn; and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration" (*First Apology*, ch., LXVII, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*).

The first reason for the observance of Sunday offered by Justin is that it was

the day God began TO WORK! Justin, however, did not teach that Sunday ought to be kept as a rest day!

Notice also that Justin calls it the "day of the sun." Why? Tertullian gives us the answer a few years later!

When some Romans reproached the early Catholics for sun-worship, he admitted:

"It is a well known fact that we pray toward the east . . . we make Sunday a day of festivity. What then? Do you [pagans] do less than this? Do not many among you, with an affection of sometimes worshipping the heavenly bodies likewise, move your lips in the direction of the sunrise. . . It is you . . . who have admitted the sun into the calendar of the week; and you have selected its day, in preference to the preceding day, as the most suitable in the week for either an entire abstinence from the bath, or for its postponements until the evening, or for taking rest, and for banqueting" (*Ad Nationes*, book I, ch. xiii).

Sunday observance came from Sun-worship. Tertullian justified the practices of his day by appealing to the practices of the heathen, instead of the Bible!

### Tradition Began Customs

Tertullian, the father of Latin Christianity, never cites any scripture for his beliefs. He claims tradition for the customs of his day. Here is what he wrote about Sunday and similar customs:

"If, for these and other such rules, you insist upon having positive Scripture injunction, you will find none. Tradition will be held forth to you as the originator of them, custom as their strengthener, and faith, as their preserver. That reason will support tradition, and custom, and faith, you will either yourself perceive, or learn from some one who has" (*De Corona*, sect. 4).

Sunday did not come from the Bible. It is a tradition of men!

Justin Martyr admitted, however, that there were many who followed the Bible in his day. There were Christians with whom he sometimes associated who observed the sabbaths and the annual festivals of God (chapter 47). He adds, however, that they were rejected by the main body of early professing Christians. The doctrines of God's Church were the same a century after the apostles as they were today. We—in God's Church today—maintain the same faith and body of beliefs that were rejected by the multitudes who were running after paganism!

### Origen Instructs Catholics How to Observe Sabbath

Now we come to Origen who wrote

about 230 A.D. What did Origen say about the Sabbath?

He spoke in no uncertain terms about the sabbath within the Catholic churches in Alexandria, Egypt. What follows is not said by a Judo-Christian, as those who obeyed God were called. This was written by a Catholic to Catholics concerning the seventh day of the week at the beginning of the third century:

"But what is the feast of the Sabbath except that of which the apostle speaks, 'There remaineth therefore a Sabbathism' (Hebrews 4:9), that is, the observance of the Sabbath by the people of God? [Notice how this man understood his native Greek tongue!] Leaving the Jewish observances of the Sabbath, let us see how the Sabbath ought to be observed by a Christian. On the Sabbath day all worldly labors ought to be abstained from. If, therefore, you cease from all secular works, and execute nothing worldly, but give yourselves up to spiritual exercises, repairing to church, attending to sacred reading and instruction . . . this is the observance of the Christian Sabbath" (*Origen's Opera*, Book 2, p. 358).

These are mighty strong words, expressed by an Eastern church leader. Here is the teaching of the apostate churches 200 years after the crucifixion! Catholics ought to repair or go to church on the Sabbath [the word Sabbath never meant Sunday to early Catholics] for reading and instruction. Worldly labors ought to be abstained from, though not in the strictness that the law of God commands. This is not spoken of Sunday, but the seventh day of the week—around 230 A.D.!

### Constantine Enforces Sunday!

The opening of the fourth century was tumultuous for the churches everywhere. Diocletian, Maximian and Galerius were the Roman Emperors in proscribing every form of Christianity. The persecutions lasted nearly a decade. Then the professing Christian religion suddenly emerged to freedom under an Edict of Toleration. The nature of such an edict could mean but one thing, that Christianity was looked upon by the political leaders of the Roman Empire as the future State religion. Events now happened fast.

In 321 A.D., on the seventh of March, an unusual edict was issued by Crispus and Constantine, often designated as the earliest Sunday law. It read thusly:

"On the venerable day of the sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is

not so suitable for grain sowing or for vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost." (*Codex Justinianus*, lib. 3, tit. 12, 3; translated in *History of the Christian Church*, by Schaff, Vol. III, p. 380).

This edict was a civil statute, not an ecclesiastical one. It was a *heathen institution* of which Hutton Webster says:

"This legislation by Constantine probably bore no relation to Christianity; it appears, on the contrary, that the emperor, in his capacity of Pontifex Maximus [a title the popes later took from the Emperors], was only adding the day of the Sun, the worship of which was then firmly established in the Roman Empire, to the other ferial days of the sacred calendar" (*Rest Days*, pp. 122, 123).

Sunday is the "MARK of the Beast"—the political Roman Empire. It was imposed by the STATE! The Church voluntarily accepted it.

#### The Council of Laodicea

About 365 A.D. the Council of Laodicea was called to settle, among other matters, *the sabbath question!* One of its most famous canons was the twenty-ninth, which reads thus:

"Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather, honouring the Lord's Day; and, if they can, resting them as Christians. But if any shall be found to be judaizers, *let them be anathema from Christ.*" (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. XIX, p. 148).

The force of the Roman State had already been utilized in 325 A.D. to confiscate the property and destroy the lives of any who obeyed God's command to keep the Passover. So now, in 365 A.D., the heavy hand of the State fell upon any who would be faithful in resting on the Sabbath day as commanded in the Bible.

*Why give such a command if there were no Christians observing the Sabbath?*

Not only was sabbath-keeping forbidden at this council, but canons XXXVII and XXXVIII also forbade Catholics to observe any of the annual festivals! "It is not lawful to receive portions sent from the feasts of Jews or heretics, nor to feast together with them." "It is not lawful to receive unleavened bread from the Jews, nor to be partakers of their impiety" (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, p. 151). These ecclesiastical laws had the force of civil laws, especially following the time of Theodosius (378-395).

But one important canon is often overlooked in this Council. The sixteenth canon reads: "The Gospels are to be

read *on the Sabbath*, with the other Scriptures" (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, p. 133). The "Sabbath" mentioned is the seventh day of the week!

Notice. Although Catholics were required to work on Saturday, they were still commanded to attend church that day! *Saturday then was observed much as Sunday is now!*

Says Socrates, the Catholic Historian, in speaking of the Eastern churches during the life of Chrysostom (345-407). "Saturday and the Lord's day [were] the two great festivals, on which they always held church assemblies." And Cassian takes notice of the Egyptian churches, that among them the service of the Lord's day and the sabbath was always the same" (*Bingham's Antiquities*, p. 656).

Public worship on the sabbath was far from expelled in the churches of the East. Even the Western bishops, especially at Rome, had to allow it to continue.

#### After the Council of Laodicea

Public worship on Saturday persisted in the churches long after the Council of Laodicea.

Gregory, Bishop of Nyassa, a representative of the Eastern churches, about ten years after the Council at Laodicea dared to tell the world: "With what eyes can you behold the Lord's day, when you despise the Sabbath? Do you not perceive that they are sisters, and that in slighting the one, you affront the other?"

Observance of Sunday in a sabbatical manner was not strictly enforced for almost two centuries more, for we even find Jerome, the translator of the *Latin Vulgate Bible*, working after the *Sunday services several years following the enactments at Laodicea.*

Augustine, around 400 A.D., soon declared: "*The holy doctors of the church* [not the Bible, but men] *have decreed that all the glory of the Jewish Sabbath is transferred to it {Sunday}. Let us therefore keep the Lord's day as the ancients were commanded to do the Sabbath*" (Sabbath Laws, p. 284).

It was the Church which sanctioned the Roman Sunday *as a rest day.* It was the Church which claimed to have altered God's law (David 2:21) and transferred the law of the Sabbath to Sunday.

It was another six hundred years until the last recorded semblance of public worship was extirpated from the Eastern churches. Pope Gregory of Rome, in the West, anathematized "Those who taught that it was not lawful to do work on the day of the Sabbath" (*History of the Popes*, Vol. II, p. 378).

Sabbath keeping was obliterated from

Rome by the sixth century (Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, p. 375). The Eastern churches extirpated it in another four hundred years (about 1000 A.D.). The Sabbath was also stamped out by the churches of the British Isles and the continent where, according to Webster's *Rest Days*, "The Celts kept Saturday as a day of rest, with special religious services on Sunday (A. Bellesheim, *History of the Catholic Church in Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1887-1890, i, 86)."

#### The Protestant Attitude

The early Protestants and translators of the Bible, Cranmer, Tyndale, Zwingle, Calvin, Luther and others recognized that Sunday is merely the result of tradition. They knew it did not come from the Bible!

Why did the Protestants not accept the seventh day as the Sabbath? What made them accept the customs of ancient Baal worship?

Let's read the Protestants own answer:

"Luther's Larger Catechism taught that one day is not essentially better than another, but that, since it is not possible to devote each day in the week to a special religious celebration, one day should be set apart for that purpose and that, *to avoid the unnecessary disturbance which an innovation would occasion, it should continue to be Sunday.* The Augsburg Confession (art xxviii.) protests against the Sabbath substitution theory" (*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, article "Sunday").

*This is why Protestants observe Sunday today!* They have voluntarily adopted the MARK of the Beast—the ROMAN EMPIRE'S national holiday!

Carlstadt was one of the few men in the Reformation who observed the Sabbath and the festivals. With him, the laws given by God to Moses were still binding. But his teachings were rejected by the leaders of the Protestant movements. Luther admitted in His book *Against the Celestial Prophets*: "Indeed, if Carlstadt were to write further about the Sabbath, Sunday would have to give way, and the Sabbath—that is to say, Saturday—must be kept holy."

From the beginning Protestants were not interested in obedience to God, or in the Gospel of the Kingdom. Exactly as the early Catholics, *they were seeking to convert the kingdoms of this world to their religions.* The truth that was open to them passed through their fingers!

Thus it remains for the *Church of God* today to proclaim the final message. Only this Church—our Church—has remained steadfast through the centuries and has KEPT THE COMMANDMENTS OF JESUS!