

Part Four of PART THREE

7.4.

The Sabbath in Proclamation

The Sabbath is in the New Testament found to appear prominently, obtrusive and also implied and subliminal, anywhere, totally incidentally as well as deliberately the focus of attention. The Sabbath stupendously appears in New Testament history exclusively **Christian**. The Sabbath spontaneously and naturally **moves with the Christian Church and the Proclamation of Jesus Christ**.

Like the knowledge of **Jesus Christ**, knowledge of the **Sabbath** is **reserved to the Scriptures**, the Word of God and sole authority in the Church in matters of faith and practice. And like a **saving** knowledge of Jesus Christ, a **blessed** knowledge of the Sabbath is **reserved to the grace of God through the workings of the Spirit of Christ**. The student for this very reason would **expect to find the Sabbath** in the Church's life it **constantly receives** from its Lord. His confidence is not disappointed. Paragraph 7.1 shows how **God in Pentecost providentially** worked out the Sabbath's prophetic significance, in its fulfilment establishing it, and thus causing the Church to observe the Sabbath as a **precedent and example for all ages** of Christianity. Paragraph 7.2 shows how for the **Apostolic Church of after-Pentecost** the Sabbath Day is naturally supposed for Pastorate, Sacrament and Proclamation. Paragraph 7.3 shows how in the **Gospels**, the **Church reflected** on the Sabbath as a **New Covenant** institution, and in so doing **established** its **theological and ethical** significance for **Christ's People**. Paragraph 7.4 will treat on the Sabbath employed in Church **Proclamation**.

7.4.1.1.

The "Forty Days" and the Witness of the World

Consideration of the Sabbath in Church **proclamation** as a cosmic-eschatological sign first of all necessitates an evaluation of the **"Forty Days"** between Jesus' resurrection and ascension. Usually in theology **this interim period** gets mystified and overvalued. The witness of this period was and is of grave importance. But the **purpose** of the recording of the events that occurred during this period was the precise purpose of the recording of Jesus' life-story **before** his death and resurrection. It is written so that **nothing would happen in a secret corner** or would be **hidden under a bushel**. Of whatever happened during the forty days the **things of importance for the revelation of God in Jesus, had** been recorded. The history of this period is no subject for conjuring one's own theology from

teachings and revelations of Jesus to his disciples not recorded but purely **supposed**. **Nothing from the forty days is left secret**.

Said John that all the books in the world could not tell the things Jesus did, and the possibility is good that he meant the things done by Jesus **during the period of forty days!** What happened to be preserved after all – very reasonably then – should be **representative** character-wise and importance-wise. Those **many things not recorded** must have been of the **same sort** and of **equal** importance, but the Holy Spirit deciding determined which should be **preserved** in Scripture. So **of what nature** are the things in fact **found recorded** from the history of the forty days between Jesus' resurrection and his ascension? If Barth's sermon quoted and discussed below employ hermeneutics correctly, the things that occurred during the forty days indeed had to have been of the **same** kind and significance as the **Apostolic witness of Pentecost**. In fact, it should even be deemed of **greater** authority and "inspirational" validity than the Apostolic witness because it was given and received immediately from the Lord Jesus **himself!** **But, is** there such a witness to be discovered within and from these forty days? **What, really,** was the witness Jesus **himself** gave during his earthly appearances after his resurrection from the dead, and **what, really,** was the witness received and given by the **disciples** during this period? Again, judged by Barth's sermon's interpretation of these events, an **absolutely authoritative witness of the saving Gospel** exists in the revelation of this interim period. What is found there **throughout** – according to Barth in this sermon – for example in Jesus' **first appearance** to the disciples on the first Sunday evening, is the **full and saving** revelation of Jesus the Risen Christ and Son of God and man. Barth's view represents **general Christian tradition and teaching**. (See discussed below.)

But the Forty Days' witness' significance is not that of traditional Christian teaching.

Review the situation from the beginning. The story of the forty days is told by many witnesses and written down by at least four narrators. It starts with Mary Magdalene. John tells of Mary who **"during early darkness"**, "went to the grave". She "sees", not the grave, but "the stone". And she sees it "rolled away from the grave". Now that is all Mary saw on this occasion at this time of day or night. No brilliant thinker is allowed to read into this whatever he likes or to ignore whatever he dislikes. Not if he believes the Scriptures. But any sound mind is **forced to conclude** from this information, some definite **implications**. Remembering that Mary witnessed Jesus' burial and the size and effectiveness of the stone-door, it takes no guessing to realise that when she saw the stone rolled away from the grave she must

have had the fright of her life! John **leaves nothing unrecorded** where he, **immediately, carries on** with his narration and states that Mary, after having seen the stone rolled away, “**then ran**, and reached Simon Peter and the other disciple”. While recording the incident, imagine John sitting opposite Mary and asking her, “Mary, Did you enter the grave? Mary, When you approached and saw the stone rolled away, did you linger there? Mary, You say you ran. Were you afraid, and must I write here that you ran, not that you stood by the grave first and not even looked into it?” John recorded faithfully **just** what Mary told him. Mary **did not enter** the grave **neither** did she **see** inside the grave. John says as much by exactly **not** saying anything more than her seeing the stone rolled away.

But Mary for the very reason of having observed exactly what John recorded must have observed **more than the stone’s position**. She **must** have seen **no** guard, for one thing. She **must** have seen **no** angels. She **must** have seen **no** Jesus. **But**, Mary **knew** the stone could not be rolled away by any **disciples**. She **just knew** no disciples **would**. And if **any** would, **she** would have known, she of all Jesus’ acquaintance. Therefore somebody **else** or rather some **foe** must have opened Jesus’ grave, and **for what reason** than the worst imaginable, to **steal** Jesus’ body! Any person who sees the grave of his beloved opened will immediately, **without having to look**, think of grave robbing. No one needs to confirm such a suspicion through eye witnessing if he had seen a supposed to be closed grave, open! So Mary must have been frightened and her **fear** must have been the reason why she “**ran**”. And the **conclusions** she could not have helped to make, incited her to vent her **suspicion** to Peter and John. When Mary says, “They stole the Lord’s body from the sepulchre”, she doesn’t tell Peter and John what she had **seen or could prove for fact**.

John gives **not all** the details at this **stage in the building up towards** Jesus’ appearance. He says nothing about the disciples’ knowledge or ignorance of Jesus’ **burial**, for example. **No** Gospel mentions **any disciple’s** presence at or knowledge of Jesus’ burial. As shown in Part One **no** disciple **knew** first hand of or was personally **present** at Jesus’ burial. Mary’s account of a Jesus that had been **buried**, must have been to the disciples a greater shock than the news of the possible **theft** of his body. One could suspect the Jews of grave robbing. One could – because of the Jews – **not** expect a burial. Confusion was all that could reign in the disciples’ minds. As little as they believed that Jesus would not see corruption as little did they believe that Jesus would not see corruption **in a grave**. They thought what **anyone would have thought** in those days, that Jesus’ body was still hanging on the cross! **They all left Jesus to his fate** under Roman law and

that was **the end to them**. They lost hope even while Pilate “delivered Him over” to the Jews to be crucified and forsook Him **then**. The two disciples most probably had not even seen **Mary** since **days** before. If the disciples **had not already heard** about the **guard** and **through that news** have learned of Jesus’ **burial**, **this woman now** tells them for the first time that He was buried ... and on top that his body nevertheless got stolen! “Madness!” they reacted to Mary’s news.

Mary delivers not the witness of a believing witness of a risen Christ to believing disciples all of a sudden become Apostles. All she does is verbalising the mental cognisance of an inevitable inference of a very confused **unbeliever**.

Mary saying, “And **we (plural)** know not where they have laid him”, speaks of at least the **three** persons mentioned in the **context**. It does not imply that Mary, as recorded in the immediate context, had gone to the grave together with other persons. Where Mary **goes**, and **sees**, **runs**, the **singular** occurs – “**she** went” etc. Where she **tells** what she **thinks** must have happened, she says what **every** one must have thought, “**We** know not where they have taken him!” – plural. It is as much a supposition that the “**we**” who knew not, were the persons **involved in Mary’s reporting**, as it is a supposition that “**they**”, plural, had **stolen** the body. Mary did not see the body getting stolen. She saw no one or more persons. So how could she say, “**they**”, and that they, “**stole**” the body? – by simple **inference**. The stone was of such a size and its closing the opening of such a design that no **single** person could ever have opened it and anybody could have imagined that **several** persons would be required. **Who else but the guard?**

If Mary knew of the guard that had been appointed to the grave on the Sabbath, she could have had them in mind when she said “they stole / removed the body”. She most probably **did know** about the guard. In fact, “the Sabbath’s afternoon”, says Matthew, “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary set out to have a look at the grave”. **But they never got there**, and it may have been because they were **told of the guard** and warned not to go there “till the third day was over”. “**Immediately**”, in any case, when “they set out, there was a great earthquake”, and they could not do what they “set out” to do. The **Jews the morning already also** would have made sure that news of the guard reached ear of every inhabitant of Jerusalem. So Mary **knew** of the guard at the grave, placed there on Saturday morning. Going to the grave “early darkness” and not noticing any guard on duty, or, for that matter, any living being nearby, Mary unwittingly witnesses of a resurrection that was **something of the past** at this time of night. She **in her**

ignorance and unbelief confirms the fact and truth of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

Mary **obviously does not tell** the disciples about the absent guard. She automatically must have suspected the guard. Had they still been at the grave, Mary would have asked them about the missing body – but then she would have first looked and made sure about it. The guard must **long since** have **gone** when Mary arrived at the grave “when early darkness still”. **It no longer was “the third day”!**

John further mentions how he, **“believed”**. That is all. The Gospel says not that John believed **in Jesus** the Risen One of God the Saviour. What then, **did** John “believe”? The word “believe” may simply mean he **“understood”**, and then it would mean John understood what **Mary** in her exited state had tried to explain to them and they themselves as muddled as she, could not understand. The word for the same reason could mean that John “believed **Mary**”, or, John “believed **what** Mary had told them”, namely, **that the body had been stolen**. It could mean nothing more or anything else. It least of all can mean that John here gives **the witness of a believing Apostle of the Church of Christ**. John here gives the witness of a puzzled, scared and sceptical fisherman who hides his while till he could escape to his boat. “Then the disciples returned home”, John 20:10. A few days later they would be ordinary fishermen again.

“Now Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping ...”, verse 11.

The Gospel of John makes a huge jump in time. The in between time **from Mary's account** of an opened grave to her finding herself here by the grave has already been discussed in Par. 5.3.3. The other Gospels have noticed the events that fill this vacuum in John. Our concern here is to find out from these events and their recording **what character** they are constituted of. Are they **“revelation”** in the sense of the Apostolic Witness of Christ's Church, *i.e.*, are they **eschatological**, or, are they of the nature of an **historic recognition** of a historic fact of the existence of this man, Jesus after his crucifixion on that fateful 14th Nisan of the Jewish calendar?

In the **Gospels** the Church of the **late** first century contemplates on the Christ-event as the **beginning** of the epoch. A point of departure had arrived along the way. The question was not, Did this man Jesus walk the earth? The question for this time in history was, did this man Jesus walk the earth **after he had been crucified, died and had been buried?** Whether or not one is a believer, a “saint”, or an atheist, matters not – **did he live then or did he not live then?** The question concerned **no more than a man who lived and who was known to have lived** before Fourteenth Nisan when he was crucified and died and was taken from the cross after nightfall and was

buried the next day as the Sabbath drew on. (Later in history, the question would pose too formidable for some **who had to accept the witness of the world** that this man really walked the earth after that fateful date. So they solved the dilemma and made of the historic Jesus some sort of ghost-figure who only appeared for real. And who only **apparently died**. They were the Docetists and they believed the facts but not the truth about the facts. The very fact that the Docetists believed this impossible ghost-figure Jesus proves the historicity of the **bodily living Jesus – as before his death, so also after his death** because we all know there is no such thing as a ghost.

The **disciples** are the chosen of God to be the witness of the world – no **Docetists** who never knew him “after the flesh” and who thereby are disqualified as witnesses from the people. The disciples, because they had known and believed in Jesus “after the flesh”, lost all hope in Jesus “after the flesh” when He was condemned to death. Their dreams were shattered. They could never be fooled by hallucinations like the Docetists were. **The disciples expected something from reality for the future. Reality failed them.** How could illusions do for them what reality could not? So they were the ones best qualified – the only ones qualified – to be witnesses of a **reality** which they witnessed slip from their grip ... **turning up again!** Cold statistics supply the undeniable fact of **material reality**. This one man named Jesus of Nazareth has encountered them, quite often, for a solid forty days after that he had died! Yes, they knew him intimately. He to them was like a God and a Master! The God and a Master they used to acknowledge and honour. Now “after all this that happened” he is so real and tangible that they are prepared to again accept him their leader, their Master and even their God. Old habits die hard, and even harder die well nurtured hopes and expectations. **“Master, wilt thou at this time, restore again the Kingdom to Israel? (Acts 1:6) “Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. But blessed are they that have not seen yet believed”**. Yours is but a nominal faith, Thomas, Peter, Mary. Though you all may call me Lord and God, you still don't believe by a **faith of the Resurrected Christ Exalted in the Power of God's utmost might that breaks the bonds of eternal death!** Yours is still the believing of men.

“The main evidence for the resurrection of Christ ... is provided by the existence and growth of the Church itself if we have regard to the circumstances in which the earthly mission of Jesus ended ... in utter catastrophe. That the Apostles within a few weeks of the crucifixion should have boldly confronted those who had condemned Jesus and proclaimed his resurrection and lordship – this is the real evidence for the resurrection as a fact of history. ... Full weight should be given to the fact that from the

earliest days the characteristic act of worship of the apostolic community was 'the breaking of bread' – surely a memorial of unbearable sadness except for the knowledge of the Risen Christ: 'he was known of them in the breaking of the bread' (Lk.24:25). Luke's Emmaus story (24:13-35) implies that the risen Lord was made known in his Church in two ways: in the expounding of the Scriptures and in the breaking of bread, i.e., through the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. In both these ways still to-day is the power of Christ's resurrection made known in his Church. Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible, SCM Press London 1969, Resurrection

Richardson says, "The Apostles within a few weeks of the crucifixion ... boldly confronted those who had condemned Jesus and proclaimed his resurrection and lordship – this is the real evidence for the resurrection as a fact of history." "Within a few weeks" ... "the Apostles", is something different than "from the earliest days the characteristic act of worship of the apostolic community was 'the breaking of bread'" namely with reference to "Lk.24:25, Luke's Emmaus story 24:13-35". "The breaking of bread" referred to in "Lk.24:25, Luke's Emmaus story 24:13-35", was not the "worship of the apostolic community". It was an ordinary meal served to a stranger and which he in any case did not eat. (The disciples recognised **Him** for "**him**" though **he** was **He** Whom they recognised **not**. They witnessed and confessed Jesus simply for the historic man of Nazareth he was, and not for the Risen Lord of the Church. They did not recognise Jesus as the Second Person of the Godhead, or as God incarnate and least of all as **God incarnate through resurrection from the dead!**) It was not the disciples "Congregated", but two who were not of the twelve, at home. And at this stage in history no disciples were Apostles yet. Therefore, "from the earliest days" must be qualified. From day one to day forty nine "the characteristic act of worship of the apostolic community" was still unknown and not practised as much as once. But on the **Fiftieth Day** of Passover Season a **miracle** would occur, like the birth of Jesus and like his resurrection. Then would become true what Richardson here says of the disciples' worship during the forty days – it would be true of their worship only after the forty days and in fact only **after the forty-ninth** day.

"The NT writers regard the resurrection of Christ as the fulfilment of scriptural prophecy (cf. especially 1Cor.15:4). Like his passion and death, the resurrection was a part of the predetermined divine plan for our salvation; but, since the gravamen of the Jewish objection to the Messiahship of Jesus lay in their inability to believe that the Christ should suffer rather than that he should triumph over death, the NT writers are found more frequently arguing that the passion had been foretold by the

prophets (e.g. Luke 24:46). Nevertheless, the apostles firmly held that the resurrection had been predicted in the Scriptures (e.g. Acts 2:25-36); it was no mere afterthought or attempt to make the best of a bad job: it was (like Christ's death) a part of God's eternal purpose. The resurrection of Christ shed new light on the ancient scriptures; they now could be read with a fresh understanding which illuminated many obscure and unexplained prophecies and mysteries.

... The NT writers are concerned to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus, not to explain it. It is a mystery beyond human comprehension, and the Apostles are its witnesses, not its psychologists. It has come to them as a fact, not as a philosophical explanation. The earliest recollections of the apostolic proclamation (e.g. the sermons of St. Peter in Acts) give no rationale or account of the mode in which it took place. St. Paul does not seem to be called upon to explain to the Corinthians the nature of Christ's resurrection body. It is not until we reach the later stages of the tradition (the stories in the Gospels) that we find definite teaching concerning the bodily resurrection of the Lord. The Gospel accounts teach or imply that Jesus rose in the body (Luke 24:39-43, John 20:6f., 27), though it is implied that his risen body possessed capacities not shared by our ordinary bodies (John 20:26)."

"It is a mystery beyond human comprehension, and the Apostles are its witnesses, not its psychologists." Before the Holy Spirit came, these Apostles as the disciples they used to be, found Jesus' resurrection "beyond human comprehension" and tried to be its psychologists rather than its witness. It came to them "as a fact" for which they had all sorts of "philosophical explanation". They initially labelled its report "idle fables". Eight days after they (not only Thomas) saw Him as their new religious leader. And they on the exact day of Jesus' ascension (which they anticipated not a moment) considered Jesus for king of the restored kingdom of Israel and Judahh. Of all this, nothing remained when on the appointed day the Appointed of God, Jesus the Christ, would the first time be the Object of the Faith of the Church, of its Confession and of its Witness, Proclamation and Worship. (The Holy Spirit would "testify of Me".) "The NT writers are concerned to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus, not to explain it." The disciples were the first witnesses of the **risen Jesus**. They were not the "Witnesses" of Jesus' **resurrection** though. Once they would become witnesses of "the Resurrection", **the Resurrection of Jesus the Christ and in Him the Resurrection of the Elect**, they would also become its **proclaimers**.

To return now to the **sequence of events**: John believed **Mary**. It seems Peter did not. Luke tells how later that night other witnesses confirmed what Mary had **suspected**. After having told Peter and John of the rolled away stone, and after they had run to the grave, solitary Mary experienced some sobering after-thought. But I never looked **inside** the sepulchre! The body may still be there! Mary called the other women, and with their ointments “prepared” on the Friday afternoon after the burial, they arrived at the grave with the view to embalm Jesus’ body. “And they **found** the stone rolled away from the sepulchre” – **as Mary had noticed before**. But now, this time, they would **enter** the grave – unlike Mary the first time. Mary’s worst **suspicion is confirmed**, “They found not the body!” “They found not the body ... **of the Lord Jesus**”, writes the **narrator, long after**. These are not women who come to the grave to meet the “Lord Saviour of his people”. They come to find a corpse, and instead find nothing. They come to find a corpse perhaps stolen, and in fact find their fears confirmed (they mistakenly thought of course). “With bowed down to the earth faces they left.” Their heart was bowed down within them. They looked for the dead among the dead and were disappointed. “Why seek ye the living among the dead? Don’t you remember what He taught you?” Could these two women have grasped the implications of the angel’s words? “They remembered his words”, yes, but did they remember correctly and **what the meaning could be?** “And so they returned from the sepulchre and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest” who by now had all come together in one place, “driven upon one another in despair of the Jews”. Just the **idea** of a living Jesus evoked by “the words” (not by the **sight** of Jesus) of the “two men” or angels – “seemed to them (“them” all – including the women) as **idle tales**”. “And they (all present) believed them (the angels) **not!**” But impulsive Peter! He couldn’t stand the tension. He had to see again for himself. The matter now has deepened in complexity. First he had to learn that Jesus was taken from the cross and had been buried. Next thing he hears, Jesus’ body had been stolen! Then he and his friend went to see for themselves. John could believe Mary, but not he, Peter! Now he again runs to the grave. This time he “looked closer” = “stooping down”. This time he notices what he at first must have missed, clear evidence of an orderly playing off of a **mysterious yet material event**. “He sees the linen clothes laid by themselves. He departs, wondering by himself at what must have happened”. Peter returns **not having seen Jesus**, but having seen **evidence** of something he could not understand, leave alone could believe. “Later on”, says Mark – “the evening of the same day” says John – Jesus for the first time appears to all the disciples except Thomas who was absent. The

disciples from Emmaus mention one Simon, to whom Jesus had appeared earlier that day,

tells Luke. **Peter is not that Simon**. Thomas was absent, and Judahs was dead. Jesus now appears not to nine disciples the first time, but to **ten** (collectively called the “eleven”) **that included Peter** who obviously like all the others had not seen Jesus **since his crucifixion**. Peter **on this occasion** would see Jesus for the **first** time. After having seen the living Jesus the first time, Peter would **still not be** the proclaiming, **eschatological witness he was destined to be**. Some days after, Jesus asked Peter, “Simon, Peter, do you love me?” Peter must have thought how he had denied Jesus, and answering, “yes”, must have raised some doubt in his own heart. The **pleading way in which Peter answers** Jesus suggests the uncertainty of his own conscience. Jesus knew Peter was **not ready** yet as Witness, and **would not be ready until he had received the Holy Spirit**. Jesus asked Peter **three** times if he loved him, and **three** times Jesus referred to **his sheep** that must be safely tended. Jesus metaphorically spoke of his **Church**, and while his sheep were still scattered, Peter’s love for **Him** could not be projected properly. Peter’s love for **Jesus** could only be realised as his love for Christ’s Body, the **Church**. The Church would realise only on the appointed day the fiftieth day or “Pentecost”, the day of the **First Loaves Wave Offering** – **then** Peter’s love will be proven worthy. “The Holy Spirit **was there not yet**” – while of course it is the **Eternal Spirit of God**. Every confession any disciple or any other person had made **before** Jesus’ death, that Jesus is Lord and God, **was by the Holy Spirit**, for “no one can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Spirit”. Yet **these** confessions were of the same nature as those of the **forty days**. They had as **object** a Jesus and a Christ, **not fully** recognised, not fully known, not fully loved, witnessed, confessed or proclaimed, **yet**. It was the confession of the Lord by men and women **who had not received the Holy Spirit** to the measure **promised** by the Father and **guaranteed** by Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. The forty-nine days of harvest still **counted down**. **The First Bread of harvest would only be waved** not before the harvest was **fully gathered in** and its fruit edible **on the fiftieth day**. Jesus will be **seated** the Risen, Exalted, Honoured, at the right hand of the power of God in heavenly places. And **in Him, the Elect** will be seated at the right hand of God, **before on earth** the latter rains shall be poured out in mighty torrents – **onto the People** in fact. And Jesus will be **confessed, witnessed and proclaimed** the Risen, Exalted, Honoured, at the right hand of the power of God in heavenly places ... in the power of the Holy Spirit “**as promised**” in fact! The **time** determined as the

time of the **Holy Spirit's Witness of the Risen Christ, had** not come and **would** not come for **forty-nine** days.

The woman came to the grave a **third** time to make sure that what they had seen they had seen. Every one present – **witnesses of Jesus' crucifixion** – were witnesses of **the dawn of the last days**, the Christian era. They will be present again and be witness again **within** those days. They **now** are the witnesses of the last days' **breaking**. They will see the Kingdom of God come, they, who "stand here". The world and the Church will look for evidence of the "historic Jesus" from this day on. The witness of this Jesus will come **from the elect** and not from the reprobate. In vain is the evidence looked for in history and in history books because the evidence needed is right here where it belongs and before had been – in the Scriptures and in the elect – they who stood there **before** and now **in** the Kingdom, "see" and **witness**. Is the question raised, "The historic Jesus"? The answer won't be found **elsewhere**. The witness won't be heard **again**. Here are the **unbelievers** witnessing so that the believers might believe. They saw an empty grave **not believing**. They saw a man they before his death had known and knew him again **but believed not**. They recognised this real person, breather of air and eater of fish, but **believed him not**. These are the witnesses who had known Jesus before and after his **witnessed death** and who although they believed not testified to Jesus living after his death. They even recognised this Jesus for what they held him before his death, even as their Lord and God and Master who worked miracles and held sway over the depths of the sea. **Yet they believed not**. They returned to their boats. They will give **unprejudiced** witness! He it was whom they saw and met and were met by and touched and spoke and ate with. For forty days did He instruct them as during his whole ministry in Galilee and Judea over three and a half years! How could these witnesses ever be mistaken? Their unbelief despite their acquaintance of Jesus is their most important qualification as witnesses. Who needs all the world's books filled with more of the same kind of confirmation? "These things" John and the other witnesses "wrote down". "These things" suffice. If any believe not their witness of this Jesus, whose testimony would be believed? The evidence is overwhelming and final. It is "witness **against** them"!

The necessity and the nature of the world's witness to the historic Jesus should be recognised in the **disciples' witness during the forty days** between Jesus' resurrection and ascension. This witness is recognised from the first moment and first day of the evidence of an empty grave, of a bewildered guard and of a surprised company of disloyal followers. "They",

who "stole his body", Mary must have learned, were the guard, and they were no longer at the grave for the very reason that He rose from the dead!

Mark, or the Gospel according to St Mark, originally saw fit to end his narrative of Jesus of Nazareth with the women frightened by the angel's order that they should tell his disciples that Jesus waits to meet them. The women were so frightened by this instruction they fled the scene of the grave, and **kept silent**. The women had **not** been superstitious – they did not flee the scene **before** the angel's instruction. But this strange and unfortunate coincidence was more than they could bear. This angel tells them the **dead** Jesus wants to meet his disciples. It could only imply the **disciples' death**, and perhaps for them also the terrible death Jesus had to endure. The women could not listen, and they could not tell the disciples. They **fled**.

And here Mark originally ended. Jesus' resurrection should be what it should be for unbelievers: Judgement! And **Jesus' resurrection** should be for **believers** the Power of the Holy Spirit! Jesus' resurrection alone should be the reason and cause of faith for those who would believe unto salvation. A living Faith! **Mark stopped where Pentecost started**. But **later** on, the well-known "second ending" was added, and **Mark resumed the history of the Church with the witness of the world**. (This later addition to some extent may in part have been borrowed from Luke and John.) That history starts with recalling how Jesus "the Risen early on the First Day of the week appeared unto Mary Magdalene first". The qualifying of what status Jesus appeared in to Mary, namely "as the Risen One" – *anastas*, is the work of the **narrator**, "Mark". According to **John**, Mary at first didn't recognise Jesus, but confounded Him for the gardener! And when she eventually recognised Jesus she did so **not understanding** a thing about Jesus' **resurrection!** Mary for every reason of her humanness exercised no act of saving faith in recognising this resurrected Jesus for the one, only, same and real Jesus of her company a few days ago. She at this moment in no wise by her recognising attests **willingly or consciously** even Jesus' **historicity** let alone his **divinity!** In fact it is impossible to ever recognise Jesus' historicity without recognising his divinity. But **willingly and consciously** to recognise, witness and proclaim Jesus' historical reality as God's divine and saving presence with men, is another matter. **Only the Spirit of Christ** (Pentecost) could and would provide the requirements for **such** a recognising of Jesus the Christ. Mary's very **unwitting and unpremeditated** acknowledgement and recognising of Jesus is **her**, only possible prove of Jesus' historicity, **her** only possible prove of Jesus' historicity **as of after his death**. On seeing and recognising Jesus there is no sudden **insurgence of**

faith causing Mary to proclaim Jesus the Christ of God. That Mary **sensibly saw** Jesus (resurrected) was **not a seeing Jesus the Resurrected of God through the Power of the Holy Spirit**. Hers was the act of man. Mary saw the historic person Jesus (after his death). She did not work out the possibilities of her seeing Jesus, or its implications. Mary paid the implications Jesus' resurrection had no attention. The only implication in any case as far as Mary was concerned would have been that without Jesus' resurrection from the dead bodily it would have been impossible for them to meet. But she of course for no moment analyses events in such a way. To Mary it would mean cold and dead mental exercise. How Jesus came to stand there before her and how it was possible that he could be touched and held fast by her never entered her mind, or her inmost soul that must be saved by this man she so loved. The difference between Mary's awareness and sterile logic, though, was no more than her human **emotion**. She loved Jesus the way humans love one another. Mary's calling Jesus "Master", therefore, was of the same kind as Thomas' calling Jesus "my Lord and my God" and Peter's plea, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee". It could be interpreted as an exclamation, an oath of surprise. Actually Mary **meant** her calling Jesus "Master" to be no more. The world should first recognise the resurrected Jesus for the individual he **used** to be – the historic figure not yet properly the Lord of his Church! Even recognised and acknowledged "Master", "Lord" and "God", the witness must be nominal, no more than the recognition and acknowledgement of a **rich young man** who called him "Master" but could not see himself following Jesus – **through want of that special call**, that electing privilege of grace called **faith**. **This Jesus**, must first be revealed and must first in person appear and confront the world before any might believe **unto salvation**. The world must have no justification in its unrighteousness. The **Crucified** must first be justified in His Righteousness!

But **it must be the elect** who thus recognise and acknowledge the Jesus who appears for and as the Jesus who walked the streets of Jerusalem and was taken outside Jerusalem to be crucified. The witness like that of the rich young man won't do. **The elect must witness: It is he**, known and attested of **those** who knew him and who with him walked the streets of Jerusalem and saw him led away to be crucified. **These who believed** him have to witness. **No strangers and no unbelievers** could be **that** witness. Therefore, **Mary** "went and told **them that had been with him** as they mourned and wept. And **they** (who **then** believed), when they had heard that he was alive and had been seen of her, (now) **believed not**" – **their unbelief their unwitting witness!** Mark complements John's observance of events.

Of the resurrection-faith there is no trace as yet. This is no belittling of the witness given on this day – it is its rightful appreciation. By not faithfully, that is, truthfully, evaluating the witness given on this day, its real greatness and real meaning will be destroyed. Its necessity will be smothered and displaced by a **false necessity and value**. The Day might steal the occasion instead of the occasion winning the day. All through the period of the witness of the world everybody and every day's witness, is common. (In fact in after-apostolic Christian tradition the resurrection has lost its honour to a strange day.)

The Church exists, but does not exist manifested **in the power of the Holy Spirit yet**. To proclaim Jesus the Risen Lord as the **Church of Christ requires the Spirit of Christ**. The Church **does** exist during the forty days but as it were **in the seed**, after being planted but while "**waiting**" to burst into life and light. The **disciples'** witness is not the **Apostles'** Proclamation of the Risen Jesus. ... **Not yet**. The disciples' instruction during the forty days was not the **Church's** initiation in duty by the Spirit of Pentecost. Cognitive witness of the historic Jesus needs the Holy Spirit to be Proclaiming Witness of the Risen Christ.

"And as he sat at meat with them he took the bread, and having prayed, he broke the bread and handed them some to eat. And their eyes were opened ... they recognised him. **But he had vanished out of their sight**. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us while he talked to us on the way and while he opened to us the Scriptures? And they departed immediately to Jerusalem and there found the eleven thronged together, also the others of the company. They told them, the Lord is risen, indeed, and he appeared to one Simon. And they told what things happened on their way, and how they recognised Jesus while they ate. And as they thus spoke, Jesus himself stood in their midst." (Lk.24:16-36) The passage speaks for itself. These two men experienced sporadic enlightenment. Of a sudden Jesus vanishes. The intensity of feeling depended on Jesus' physical presence while their mental insights depended on reflection. This still is far from the measure of Spirit and Faith the *bona fide* Church would still be endowed with. The two disciples report their experience with Jesus, whom they at first didn't recognise. It suddenly dawned upon them who this stranger was. "Their eyes were opened and they recognised him". Theirs was a human and mental realisation that of course would excite any person who encounters a person he very well knows had died, living!

Facts these two men knew already, were, that Jesus was killed, that his grave was empty, that some angels had told the women that he is risen, that Jesus had appeared to one Simon. As the Stranger explained to them the

Scriptures, these men – after three days of confusion – only needed to sit down, to close their eyes a minute and to get a little blood-sugar to their brains, to “click” ... This is Jesus! And thus – instructed by Jesus on these things – they were enabled to infer that Jesus must have been resurrected from the dead! **They with their wits about them recognised Jesus the same person whom they had known personally and with their wits about them had seen killed and died!** They were very, **very far** from a **full understanding** of these things and from a **saving faith** in Him that also is a proclaiming, eschatological-creative faith and testimony of the **Apostolic Church! With their wits about them this Jesus disappeared the moment they thought they understood!** At the exact moment of grasping, reality slips from the hold of **these witnesses** ... Jesus **vanished** from their sight! In the Sabbath as in the Lord’s Supper Jesus **appears through faith**, is **taken hold of in faith** and is **partaken of by faith**. **Faith itself** is strengthened by and sustained in the real and true presence of the object of Christian Worship. But Jesus – **as** surely and **as** clearly as He is communed with through Sabbath or through Lord’s Supper – is **lost in purely mental** processing and understanding of these institutions. If Jesus is made the thought-food and rationale of religion, He vanishes. Jesus the Risen cannot be kept captive. If the psyche of exited emotionalism, Jesus is nowhere and in no manner – least of all **spiritually**, present.

Cleopas and his companion went and told the others no more than their own findings. Theirs was an unusual experience and insight. But it was no case of the full Power of Jesus’ and the Father’s Promise of the Holy Spirit, that Faith the Church would be **created** of and afterwards would live of and exist by. And the disciples’ was not Communion of the Saints. It was not the Church (and it was not the Lord’s Supper they partook of) ... not **yet**. **Theirs was the witness of the world and of the unbelievers still!**

In fact, the disciples’ was the witness of the unbelievers because this very group of people a little after sunrise had received personal testimony from some women that Jesus had appeared to them. The women’s witness was so strong even the two disciples from Emmaus received ear of it. But the disciples were the first sceptics, the first agnostics – “idle fables!” scorned they. Because the disciples believed not, their witness is the **surer**. It must be admitted, they were **objective** observers. **They could score nothing** by telling lies about their attitude about Jesus and their encounters with Him. They had no need to pretend. They still would be in their precarious situation of that room. The disciples, eventually on this same day, recognise, admit and witness the reality of Jesus whom they had known so well before his death. Despite the plain and palpable fact of his death and

without having any further interest in the fact or in the implications of the fact, they recognising, admit and confirm Jesus’ present living reality. Their witness to this existential truth must be accepted for true precisely for their scepticism and unbelief! No matter how, it, the disciples’ witness, and he, this Jesus they witnessed of, was a historical fact, and he, a historical figure **after his death as before his death**.

In order of historic sequence, we have now arrived in the upper-room “where the disciples were thronged together for fear of the Jews”. *“Like a flock of chicken on the roost-stick when it had thundered sat they there”*, says Barth.

It all along had been the First Day – since Mary in early darkness had gone to the grave on her own. Actually, every discovery since the women “after the Sabbath had passed” had “bought ointments to anoint the body”, had been made on the **First Day** of the week. Every thing that happened since the guard had left the grave has happened on the First Day. It was the First Day because the First Day follows the Sabbath like the Second Day follows the First.

And the **event** or events of the Day, making the day what it is, **not being Jesus’ resurrection**, and, compared to Jesus’ resurrection, being but like the light of the moon compared to the light of the sun, make of this day one **perfectly ordinary**. The disciples saw and recognised Jesus “during **forty days**” **as ordinary** as “this the First Day of the week”. John even reckons this day the **way the world reckons** days, from midnight to midnight.

“It is better for you”, Christ told his disciples, “that I go away”. **The witnesses would not be able to behold Jesus face to face had he revealed himself in full resurrection glory during the forty days on earth**. The **Holy Spirit only** would make that possible – the Holy Spirit **according to the Father’s Promise** and not otherwise. Mortals can’t approach Christ’s resurrection glory, like no mortal can approach God’s glory. The witnesses would walk in the full splendour of the countenance of the resurrected and exalted Christ **on Pentecost**, the Holy Spirit being “poured out” upon them, they being “baptised from above”.

The Church has, however, besides making of the **First Day** what should be made of Resurrection **Sabbath**, made of the **First Day** what should be made of Pentecost **Sabbath**. It has made of this first Sunday of the **forty days** “the **fiftieth** day, fully come”. The Church has carried the ark of the house of God (the Sabbath) into the house of Dagon (Sunday). Had Jesus been raised from the dead on the First Day of the week and provided prophecy allowed for such a possibility, then every importance the Church

has attached to the First Day would have been justified. **Had** Jesus been resurrected on the First Day and **had** the testimony of Scripture “Old” as well as “New” Testaments attested to Jesus’ resurrection on the First Day, then, **Scripture would be true to itself**. **Then**, “according to the Scriptures the third day” of Jesus’ death and resurrection, would have happened to be and would have had to be, the **First Day** of the week. But, while Jesus’ resurrection **happened** to be and by the witness of Old and New Testament **had to be** on the **Sabbath Day**, the association between resurrection and the **Sabbath Day** is justified **exclusively**. **All** that occurred on the **First Day** of the week was the inevitable **sequel** of things told by the **world’s own witnesses**. Thus the first of the **forty days** was of no special, exclusive Pentecostal- and Resurrection-significance. Thus the Church that then was, was still the **dormant seed waiting** in darkness (in all honesty a darkness of unbelief) for the rains and the light of God’s **Promise**. The Church would receive that life-giving “latter rains” and “great light in the darkness” **on the Fiftieth Day of Passover-season**, and it would be on the **Sabbath**, “according to the Scriptures”. Things didn’t simply work out according to **sequel**, but exactly as **pre-determined** in the Council of God, “according to the **Scriptures**”!

*“The **earliest** recollections of the apostolic proclamation (e.g. the sermons of St. Peter in Acts) give no rationale or account of the mode in which it took place ... It is not until we reach the **later** stages of the tradition (the stories in the **Gospels**) that we find definite teaching concerning the **bodily** resurrection of the Lord. The **Gospel** accounts teach or imply that **Jesus rose in the body** (Luke 24:39-43, John 20:6f., 27) ...”* Anderson (Emphasis CGE)

The **early** in time Apostolic and Pentecostal witness of the Risen Christ, is concerned to **proclaim** the resurrection of Jesus, **not** to explain it. The Apostles in **obeying** their call to proclaim the Christ **do not attempt** to explain the resurrection – they are its **witnesses**, **not** its psychologists. Jesus’ resurrection has come to them as a **fact**, not as a **philosophy**. The Gospel stories supply **as little** rationale as do **Peter** where he **preaches** Christ Resurrected, or, as do **Paul** where he, in his sermons and letters, **teaches** Christ Resurrected. The **witnesses** are the **same** and **also**, **not** the same. They are the **Disciples** become **Apostles**. They are the **afraid** and **unbelieving** witnesses of the Jesus who again lived on earth. They had known and were able to know him having known him before ... **ever so timidly**. But **now**, **Sabbath of Pentecost**, they are the **bold, proclaiming Witness of the Exalted Christ, the Church of the Holy Spirit!** They witness the much adored and worshiped **Jesus, recognised** for the carpenter

got crucified returned from the dead. **Jesus** who converses with his former followers is **again** adored and worshipped for precisely what he had been to them before. **This Jesus is now, worship, adored, proclaimed and honoured the Risen!** It is **this Jesus, become the Jesus the Exalted Christ, who, fulfilling the Promise of the Father, obtains many brethren**. Eph.4:9-13

The **first** testimonies are of the **unbelievers** – the testimony of the world – of the **impartial** jury. They are recorded in the **later** Testimonies the **Gospels**, as the testimony of the **forty days** between resurrection and ascension, **excluding** the resurrection and **including** the ascension. The **witnesses** of Jesus’ resurrection are **not eyewitnesses** of his resurrection. They are eyewitnesses of **Jesus**.

A Church which has given much thought and has gone through much affliction and that must **answer for its Faith, only now**, in the late documents the **Gospels, face the world** of unbelievers with a well considered and justified **testimony**. Say they to the world, We witnessed the truth of this Christ **while we ourselves were the world, unbelievers** and sceptics **like you**. There is no escape for **you** as there was no escape for **us** from the judgement of God revealed in this Jesus, God’s Anointed. We put before you the life of Christ in our accounts of the Man Jesus of Nazareth. Now you must judge Him and **be** judged by Him. **Is He the Messiah the Son of God or are you going to reject your only salvation?**

The **Church** in the Gospels not only narrates, but **accounts for its faith** that makes it the **Proclaiming Witness of the Christ, the Pentecost Church**. It **will** be in the **Gospels** therefore – it **must** be expected **there** and nowhere else in the New Testament – that the Church as the responsible Church answering for its faith in Jesus Christ **will supply its rationale for the Sabbath**. Had the Church to put on the table its rationale for **Sunday**, it **had** to be **here, in the Gospels** and **nowhere else** in the New Testament. Needless to say there **is no** such rationale given ... **not in the Gospels ... not of Sunday!**

The conclusion is forced upon the honest mind. **No** rationale, **no** reason, **no** logic, **no** basis, **no** motivation **whatever** can be dished up from the history of Jesus **between resurrection and ascension** for “**this day the First Day of the week**” as the **New Testament or Apostolic Day of Rest and Worship**.

It is **not strange** at all **not** to find a word about the **Sabbath** during this period of the “forty days” of preliminary, unprepared, purely human witness and recognition of the man crucified, risen and returned to life. It is **not strange** at all **not** to find a word about the **Sabbath** during this period

where no word of exaltation, of intercession, of immortality, of divinity or **whatever** of the like is heard, **yet. But when begins Proclamation** of the exalted, interceding, incorruptible and divine, Risen Christ ... **then also the Sabbath is involved!** From “the **beginning** of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”, it “straightway” is “... the **Sabbath**”! When “**the times of the Gentiles**” begins, comes ... “**the next Sabbath**”! When the **Holy Spirit begins the Church, appears the Sabbath!** When the angel rolls away the stone, **New Life ... “in the Sabbath” begins!**

7.4.1.2.

The “Forty Days” and “Easter-Message”

“Then the same day at evening, being the First Day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord”.

The Church makes of the **First Day** of the week, **this:**

¹ “Prayer for the Sermon. Loving, all mighty Father and God! Could we fathom, could we justly praise what You have done for your People, for the whole world and therefor also for us in that You have raised Jesus Christ your Son, our Brother, from the dead among whom He also belonged, and have invested with life incorruptible to thy honour and our salvation ...! Could we be justly grateful for your Promise, your Comfort and your Instruction you in raising Christ upon us your blessed People have bestowed once for all! May we accept and cherish in what we are, think, say and do that Resurrection Day is the true birthday of us all, the Day to which all our other days may join as days of freedom, peace and joy!

² May we notice something of it as we in this hour together in praying and in singing endeavour to proclaim your Word and to make it heard. You know that even our deepest sincerity and zeal, our greatest fidelity cannot make of us a true Church of the Resurrection. The Light necessary for that, here, as in all the Churches of this city and everywhere else can only come from You. We pray of You without claim and in childlike trust that this Light may not lack – nowhere and so also not with us. Amen.

My beloved Brethren!

³ We are here to celebrate the memory of ‘this day, this First Day of the week. In place of the Jewish Sabbath as the Seventh Day this First Day in the Christian Community has as by itself become the true Sabbath and the Church’s weekly Feast Day. The Christian Feast Day thus has its ground and origin in this Day. In the Germanic tongue it sounds a little heathenish: “Sunday”. Now because on this Day the Sun of righteousness ascended in

the dark world of sin, it may as well be called Sunday. It nevertheless is more aptly in Romanic languages called “the Lord’s Day” because He, the Lord, is The on this day Risen Sun of Righteousness.

⁴ Every day used to be a day like all others of our time-reckoning. What makes of this day this singular Day, was that which happened on it and to it: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! It is the resurrection of this One deceased, his going out of the grave wherein He – after He two days before on Good Friday had been crucified and had died – had been laid.

⁵ Beloved brethren, how that could happen and did happen: this conquering and removal, this death of His death, His vestiture and fulfilment – not in the likeness of his former mortal, but in a new immortal Life – that I know as little as you do. Nothing is simpler than to say, man could not believe that. That in fact ever since could not be told and even less described or explained. There appropriately is no passage in the New Testament where something in that strain is even attempted. The resurrection of Jesus was God’s act only and wholly. As such it is an act most perfect, but also most incomprehensible. That such a thing happened could only then and now be but recognised, admitted, witnessed and proclaimed. ‘Jesus Christ is risen’ Christians today in Russia greet one another, the other replying, ‘He is truly risen!’ Even so, that isn’t telling; that is to witness and to proclaim.

^{6a} Of what on this day had happened only that what followed on Jesus’ resurrection could be told: that He appeared to his disciples, that he met them (notably not in their imagination, in a dream or however ghostly, but clearly bodily visible, audible, yes, tangible).^{6b} This recently deceased Man now living in the power and manner that God lives – immediately through Him and with Him and therefor immortally, indestructibly, incorruptibly alive. Thus Jesus on this day approached his disciples. That since then however faltering could only be recounted for certain. Exactly in this story was and is witnessed and proclaimed what was and is not to be told – then and to this day.

^{7a} Thus – so the story of the witness goes: “On the evening of this day came Jesus”. As foreseen and expected? No! Indeed as He promised – but who could have believed that before or even have understood it?^{7b} What a coming! Hence from the grip of the dominion of death the fatal destiny of all humanity. Hence from the grave that as yet has never returned one dead! Such a coming, hence, from where none has ever come, a coming totally unforeseen and totally unexpected. But He, Jesus, came from there.^{7c} Really the same Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had known before? Yes, whom they personally knew but never truly recognised! The same Jesus, but now in

glory. That is to say, the same Jesus now reveals himself as the true Son of God and Son of man whom they before with eyes seeing had not seen, with ears hearing had not heard. The same but now so that their eyes and ears open in that He opens them. This from the dead risen Jesus “came and stood in their midst”. We would like to ponder on this noteworthy expression.

⁸ Before anything else it means, He stepped into the midst of his disciples. He thus stepped into the place which they during the long hours since Good Friday saw empty, where they could only notice the emptiness: only the memory of his blood drenched body taken from the cross, only his grave and in it all their own mistaken and perished hopes and illusions, only the end of all things.

^{9a} ... To these came Jesus and stood in their midst. For what? Unto their hope. Unto a hope in the power of the great mercy of God their Father came Jesus. Unto a hope unto the hopeless, these wearied and heavy laden, these sorrowful and scared cowards – Jesus came unto a hope to this thoroughly sick body of disciples. Jesus did this in the most simple way imaginable: “Peace be unto you!” he greeted them. In the language of the time that meant no more (or less) than what today it would mean when a person meets another and says, ^{9b} “Good day to you all!” So human, so like their equal stepped Jesus into their presence. But this “Good day”, being wished his disciples by Jesus is no mere wish. Jesus brings, indeed creates for his disciples that which this single word says, “Peace!” – a “good evening”, a “good day!” He does this however, in that He shows them his pierced hands, his stabbed side – the traces of his death of the cross. Therein Jesus reveals himself as the One who experienced the beatings, the wounds and death not as the course of fate but absolutely in the freedom of obedience to God his Father. Jesus reveals himself to his disciples as the One who took upon himself these sufferings well be it from God to His honour. ^{9c} Precisely as the on the cross slaughtered Lamb of God does Jesus prove himself to the disciples the victorious, living Lion of Judahh: as the Saviour of all the world loved by God and so as their Saviour. ^{9d} Thus approached the Resurrected Jesus his own and met with them; thus, as Prophet of the singular unchangeable and infallible Truth of God; who now actively and finally ventures upon the teaching, discipline, equipment and command of these lost and disarrayed troops his Community. Thus does He make this little nation in its encompassing inability stronger than all nations of the world. Thus did Jesus wish – no, thus brought Jesus and created He peace unto them. Thus brought He and created He the good evening, the good day, by stepping in their midst.

¹⁰ We are allowed and obliged to add something here: Jesus, as He stepped into the midst of the disciples, stepped into the centre of each of your lives. (the Congregation of Basel’s prison) ... Peace be unto you! If Jesus died and was resurrected as the Hope of his whole Body, then died He and did He rise as the Hope of each of the body’s members; then died he and did he rise also for your justification before God, and also for the sanctification of your life! Do his people with Jesus stepping in their midst no longer stand before his corpse, before his grave, before a tattered Hope, no longer do you. Then also in fact are you through his resurrection newly born unto a living Hope. Is it befitting for His Church on his permission and instruction to pray: “Our Father which art in heaven”, then also for you is it fitting to call upon God as your Father, then may and should also you know that even you are His beloved child. What concerns all in the encounter of the Risen One with his disciples concerns you personally. “My God and my Lord!” Thomas exclaimed when he like and with all the others recognised Him.

¹¹ Here something besides should be referred to. He who on this day steps into the midst of his disciples, precisely therewith steps into the midst of and ascends his meritorious Throne in the midst of the completed world-event. Thus spoke He and thus speaks He since then and from there the first and the last word. Do we go back once more to the disciples on this day, the Day is the Blessed Day of the Lord, the first Sunday!

¹² The end of our text tells, “Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord”. That doesn’t mean that they now for evermore won’t have questions or complaints, or that they nevertheless in the end would become great Saints and heroes. But it means that they found themselves comforted, encouraged, put on their feet, that they in all meekness may lift their head a little and may keep it high. What they have heard while seeing the Lord, that indeed was an irresistible full practical appeal, the call to service as his witnesses in the world among other men. What they received was the prospect of a clear and full future within their total limitation of existence in time. And what they heard as they saw the Lord, what they heard rising high above, was the fine though strong tone of infinite Hope for them and the whole creation. “Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!” They received the prospect of the last rending of all bonds, of the last and final answer of all riddles, the prospect of the realisation and being in the realm of eternal light, of which the first ray, just now, on this day, has reached and enlightened them. Because of it and for it were they glad when they saw the Lord. ...” Karl Barth, Rufe Mich An, Predigten aus der Srafanstalt Basel, EVZ Verlag Zurich 1965

7.4.1.3.

Typical Easter Hermeneutics in the Light of Pentecost

¹“Could we be justly grateful for your Promise, your Comfort and your Instruction you in raising Christ upon us your blessed People have bestowed once for all! May we accept and cherish in what we are, think, say and do that Resurrection Day is the true birthday of us all, the Day to which all our other days may join as days of freedom, peace and joy!”.

How true is every word and every longing Barth here prays for, but also how untrue because he supposes for the day of occurrence of Jesus’ resurrection – the basis for his petitions – the First Day of the week and not the day it actually was, the Sabbath! He supposes the First Day as through all centuries it has been done – as a matter of course, which it is not. The Day was predetermined as was the Event and the Actor of the Day which was not the First day but the Seventh Day the Sabbath.

“Your Promise, your Comfort and your Instruction”, we have seen above, are the signs of “**Pentecost fully come**”, which was the **Sabbath**, and not Sunday. God’s act “in raising Christ” was his act of the **Sabbath**. God “blessed” the **Seventh** Day, in that he “blessed” his People. “May we accept and cherish in what we are, think, say and do ... Resurrection Day” and so do what God did with the Sabbath in that He hallowed the Seventh Day. “Resurrection Day is the true birthday of us all” in that on the **Sabbath** God “finished” what He had made – “finishing”, completing, fulfilling **all in all in Christ in raising** Him from the dead. On that **Day** we saw the light of God in the countenance of Christ. Not only the individual believer is then truly born, but God’s People – **Christ’s Church**. “The Day to which all our other days may join as days of freedom, peace and joy!”, should be said of the Sabbath and not of the First Day, for it is in truth so in Jesus Christ.

³“We are here to celebrate the memory of ‘this day, this First Day of the week.’” What, throughout this sermon of Barth is celebrated and remembered? Jesus’ resurrection is the sum of it! But, “it is written”, “You must remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy ...”. God’s command, “Remember!” should not be seen only as commandment, but as Promise. “Remember, this Day is **coming** in which God’s works will be finished once for all in Jesus. Remember this Day for Jesus’ resurrection in it! God’s commands and promises are a remembering that do not clash with God’s own Future, with Prophecy and its Fulfilment. In Christ Jesus God’s Command is God’s provision; what He demands He gives. The Sabbath is made man’s first day as the creature which God intended him to be. He receives his promissory note, his guarantee from the Manufacturer Himself. Remember the Seventh Day and on it expects God’s gift of love. (Don’t put

out your socks the day after Christmas-eve!) *Celebrate the memory of ‘this day, this Sabbath Day of all weeks.*

“In place of the Jewish Sabbath as the Seventh Day this First Day in the Christian Community has as by itself become the true Sabbath and the Church’s weekly Feast Day.”

One can scarcely imagine how such a fickle origin, “as by itself”, for the vitally necessary institution of “the true Sabbath and the Church’s weekly Feast Day” could so readily be accepted by a theologian of Barth’s stature. The phrase, “as by itself”, should imply more than “without good reason”. “As by itself” in fact postulates Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus’ resurrection was of such significance that it automatically but very grandly caused the switch over from “the Jewish Sabbath as the Seventh Day” to the *Most Important Day in the Christian Community*. That Jesus’ resurrection could have disposed of the power for the supposed transference or for the establishing “as by itself” of the Day of resurrection as “the true Sabbath and the Church’s weekly Feast Day” cannot be denied or even attempted to contradict. Jesus’ Resurrection is God’s **excelling** act of creation – His **Rest** spoken of by the Prophets. In and by Jesus’ resurrection God created and established all his works or He never did. Jesus’ resurrection is God’s **Rest** or he never rested, never finished, never blessed! Why then would the Scriptures **always** have **expected this** Day the **Seventh** Day Sabbath? And why was Prophecy so faithfully, so consistently fulfilled “**in the Sabbath**”? Because the Sabbath at no point in time has been “*Jewish*” but has always been “the Sabbath of the Lord thy God”. That is, the Sabbath has always meant to be thy **God’s**, for God’s purpose and **ready** to the Lord’s commission! **Where would the Sabbath be** when God **finishes**? It would be **present**, accommodating, on duty. Where would the Sabbath – God’s Day of **Rest** – be, on the day when its very purpose would be fulfilled, when **God, rested**? Where would it be but **as appointed**, that is, as “hallowed” / “sanctified”? Where would the Sabbath be when God “**wrought**”? When God in **raising Christ** from the dead, “wrought”? When God **in the exceeding greatness of his power us-ward** according to the working of his mighty power, “wrought”? Where would the Sabbath be, **when God set Jesus at his own right hand** in the heavens? Where, when **making known the riches of the glory** of his inheritance in the saints – **Pentecost**? Where would the Sabbath be but where God **assigned** it – at his disposal, at his **service. Destined the Seventh** Day appointed by **God, Day of Rest!** “The Christian Feast Day thus has its ground and origin in this Day.”

The Christian Feast Day has **not** its ground and origin in **itself**, “this Day” as such and common day. The Christian Feast Day – Christianity’s one

and only Feast Day – has its ground and origin in this **Event**, the **Christ** event of **resurrection** from the dead! To this end was God’s creation started. The great earthquake of Jesus’ **resurrection**, the angel descending from heaven rolling away from the grave’s door stone as the sign of Jesus’ **resurrection**, “**in the Sabbath**”, gives the Christian Feast Day its ground and origin. It gives it its one and only fulfilment “according to the Scriptures” and all Prophecy, all Feasts and all Law, and all types and symbols, ceremonies and rites. (See schematic illustration how all “Feasts” meet, cross lines, and end Jesus’ Resurrection being its crux – exactly where the Sabbath lies, Part One, Par. 5.1.1.6.4.)

A “ground and origin” that at once is not fulfilment, that is, that is not the **eschatological essence** of the “*Christian Feast Day*” is a “ground and origin” that absolutely has nothing (“*ganz und gar und restlos nichts*”) to do with Christ. It means: A “ground and origin” that does not **at once** witness of “in the beginning the **Word**” and, of “the **Amen** of the creation of God”, is a “ground and origin” that has absolutely nothing to do with Christ.

“In the Germanic tongue it sounds a little heathenish: “Sunday”.

This may sound like childlike innocence. During the Barth’s lifetime the debate between “general revelation” and “special revelation” reached its zenith. No theologian sided for “special revelation” as Barth did. Now where did the “Sunday”-motivation start? With Justin! And Justin used “general revelation” for Sunday-keeping among Christians. (See Part Three of Part Three, Par. 7.3.1.2.3, 7.3.1.3.1.5., 7.3.2.3.3.) The longer considered, the more “heathenish”, “Sunday” sounds.

“Now because on this Day the Sun of righteousness ascended in the dark world of sin, it may as well be called Sunday.” This assumption makes possible forgiveness for calling Sunday “*the true Sabbath and the Church’s weekly Feast Day*”. The principle of application of cause and effect is correct and justified – it is inevitable. But the day basically assumed is wrong. Barth postulates, “*Now because on this Day* (the First Day) *the Sun of righteousness ascended in the dark world of sin*” But the **Scriptures** postulate that because the Sun of righteousness, after He the day **before** the First Day, “on the **Sabbath Day**”, **in resurrection had ascended** in the dark world of sin, He on this day that may as well be called Sunday, “**first appeared**”. And thereby the grounds for calling Sunday “*the true Sabbath and the Church’s weekly Feast Day*” is transferred back to where it should be to form the foundation for “*the true Sabbath and the Church’s weekly Feast Day*”, the **Sabbath** the **Seventh** Day of the week.

“(Sunday) nevertheless is more aptly in Romanic languages called “the Lord’s Day” because He, the Lord, is The On this Day Risen Sun of Righteousness”. Barth in other words only repeats the claim of Jesus’ resurrection for Sunday. The name adopted for Sunday, “*the Lord’s Day*”, cannot be allowed to be borrowed from Scripture for Sunday *because He, the Lord, is The-In-the-Sabbath-Day-Risen-Sun-of-Righteousness*. In fact, **in the very context** where he sings the glory of the Sun of Righteousness rising with healing of salvation in his wings, the prophet Malachi warns, “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant which **I** commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel ...”! Christ Jesus (savour unto death or savour unto life) is the Sun of Righteousness **which the law of Moses** reminds of, warns of, which it foretells and above all **promises**. “**Remember** the law” ... is not a matter of its **keeping** only, but of **thinking** about it. **What** does the Law speak of, witness of? **What** does the Law prophecy and **promise**? “For behold, the day cometh, that burns like an oven!” Malachi speaks of “**All Israel**” in the eschatological “**Day of the Lord**” – **the Christian Church!** And Yahweh commands **this Community** to “remember the Law of Moses” in the day that the Sun of Righteousness would rise. How could the **First Day** be expected?

Does it surprise that Christ “ascended”, “arose”, according to the law, according to prophecy, according to eschatology, God, finishing the **Seventh Day**? Does not the very Seventh Day prophesy? Is not the Day trumpet and voice proclaiming the coming of the day of the Lord? “Remember the law!” And do not miss what the prophet Malachi says here, “The law of Moses **my servant**”. Servant of the **Lord!** “The law ... which **I** commanded ...!” My servant which I employed. **In this context**, Malachi uses as metaphor the sun of righteousness rising with healing in its wings. It is an allegory for Jesus’ resurrection with the healing of everlasting life in his wings. In it is seen the Sun of righteousness the Lord, and in his rising is seen the Lord **entering** into his glory and triumphant **Rest**. This figure befits **God in Christ victorious in resurrection** from the dead. The Sun of Righteousness rising with healing in his wings is **Yahweh’s Passover** – a **prophecy** that predicts Jesus’ resurrection “according to the Scriptures the third day” ... “**in the Sabbath**”.

⁴*“What makes of this day this singular Day, was that which happened on it and to it: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!”*

“What makes of this day this singular Day”. “*This day*”, demonstrative pronoun, is “singular”. Grammarians agree that not too much may be made of the construction, “on the evening of this day the First Day of the week” to express “singular” meaning. It can simply be translated,

“The evening of the **same** day, the First Day of the week”, KJV. So translated the fact **that it was the First Day is but inferential and incidental** and could be the **only** possible way to interpret it! Why then, “This the First Day”? The answer encountered in Christian tradition, of course, is Jesus’ **resurrection!** But Jesus’ resurrection simply **did not occur on this day, and never, according to the Scriptures, would have occurred on this day!** The **first** thing that happened on this day – according to John – is **not Jesus’ resurrection**, but **Mary** who in “early (moonlit) night” **sees the door-stone** removed from the opening. According to **Luke** the **first** thing that happened on this day was several women (lead by the two Marys) who **go to anoint** the body when “deep night”. According to **Mark** the first event that occurred on Sunday is the three women who **bought spices as soon as the Sabbath was over**. Next thing according to **Mark**, “very early the day breaking”, **finds the women’s fears confirmed** and them, **fleeing** from their commission. According to **Matthew** the first event that occurred on Sunday, is **an angel who tells** the women exactly **when** Jesus was raised – **unobserved** by human witness – namely, “**Sabbath’s afternoon**”. While the angel is telling, **the sun is up** already, and the women immediately **hasten to tell** the disciples **what the angel has told them** – when Jesus encounters them on their way! These are the facts – the very **first events of the first, First Day**. And Jesus’ **resurrection does not** count under these events! So what makes of “this day” this “*singular*” day? It that which happened “*on it and to it*”, namely, the **appearances** of the **Risen** Jesus to his disciples!

The only question remaining is, Could Jesus’ **appearances** do for the First Day, what actually **only** his **resurrection** could? The appearances are **dependable** on the resurrection. The **resurrection** is the **full and final revelation** of God in Christ, the grand eschatological Day of the Lord. Jesus’ **appearances** are all secondary events with **preliminary** witness-value as to the **Pentecostal** Witness of the Risen Christ. This relation and relevancy, this balance in significance, may not be manoeuvred to one’s personal preferences. The events and times of events each fill its divinely ordered place and moment.

Jesus’ **resurrection is representative** – First Sheaf of the **whole** harvest. And **in Him in his resurrection**, the **elect appear before the throne of God complete**. **In Christ in his resurrection** the Elect had **obtained eternal life**. Jesus appeared on earth **temporarily**. His **appearances** were **selective and isolated**. Jesus’ appearances **so obvious of every of the forty days** were **revelation obscured** and **man its blind witness**. But Jesus’ **absence** – **so obvious of the Fiftieth Day** – was

revelation absolute, and **men its seeing witness**. The First Day’s significance is comparable to the significance of any of the forty days that Jesus appeared to his disciples bodily. The **Fiftieth Day’s** significance is comparable to no other day’s being that Day that “we are witnesses of this Jesus ... **which ye now see and hear**”. “Therefore let all the house Israel (the one Church) know assuredly that God hath made **that same Jesus whom ye have crucified**, both **Lord and Christ**.” Here and now this day **as not before** among men **nor** in God’s own revelation is **Jesus, revealed: revealed, crowned and enthroned, anointed and announced, “both Lord and Christ”**. This Jesus, **this Day, Sabbath of Pentecost** and not that first First Day of the week and first of forty ordinary days is revealed Head of “All the House of Israel” his Church.

7.4.1.3.1.

Being Late, Or, Being the First Day?

Compare Par. 6.2.

“**By reason of that same day** the First Day of the week being (forced upon one another’s support) behind locked doors through fear of the Jews, **Jesus when being evening trod in their midst.**”

In relation to its historic context, “this day the First Day of the week” is not “*singular*” or extraordinary. It simply was “the same day”. The phrase “Then the same day at evening, being the First Day of the week” – *Ousehs oun opstias tehi hehmerai ekeinehi tehi mi ai sabbatohn* is explained by dogmatists as emphatic-demonstrative. But it definitely is **not**. It is **idiomatic** and **parenthetic**, and explains in a **secondary** way the **important** adverbial phrase that indicates the time which John **primarily** has in mind, namely, “**Being therefore evening doors being locked** (on the same day the First Day of the week) came Jesus ...”. *Ousehs oun opstias (tehi hehmerai ekeinehi tehi mi ai sabbatohn) kai tohn thurohn kekleismenohn ... ehlthen ho Iehsous* The impression is created, without doubt in my mind, that John actually wants to say, “*Evening – that same dreadful First Day of the week and the disciples for fear of the Jews crammed in behind lock doors – when Jesus suddenly and unexpectedly treads in their midst!*” John **recalls the past day** and does **not** wish to emphasise the **present!**

Kai – “and”, repeats *ousehs oun*. In ordinary English (but **precisely** what John wanted to say) the sentence should read, “**While then being evening and while then doors being locked (due to the events and circumstances of “the day, this, the same First Day of the week”)** came Jesus.” “On the First Day of the week” is **not the important** thing. It was when the two disciples from Emmaus arrived in Jerusalem and **found the others “crammed in, in fact evening already and the doors locked for fear**

of the Jews (on the same day, the First Day of the week) when Jesus appeared in their midst". **That is the precise meaning of the exact language the Greek!** The secondary and **incidental** thing that it was the First Day of the week **is of less importance**. In fact, it was not then strictly speaking, the First Day of the week! The secondary and **incidental** fact that it was the First Day of the week **belongs with the circumstance of the disciples' fear**, and not with Jesus' appearance! That circumstance of their fear did not begin this evening. They did not when it became evening, assembled. They had been "**crammed in** behind locked doors": **Reason?** "Through their fear". **When? When** that fear had driven them into shelter and each other's comfort. **Their being crammed into** the upper room did not happen the evening but **before**, and the disciples now on the evening **as a result** were being crammed in **still**, because of their fear. That was the **circumstance** "on that same First Day of the week" and it was **then** – "on that same day the First Day of the week" – when they were thus driven upon each other's presence and the security of the upper room. Therefore the **dative** of this phrase should be appreciated for the **instrumental** it is: "When evening and crammed in behind locked doors for fear of the Jews **because of that day** the First Day of the week ...". **John refers back and supposes the events of the past day – not of the evening**, "when Jesus stood in their midst".

The disciples' **circumstance** and the **actual events** – Jesus' appearance *et cetera*, relate to each other in much the same way as where according to **Acts 20:7** the disciples "on the First Day of the week were together still after having had assembled for Holy Communion before, when Paul addressed them".

The phrase tells **which evening** it was which the **predicate** relates to: it was the evening when Jesus **appeared** – "**stood in their midst**". It was not the day on which the disciples gathered (or gathered for worship). When the disciples **took refuge** in the upper room it was not the evening **yet**. What John has **in mind** and in much the **same words** he uses, is **this**, "**By reason of that same day** the First Day of the week being (forced upon one another's support) behind locked doors through fear of the Jews, Jesus **when being evening trod in their midst**."

The function of the phrase "that same day the First Day of the week" is **not dogmatic** in the least but **purely stylistic**. It **only combines the stories** of the disciples from Emmaus and of Jesus' first appearance. To apply or to interpret this phrase as in any way indicative of John's conviction of a new Christian Day of Worship would be **dishonest hermeneutics**.

No one would beg to differ on the meaning of the phrase ordinarily. Compare John 16:23, 14:20. Its simplest meaning is "**that same day**" rather than "**this very day**", and its bearing on the **past** day and its events – **not** on the **present**. Only when this text, **John 19:20**, is discussed, the idiomatic expressions of the text suddenly are pregnant with **extraordinary** meaning. **The idea behind** these interpretations is to prove that the "revelation" of "the forty days" was unreservedly eschatological, and the revelation of Jesus as the Christ of God. As a consequence the First Day of the week is sanctified through the Holy Spirit and the universal and holy Church as the New Testament Day of Worship-Rest. This, the phrase is **forced** to mean – at the expense of the **Pentecostal** Promise of the Holy Spirit!

*"What makes of this day this singular Day, was **that which happened on it and to it: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!**"*

What Barth does here and exactly in the same manner is done by the whole world of First Day resurrection remonstrance. Despite utter impossibility Barth with exclamation mark and the works states the case for Sunday for being accepted the day of Jesus' resurrection. What he alleges is an eternity from correct or true. It is nothing but **assumption**.

Part One treats on the assumptions, "*It is the resurrection of this One deceased, his going out of the grave wherein He – after He two days before had been crucified and had died – had been laid.*" Jesus was crucified and died on **day one** and only the **next** day, "after that it was evening", was taken from the cross, and "the Sabbath **drawing near**" was **buried** – on day **two**. Jesus' resurrection therefore was the event "in the Sabbath", "the third day according to the Scriptures"!

⁵*"How that could happen and did happen: this conquering and removal, this death of His death, His vestiture and fulfilment – not in the likeness of his former mortal, but in a new immortal Life – that I know as little as you do. Nothing is simpler than to say, man could not believe that. That in fact ever since could not be told and even less described or explained. There appropriately is no passage in the New Testament where something in that strain is even attempted. The resurrection of Jesus was **God's act only and wholly**. As such it is an **act most perfect**, but also most **incomprehensible**. That such a thing happened could only then and now be **but recognised, admitted, witnessed and proclaimed.**"*

*"The resurrection of Jesus was **God's act only and wholly**. As such it is an **act most perfect**, but also most **incomprehensible**." It was an act of such divine magnitude that God in and through it, "finished" and "rested", in it and through it, "blessed" and "sanctified" not only the day, but ultimately, man. "The Sabbath was made for man". It was "**God's act only and wholly** –*

as such an act most perfect but incomprehensible". That can but mean, **God, rested the Sabbath Day in Christ in his resurrection.** It can but mean the essence of the Fourth Commandment. "*God's act only and wholly – as such an act most perfect but incomprehensible*" "for man" ... "us-ward", can but mean, **to believe, to enter God's rest in Jesus.**

When in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and on the Seventh Day rested, it "*was God's act only and wholly.*" God's "*act most perfect*" – what is it but God's act of "**rest**" and "**finishing**", the act of "the exceeding greatness of his power which He wrought when He raised Jesus from the dead"? **Christ, there, was man represented when "in the Sabbath Day" God raised Him from the dead.** For no lesser reason than that "*as such it is an act most perfect, but also most incomprehensible*" God blessed and **hallowed the day of his act** – the Seventh Day of his rest "for man" as well to rest in Christ.

^{6a} "*Of what on this day had happened only that what followed on Jesus' resurrection could be told: that He appeared to his disciples, that he met them*". Again, Jesus' **resurrection** is not included in "*what on this day* (the First Day of the week) *had happened*". "**Only**" that "*what followed on Jesus' resurrection could be told*" of this day. It **excludes** Jesus' resurrection which had happened on the **Sabbath** before and which could not be told by any human however faltering! Man **did** not tell this thing at first, but man **was told** this thing at first! *Thus Jesus on this day* (the First Day of the week), **approached** his disciples as "He to Mary Magdalene first of all early on the First Day of the week appeared **risen**"! **That, since then could only be recounted for certain** for an event of the **First Day** of the week.

7.4.1.3.2.

Resurrection and Sabbath of Resurrection Speaking

^{6b} "*This recently deceased Man now living in the power and manner that God lives – immediately through Him and with Him and therefor immortally, indestructibly, incorruptibly alive. ... That since then however faltering could only be recounted for certain. Exactly in this story was and is witnessed and proclaimed what was and is not to be told – then and to this day.*"

"*Exactly in this story was and is witnessed and proclaimed what was and is not to be told*". It is **Jesus in rising from the dead.** It is **not** "...*Jesus on this day thus approaching his disciples*". No man could tell because no man could "live" behold or comprehend Jesus' **resurrection.** Man was present in Jesus' resurrection only representatively **in Him.**

Only thus could Jesus on this day the **following**, or on **any** day that He yet would appear to his disciples, have *approached his disciples.* Jesus

would approach them **NOT** "*immediately ... in the power and manner that God lives*", but bodily, *in the manner* that the Man Jesus **had lived and had died** – even with wounds that could be seen and touched. The manner of living "*immediately ... in the power and manner that God lives*", is the manner in which Christ, when He was **raised from the dead "in the Sabbath"** was seated **at the right hand of God in heavenly places.** It was **not** the manner in which He **appeared to the disciples.** The manner of living "*immediately ... in the power and manner that God lives*", is the manner and mode of divine things, and not the manner in which Jesus was recognised and witnessed by his **so human "faltering" disciples on this evening.** Soon, on the **Fiftieth Day of First Bread Wave Offering,** the immediate power and manner that God lives would be the immediate power and manner that Christ would be put before the eyes of his disciples and the world. Soon, the **Fiftieth Day – on the Sabbath** – Jesus would be seen and be recognised and be witnessed **by faith** – even by the faith through the "Power from on high". This immediate act of God would, soon, "in its appointed time", be the privilege of the **Sabbath Day,** and **not** of the First Day.

⁷ "*Thus – so the story of the (Apostolic) witness goes: "On the evening of this day came Jesus". As foreseen and expected? No! Indeed as He promised – but who could have believed that before or even have understood it?"*

"*On the evening of this day ... as foreseen and expected? No!*" **Humanly** speaking the disciples expected never to see Jesus again. And after his resurrection "*on the evening of this day*" they would see Jesus again despite their own inadequacy as witnesses. "*On the evening of this day ... as ... indeed He promised*", says Barth. Jesus did tell his disciples they would see him again. But that Jesus meant his promise specifically to have applied to "*this day*"? No! Naturally, as night follows the day, Jesus, after He was raised from the dead and seated on the right hand of God's Power "in the Sabbath", would, "on the First Day", appear the first time to men and women here on earth. "*Who could have believed that before or even have understood it?*" But even now where Jesus in fact appears, the question remains: "*Who could have believed that before or even have understood it?*" The question nevertheless here and now remains because these witnesses **are not** the eschatological witnesses they eventually **would become** when God's Power on "Pentecost fully come" will have appeared **the first time** to men and women here on earth.

"*As foreseen and expected*". Yes! "*As He promised*", "**indeed**"! Not by man but by God, "according to the Scriptures! "Seven weeks shall be

complete, even unto the morrow after the seventh week ... and ye shall offer a **new offering** unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves ... They shall be of fine flour, baked with leaven, the **First Fruits** unto the Lord ... And with the bread a burnt offering ... an offering made by **fire**, a **sweat savour** unto the Lord ... offerings of **peace**. And the Priest shall wave before the Lord the bread of First Fruits: They shall be **holy to the Lord** for the Priest. And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, a holy convocation unto you. Ye shall be occupied with the Lord's service ... a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations", Lv.23:15-21. The very day appointed in the everlasting Covenant of Grace the Father's Promise of the Holy Spirit would make true Jesus' pronouncement: "Ye are witnesses of these things". Or rather, Jesus' promise would make true the Prophecy! But the witnesses only when "endued with Power from on high" would be that Witness of the Promise, the Church. "Behold, I send the Promise of the Father!" Lk.24:48. **Even though Israel entered the Promised Land when they crossed the Red Sea** it took forty years before God allowed them to cross the Jordan! "Who could have believed that before or even have understood it?"

^{7b} "What a coming! Hence from the grip of the dominion of death the fatal destiny of all humanity. Hence from the grave that as yet has never returned one dead! Such a coming, hence, from where none has ever come, a coming totally unforeseen and totally unexpected. But He, Jesus, came from there."

Two aspects about Barth's observations must be made clear. The first is that the "coming" he here describes fits **not** Jesus' **appearance** the evening of the First Day of the week but Jesus' **resurrection not seen by any of the "Sabbath's afternoon"**. The resurrection "**in the Sabbath**", witnessed by **angels** and **testified** by angels, was "totally unforeseen and totally unexpected". **All men were unawares** of the greatest of all God's works of all eternity. The women were the elect to **hear** of it, first – and first hand – from the angel. But they did not **see**. Neither did the **First Day** witness this event. **Of all days**, the **Sabbath Day** only witnessed this event and **from it** obtained eternal **distinction**. The Sabbath's is a distinction **invested** in it through **God's supreme act** – a distinction invested in no other day since creation of all God's works and of all God's days.

The second aspect is that the "witness" which Barth describes here **neither** fits Jesus' **resurrection** the afternoon of the Sabbath Day **nor** Jesus' **appearance** of the First Day, **seen** by all present. Barth supposes "a coming totally unforeseen and totally unexpected", which implies a **witness** that did not foresee nor expect what it actually saw. The **Apostolic Witness of the**

Christ Risen from the dead Exalted, foresaw and expected, "**waiting in Jerusalem**" for the "Promise of the Father from on high". Jesus, when He appears to his disciples **as from the right hand of God** in heavenly places, appears as **this** Jesus, and He appears to a **Witness prepared** and "**endued with power**" to be the Witness to "**such a coming**" ... and not before!

"No one can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Spirit". The disciples, all, like Thomas, **had to admit** Jesus their Lord and God living and moving among themselves like they themselves lived and moved among one another. They all, like Thomas, had to admit like the **whole world** must admit. **Yet** theirs was **not this** Witness among **all** men, but a witness behind **locked doors** and behind a locked **understanding** and a limited, locked in space of **time**, "**being evening** the same day of the First of the week". Theirs **as yet** was the eschatological Witness in its **hidden** state. It would in appointed **season** and on appointed **day** be set **free** to go into all the world and to proclaim this Jesus the Risen. And that would make the world's difference to the **Witness**. It would be the same while not the same **witness**.

^{7c} "Really the same Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had known before? Yes, whom they personally knew but never truly recognised! The same Jesus, but now in glory. That is to say, the same Jesus now reveals himself as the true Son of God and Son of man whom they before with eyes seeing had not seen, with ears hearing had not heard. The same but now so that their eyes and ears open in that He opens them. This from the dead risen Jesus "came and stood in their midst". We would like to ponder on this noteworthy expression."

Again, Barth says the things true and essential of Jesus and the disciples, but not of the time. The season and the day "according to the Scriptures" are not the **fulfilled** season and day. It was *really the same Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had known before. Yes, whom they personally knew but never truly recognised! The same Jesus, not in glory appearing, appears the same Jesus* that died, but now, lives, that now, still carries wounds of slaughter. **To the disciples** *the same Jesus revealed as the man whom they before with eyes seeing had seen, with ears hearing had heard*", **now**, "**appears**". That is to say, the Jesus who **now** reveals himself as the man whom they before with eyes seeing had not seen, is the Jesus whom they now still with eyes seeing, **do not see fully**. The Jesus whom they before with ears hearing had not heard, is the Jesus whom they **now** with ears hearing, **still do not hear truly**. The same Jesus it is, who now appears so that their eyes and ears open in that He opens them to recognise and to testify of the existential and cognitive truth of what they see and hear and feel and thus recognise and testify to. **This from the dead risen Jesus**

“came and stood in their midst”. “In their midst” but **they** not “filled with the Holy Spirit”! The Jesus who “thus will come again”, Yes! The same witness? Yes! Was it the same testimony? Yes! But now with eyes and ears **not** opened **spiritually**. “**Witness**” has not as yet become “**Proclamation**”. It has as yet not become the obedience of faith to Jesus’ command and commandment, “Go ye then and teach all nations” (Mt.28:19). “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that **repentance and remission of sins** should be preached and **proclaimed, in his Name, among all nations**, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye **shall** be witnesses of these things” (Lk.24:46-48). “Ye **shall** be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many **days hence** ... Ye **shall** receive power ... and ye **shall** be Witnesses unto me” (Acts 1:5, 8). “... the Lord working with them, confirming the word (of Promise) with signs **accordingly**” (Mk.16:20). There is this difference between the revelation and the witness of the **forty days**, and the revelation and the witness of the **Fiftieth Day** and First Loaves Wave Offering. (**Two** loaves, symbolic of the one Church, Jew and Gentile. **That** prophecy **had to be** fulfilled before the witness would be realised fully.) It is the difference between the **nominal** witness of the world and the **eschatological** Witness of Proclamation. It also is the difference between the same Jesus recognised, known, witnessed and testified – yesterday before he was crucified and died; today while resurrected from the dead and present again in and around **Jerusalem**. And **tomorrow, when preached and proclaimed the Risen in all the world** ... the Jesus of the Christian Confession of Faith! It is a difference recognised in the Third Person of the Godhead, **the Holy Spirit and its Power**, the Promise of the Father “heard” and **sent** of Jesus (Acts 1:4). “Witnesses unto Me” that has not “received power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” **are** no “witnesses unto Me” (verse 8). It is the “full Gospel of Christ” or it is the powerless consensus of indifferent or at best the politically interested.

The substance and truth of the article, “I believe in Jesus” is of the substance and truth of the article, “I believe in the Holy Spirit”. “At this point the Creed once more repeats the words, ‘I believe’” says Barth. “That has not only a stylistic significance; here attention is urgently called to the fact that the **content** of the Christian Confession is brought once more into a new light, and that, what now follows, is not obviously connected with what goes before. ... It is the remarkable **pause between the Ascension and Whitsun**. (The pause should be considered between Resurrection and Pentecost.) ... We are concerned with man who participates in the act of God, and moreover participates actively. Man belongs to the Creed. This is

the unheard-of mystery which we are now approaching. There is a faith in man ... That this actually takes place, is the work of the Holy Spirit, the work of God on earth which has its analogue in that hidden work of God, the outgoing of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. (This is fulfilled in the **Apostles** of all men, first, and in them among all men, **uniquely**.) When we speak of the Holy Spirit, let us not look at all men, but at special men belonging in a special way to Jesus Christ. When we speak of the Holy Spirit, we have to do with men who belong to Jesus Christ in the special way that they have the freedom to recognise (not only the bodily person, but) His Word, His Work, His message in a definite way ... to have inner ears for the Word of Christ, to become thankful for His Work and at the same time responsible for the message about Him, and, lastly, to take confidence in men for Christ’s sake – that is the freedom which we obtain when Christ breathes on us, when He sends us the Holy Spirit. If he no longer lives in a historical or heavenly ... **remoteness** from me, if he approaches me and **takes possession** of me, the result will be that I hear, that I am thankful and responsible and that finally I may hope for myself and for all others ...” This must be said primarily of the **Apostles**. This thing happened in them **as in no other**, namely as revelation that changed them into Apostles and the Old Testament Church into the New. The thing happened authentically and authoritatively to the Apostles on Pentecost **only and forever**. In all believers afterwards it is different, incomparably different – **all others are not “Loaves of Firstfruits”!**

“In the exposition of the first article of the Confession I said that creation is not a lesser miracle than the birth of Christ of the Virgin. And now thirdly ... the fact that there are Christians, men who have this freedom, is no lesser miracle than the birth of Jesus Christ of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, or than the creation of the world out of nothing”. (Dogmatics in Outline) The **third “miracle”** is indeed the **Pentecostal birth or creation of the Church**. It needed that miracle of the Holy Spirit to be Church, that is, to be **Witness, eschatological Witness and Sign, the Apostolic Proclamation of the Risen Christ**. There is **no** comparison between **this Witness** and the **witness of the world**, the witness of **disciples** before “the Holy Spirit was fallen upon them” in this special way, and the witness of **Apostles** “after that the Holy Spirit was fallen upon them” ^{Acts 8:16, Jn.7:39} and “after that the Holy Ghost (was) come”. ^{Acts 1:8} There is **no** comparison between Jesus’ appearance and the disciples’ “waiting” for “forty days”, and Jesus’ coming in “**Pentecost fully come**”! Without the Sabbath Day of Pentecostal fulfilment there would not have been this Witness of the Christ, no Church, or Christian freedom. Any measure of the Holy Spirit before

Pentecost, was as the Christ before Jesus incarnated. The **disciples' witness** of "the same day the First Day of the week" that the disciples from Emmaus found the others in the upper room – as **all** their witness during the forty days – **is no more than the witness of the world**. Likewise Jesus' appearance to them on that "same day the First Day of the week" – as **all** his appearance during the forty days – **is no more than appearance to the world**. Sunday sacredness – being founded on the witness of the world – is not comparable to the Day founded on Jesus' glorious Passover and Pentecostal witness and fulfilment in rising from the dead "in the Sabbath" and coming in the Spirit the "Fiftieth Day" in the Sabbath again!

⁸ "... He stepped into the midst of his disciples. He thus stepped into the place which they during the long hours since Good Friday saw empty, where they could only notice the emptiness: only the memory of his blood drenched body taken from the cross, only his grave and in it all their own mistaken and perished hopes and illusions, only the end of all things.

To the disciples this condition very much stayed unchanged for at least another forty-nine days. (The days of one's mourning are numbered and counted. In the disciples' case they were allotted and determined "according to the Scriptures".) (As Jesus for forty days after his baptism entered the wilderness to be tried and on his return was witnessed to by John the Baptist, He after his death in a figure entered the wilderness in anticipation of being witnessed to by the Holy Spirit.) Just before Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples still held to their **earthly idea of the Kingdom** of God, Acts 1:6. "Only the memory ... of all their own mistaken and perished hopes and illusions, only the end of all things", stayed with them till the last. "But, ye shall receive power ..." even the Power of the Kingdom. **Then, and only then** would their hopes be changed and would they realise, recognise and testify, "The Lord hath done great things for us; we are glad. They that **sow in tears** shall **reap in joy**. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless **come again** with rejoicing, **bringing in his sheaves**", Ps.126:3-6. Christ would "come again" through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, and all his sheaves would be gathered in his holy temple, "in all the Churches of the saints". ^{1Cor.14:33}

7.4.1.3.3.

The Manner Jesus Does Not Reveal Himself

⁹ "... Precisely as the on the cross slaughtered Lamb of God does Jesus prove himself to the disciples the victorious, living Lion of Judahh: as the Saviour of all the world loved by God and so as their Saviour. Thus approached the Resurrected Jesus his own and met with them; thus, as Prophet of the singular unchangeable and infallible Truth of God; who now

actively and finally ventures upon the teaching, discipline, equipment and command of these lost and disarrayed troops his Community. Thus does He make this little nation in its encompassing inability stronger than all nations of the world. Thus did Jesus wish – no, thus brought Jesus and created He peace unto them. Thus brought He and created He the good evening, the good day, by stepping in their midst."

"... Precisely as the on the cross slaughtered Lamb of God does Jesus prove himself to the disciples the victorious, living Lion of Judahh: as the Saviour of all the world loved by God and so as their Saviour".

When Jesus proves himself to the Father the victorious, living Lion of Judahh: as the Saviour of all the world loved by God **it is his resurrection** from the dead – it is **not** his appearance to any. And for Jesus "precisely" thus to appear and be "proven to the disciples" and the world "precisely" thus needs the Promise of the **Holy Spirit**. Jesus the Lion of Judahh, Saviour of the disciples and the world **is not known but as the exalted and glorified Christ at the right hand of God through faith** – thus or not at all. No natural religion, no rational proven truth, saves; it judges and condemns. And when Jesus appeared to the disciples on this evening of the First Day of the week, He needed to greet them with the word, "Peace be to you!" because they **had no peace**. Jesus had to pray on behalf of the disciples that they should receive the Holy Spirit because they **lacked the Holy Spirit**. They **could not then** receive the grace of **the full knowledge and proclaiming faith of Jesus** because the time and **day determined** for that knowledge and Faith of Jesus have not come as yet, and **they**, were not prepared for it as yet. Jesus appeared to the disciples the real and resurrected Jesus **for no other purpose than to assure the Promise of the Holy Spirit** to these who lacked it and who did not get it then and there from Jesus. Jesus' coming in **physical** appearance to his disciples was **to prepare them to be prepared**. Jesus' coming in **spiritual** appearance to his disciples through the Holy Spirit prepares them fully: Witness of the Risen Christ crucified for the sins of many. Knowing Jesus with the proclaiming knowledge and saving faith – knowing Jesus and making Him known with the authority of **Apostles, comes but once**. This once would **not be repeated after or before**. Jesus "the same evening on the First Day", did **not** reveal Himself, and did **not** make Himself known **like that once, would**. Jesus, "precisely as the on the cross slaughtered Lamb of God" did not reveal and did not make Himself known as "the victorious, living Lion of Judahh: Saviour of all the world loved by God and so their Saviour". Definitely not. He made Himself known "precisely as the on the cross slaughtered Lamb of God". He wished and actually did bring the disciples

peace. Jesus was sacrificed to bring peace. You, My brethren must first see and know Me alive after I have been offered a sacrifice – even though you could not understand or believe. In fact, precisely as the ignorant and unbelieving should you know and recognise ... **Me!**

It was not **that peace** of Christ that **surpasses** understanding, but the peace that could be grasped **mentally** that Jesus this night brings his disciples. It was not Jesus' **continued** presence with them, it was not his peace that could only be realised only through his **constant abiding** with them **through the Holy Spirit**. "**Lo, I am with you always**" is Jesus' word, **only** delivered in the Promise and abiding of the **Holy Spirit**. It applies in the case of the **disciples, as in no other** case before or after! Because **they**, "**Ye**", my disciples who knew me in the flesh "shall be witnesses unto me". "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him (thus) no more", 2Cor.5:16. "Now henceforth ..." after the Spirit of Christ, that is. No mortal could testify of Jesus **thus**, but the **Apostles**, who, while **disciples** – as on "the evening on that First Day of the week", **recognised Jesus "after the flesh" but knew Him not yet after the Spirit**. "God ... committed unto **us (Apostles)** the word of reconciliation, now then **we** are ambassadors for Christ as though God beseech *the world* by **us**." The launching of this commission did not take place on the evening John speaks of in 20:19. Jesus with his appearance to the disciples **only prepared** them for it, and even their preparation then for the eventual day of fulfilment, was **in part only**. And incidentally, Sunday scores no points from Jesus' appearance in any way above the other days of the week. (In fact, it could be indicated how John places this evening on the First Day while it technically was the Second Day of the week. See Par. 6.2.)

Barth, **out of place**, claims,^{9d} "Thus approached the Resurrected Jesus his own and met with them; thus, as Prophet of the singular unchangeable and infallible Truth of God; who now actively and finally ventures upon the teaching, discipline, equipment and command of these lost and disarranged troops his Community. Thus does He make this little nation in its encompassing inability stronger than all nations of the world. Thus did Jesus wish – no, thus brought Jesus and created He peace unto them. Thus brought He and created He the good evening, the good day, (Sunday) by stepping in their midst."

Although Jesus "**resurrected**", "**approached ... his own and met with them**", although He is "**Prophet of the singular unchangeable and infallible Truth of God**", **He did not reveal these qualities or attributes** to his disciples and **they** did not recognise Him **for** these qualities or attributes, **then**. Jesus **not** "**now actively and finally ventures upon the teaching,**

discipline, equipment and command of these lost and disarranged troops his Community." Clearly "**actively and finally**" **not** – that would be the prerogative of **Pentecost** – that would be the prerogative of **the Spirit that testifies of Christ**. Precisely **this**, which Barth places on the first First Day and on the Holy Spirit's doing – "according to the Scriptures" is placed on the Holy Spirit's doing of the Fiftieth Day of First Bread Wave Offering! It is the prerogative of Pentecost that Jesus "Thus ... make(s) this little nation in its encompassing inability stronger than all nations of the world."

Barth further simply **dramatises**, "Thus brought He and created He the good evening, **the Good Day**, by stepping in their midst".

Barth perfectly **in place**, remarks,^{9b} "This "Good day", being wished his disciples by Jesus is no mere wish. Jesus brings, indeed creates for his disciples that which this single word says, "Peace!" – a "good evening", a "good day!" He does this however, in that He shows them his pierced hands, his stabbed side – the traces of his death of the cross. Therein Jesus reveals himself as the One who experienced the beatings, the wounds and death" – but **out of place** the fact that He, "not as the course of fate but absolutely in the freedom of obedience to God his Father. Jesus reveals himself to his disciples as the One who took upon himself these sufferings well be it from God to His honour." This is the message, the Good News of the forty days and from the forty days. It has its own place and purpose – its own, **relative**, significance because the witness of the world about this Jesus **must be heard**.

^{9a} "... To these came Jesus and stood in their midst. For what? Unto their hope. Unto a hope in the power of the great mercy of God their Father came Jesus. Unto a hope unto the hopeless, these wearied and heavy laden, these sorrowful and scared cowards – Jesus came unto a hope to this thoroughly sick body of disciples. Jesus did this in the most simple way imaginable: "Peace be unto you!" he greeted them. In the language of the time that meant no more (or less) than what today it would mean when a person meets another and says, 'Good day to you all!'"

¹⁰ "We are allowed and obliged to add something here: Jesus, as He stepped into the midst of the disciples, stepped into the centre of each of your lives. (the Congregation of Basel's prison) ... Peace be unto you! If Jesus died and was resurrected as the Hope of his whole Body, then died He and did He rise as the Hope of each of the body's members; then died he and did he rise also for your justification before God, and also for the sanctification of your life! Do his people with Jesus' stepping in their midst no longer stand before his corpse, before his grave, before a tattered Hope, no longer do you. Then also in fact are you through his resurrection newly born unto a

living Hope. Is it befitting for His Church on his permission and instruction to pray: "Our Father which art in heaven", then also for you is it fitting to call upon God as your Father, then may and should also you know that even you are His beloved child. What concerns all in the encounter of the Risen One with his disciples concerns you personally. "My God and my Lord!" Thomas exclaimed when he like and with all the others recognised Him.

The Pastor beautifully applies his message to the text. Unfortunately he does not apply the text to his message. Jesus' treading into the midst of his disciples here in John 20:19 in fact and in truth **is not his stepping from the dead and the grave**, and it also **is not his stepping into the heart of a man born of the Holy Spirit**. Least of all should Jesus' stepping be confused for **the coming of the Christ** in the Father's sending of the Promise of the Holy Spirit. **Pentecost** is not the **ordinary** work of God through the Holy Spirit but the **extraordinary** and once for all fulfilment of the **Prophetic Word** through the Holy Spirit! Pentecost was the creation of the Christian Church and **Christ's resurrection its source of power!** What happened on Pentecost did not happen **that evening** of the First Day! By far not! Jesus in that night was recognised for the **Crucified** rather than for the Risen One. And He was simply recognised and **not proclaimed** whatsoever for the Saviour of the world and every one that believes in Him even though **He then was it** no less than any other time of history. Jesus, that evening, was Saviour, **but, not** revealed, **not** acknowledged, **not** recognised, **not** appreciated fully, **not** seen properly. Jesus **appeared with hidden glory**. *We are NOT allowed or obliged to add anything here which God saw fit not to allow or oblige.* And then we are even stricter forbidden to build on that what is not "*allowed or obliged*", namely a case for Sunday-sacredness.

¹¹ *Here something besides should be referred to. He who on this day steps into the midst of his disciples, precisely therewith steps into the midst of and ascends his meritorious Throne in the midst of the completed world-event. Thus spoke He and thus speaks He since then and from there the first and the last word. Do we go back once more to the disciples on this day, the Day is the Blessed Day of the Lord, the first Sunday!*

If ever Barth "*referred to something*" **totally "besides" the point**, this is it. Even if Jesus rose from the dead on the First Day, *He does not ascend his meritorious Throne precisely with stepping into the midst of his disciples*. Jesus certainly not *since and from stepping into the midst of his disciples speaks the first and the last word*. Certainly not in this appearance to his disciples is the "*world-event*" "*completed*".

Jesus "*ascends his meritorious Throne*", He "*completes*" the "*world-event*", and He "*speaks the first and the last word*", **in Resurrection from the dead** – *on this day, the Blessed Day of the Lord, the Sabbath!*

Do we go back once more to the **disciples** on this day the First Day of the week, "*the Day*" **certainly is not "the Blessed Day of the Lord!"** – in no respect. Rather, the day is *the Blessed Day of the Lord* in one respect only, that it is one of all the days of "the last days", the times of restitution and the rebuilding of the ruined tent of David! This day **especially is not "the first Sunday" "blessed"** for being the day of Jesus' **resurrection**, because the **Sabbath** was that "*blessed*" Day, and the Sabbath **for the reason of Jesus' resurrection** was thus this "blessed" Day, **originally!**

"Do we go back once more to the disciples on this day, the day" certainly is not "the Blessed Day of the Lord!". "*The Blessed Day of the Lord*" is no other than the Sabbath **Jesus claimed Lordship of** and which He claimed Lordship of **for the very reason that He would rise from the dead on it and indeed did rise from the dead on it** – **to finish** God's works and **to enter his rest!** Every thing Barth sings about the **Sunday** and this specific **appearance** should be sung about Jesus' **resurrection "in the Sabbath"**. **Man's** appearance before God's Throne **in Jesus**, and **man's** ascending his meritorious throne **in Christ, "on the Sabbath"**, should be sung those praises! Indeed, **on this very Sabbath, before** this very First Day of the week, The Throne of Almighty God, the "*completed world-event*" and centre of the universe "comes down from God out of heaven", "a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the Tabernacle of God with men! And He will dwell with them, they shall be His People. And God Himself shall be with them and they with their God shall be. ... And a pure river of water of life pure as crystal proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb". The cosmic centre Divine comes to rest on the Hill called Skull in the garden of Joseph there. An angel from heaven descends and rolls the stone from before the opening of the grave. The bonds of death are broken, the mount is split and parted for Jerusalem and the Throne of God to rest where He is Victor and where He over the last enemy, death, triumphs!

"Do we go back once more to the disciples on this day, ... the first Sunday" this day is of Jesus' **appearing**. It is **not** Jesus as He **already** appears before the throne of God. It is **not** Jesus as He **already** is ascended on his Meritorious Throne, **but it is Jesus** the Crucified, the Man of Sorrow and of men despised. It is Jesus not gone to his Father in heaven yet, but for forty days still abiding with his kin on earth. But it is Jesus Crowned and Exalted nonetheless who now appears to his disciples as the **crucified**. He encourages them for yet a little while. A few days only, and He will come –

as promised: the Crowned and Exalted Risen King of the Kingdom of God ... through and in the **Spirit of Promise**.

Barth puts everything **back in its place** where he follows up, ¹² *The end of our text tells, "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord". That doesn't mean that they now for evermore won't have questions or complaints, or that they nevertheless in the end would become great Saints and heroes. But it means that they found themselves comforted, encouraged, put on their feet, that they in all meekness may lift their head a little and may keep it high. What they have heard while seeing the Lord, that indeed was an irresistible full practical appeal, the call to service as his witnesses in the world among other men. What they received was the **prospect of a clear and full future within their total limitation of existence in time. And what they heard as they saw the Lord, what they heard rising high above, was the fine though strong tone of infinite Hope for them and the whole creation. "Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" They received the prospect of the last rending of all bonds, of the last and final answer of all riddles, the prospect of the realisation and being in the realm of eternal light, of which the first ray, just now, on this day, has reached and enlightened them. Because of it and for it were they glad when they saw the Lord ...***". (Emphasis CGE) No! Barth even here **anticipates** what on **Pentecost** happened: on Pentecost **Sabbath**, and **not** on this evening – **remembered for that First Day**.

No one could have said it better, more appealing and more comforting to one's soul than Karl Barth. Nevertheless, this is **not that Prophetic Joy predestined and realised in Resurrection and Promise, First Sheaf Wave Offering and First Loaves Wave Offering. This after forty-nine days would become** that Prophetic Joy predestined and realised in Resurrection and Promise, First Sheaf Wave Offering and First Loaves Wave Offering. See Par. 7.1.1.6.4.

This aspect consisting of these events and facts of this night remembered for that First Day is as much a part of the historicity of the Man called Jesus of Nazareth as is his birth and crucifixion, death ... **and resurrection!** There is no real Man Jesus the Christ who lived not on earth these Forty Days counted from the sun's setting after the Sabbath of Passover 15 Nisan round about or perhaps exactly of the Year 29 of our Lord.

7.4.1.3.4. "Peace Be Unto You"

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, **he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost!**" John 20:22.

"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you". "All power (of the Holy Spirit) is given unto me in heaven and in earth". (Mt.28:18). Jesus would assign that Power **at the appointed time, place and mode** ("**Everything upon his day!**"! Lv.23:37). Jesus restricts the fulfilment of his command to the will of the Father. "Behold, I send the Promise of my Father (the Holy Spirit) upon you: **But tarry ye** in the city of Jerusalem **until** ye be endued with Power **from on high**" (Lk.24:49), *i.e.*, from where Christ at the time would be at the right hand of the Father. "It is not for you to know **the times or the seasons** which the Father hath put **in his own power** (which is in his Word which is in Christ). But ye **shall** receive Power, **after that = when** the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and (then) **ye shall be witnesses unto me** ... unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:7-8). Jesus says this just as He is to ascend into the heavens. The Holy Spirit as promised is something **to be** fulfilled in the **future**. It had **not** been fulfilled **already** on the first Sunday evening. Only on the day predestined, when "Pentecost had fully come" **the Spirit would come**. The appointed day or "appointed time" **only then, came, once for all**. The first Sunday night when Jesus appeared to his disciples He did **not** fulfil the Father's Promise of the Holy Spirit.

Inevitably, it must be concluded, that the traditional interpretation and translations of the **words of the text** should be reconsidered.

7.4.1.3.5. "He Breathed On Them"

The word translated, "**he breathed on**" – *enefusehsen*, is used but this **once** in the New Testament. Also no other forms of the word are found there. The safest rule to arrive at the word's nearest meaning would be to stay as near to its **literal** meaning as possible. In order to do that, the word **supplied** as indirect object, "he breathed on **them**", should be eliminated. Jesus *enefusehsen* no one. He simply, *enefusehsen*. Nothing in the word or in the context indicates or implies that Jesus *enefusehsen* "**on**" any. The word *enefusehsen* is a compounded word derived from the preposition *en* – "in" or "by", and the verb *fusaoh* – to breathe. The modern English medical term, "emphysema", comes from this Greek word and describes a pathologic condition of the lungs. Something "in the lungs" is wrong. In John the word can very naturally mean, Jesus **felt sad**. Jesus "**sighed within** (himself) and thought concerning them (or "said to them" – *legei autois*), You **need** (or,

“must have”) – *labete*, the Holy Spirit!” Jesus said this in the context of **his command** to the disciples, “As my Father hath sent me, **even so send I you**”. The Father sent the Son on a mission of much travail. His mission was the mission of the **cross**. “**Even so**” Jesus sent his disciples. Their mission was one of sorrow and **suffering** for Christ. **Jesus is thinking of their insufficiency and the Holy Spirit’s exigency**. The disciples’ need of the Holy Spirit would be **answered on the day** the Spirit would come even as the Father had promised. The Father’s Promise is meant to meet Jesus’ command! Wonderful providence of a caring Father and Jesus! This word *emphusehsen*, in other words, means that Jesus was **praying** for the Father’s loving care over his disciples on their mission of suffering for him, through **redeeming his promise** of the Holy Spirit. It meant **not** Jesus actually “on this day the First Day of the week”, bestowed upon the disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Like this word *emphusehsen* which means that Jesus **in his heart** understood the disciples’ need of the Holy Spirit is exaggerated beyond recognition, so the meaning of even the expression “**this day the First Day of the week**” is *inflated (emphusaoh)* out of proportion.

Had the disciples not been Jesus’ witnesses “as they beheld him” on this first evening the Day the First of the week? They were. Did they not worship him their Lord this first evening the Day the First of the week? They did. But they did this, and they experienced this while not being **Church** yet – the “sent” in action, while not believing unto the saving of their souls and of the **whole world**, but humanly and earthly-bound, “**locked behind doors**” still. Were these surprised ones not **still** the **disloyal** of the day of crucifixion? They were. Were they not the renegades from the infantry of the Messiah, to be re-enrolled “this time” (Acts 1:6) in the kingdom’s army? They were – the same and changed no bit. They **lacked**. They needed more than to merely recognise their Lord. **Their witness was still empty**. **Anyone** who had known him **as they** had known him before, had Jesus to appear to him, must have recognised **and** must have acknowledged **his bodily reality and presence**. Every one who was thus confronted with this reality in fact **did** recognise Jesus’ bodily reality and presence. Their confession, their witness, their faith and their worship was fickle, temporary, like the beauty of the flowers of the fields. They witnessed, confessed and even worshipped this risen **yet earthly** man Jesus their Lord and God. They had in view as the basis and goal of their faith – and that at best but very weakly – no more than **the memory of an ideal** of an earthly, temporary, be it concrete and triumphant **House of David**. The disciples witnessed not, believed not, proclaimed not, and worshipped not

Jesus the Risen Lord of Eternal Life. Not for a moment **before Pentecost**, before God Tri-une would **in the Power of the Holy Spirit put before the world** (as before the disciples): “**This-Jesus-Ye-Crucified-But-God-Raised-From-The-Dead!**” They worshipped Jesus not for **Whom He** according to his **Name** was, but according to **what their own** concept of and expectations from Him were.

Especially Paul connects the resurrection with the atoning work of Christ. Not merely in Jesus’ **suffering and death**, but in being “**raised for our justification**” **God** completes his act of saving. **God in Christ** through the **Holy Spirit “works”**, “**US-WARD**” (Eph.1:19) in the **resurrection** of Jesus. The resurrection is connected with **redemption** in the New Testament, Pentecost following as resurrection follows crucifixion. Nothing the one without the other is complete. The resurrection of **Jesus**, witnessed by the disciples **as Church**, becomes the resurrection of **Christ proclaimed** by the **Apostles** – a sign vouchsafed by God of the **ultimate victory** over sin, death and devil. The risen Christ until coming in Parousia through the **Holy Spirit** and beheld by the eye of **faith** appears to none but the world and **unbelievers**. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the eschatological sign, in history, of the **ultimate consummation** of God’s purpose, **in history** – **God’s final triumph in Jesus Christ**. Christ was resurrected “by the Spirit of Power” promised the disciples by which they as the elect would also come to witness Jesus’ resurrection. They would come to witness Jesus’ **resurrection** – not the appearance of a revitalised corpse of an ordinary man undeniably witnessed to the world by the world. They will come to witness The Resurrected Jesus as God incarnate who died and was buried and was **raised in the finishing and rest of all God’s works**. Jesus realised the disciples’ need of the Holy Spirit. Christ **only through the Holy Spirit** would appear to them the Risen One from the dead – by a manifestation wherein both the “from” and the “to” would be fully grasped.

Christ who **substituting**, died, had **representatively** raised from the dead every elect “the third day” of Passover-Redemption, “The Fiftieth Day” **incorporates** these all and these only. The elect “**in Christ**”, at that moment in time He died, died; and at that moment in time that He rose from the dead, rose from the dead. They in themselves at that moment in time of his dying, **fled** from Him. They in themselves, at that moment in time of his rising, were **gone**. **But** “according to the Scriptures” the Fiftieth Day, **they**, raised from the dead into life eternal **in Christ**, through the Holy Spirit **incorporated in Christ** receive the tongue to proclaim **God’s act “us-ward”**. “This Jesus ye crucified but God raised from the dead **we** proclaim”. The elect extra-ordinarily “in Christ”, “all with one accord were **in one**

place”. They, the scattered sheep, had been brought in. The Church has been born; the seed has broken the sod; men and women have become brethren; disciples, apostles. Witness has become proclamation. Explanation has become Faith, and Faith, explanation.

It happened twice that Jesus’ resurrection is witnessed Fully, Grandly, Finally: In **Christ** and in the **Holy Spirit. Not once in between on the level of the ordinary or merely human or even humanly divine.** It twice so happened thus ... and twice ... **on the Sabbath!** No wonder the Scriptures declare, “God concerning the **Seventh Day, spoke!**” It happened a **third** time that God “concerning the Seventh Day, on this wise spake, And God did rest the Seventh day from all his works”. The **third** time, because God speaks in the **Word, in Christ, firstly.** God’s speaking on **creation-Sabbath** is God’s **Word** “made manifest” in a **figure** – the figure of creation. God’s speaking on **creation-Sabbath, is God’s works** – **all** of God’s works a **figure, the figure of Emmanuel, “God with us”.** It is God working “the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward ... **when** He raised Him from the dead”. God’s speaking on creation-Sabbath, is God **in creating prophetically speaking** “according to the **working of his mighty power**”. God in creating prophetically speaking is God “working **in Christ raising him from the dead**”. It is God **working at the goal** where He “sets Christ at his own right hand in heavenly spheres ... **showing what is the hope** of his calling, and **what the riches** of the glory of his **inheritance** in the saints”. God speaking on **creation-Sabbath, is God** on the Sabbath his Day of Rest **speaking in Christ!**

Not once **between Resurrection and Pentecost** – as not once between creation and crucifixion – on the level of the ordinary or merely human or even on the level of the divine, has God spoken in Christ **in the way** as when He **raised Him from the dead** “in the Sabbath”. Or, as when He **fulfilled the Father’s Promise of the Holy Spirit** “when Pentecost was fully come”.

Translation of Acts 1:4 usually is very much the same as translation of verse 6. Jesus “assembled together with them”, verse 1:4, the **translation alluding to the “Church meetings” allegedly like the First Day’s.** “They were come together” when Jesus ascended to heaven, verse 6. [It happened in Bethany according to Luke 24:50. “They (then) returned to Jerusalem (passing) the mount called Olivet which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day’s journey”, Acts 1:12.] These alleged “Church meetings” are referred to traditionally to make it look like the **same kind** of meetings as the **full Pentecostal experience** – **allegedly received on the First Day!** And of course thereby Jesus made the First Day the New Testament Day of Rest and

Worship, remember! But verse 4 should, while **referring back** to verse 3, read: “And **seasoning the time** (for the disciples by his personal appearances during the forty days, verse 3, Jesus) commanded them that they must wait in Jerusalem. Be patient till the promise of the Father which He told you of, has come”. The word usually translated “assembled together with them”, is *sunaldzomenos* and is used **only this once** in the New Testament. (It seems Luke reserved some special words for this interim history.) It comes from two words, *sun*, meaning, “with”, and *halidzoh*. *Halidzoh* is formed from the word for “salt”, *hals*. The implication is that the disciples’ waiting during the winter harvest was no joyous season for them, but a rather trying one only occasionally brightened by Jesus’ “salting”, seasoning and comforting, **random** appearances. No luck here for Sunday! (We note this because the Sunday issue in Christianity is our concern here. As little as this remark might be expected here, as little is the whole idea of Sunday-sacredness in this context of Scripture.)

Says J.C. Ryle, “*I believe our Lord (in the upper room on Sunday evening) taught the disciples, by this action of breathing on them, that the beginning of all ministerial qualification is to have the Holy Spirit breathed into us; and that, until the Holy Ghost is planted in our hearts, we are not rightly commissioned for the work of the ministry.*” *Expository Thought on the Gospels*

Beautifully put. I would only beg to differ about the mode or method Ryle supposes, as I have explained above. But the purpose or aim of Jesus’ deed could not be stated better. It **promises fulfilment.** This occasion was but **preparatory** for what was to come. Also the whole pre-crucifixion ministry of Christ witnessed by the disciples was a preparatory experience. The disciples had to be tried, like gold, to show forth the full glory of Christ when in time God would call on them to do so. They were not qualified yet. And their main qualification would be their having shed the dross. No presumptuousness, no pride, no selfishness, no aspirations or hopes or promises **of this world** were to be able to beguile them from their single purpose, to **proclaim the Risen Christ!** Only when thus equipped, could the disciples, the slow to learn and of small faith, become the Church of Christ ... only through the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ within their hearts. “*Thus does He make this little nation in its encompassing inability stronger than all nations of the world*”. That would happen and did happen on Pentecost Sabbath, and not “on this day the First Day of the week”. That, ever since, God in Christ is doing in the Power of the Holy Spirit till the coming again of Jesus. “I believe the Church” does not mean, “I believe Sunday”. But the qualification is specific.

The First Day of the week, this day when Jesus appeared to them, would remain the First Day **of the week**. **It was** never to become what God meant the **Sabbath** to become – the first Day of man’s walking with God **in the power of the Holy Spirit!** As “in the beginning” the Seventh Day was the first Day that God walked with man and man walked with God. The First Day of the week **was** never to become what God meant the **Sabbath** to become – the first Day of man’s walking with God **in the power of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead!** “In the beginning” the Seventh Day was the Day that **God** “separated, and blessed” and that **He** “finished and rested” on. So, “in these last days” the Sabbath is the Day that **God, in the power of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead**, has separated and blessed, and has finished and rested on!

As of Jesus’ “**breathing**” spoken of here in John, is made much more than John intended, so of Jesus’ **greeting**, “**Peace be unto you**”. We have seen Barth’s interpretation and his is about standard. Note, Ryle’s statement, “*I cannot doubt that it (Jesus’ greeting and his repeating it) was specially intended to cheer, and comfort, and animate the disciples. Glad as they doubtless were to see the Lord, we may easily believe that they were frightened, and overcome by a mixture of feelings; and the more so when they remembered how they had behaved when they had last seen their Lord. Jesus read the condition of their hearts, and mercifully makes assurance doubly sure by repeating the gracious words, “Peace be unto you. As Joseph said to Pharaoh, “the thing was doubled”, in order to make it sure and prevent the possibility of mistake*”. But Augustine, where Ryle quotes him commenting on Isaiah 57:19, **goes too far**. “*The iteration is confirmation. It is the “peace upon peace” promised by the prophet*”. Isaiah declares the day of the Lord, when “I will heal him (Zion): I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips, Peace, peace far off, and near, saith the Lord; I will heal him. But the wicked, like troubled waters, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, I will not heal. No peace, saith my God, to the wicked”. Healing and peace are one. (The reader will notice some difference between my rendering and the King James Version as he has often had to have noticed.) What Isaiah had in mind, Jesus’ greeting did not fulfil. Jesus Himself **is** that thing that fulfils Isaiah’s eschatological vision of the Peace of God’s Word that heals, restores and comforts the mourners of Jerusalem.

Malachi prophesies “the sun of righteousness arising with healing in his wings”. Jesus, greeting his disciples, “Peace be unto you”, did comfort, did restore, did heal. But He therein and therewith did not bring this peace, did not comfort with this comfort, did not restore with this restoration and

did not heal with this prophetic, eschatological peace, comfort, restoration and healing **which is the full measure and the full content of the Word of God**. Jesus’ greeting to his disciples did not ultimately confirm the Day. God has a “Peace unto you” of **ultimate** significance though, that **does** confirm the Day of its realisation. It is the Peace of his Rest and of his Blessing, Sanctity and **of his Finishing** the Seventh Day all his works He had made! This Peace is “Emmanuel, God with us”. It is the “Peace on earth” that is “glory to God in the highest”. It is the “good will (of God) toward men”, “good tidings of great joy that shall be to all people”. ^{Lk.2:10-12} Christ, God’s Rest and Peace – Christ incarnate – is Christ Crucified, **Raised and Exalted**, Seated on the right hand of the Power of God the Father hence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. Jesus’ greeting in the form of a prayer for Peace for his disciples on that evening of the First Day of the week **points** to God’s eschatological greeting. In resting on the Sabbath, God said “Good Day” to man. God again says “Good day”, and “Peace unto you”, when He, saving the dead from death, **raises** Jesus from the dead. He again says “Good day”, and “Peace unto you”, “on the day of Pentecost fully come”. Jesus did not use or meant not his greeting of that evening the First Day of the week, **thus!** Therefore the **day underscored** by God’s courtesies of **eschatological** significance is his **appointed** day, his sanctified, hallowed and sacred Day of Communion with his Church. It is the Day of **greeting** man with the Peace and Rest and Blessedness of everlasting **life: in rising from the dead** “in the Sabbath”, forever to be “**God with us**”, Emmanuel!

7.4.2.

The Sabbath in Church Confession

When contemplating the **last things** as they are in Jesus (eschatology), Christian thinkers inevitably, through the nature of it, arrive at the point where they **must** take account of the Christian **Church**. **As surely as the Church** has to be taken account of when the last things are considered, the **Sabbath** has to be taken account of. **Church and Sabbath** invariably and unavoidably are **conclusions of eschatology**. The last things seen from the perspective of the Church discover not only the Church as cosmic-eschatological sign, but also the Sabbath. An eschatology that does not take account of the Sabbath as a cosmic eschatological sign is as incomplete as an eschatology that does not take account of the Church as a cosmic-eschatological sign. As Karl Barth once said, “*A Christianity that is not eschatology totally, absolutely has nothing to do with Christ.*” („*Christentum das nicht ganz und gar und restlos Eschatologie ist, hat mit Christus ganz und gar und restlos nichts zu tun!*“) (See Part Five of Part Four, DV.) **All prophecy**, whether in the form of Law, offers and sacrifices,

feasts, symbols or cultures, is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. And **it so happens** that Christ becomes the fullness of Prophecy – of Old, **and**, of New Testament Prophecy – **while regularly involving the Sabbath**. (Christ’s own Sabbath healing ministry was prophetic of his **final** eschatological Sabbath healing ministry, his **resurrection** from the dead “in the Sabbath”. See Par. 7.7.) The Sabbath’s being involved in God’s revelation in Jesus Christ is a phenomenon that can neither be denied nor wished away. “On the third day according to the Scriptures” does **not, per accidens**, happen to be fulfilled “**in the Sabbath**”, ^{Mt.28:1} but it happens to be fulfilled “in the Sabbath”, **because**, “**according to the Scriptures**”! Christ resurrected from the dead the third day **according to the Scriptures ... is ...** Jesus Christ resurrected **on the Sabbath** – according to the Scriptures and according to **all Prophecy!** Jesus is the fulfilment of Scriptures and of Prophecy **on the Sabbath** as He on **no other** day or days is the fulfilment of Scriptures and of Prophecy. “**As God spoke of the Seventh Day that in it He rested**”, so, is Christ the fulfilment of Scriptures and of Prophecy **on the Sabbath**. Thus is Jesus’ fulfilment of **Scriptures and of Prophecy**. Jesus, in a **different** way – in the way of God’s **determination** and of his **revelation** – is on the **Sabbath Day** the Amen of all God’s works He had made the Sabbath for the purpose. It **would** not be otherwise; it **would** not be **another** day. “**In these last days in the Son**”, it **thus**, and **on the Sabbath**, would **happen**, would come true, **in fact got fulfilled**. So the Sabbath **must** appear where **eschatology** is contemplated.

7.4.2.1.

The Church and the Sabbath

Karl Barth’s discussion of the **Church** in his University of Bonn Lectures, summer 1946, considers the Church simply from the perspective of its **universality**, “**here**”, “**there**”. Barth perceives the Church the **insufficient**, nevertheless Church and Body of Christ. It **is Church** because it **takes place** concretely in the Name of Christ, “here”, “there”! Barth’s description of the Church in these lectures may be described as an ecumenical apology for the Church in its weakness, quite understandably *vis a vis* the Church’s recent history under Nazism.

Barth’s Bonn Lectures are also limited in scope regarding the Church, because, says he, “*For the first time in my life I lectured without a manuscript*”. When the article “The Church” comes under discussion, Barth says, “*We must be brief in this section which by rights ought to be very thoroughly treated. Our lecture hours are numbered.*” One may expect in these **concise and quite early** notes, only some **at the time relevant** viewpoints on the subject of the Church confessed by the Church. These

lectures were published appropriately under the title “*Dogmatik in Grundriss*”. They are not so much an “Outline” (Thomson’s title for the published Lectures) of Barth’s broader theology, as they are “**First Impressions**”. Barth assures the reader he may find in these lectures “*nothing at all that is essentially new*”. Later in Barth’s life, he for the fourth time ventured upon a *Credo*. (*Credo* in 1935, *Confession de la Foi de l’Église*, 1943, *Grundriss* 1946/47) In *Evangelical Theology*, “The Annie Kinhead Warfield Lectures of 1962”, Princeton Theological Seminary, published complete 1963, Barth complements his perception of the Church as explained in *Grundriss*. His outlook has broadened as well as deepened. Or shall we say he in these **later** Lectures expresses some other aspects of the subject not found in *Grundriss* – something of the “new” that can be found so copiously in his *Church Dogmatics* and that had not been revealed in *Grundriss* as yet.

Without saying too much, Barth, in *Grundriss*, **indirectly** says the best what should be said about the Sabbath, **that unobtrusively and undaunted it serves the Master and the Church**. I quote from the translation by G.T. Thomson, “Dogmatics in Outline”. Note how **lively** (“existentially”) Barth supposes the Church, “*Since here and there through the Holy Spirit men meet with Jesus Christ and so also with one another. Christian Community visibly arises and exists here and there.*” No “*visibility arises*” without the “*here and there*” or without the “*Holy Spirit*”. Barth says nothing though that the “*here and there*” also requires the **Day** of Worship – he **takes it for granted**. If there is a certain point in **space where** the Church meets, then there also must be a certain point in **time when** the Church meets. Where there is a “**here**” and a “**there**”, there also is a “**now**” and a “**then**” – a “Today!” The “**then**”, of course, must be the **Day of Worship**. Christian Community visibly arisen and existing here and there **and on this Day**, “*is a form of the one, holy, universal people of God and a communion of holy men and of holy works, (1.) In that it submits to sole rule by Jesus Christ (“Lord of the Sabbath”) in whom it is founded, (2.) In that it also aims to live solely in the fulfilment of its service as ambassador* (as also the Sabbath aimed at and solely functions in the fulfilment of its service and communion), (3.) *In that it recognises its goal solely in its hope, which is its limit.*”

“... *To-day there is rather too much than too little said about the Church* (as about the Sabbath). *There is something better: let us **be the Church!***” That means to say, “Let us **go** to Church!” In Afrikaans we say, “Let us **keep** Church!” So there also is something better than talking about the Sabbath: let us **keep** the Sabbath!

“It would be great gain, could Luther’s urgent desire have been carried out and the word ‘congregation’ had taken the place of the word ‘Church’. Of course we may find in the word ‘Church’ what is good and true, since ‘Church’ means Kyriakeh Oikia, the Lord’s House; or, derived from circa, a circularly enclosed space (which also implies the return in circularly enclosed time–space this Day of Congregation). Both explanations are possible, but ecclesia certainly means congregation, a coming together, arising out of the summons to the national assembly which meets at the call of the messenger or else at the sound of the herald’s trumpet. (See Par. 7.1.1.6.1, where exactly “congregation, a coming together, arising out of the summons to the national assembly which meets at the call of the messenger or else at the sound of the herald’s trumpet”, happened **on the Sabbath of Pentecost.**)

A congregation is the coming together of those who belong to Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. (See Par. 7.1, Pentecost.) We heard (in Barth’s foregoing lecture on the Holy Spirit) that special men belong in a special way to Jesus Christ. This takes place when men are called by the Holy Spirit to participation in Christ’s word and work. This special membership has its analogue on the horizontal level in the membership of those men with one another. (In the vertical dimension this special membership has its analogue in the communion in Christ of those men with one another through the Holy Spirit. Or, in other words, this special membership has its analogue in the vertical in their Sabbath’s-Worship.) The outpouring of the Holy Spirit directly (vertically in the prayer and worship dimension of the Church’s existence) effects the coming together of these men. (“Today” – the Day of proclamation – “if ye hear ...”! It is no senseless fact that the Holy Spirit effected the coming together of these men ... **on the Sabbath Day** for to be the “Today, if ye hear!”)

We cannot speak of the Holy Spirit – and that is why at this point the congregation immediately appears – without continuing credo ecclesiam, I believe in the existence of the Church. (At the point where we speak of the Congregation, the Day of Worship immediately appears. We cannot speak of the Congregation – and that is why at this point the Day of Worship immediately appears – **without continuing**, “I believe the Sabbath”. This we confess however, in deed, rather than in only words.) And conversely, Woe to us, where we think we can speak of the Church without establishing it wholly on the work of the Holy Spirit. (Likewise, Woe to us, where we think we can speak of the Sabbath without **establishing it wholly in the Congregation** the work of the Holy Spirit. The Sabbath is no private vacation, no opportunity for self-gratification labelled “rest”. The Sabbath

means the **Church’s labour of Prayer – its Worship**. The Sabbath is the opportunity of the Spirit’s operation and the work of the Word among favoured men.)

Credo in Spiritum sanctum, but not Credo in ecclesiam. I believe in the Holy Spirit, but not in the Church. Rather I believe in the Holy Spirit, and therefor also in the existence of the Church, of the Congregation. (I believe the Church (not “in” the Church), and therefore also in the existence of the Sabbath (not “in” the Sabbath) – the Sabbath of Congregation.) So then we must eliminate all ideas of other human assemblies and societies which have come into being, partly by nature, partly by history, on the basis of agreements and arrangements. (So then we must eliminate all ideas of other human feasts like Sunday which have come into being partly by nature, partly by history, on the basis of agreements and arrangements between the world and the Church.)

The Christian Congregation arises and exists neither by nature nor by historical human decision, but as a divine convocatio. (The Christian Day of Worship of the Congregation then arises and exists neither by nature nor by historical human decision, but as a divine convocatio.) Those called together by the Holy Spirit assemble at the summons of their King. Where the Church coincides with the natural living community, with, for example, that of the nation, the danger of misunderstanding always threatens. (The threat actually realised in misunderstanding when the pagan perception of the overcoming of darkness by light – “general revelation” – was inadvertently identified with Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.) It cannot be formed by men’s hands. (“The Sabbath was made” not by men’s hands but by the Creator of creation, redemption and Church.) That is why the zealous, swift founding of Churches ... is a doubtful business. (Scarcely any not adopting Sunday for its Day for Congregation.) Calvin liked to apply to the Church a military conception, that of la campagne des fidèles. A company usually comes together on the basis of a command and not on that of a free agreement. (The Christian summons or command comes from and is **Christ Himself**. The Christian Company only comes together on the basis of the command and summons of its Master and not on that of a free agreement.) By men assembling here and there (and therefore also, “then”, “on the Assembling Day”) in the Holy Spirit there arises here and there (and “in the Assembling Day”) a visible Christian Congregation. (The Church dispersed and when not engaged in congregation on other days is visible as letters written by Christ – but then **visible, not** as this “one”, “existing” and **manifested “existing”**, “People of God”. A people that **never, never on appointment**, in the name of its Lord, **gather, is not** “the People of God”.

The Church of the **Congregation** yet **never assembled** “here and there” and **never on the Day** of Congregation – the Sabbath Day – is **never visible**, is **never**, “Body of Christ”. *It is best not to apply the idea of invisibility to the Church* (It is best not to apply the idea of the Church unrelated to its Day of Worship); *we are all inclined to slip away with that in the direction of a civitas platonica or some sort of Cloud-cuckooland, in which the Christians are united inwardly and invisibly, while the visible Church is devalued*. (... and its **congregation**, its **Day** of Congregation, and its very reason for being, its **witness**, **disappear**. The **Church** will disappear **altogether** as surely as its **Day of Worship** might disappear altogether. **Only**: While **sustained by and in God’s mercy** “here” and “there” the Church finds itself the visibly Congregating Body of Christ on ... **Sunday** mornings, it should ask itself about God’s **forbearance**.)

In the Apostles’ Creed it is not an invisible structure (and therefore a structure not related with the **Day** of Worship) *which is intended but a quite visible* (and therefore **Sabbath’s**) *coming together, which originates with the twelve Apostles*, (With the Apostles originated a quite visible coming together very definitely limited by the time–space of its originating event, the **Sabbath Day, Pentecost**.) *The first congregation was a visible group* (visible this Day the **Sabbath** of their grouping and worship), *which caused visible public uproar. If the Church has not this visibility*, (a visibility not only of “where”, but of **when** as well) *then it is not the Church. When I say Congregation, I am thinking primarily of the concrete form of the congregation in a particular place*. (As in a particular restricted **space in time**. Without the visibility in respect of the particular **Day of Worship** there cannot be visibility in respect of geo-spherical **space**.) *Of course each of these congregations has its problems, such as the Congregation of Rome, of Jerusalem, etc. The New Testament never presents the Church apart from these problems* (and never supposes these problems apart from the Church’s on-the-Day-of-Worship-assembled-existence.) *At once the problem of contentions* (“*das Problem der Verschiedenheiten*”: I prefer “contentions” to Thomson’s “variations” because they are a “*problem*”.) *in the individual congregations crops up, which may lead to splits. All this belongs to the visibility of the Church* (congregating here and there and every Sabbath Day), *which is the subject matter of the second article*. (In fact all this belonged to the visibility of the **Apostolic** Church. Acts 15 is the classic example. Contention occurred in the one holy universal Church made visible in its observance of the **Sabbath** Day.) *We believe the existence of the Church – which means that we believe each particular congregation to be a Congregation of Christ* – (made visible, become true Church in

Congregating ... on the Sabbath. **Now** – not before, not after – one is able to point and say, There! See! The Church!) *Take good note, that a parson who does not believe that in this congregation of his, including those men and women, old wives and children, Christ’s Congregation exists, does not believe at all in the existence of the Church. Credo ecclesiam means that I believe that here, at this place* (this Sabbath Day of Church-worship), *in this visible assembly, the work of the Holy Spirit takes place By that is not intended the deification of the creature* (or of the Sabbath for that matter); *the Church is not the object of faith* (neither is the Sabbath), *we do not believe in the Church* (or in the Sabbath); *but we do believe that in this Congregation* (on this Sabbath Day) *the work of the Holy Spirit becomes an event* (as at Pentecost on that Sabbath Day). *The mystery of the Church is that for the Holy Spirit it is not too small a thing to have such forms* (and such a Sabbath-Daily manifestation). *Consequently, there are in truth not many Churches but one Church in terms of this or that concrete one, which should recognise itself as the one Church and in all the others as well*. (When somewhere universally manifested in this **place**, then somehow universally the Church is manifested on this **Day**.)

... ‘I believe one holy ... Church.’ What is the meaning of sancta ecclesia? According to biblical usage of the term, it means ‘set apart’ (as God ‘set apart’ the Seventh Day). *And we think of the Church, of those called out of the world* (as we think of the Sabbath as that day called out of other days). *‘Church’ will always signify a separation* (and worship will always signify a separation in every respect – in terms of Day as in terms of place). *We heard that there are also natural and historical societies, but that only the Christian Congregation is the ecclesia sancta*. (We heard that there are also natural and historical days and Days, but **only the Christian Congregation’s is Day of the ecclesia sancta**.) *It is distinguished from all such societies because of its commission, its foundation and its goal*. (The Sabbath is distinguished from all such social days because of its commission, its foundation and its goal.)

‘I believe one holy, catholic [universal] ... Church’ – the ecclesia catholica. ... What is involved is the one, holy and catholic People of God. Fundamentally the three concepts make the same assertion: ecclesia catholica means that through the whole of history the Church remains identical with itself. It cannot alter in its nature. (Neither can it change its Day of Worship.)

... The Church is the Communion of the saints, communio sanctorum ... The Congregation is the place where God’s Word is proclaimed and the sacrament are solemnised and the fellowship of prayer takes place ... (The

*Congregation is the **place**; the Sabbath is the **Day** of prayer, sacrament, proclamation and congregation. The Sabbath is supposed, practised, preached – expressly or implied. It all along **depends on the Church** for its existence. And Church that not so **supports** its Sabbath Day is not Church. **On other days** the Church is visible **invisibly**. God’s People **also** pray **in their closets**, not heard and not seen. They also are in the world when they, on other days, do not congregate. But on such days God’s People **are many**. On the Sabbath, God’s People **is one**. The Sabbath is a unifying factor of the life and Faith of the Church. That the Sabbath also has become a divider **because of Sunday** is a sorry state of things, and very disheartening.)*

*In faith I attest that the concrete Congregation to which I belong and for the life of which I am responsible is appointed to the task of making in this place, in this form, (in this Day,) **the one, holy, universal Church visible**, (Church, “where”, Church, “when”, and Church, “I, responsibly attesting”, “exists”. The Church **not personalised does not exist**. The Church not concretely here where I believe and at least one or two others **believe together, does not exist**. The Church not concretely here, **this Day-To-Be-Here**, does not exist. In faith I attest that **the concrete Congregation is the meaning why** “the Sabbath is valid for the People of God”.)*

*... In the Nicene Creed a fourth is added to these three predicates of the Church, that I believe one, holy, catholic and **apostolic** Church. This fourth one does not simply stand in a row with the other three expressions, but explains them. What is the meaning of Unity, Catholicity, Holiness? What distinguishes the Congregation from all other societies of a natural or even of an historical kind? We can perhaps say that it is the **ecclesia apostolica** – that is, the Church founded on the witness of the Apostles – which transmits this witness, and which was constituted and will be constituted ever anew by the fact that it hears this testimony of the Apostles (... realised on the Sabbath).*

... Along three lines the apostolicity of the Church means:

*Where the Christian Church is, we are obviously connected in some form or other with Jesus Christ (and obviously with the Day of Worship, Jesus being Lord of the Sabbath.) The **name**, the Christian Church, indicates the unity, holiness and universality of the Church (so the name, the Christian name for its Day of Worship, “Lord’s Day”). Whether this basis – Jesus Christ – and appeal to this basis takes place de jure is the question that must be put to every congregation in every place. (Whether appeal is made de jure to Christ in this special way as basis for **Sunday** as Lord’s Day is the question that must be put to every congregation in every place.) Where the Apostolic Church is (and where its Day of Worship is) – the Church which*

*hears and transmits the Apostles’ testimony – a definite sign will be living, a nota ecclesia. The sign that **Jesus Christ**, namely, is not only **He from whom the Church** (as also its Day of Worship) **derives, but that Christ is **He that rules the Congregation**** (as He is Lord of the Sabbath also). **He, and He alone!** At no time and at no place is the Church an authority which upholds itself out of itself (... or is the Day of Worship something that could uphold itself or could be upheld by the Church out of itself). **But – and here follows an important principle with regard to Church governments – fundamentally the Church can be governed neither monarchic nor democratically. Here Jesus Christ rules alone, and any ruling of man can only represent this government of His. **Any ruling of man must let itself be measured by that government. But Jesus Christ rules in his Word by the Holy Spirit. Church government is thus identical with Holy Scripture, for it witnesses to Him. So the Church must continually be occupied with the exposition and application of Scripture. Where the Bible becomes a dead book with a cross on the cover and gilt edging, the rule of Jesus Christ is slumbering** (and His Lordship and Sovereignty are forgotten). **There the Church is no longer the one universal Church, but the threat is there of the breaking in of what is unholy and separatist. Of course even this “Church” will call on the name of Jesus Christ. It is not words but reality, which matters; and such a Church will not be in a position to bring reality into action.**** (Such a Church won’t enter God’s Rest and it will not enjoy its Day of Rest for unbelief and disobedience.)*

*2. The life of the one holy universal Church is determined by the fact that it is the fulfilment of the service as ambassador enjoined upon it. (The validity of the one holy universal Church-Day is determined by the fact that it received a bit from the fullness obtained by Christ. “Therefore Christ’s Church keeps the Sabbath Day” – Hb.4:9, Gn.2:1-3.) The Church lives as other communities live, but in its Church service its nature appears – proclamation of the Word of God, administration of the Sacraments, a more or less developed liturgy, the application of a Church law (... for even the first Congregation had at least a Church-law order, namely Apostles and Congregation), and lastly theology. (The Sabbath exists as other days exist, but its nature appears **in service** to the Church– to proclamation of the Word, to administration of the Sacraments, to a more or less developed liturgy, to the application of a Church law ... and lastly to theology.) The great problem, which the Church has again and again to answer (also concerning the Sabbath Day), is this – what happens in and by all these functions? Is it a question of edification? Is it the cultivation of religious living, or quite objectively an order (in accord with an ontological*

conception of the Church) which must simply be achieved as the opus Dei? Where the life of the Church (or its Sabbath-Worship) is exhausted in self-serving, it smacks of death; the decisive thing has been forgotten, that this whole life is lived only in the exercise of what we called the Church's service as ambassador, proclamation, kerygma. A Church that recognises its commission will neither desire nor be able to petrify in any of its functions to be the Church for its own sake (e.g. in its keeping of the Sabbath or of Sunday). There is the 'Christ-believing group'; but this group is sent out: 'Go and preach the Gospel!' It does not say, 'Go and celebrate services!' 'Go and edify yourselves with the sermon!' 'Go and celebrate the Sacraments!' ('Go and keep the Sabbath!') 'Go and present yourselves in a liturgy which perhaps repeats the heavenly liturgy!' 'Go and devise a theology which may gloriously unfold like the Summa of St Thomas!' Of course, there is nothing to forbid all this; there may exist very good cause to do it all; but nothing, nothing at all for its own sake! In it all the one thing must prevail: 'Proclaim the Gospel to every creature!'

(It may not always be possible to speak of the Sabbath. More likely, it mostly is better not to talk about the Sabbath for the incomparable greatness of the Gospel that should be proclaimed and served by it. But the Sabbath none the less and for that very reason **is supposed the surer even where not spoken of** while its force is implied and felt. This is just as true in the Old Testament as in the New. The Church Congregating is the Church Congregating on the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath "There!" is the Sabbath "on the Lord's Day". The Church stepping out of the Red Sea into the Promised Land is the Church on the Sabbath Day. The Church overthrowing the reign of Ataliah and crowning the King of Israel is the Church on the Sabbath. The Church rising from the dead in Christ is the Church on the Sabbath Day. The Church baptised in the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost is the Church on the Sabbath Day. The Church "in the Spirit", is the Church "on the Lord's Day". The Church partaking of the "Lord's Supper" is the one so doing "on the Lord's Day". "The Sabbath" as if hushed – precisely for being quiet and lowly but faithful **servant of the Servant** of the Lord – **is not for its own sake**, but for the Lord's and for the People's sake. – Although much more than in the Old Testament the Sabbath is not talked about too much in the New Testament. It simply is "remembered" and "kept" ... New Testamentically. It may safely be assumed the Apostolic Church was familiar with the Old Testament terminology.)

"In it all the one thing must prevail: 'Proclaim the Gospel to every creature!'" (Let the truth face us and let us face the truth: So was it in the Apostolic Church. **Church and Day of Rest are not to be separated. Both**

are "separated" that is, "sanctified", "**holy**", "**for and unto the Lord**". The **Church**, and the more the Church-**Day** should be **quiet** so the **Gospel** might be **heard**. In its weakness lurks the Sabbath's strength. In its stillness it sounds clearest the voice of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The **Church** for the Sabbath's rest becomes the better visible and is heard the clearer. The Sabbath's message, its **Lord**, becomes the object of adoration, praise and worship. The Sabbath's voice is that of prayer, trust and praise of Jesus Lord and Christ.)

*And now the last point, that where the Church is, there it has an **aim, the Kingdom of God**. ... Where the Apostolic Church is alive one knows indeed this longing, we long for the mansion made ready. We do not let ourselves be hindered by the hope of the Kingdom from standing as a ... soldier in the compagnie de Dieu and so making for the goal. The limit is set us by the goal. If we really hope for the Kingdom of God, then we can also endure the Church in its pettiness.* (And now the last point, that where the Church keeps the Sabbath, there it follows after its **aim, the Kingdom of God**. Where the Sabbath of the Apostolic Church is alive one knows indeed this longing, we long for the mansions made ready. We do not let ourselves be hindered by the hope of the Kingdom from keeping and celebrating the Sabbath and so making for the goal – standing as soldiers in the *compagnie de Dieu*. The limit is set us by the goal. If we really hope for the Kingdom of God, then we can also endure the Church in its pettiness and permit the little rest of the Sabbath Day. If we really hope for the Kingdom of God, then we can also endure the Church and enjoy a promise of the celebration of God's Rest in a little enjoyment of the Sabbath.) *Then we shall not be ashamed to discover in the concrete Congregation the one holy universal Church.* (Then we shall not be ashamed to discover on this concrete Day the one holy universal Church living in the hope of the Kingdom of heaven.)
... The Christian hope, which is the most revolutionary thing we are capable of thinking, and beside which all other revolutions are mere blank cartridges, is a disciplined hope. It points man to his limitations: there you may hold out. The Kingdom of God is coming, so you must not begin the flight to the kingdom of God.” (The Kingdom of God is coming, so the Church may rest the Sabbath.) *“At once quite restless and quite at rest” – “true minister verbi divini” – “take your place and stand in your place ... waiting ... to meet the coming of the Lord!”* (Let us keep the Sabbath! *“Be the Church!”* The Sabbath – like the Church for which it was made [‘the Sabbath was made for man’] – also ministers to the *Word of God*. Being **appointed thereto** it ministers and waits on the Word and on the Congregation. The Sabbath stands in its place, serving **Lord and Church** ...

“waiting to meet the coming of the Lord.”

Only **provoked** would one speak “concerning the Sabbath” **so much**. The better thing of course is to **keep** the Sabbath and simply to allow this servant to tell about its Lord.

In the later Lectures, Barth has found the **vertical dimension** of the Church’s life (seen in the small in the work of the theologian), Barth indirectly recognises this dimension in *Grundriss*, but under the article of the Holy Spirit. In *Evangelical Theology* he discovers the necessity of **prayer** for the Church to be People of God (or faithful theologian). From this vertical dimension of the Church’s existence (of the theologian’s work), Barth finally appreciates the **Sabbath’s** necessity for the life of the Church. Without the vertical **connected-ness** through **prayer** between Church and Life–Source (like a window opened heaven–wards), the horizontal of the Church’s existence (windows opened “facing the surrounding life”) becomes impossible. Barth’s earlier horizontal or time-spatial dimension of Church-life. **Prayer, like a Sabbath from above breaks** the monotonous passing of the Church’s life (the theologian’s work).

The Afrikaans word *aanbidding* for “Worship” literally means “the Praying to”. “Worship” includes Church-“**Service**” and Church-“**Prayer**” – the Church’s work **and** its **rest** – the “rest” found in **prayer!** “Worship” is the Church’s “**work**” and **includes its praying – its rest**. Only God’s light could break through the window opened heavenward. Only the grace of God could make of man’s work – his praying, a **resting**. **Jesus must** enter the midst of his disciples or they shall not receive rest for their souls. A **Sabbath Rest – God’s Sabbath Rest – is needed**.

In the following quotation the **theologian** may be understood for the **Church**, “**theology**” may be understood for the Church’s **work**, and so also the theologian’s “**prayer**” may be understood for the “**worship**” of the Church:

... It is peculiar and characteristic of theology (Church work) that it can be performed only in the act of prayer (worship). In view of the danger to which theology (the Church’s work) is exposed and of the hope that is enclosed within its work, it is natural that without prayer (worship) there can be no theological (Church) work ... Work (worship) must be that sort of act that has the manner and meaning of prayer in all its dimensions, relationships and movements. The circular movement must be interrupted; a Sabbath Day must be inserted and celebrated. The purpose of the Sabbath is not to eliminate the working days or to divest them of their proper tasks, but rather to obtain for them precisely the light from above which they lack.

How can this happen? What can and should happen is that the theologian (Church) for a moment should turn away from all his efforts in the performance of the intellectus fidei. At such a moment he (the Church) can and should turn exclusively towards the object of theology (or of worship), to God. But what else is such a turning to God than the turning of prayer (rest)? For in prayer a man temporarily turns away from his own efforts. This move is necessary precisely for the sake of the duration and continuation of his (the Church’s) own work (worship). Every prayer (all worship) has its beginning when a man puts himself – together with his best and most accomplished work – out of the picture. He leaves himself and his work behind in order once again to recollect that he stands before God. How could he (the Church) ever find it unnecessary to recollect this fact continually and anew? He (the Church) stands before the God who, in his work and word, is man’s (the Church’s) Lord, judge and Saviour. He (the Church) recognises also that this God stands before him, or rather, draws near to him, in his work and word. This is the mighty, holy, and merciful God who is the great threat and the still greater hope of man’s (the Church’s) work (worship).”

Barth sees **interruption** of its labours, **praying and from labour ceasing**, as the Church’s **indispensable Sabbath**. At the same time its Prayer-Sabbath is the Church’s **work** – its **worship!** Breaking in from above into the Church’s earthly existence, prayer and Sabbath at once pose “the danger to which (the Church’s work) is exposed and the hope that is enclosed within its work. ... The purpose of the Sabbath is not to eliminate the working days or to divest them of their proper tasks, but rather to obtain for them the light from above which they lack.”

Among the light-lacking days counts the First Day of the week. And it lacked this light even on the evening of that first First Day of the week when and where Jesus first appeared to his disciples. The Church in vain invests this evening and this day with such glory because it is not the glory God had given it, but the glory which He had given the **Sabbath Day**, **misapplied** to the First day of the week.

7.5.

The Sabbath’s Sacramental Nature

If any reader may recognise a certain respected theologian’s hand in this section, he is not mistaken. But while I have applied his ideas more than liberally and to a subject he would have disapproved, I am not allowed to identify him. I feel though that for the sake of truth the essential sameness of the Sacraments and the Sabbath justify my borrowing from him.

“The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to his Church the benefits of his mediation are all his ordinances, especially the word, Sacraments and prayer” (Larger Catechism, Question 154).
“Especially (through) the word, Sacraments and prayer” (Shorter Catechism, Question 92)

Christ through the Holy Spirit communicates to his Church the grace of his Covenanted Word. That these **special ordinances – also seen as “rituals”** – were designed for this holy purpose is as plain as language and reason can make it.

Is there **any other** divine ordinance of the same class and kind, that possessing the same qualities, sustain the same relations as do the Sacraments? Concerning the Day of Worship–Rest, the Sabbath, this is **antecedently true**, because its **reason to be still continues**. As are the Sacraments (“Do this in remembrance of Me.”), the **Sabbath is commanded in Scripture as ordinance** ... “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy ... Remember that the Lord thy God brought thee out ... therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath Day”.

But most importantly, **as** are the Sacraments, the Sabbath Day also most positively **resorts under the Lordship of Christ**. According to the Scriptures through Christ, through his ministry, sacrifice and resurrection, **the Sabbath Day** comes as another divine and perpetual ordinance of much the same class, possessing the same qualities, and sustaining the same relations as the Sacraments. Christ through the Holy Spirit communicates to his Church the grace of his Covenanted **Word** – as by means of sacrament, so by means of the **Sabbath Day**. **Christ uses ordinances** – as the Sacraments so the Day of Worship–Rest – not only to **represent, signify and pledge**, but also **actually to apply** the benefits and the mediation of his redemption to believers.

7.5.1.

A Spatial Sign

The Sabbath is an observable and **tangible** sign existentially experienced in **time** and **locality** by both the Believer and the Body of Believers. Through faith no less than the **Lord’s own**, promised, pledged and **extraordinary** presence and participation in the Day of Worship, is **as real** as the believers’ participation and enjoyment in the Day. The **Lord’s own**, promised, pledged and extraordinary presence and participation in the Day of Worship is **as real, as present and as participated**, as through faith by observance of the **sacraments**. Paul, **exactly by not mentioning** the Sabbath Day in the context of the Lord’s Supper, **supposes and implies** it and its keeping “**as often** as ye eat the Lord’s Supper”. The Sabbath, **also by**

being mentioned so often and in such important context elsewhere in the Gospels and the Acts, is supposed and implied **as sign and pledge of Covenant relationship and allegiance to Christ and his finishing of his works in dying and rising from the dead**. The Apostles **all** applied and themselves partook of the uses and benefits of the Lord’s Sabbath Day as long as they lived. And the entire Christian **Church** under guidance of the **Holy Spirit** shared the **Apostles’** observance of the **Lord’s Sabbath** in unbroken **continuity** until the falling away from sound doctrine. We here consider the **Apostolic** Community and its motivations for its peculiar practices during **that phase** of the Church’ history which **as its beginning was the mandating and determining period for the norms and standards of its entire history**. (Regardless of the Church’s sudden falling away from these norms and standards.)

7.5.2.

By Analogy of the Old Covenant

Hence the New Testament Sabbath came **by analogy of the Old** – wherein was already **foreshadowed and hidden** the death and resurrection of Christ – to be regarded by the first believers as the Christian Day of Rest and Worship. For these Christians, their assembling and time of communion – the Seventh Day–Sabbath – was sacred **for no lesser reason than creation and redemption**. To stigmatise the Sabbath of being “**Jewish**” isn’t merely a touching the ark with unholy hand, but of **slighting the foundation and ownership** of the Sabbath Day. If the Sabbath had been “**Jewish**” the New Testament **would have called** it so. It would not have claimed Jesus Lord of the Sabbath, but the Jews. By the fact that the Sabbath while that of the Lord also is the Jews’ (or used to be the Jews’) the Sabbath would be **not less divine**. But now the New Testament **never** calls the Sabbath “**Jewish**”, but “**Lordly**” – in fact **Christ** claims Lordship of the Sabbath Day **himself!**

The Seventh Day Sabbath then, to Christians was sacred for no **lesser** reason than creation and redemption. It was sacred for a **much greater** reason than creation and redemption – that reason being the very one why the ordinances of **Sacrament** were sacred to them: The **Lord** of Sacrament is “**Lord also of the Sabbath**”. The Lord is One, but now revealed **not only, and no longer only, by analogy of creation and redemption** (from Egypt), but **revealed** incarnated and present and through **final** redemption even in **resurrection** from the dead. “**Author and Finisher of the Faith**”, “the **Beginning** and the **Amen** of the creation of God”, **Christ**, as “**Lord of the Sabbath Day**”, **vindicates that ordinance and institution** and **elevates** it to the standard the Church attributes the “**Sacraments**”.

7.5.3.

By Analogy of Christian Allegiance

The Sabbath **publicly consummates** the Christian profession of faith and allegiance to **Jesus**. Allegiance to Christ binds Christians to **service ... the service of worship** for which the Lord ordains the Sabbath Day. “Of the Seventh Day, God somehow spoke, that in it He entered upon / into his rest”. This Scripture means to say ... **God in Jesus entered!** No Christian would deny. Obligatory upon **Christians** therefore, in consequence of **Christian faith**, they **by engagement in “a keeping of the Sabbath” openly signify** and confess their faith and promise of service to Christ.

By the admission of the **individual** to the privilege of participating in the **observance of the Day** the Church (through its officers the Apostles) signifies its **recognition** of the covenanting believer as an accepted **member of the Church**. The right of admission to or of excluding from the Assembly is restricted and regularly accompanied by allegiance to the Master Sovereign. “They all – in expectancy of the Lord – were assembled unanimously”.

Thus, the Day of Worship was always freely involved in the confessing and proclaiming Congregation that acted – not as individuals merely – but as representatives of the whole body of believers according to the law of their corporate will. Reference to **free** Christian assembling in worship evidences the Church’s **Sabbath’s** Congregating exactly as Paul’s statement, “**as often as ye eat**” evidences the Church’s **free** observance of the ordinances of Sacrament. It is a most definitive **proof of silence** that Christians practising their Faith, never whatsoever assembled and worshipped on the Sabbath and in the Synagogue **not willingly, not freely, and not the Congregation of the Elect**. As their **freedom and willingness of being the Christian Congregation** is suggested and alluded to in Paul’s words, “**as often as ye ...**”, so is it suggested and alluded to in their every **congregating on the Sabbath Day and in the Synagogue / Church** (Acts 15:20). **Christian freedom and tendency** is as much of the essence of observance of the **Sabbath** as it is of the essence of observance of the **Sacraments**. The **Sacraments** being **free, Christian** observance, being the occasion and opportunity of, and for, **free** observance, the **Sabbath itself**, is Christian, and, free.

“I stood between you and God, then”, said **Moses**, “lest ye **fear**”! (Dt.5) But “we, have such an High Priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens ... the **Mediator** of a better covenant, Hebrews 8. ... **Let us therefore come boldly (not fearing)** unto the throne of **grace**”, **Hebrews 4** ... where the writer speaks of “the **Sabbath Rest** still

valid for God’s people”! The writer speaks of the **practical**, “**keeping** of the **Sabbath–Rest**” – *sabbatismos*, in juxtaposition to the in context **spiritual**, “**rest**” – *katapausis / anapausis*. **Both** are a “**rest**” of **no fearing** and of having entered into the redeeming Covenant–relationship–“**Rest**” with Christ. The first – *sabbatismos*, is **no less spiritual for being practical and “sign”** of the second and **purely** spiritual “**rest**” – *katapausis / anapausis*.

7.5.4.

Its Nature and Design

What are the real **nature and design** of the Day so prominent and ever imminent in the economy of the Christian Church? The Sabbath is a **symbol**, and the Church’s response to it a **symbolical act** wherein the outward physical sign of “Sabbath Day” represents **inward, invisible** grace. The sign consists of elements **related to the Lord** of the Day and to the recipient (in the capacity of observer). The Sabbath Day signifies a symbolical **transaction** in which **Christ and the benefits** of his salvation are represented, indicated, witnessed and applied to believers – believing and confessing **individuals** – **only** in corporate **assembling under the hearing of the Word**. The **grace symbolised** is purchased by Christ, is conveyed and applied by the Holy Spirit, and is received by faith. That grace, as inward and invisible, belongs to the **spiritual Church of the Assemblies, recognisable**, as this spiritual Body on this earthly yet spiritual **Day of Worship–Rest**. The Sabbath, wherein invisible grace is represented by its **outward and spatial sign** this Day the Lord’s Sabbath Day, **belongs** obviously to those visible and organised Churches into which the spiritual children of God are gathered. **The Day of Worship–Rest can have no other sphere**. The Sabbath is a sign and witness to men in the flesh (in and outside the Church) of things that relate to the world of **Faith**. But the outward sign **has no pertinence** in sustaining the relation to its members **except in relation to the Lord of both the Body (“man”) and the Day (“the Sabbath”)**. In fact, the outward sign of the Day **has no pertinence in itself** in sustaining the relation between the Body and the Lord, except as a **sign of prayer**.

The **need and the use** of the sign the Sabbath, grow out of the **fact** that signs, **designed by God to the purpose**, are received through our senses **spiritually** to make profound impression upon our souls. They are designed and revealed through the **Word**, “according to the **Scriptures**” and the working of the **Holy Spirit**. As long as we are associated together through the operations of that Word through the Spirit of that Word, as long as we bow in **prayer, we stand in need of visible, spiritual fellowship and common loyalty**. As those who stand in need we are the **praying who**

worship. We need the distinguishing and enabling, recognisable **spatial opportunity of Christian fellowship, worship and prayer.** The Church's common loyalty, its attitude, worship and prayer – even the Church's very **Day of Worship**, stands in the sign of **the Rest in Christ we are in need of.** As stand the Sacraments. The Sacraments by this **need** lose nothing of their **physical** properties – neither does the Sabbath Day. The Christian Faith stands in **need** of the **time-spatial** sign and pledge of **the Sabbath Day** for its **display** and for the **inner appropriation** of its significance. As the **signal opportunity** for the display and appropriation of the **Faith**, the Sabbath **itself becomes a sign** of allegiance to Christ the Lord.

The Sabbath is a sign or symbol because **God created it** – it is of His “making” – “the Sabbath was made”. But because of creation's sinfulness and lost state the Sabbath points to a “**new creation**” and a new birth **like life from the dead** – a life **distinguished** from the natural or “created”. “The Sabbath was made” by **Christ declaring, “the Son of man is Lord** of the Sabbath”. The Sabbath has no other beginning even because “in the beginning, the **Word** was”. As a sign of creation **in this sense, the Sabbath** is distinguished from the merely “natural”. It obviously isn't naturally recognisable as “divine” (neither are the elements of the Sacraments), but it is **declared** “divine” appointment of God's good pleasure, **through the Word** of his good pleasure. The Sabbath is a recognisable appointment of God's **grace – it is a Covenant-sign.**

As everything created, the Sabbath **itself**, as a created but spiritual sign, stands in need of a new birth like life from the dead. It stands in this need **for our participation** in all the benefits of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. Pointing to the new creation the Sabbath itself undergoes a new creation. It is newly instituted and “revived” through resurrection from the dead **of Jesus Christ.** Thus it is a **sign of the Gospel** whereby is received of the benefits of Christ's dying and rising.

Being selected / sanctified / hallowed by God as a natural physical / created / cosmic symbol / sign, the Sabbath is to be regarded a spiritual grace and be treated as such by his Church on its Lord's authority forever. The Sabbath's suggestive and edifying power is due to both its **natural** likeness (its created-ness and “Seventh”-Day-ness) and its **divine appointment** through creation and ultimately through its New-Testament creation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The **design** of this sign the Sabbath, is obvious from its **nature and uses**, and is, moreover, clearly taught in **Scripture.** It is an **effective objective exhibition** of the central truths of the Gospels. Like a picture, the Sabbath impressively sets forth to the **eye of faith** the same great truths the

Word of God read or preached sets forth to the ear that hears through faith. The Sabbath's use has proved the wisdom of its appointment. The rationale lies in its divine constitution and institution. Like that of prayer the Sabbath's rationale is not to be found in natural law. **Man** is involved in the keeping of the Sabbath as God's **redeemed.** But he is involved as redeemed **creature** that is **concretely** incorporated in the **spiritual Body of Christ.** Thus the **Sabbath** is involved in man's recognition of this relation to and relationship with the **covenanting** God and Lord.

The Sabbath signifies **relation to Christ** as our Teacher, Redeemer and King, and hence at the same time, signifies **relation to Church-membership.** It signifies our relation **to one another** as **beneficiaries** of the same redemption, **learners** of the same school, **brethren** in the same family, **subjects** of the same kingdom, and **heirs** of the same inheritance. The Sabbath gives definitive visibility to the professing, organised Church of Jesus Christ on earth, at once in the eye of its own members and of all outsiders as before God!

The Sabbath is designed by Christ (being its Lord “too”) to **mark his covenant** with men. A seal is an outward visible thing or action **attached** by appointment of government (the “Lord”) which recognises and consummates a contract, **rendering** the contract even more sacred by the governmental (“Lord's”) recognition or “sign” (Sacraments, Day of Worship). Jesus thus “signed” or rendered the Covenant of Grace in dual capacity of being both **representative** “*Son of man*”, and “*Lord (Master) of the Sabbath Day*”-attachment. In this sign-attachment (Sacraments, Sabbath) Christ confirms his **mediatorial undertaking** (Covenant of Grace) “**for us**” by an objective declaration, the **tangible, audible and visible pledge, Lo, “the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath”!** Jesus pledges our salvation and **shows** it. He pledges our salvation on the condition of our **really and spiritually receiving** what we **in appearance** receive and accept in receiving and accepting **the sign and pledge. Christ** pledges our salvation. His pledge is his Word. He pledges on the condition of our really and spiritually receiving and accepting **Him that pledges in giving Himself.** While giving Himself in dying and rising, He pledges his Word in the sign of the Sabbath Day. **We**, while entering into God's rest in Jesus (*katapausis*) at the same time swear an oath (as Israel did on receiving the Law). By word and act of the sign and pledge, **we, pledge** to put ourselves absolutely into Christ's hands, to receive his full salvation, and to be consecrated to his service. “Ye are come unto mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ... to the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn, ... and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant ...”. We pledge

to enter into his Rest.

Christ ordained the Day, “Sabbath”, by personal **ministry**, by acknowledging and **fulfilling** of the prophets and the Scriptures and by personal **annexation**. Christ staked the Sabbath by claim, **his, the Lord Son of man’s**. But Christ claimed the Sabbath Day his, **primarily by rising from the dead Sabbath’s time**. Ordained thus by Christ, the Sabbath is a **means of grace** – not the only means, in the absence of which grace is not given, but real, divinely appointed means the use of which is obligatory and most useful to all Christians. **Christ**, through the **Holy Spirit** – while through the **appointed instrument** the Sabbath – among other means **and surely not without the others** – **effects and distributes grace** to men severally as He wills.

7.5.5.

Its Efficacy

This **efficacy as a means of grace** does not, of course, **inhere** in the “mysterious” elements (of the Sabbath as of the Sacraments) or in the merit, intention or actions of the keeper or administrator of the Sabbath (the Church). It **always** inheres in the present gracious volition of the **Holy Spirit** whose instrument the Sabbath is, just as the efficiency of the axe or hammer or sword is due to the will and power of the man who wields it. The axe cuts down the tree because **it is adapted** to cut wood (the master adapted it to suit), and because a strong and skilful master energetically and skilfully **wields it**. The Sabbath’ purpose and nature are designed to effect the mind and the heart and the will of men in the right way **while it is the Holy Spirit** who works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. God uses it as He wills, and to effect his own purpose ... We are speaking of the Lord’s Sabbath Day in the Covenant of Grace.

Under the New Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace in all respects the Sabbath is a sign of the necessity of regeneration and a pledge of its gift. In **Baptism, water**, the universal element of cosmic life, and the universal element of **cleansing**, is applied to the **person** as to the **Body** with the same significance and design. In the Sabbath, **time**, the universal element of cosmic life, and the universal element of **sustaining** it, is applied to the person as to the Body with the same significance and design. Viewed as a mere outward sign, neither baptism nor the Sabbath, nor their absence, avails anything, but the new creature, which both, alike signify. But like Baptism – the **physical**, water–baptism – that represents an inward **spiritual** grace, the “physical”, Seventh Day–Sabbath represents an inward **spiritual** grace. “For he is not a Jew, 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” (Rm. 12:28, 29). The Sabbath unites us to Christ, Head of all principality and power through resurrection from the dead, **Who unites us to God**. The Sabbath’s **foundation and material strength** is the same as that of Sacrament – **it is founded and built in the strength of the person and work of Christ**. The strength of its **physical / literal–ness is its spiritual–ness**.

The conditions of membership and participation in God’s peoples’ worship, prayer and edification are the same for keeping of the Sabbath as for Sacrament. Those conditions and strength of fibre, **are faith and obedience**. “They entered not (were disobedient) because of lack of faith”, says the writer. Every true Israelite was a true believer (Gal. 3:7). “Those who did enter the rest” believed and obeyed “the Gospel preached to them”. The Church under the Old Dispensation is precisely the same Church with the Christian Church under the New. They bore the same name : “*Kahal Jaweh*” and the *ecclesia kuriou* alike mean the Church of the Lord. “To them as to us was the (same) Gospel proclaimed”, Hb.4:2. Thus Stephen called the “congregation of the Lord” even **before Sinai** “the **Church** in the wilderness”. Compare Acts 7:38 with Ex. 32. See Paragraph 9.6 The Day of Worship–Rest or Sabbath of this Church under its successive dispensations is of the same significance and binding force. ... The Christian converts from Judahism were not gathered into a new Church, but were daily added to the already existing Church. The Gentile branches did not constitute a strange tree, but were grafted into the old **Israel**-olive tree (Rm.11:17–24). ... (“Daily added” ... (Refer Par. 7.1.1.) This Church adopted no new Day of Worship. Its “Old” Sabbath was virtually “**baptised**” as had been all its members “**in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**” – by virtue of the fullness of “Sabbath’s time” having been reached and accomplished in the Resurrection of its Lord from the dead. In the most natural manner, without the slightest hint of change, and with every incidental indication possible of the uncorrupted **continuance** of the historical Church–Day of Rest and Worship, the New Testament Church–life grew from the fulfilment in Christ of the Old Testament. The preaching of the New Testament opens with the explicit declaration, abundantly significant as coming from an Apostle to a national representative audience, all of whom knew no Church which had not always embraced the Sabbath of the Seventh Day of the week in its sacramentally–sealed membership. “The Promise” – that is, the Gospel Covenant, of which circumcision and baptism were successively the signs brought the Sabbath – uninterruptedly and unchanged – ‘**unto you and to your children**’ (Acts 2:39).

7.5.6.

By Analogy of The Lord's Supper

The use of the Sabbath is precisely the use of any sacrament – that is, the incomparable benefit of **externally signifying and pledging the benefits it represents**. With the Sabbath there are four parties present and concerned in the transaction – God, the Church, the Scriptures and the believer. The Sabbath as a transaction binds upon the believer those special obligations, and pledges to him those special benefits that spring from the Gospel Covenant as it includes the believer with the Church in the receiving of those promises of the Scriptures. In a word, the congregation of believers is brought **under Covenant** while **the Sabbath stands in the sign of that Covenant relationship**. The faith involved is **that faith of the Church standing in the Sign of the Scriptures**.

When the **Lord's Sabbath Day** is compared with the **Lord's Supper**, characteristics and qualities of Sabbath and Sacrament are even more remarkably similar and coincidental than in the case of **Baptism** and the Sabbath.

The Sabbath marks the relinquishing wells along the believers' pilgrimage on the narrow and uphill way toward the New Jerusalem and the banqueting-halls of our Father's house. At these wells drinking of the Word Jesus, the pilgrim enjoys the Water of Life and Rest. The Sabbath Day is the central moment of the weekly cycle of Church life and power. Around it all the other ministries of the Church revolve, and through it, is exhibited the indwelling of God with men and the real and objective presence and power of 'the communion of saints'.

The Sabbath's **Creator** "speaking of the Seventh Day", calls it, "My Holy Day". The Sabbath's Creator is Creator of man and of the whole cosmos. The Church – since creation the present and manifested reality of God's electing love – had always **with prophetic significance** called this special Day, "the Sabbath". But the Sabbath used to be called by the **apostles** and in **their** times by **all Christians**, the **Lord's** "Sabbath Day" (**never** was the Sabbath called the **Jew's** Sabbath Day). After about half a century's use of the name, the "Lord's **Sabbath** Day", John calls it with the by then familiar and touching title, "the **Lord's** Day", Rv.1:10. (Paul from very early called Holy Communion "the Lord's Supper".) Saying "**Lord's** Day" is saying "the Lord's **Rest** Day" because the **Lord** is the Christian's spiritual Rest and the Day denotes **that** Rest. The Sabbath inherited the name "Lord's Day" both through **positive and negative** process. With regard to the **worldly empire** and **its**, "lord's day", the Christians' compromise with State comes as no surprise. While the **second** century

Church regarded the **Jews** with **their** Sabbath Day and the **Empire** with **its** Emperor or "lord's" day, it **forgot** that the **Sabbath** Day had **Jesus Christ** for **its** Lord. And the Church forgot that He, **in the capacity of "Lord of the Sabbath"**, **had started** the Sabbath's affinity to Him and to them that are his. The Christian Church **soon** after the Apostles discarded the name "Sabbath" for the Lord's Sabbath Day, and started calling it "the **Jews' / Jewish** Sabbath". It no longer was the **Lord's** Day for the Church.

Nevertheless God's providence never forsook his Sabbath, and through all centuries it was kept in remembrance however obscurely. **Jesus originated the Sabbath Day. He**, "on one of those Sabbaths" in Galilee while He and his disciples were partaking of the Sabbath's privileges and benefits, declared, "the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath indeed!" **In the capacity of Lord of the Sabbath**, Jesus also **completed** the Sabbath's **covenanted affinity** to Him and them that are his. He finally and fully gained the privileges and benefits of his Salvation-Rest and of our partaking therein through **resurrection** from the dead on "the third day according to the Scriptures", "**Sabbath's time**"! Jesus then finally and fully gained the privileges and benefits of his resurrection "while Sabbath's afternoon before the First Day of the week. **Then**, suddenly, there was a great earthquake and an angel of the Lord descended and rolled away the stone before the opening of the grave and sat on it". It was **this earthly Seventh Day**, "when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the grave", that they **would not see** it because what happened there and then **could** not be seen by mortal eye. Let the Church not forget three things about the time and day and date of that day: It was "**Sabbath ... before** the

First Day"; it was "according to the **Scriptures** the third day"; it was "**Passover** (Redemption) Season"!

It cannot be contradicted that herein lies preference of the Seventh Day over the First Day of the week. The Seventh Day is **called the Lord's** because, instituted when God first **revealed his love in creating** heavens and earth for the sake of his eternal Covenant of Grace, **it marked the beginning of all beginnings and therein marked Jesus' resurrection from the dead**. The Sabbath, signifying and conveying God's promises and mercies, (like the Lord's Supper) commemorates Jesus' resurrection from the dead as it commemorates His death.

The Seventh Day is also called "My holy (Day)". The phrase is its name and represents and indicates the Lord's ownership and of course stands for **His holy provisions served upon it** for the entire service connected with it – **the service of God's Worship-Rest**. The Sabbath is the "Day" to which

the Lord invites his guests and over which He graciously presides as over his Supper served on the Table of his Word.

As the Lord's Supper is called by the Apostle "the Cup of blessing" (1Cor.10:16) being the cup over which Christ prayed and so the consecrated vehicle of gracious blessings to men partaking of it in Christ's Name and in virtue of his commission, so the Sabbath is called the "blessed" among the days. Jesus "**blessed**" the **cup** by **praying** over it and by **giving** to his disciples to drink. **God "blessed" the Sabbath when He created it by being for man the One worshipped – "the Sabbath of the Lord thy God"**. God's blessing of the Sabbath – its being "made **for man**", **resides in the Lord** of the Sabbath and in his **worship**. Consecrated the blessed Day of God's **Rest and freedom**, the Sabbath graciously conveys privilege of **prayer and worship** to men partaking in its observance in Christ's Name and **in virtue of his commission and Lordship**.

The Day of Worship-Rest serves "the **Communion**" (1Cor.10:16). The act of partaking in this holy symbol involves the most real and intimate fellowship between Creator and creature and between Redeemer and redeemed. The Sabbath accommodates a mutual giving and receiving between Christ the Head and the Heart of the Church, and his living members, and so a vital interchange between all the living members of that spiritual body of which He is the Head. The symbolical partaking in the keeping of the Sabbath of the Believing Community signifies the truth that the sacrificially torn flesh of Christ in resurrection from the dead purchased the redemption of the one vital and spiritual Body of Christ. So we shall all be one in the most vital and spiritual sense in time and eternity.

This holy institution the Sabbath is Day of Worship-Rest applied in figurative, commemorative sense. In no way in itself justifying The Sabbath points to the one all-perfect, all-satisfying sacrifice which our Lord offered in his own body on the cross. And as the Church and its worship would be the poorer had the Lord's Supper to disappear from its worship, so would it be the poorer were the Sabbath to disappear from its worship. Were the Sabbath to disappear from its worship the Church's worship would in every respect fall short of the worthiness of Jesus' satisfaction of God's holiness and of his holy requirements of an acceptable service.

In the Apostolic Church each Sabbath was celebrated an *agape* feast or feast of love – with or without celebration of the Lord's Supper. The New Testament had only discovered the Sabbath's Old Testament institutional character as that of a Feast of divine love. Through God's New Testament Revelation in Jesus the Sabbath's characteristic of a love Feast is much keener experienced than under the Old Testament. Acts substantiates this

impression, as do the Gospels' Sabbath-anecdotes. On and through the consecrated Sabbath Day of rejuvenating Fellowship the Word of Life is proclaimed to the salvation of the sick and sinners. The name of the Sabbath of the Lord and Author of its blessings thus is applied to the Day as such, "the Lord's Day".

The ancient Church viewed the Sabbath as its "Day of Rest" – "Sabbath". But it never understood its rest to be a sin expiating rest. The Sabbath could not earn for the Church its justification or salvation. The idea never in the least occurred. The ancient or Apostolic Church was in no respect plagued with such error. Neither was the Apostolic Church plagued with the Roman Catholic idolatry of transubstantiation. As no merit exists inherently in the bread or wine of the Lord's Supper, so no merit exists inherently in the Sabbath or in its keeping. Ye are saved by grace. And this is the true doctrine of both the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day. The Sabbath was given its name "The Lord's (Sabbath) Day" by the Apostolic Church **in honour of its Lord** and the Rest that **He** to his People is. But the Lord's Day sadly has throughout Christendom been perverted into the name for Sunday.

The **Sabbath** for the New Testament People of God represents commemoratively the one finished sacrifice of Christ – finished through victory in resurrection from the dead of the Author and Finisher of the Faith. Thus it reciprocally is connected with the spiritual sacrifice of the worshipper's heart and life. "With sacrifices God is well pleased with", the Church returns to the Lord his own Day of Worship in fearful joy of worship.

As the Lord's Supper has received the designation "**Eucharist**", of the most beautiful of all the designations the sacred Day of the Lord has received, is that of **thanks and praise**. This can be seen in almost every incident of Jesus' bestowing healing mercies in true Sabbath-spirit upon the needy in soul and body. And as Jesus said, when any sinner repents, there is joy in heaven. Remember that these Sabbath-stories of the Gospels are the Apostolic Church speaking. They reveal what mattered for the Church. While the corrupted Sabbath of the religious leaders of the day offered but rejection and sorrow to sinners and the sick the People so many Sabbath Days longed for Jesus' blessing. As the Cup is "the cup of salvation" which we take "calling upon his Name and giving thanks for his salvation" (Ps.66:13), so the Sabbath is instituted for taking up the cup of God's salvation, "Remember that the Lord thy God **brought thee out** through a mighty hand and stretched out arm : **Therefore** the Lord commanded thee to keep the Sabbath Day". Notice the **praise** and the **joy** in this commandment,

the thankfulness, for God's "**mighty hand and stretched out arm**"! "He turned the sea into dry land; they went through the flood on foot: there did we **rejoice in Him!**", Ps.66:6. "Thy sins are forgiven thee. Go! And sin no more!" Who will not take up his bed on this Sabbath Day and leap for joy singing God's praises carrying like nothing the old rest-bed of his own hopelessness? "Bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praises to be heard"! Is not in this supposed a people congregated in worship? Is not this the voice of his praises made to be heard in unison of communion, prayer and worship? Is not in this assumed then the Day for communion, prayer and worship? Is not this a Psalm of a People congregated in worship on the **day appointed for worship**? "**Come and see** the works of God terrible in his doing toward the children of men", verse 5. Who could still doubt a day – the Sabbath Day – especially **designated to the purpose of "coming** (together)", of "**seeing** (through hearing of the Word)" the "works of God('s **salvation proclaimed**)"? This is **God's People, going to Church – on the Sabbath Day!** This is the **Church:** because here is the Word proclaimed and the mysteries of God's mercy observed. The Sacraments, the Word, the Sabbath Day – here is God's People partaking in the blessing that He **pronounced** ... upon the **Sabbath Day** – "the Seventh Day concerning (which) He spoke". Psalm 66 must be appreciated in such a context of worship. And so must about every and all the Psalms, because **the singing** of the Psalms **supposes a People singing** them which supposes their **congregating for worship and praying** which supposes its appointed **Day of Worship and praying.** Just so the **Lord's Supper** supposes a People **partaking** of its mysteries which supposes the People's **congregating** for the partaking of the Lord's Supper which supposes the **Day of occasion** of partaking. The Lord's **Sabbath Day** is **nothing but** for the calling upon the Name of the Lord and for the remembering his salvation. The Lord's **Supper** is **nothing but** for the calling upon the Name of the Lord and for the remembering his salvation.

The Seventh Day Sabbath essentially and immediately is the **personal Day of Jesus Christ.** He **said** so, **declaring**, "the Son of man is Lord indeed of the Sabbath". He **proved** so, **doing and finishing** the Father's work on it – the Father's **ultimate work of rest** – that of salvation of the soul of man through the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ. Paul even borrows the language of Psalm 66 for his doxology of Ephesians the first chapter verse 19. "Joyfully sing unto God all ye lands, sing forth the honour of his Name: make his praise glorious. Say unto God, how terrible art thou in thy works! Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee ..."; "The Father of glory may give unto you ... that ye

may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised Him from the dead ...". "He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah (that is, "Rest!")". "He set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places (that is, He "Rested") far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is venerated, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. He hath put all things under his feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all to the Church which is his body – and gave Him the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." "O bless our God, ye People, and make the voice of his praise to be heard which holdeth our soul in life and suffereth not our feet to be moved" can only be a Psalm for the Sabbath Day!

The Sabbath commemorates Jesus' **death** in that it commemorates the **labour** of his **suffering** in dying for sin. Jesus' **death** is commemorated in that He "**rose from the dead**"! The Sabbath being the commemoration of God's **Rest** is the commemoration of God's **works – He creates a new thing!** The Sabbath **as the completion and perfection or rest** of all God's works, commemorates **Jesus' resurrection** from the dead. It shows God's finishing and his entering into his **Rest in Christ.** The Sabbath **as the actual day** of its occurrence commemorates Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The Sabbath is the **prophetic Day of promise and expectation** of God's victory in Jesus Christ "according to the Scriptures". **Fulfilled, "according to the Scriptures"**, the Sabbath commemorates **Jesus resurrection** from the dead. The Sabbath as man's first and basic day of all his days **in the full peace and rest and vitality of his Creator's communion,** commemorates **Jesus' resurrection** from the dead. The Sabbath's meaning could not more fully have been fulfilled than in **Jesus' resurrection** from the dead As Jesus' **death** as it on strength of his **conquering of death** is the reason for the **Lord's Supper** – His **death** on strength of his **conquering of death, also** is the reason for the **Lord's Sabbath Day.**

As Christ is **present and communes** with his elect through their participating in the Lord's **Supper**, so is Christ present and does He commune with his elect in their praying, in their praises and in their worship in the **Day** of God's Rest and Worship. The genuineness of the Sabbath-Rest Day entirely depends upon **Jesus** really being present. Take away either its original institution or the **immediate presence of Christ** in every repeated celebration of the Sabbath Day, and it is no Sabbath at all. If that is true – and it is true – then how could God's dispensation of Grace be imagined without the Sabbath Day?

The Sabbath actually grew under the special providence of God out of long-prepared **roots** or **seeds**. The divinely-prepared historic root of the Lord's Sabbath Day was, as is well known, not only God's **creation-act** "in the beginning", but the **Passover** in the history of his Elect People. The nation of Israel was the type of the Christian Church. The deliverance of that nation from the bondage of Egypt, and the redemption of her sons from the slaughter that overtook the first-born of every Egyptian household, were types of our redemption from sin. The paschal lamb was a type of Christ. The paschal supper under the Old Economy represented the external redemption **already** accomplished, and no less the **future** and **perfect** redemption to be afterward accomplished when Christ the true Paschal Lamb was sacrificed. The Lord's Supper commemorates the same redemption, looking backward to the already accomplished fact commemorated in the keeping of the Sabbath Day according to Deuteronomy the fifth chapter where the Passover is made the motive for the Fourth Commandment written or inspired by the Finger of God the Holy Spirit. The Apostolic observance of the Sabbath Day was the historical **continuation** of this Old Testament Sabbath, only the **content and character** of the Day **was shown to be Christian, New Testament!** The Sabbath more singularly became the remembrance and celebration of the work and rest of the **Second** Person of the Godhead **Incarnated**. The Sabbath belongs not only with the First Article of Confession, but more properly with the Second. And, as has been shown above, the Sabbath most properly belongs with the Third Article of Faith. So how can the Sabbath be discarded for being "Old Testament"? The Sabbath's content and nature were **broadened in scope** under the New Dispensation. At first the finger of God for the remembering of his **creative** work and rest wrote the Fourth Commandment. Then the motive of **Passover-redemption** was introduced. Now at last the two original motives for the Lord's Day of Worship-Rest came to fruition in the Beginning and Amen of the creation of God. In Christ Himself and in his own work and in his own rest the Sabbath now is for **all** peoples of the earth as the People of God and of his **Christ**.

The day of the week was in no way changed from the Seventh to the First Day. But "God – **now** in these last days" – "concerning the Seventh Day spoke **thus:** And God on the Seventh Day rested from all his works he had made", "**in the Son**", in the **Word**, in **Jesus Christ!** Thus, **God speaking**, the **Seventh** Day was changed into the Lord's Day in that it received **New Testament Content and in as much** as it was confirmed and firmly established in its predestined purpose and fulfilment. God's finishing in his Word Jesus the Christ – God's finishing in Jesus' resurrection from

the dead – **is God's last word** over sin and death. **So God could rest, having finished**, which is God's **Sabbath's** work of the Seventh Day – which is the work of the **Lord's Day!**

The Christian Sabbath thus runs back in **absolutely unbroken continuity** through the ages – through the ages before the Flood, through the ages before the Fall – it and matrimony being the only monuments of the age of innocence. Each recurrent holy Sabbath confronts the Church first as a monument of the sovereignty of Yahweh as **Creator** and secondly as a monument of our **redemption** consummated in the resurrection of our Lord. Every Lord's Sabbath Day when we celebrate the Holy Supper, or, every Lord's Sabbath Day when we celebrate God's Rest, we repeat in a chain of unbroken continuity the memorial of his sacrificial death, of **the Lord's Passover** and the People's entering into the Promised Rest of God. Each Sabbath having been brought out and in(to the "land" or the "rest") Christians at the palms and wells of **Elim** camp for God's Rest reached and realised in Jesus Christ Victor from the dead. Thus when we Christians celebrate God's Rest of the Sabbath Day we repeat in a chain of unbroken continuity the memorial of Christ's representative resurrection from the dead and exaltation at the right hand of God.

As when the Church celebrates the Lord's Supper and looks back over a vista of two millennia to its institution and from there even further back to the institution of the Passover and redemption from Egyptian bondage, it looks back to the same milestones of the Sabbath's institution. The Church remembering the Sabbath looks back even further when God "**in the beginning**", "spoke concerning the Seventh Day in this wise, And God on the Seventh Day completed all his works He had made". God completed, "in these last days speaking to us in the Son", "**showing to us-ward** his excelling attainment", "in the Sabbath", "finishing", "raising Jesus from the dead"! Alleluia!

The Sabbath's **whole service**, as the Lord's Supper's, being the memorial of **Jesus'** death and resurrection from the dead, at the same time is the pious memorial of the redemption of the lives of the first-born of Israel and of the nation itself from the bondage of sin and death. The Sabbath thus is a type and **prophetic symbol** of the redemption of the "People of God" **of all ages** by the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Not even the Lord's Supper – if one may draw such a comparison – serves as such a monumental memorial. Not even the Lord's Supper – again, if one may draw such a comparison – so accommodating **befits the life and faith** of the Body of Christ his Church of the Elect and latter days' saints.

When the Sabbath Day is remembered or kept **Jesus presides** as the Prophet and Priest of his household, and the Children ask for the meaning of the peculiar arrangement of this Feast (Ex, 12:26). Then the Scriptures are rehearsed and the history of God's People's great and eternal redemption is expounded. The religious significance of its observance is asked after and devoted to its Champion. The whole service at the same time is the pious memorial of the redemption of the first-born of Israel from the bondage of Egyptian sin and death by the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb of God on the cross of Calvary. And the People's remembrance is really a remembering of That Life earned and obtained through **dying and rising from the dead** for ever! God's finishing is no longer only looked forward to but now is looked back on also. The assurance of His Rest for his People now is absolute and the celebrity of the Institution for its remembrance the more solid and significant.

Christ on purpose once came up to the Feast of Passover to be offered up a sacrifice for the sins of the world. When many came up out of the country to be purified before the Passover, "they sought for Jesus and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that **He will not come to the feast?**" They little knew the significance of their own question. Of course He would come. If he did not the **entire historical development** of the Jewish people would have been a failure. The meaning and fruition of the **entire line of prophets and of priests**, of sacrificial **offerings** and of periodical **feasts** depended upon his coming up to **this particular Passover**. Jesus would **in one divine act of dying and rising** fulfil God's Eternal Purpose and the "*time the times and the dividing of times*" –giving reality to the symbolical representation of **all** that had gone before. What would stand out singularly would be the Lamb the Sacrifice of all sacrifice **and the Day that of the Fulfilment of all days and weeks and seasons and years**. Jesus at once fulfilled all the **prophecy** of the past and **inaugurated the future of realised redemption**. He gave to the ordinary elements of the Lord's Supper new and higher significance and thus developed out of his filling in his own predetermined place which the lamb used to point to, the Lord's Supper of the incomparably more glorious future. So Jesus took the bread – ordinary bread all men live of – saying, "This eat in remembrance of Me as if He had said, You will no more need to kill and eat the Passover lamb for I am your Passover sacrificed for you (1Cor.5:7). "In remembrance of Me ... ". Jesus gave to the ordinary weekly Sabbath of the Lord thy God new and higher significance and thus **out of his filling in his own predetermined place and Day** which the Sabbath pointed to, the **Lord's Sabbath Day** of the incomparably more glorious

future. "Remember the Sabbath" ... when "after the third day" I will be come – and you in Me – in my Kingdom through resurrection from the dead. This particular Passover, "the third day according to the Scriptures" **I do the Father's will perfectly**.

And from that awful night till the last report received of their Acts, the disciples of Christ have celebrated the Lord's Supper of Holy Communion **on the Sabbath Day**. "Do this in remembrance of Me", Jesus said. "Remember that **I brought thee out**", Yahweh Yashuah once "*spoke concerning the Seventh Day*". Jesus' life was the **living** in God Incarnate of the great **prophetic Feast of Passover**.

As it reports the Passover, Acts also reports the great **prophetic Feast of Pentecost**. "When the Day of Pentecost was fully come" and all ate of the same symbolic bread, it was the **Sabbath Day again**. The third time the Acts mentions the eating of the Lord's Supper was on that occasion in Troas "when on the First Day of the week **still being together** Paul addressed (the disciples) after (they on the Sabbath) had gathered **for Holy Communion**".

The Acts (chapter 13) also reports the great and solemn **Prophetic Feast of Judgement** when the times of Daniel's People were "determinedly ended" and "the times of the Gentiles" were entered upon ... and when it was the **Sabbath Day again**. "He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered (OAT, "He made a memorial for his works".) ... He will ever be mindful of his Covenant. He hath showed his people the power of his works (in raising Jesus from the dead) ... He sent (everlasting) redemption unto his (New Testament) People: (Therefore) He hath commanded his covenant for ever. Holy and reverend is his Name (because) the **works** of the Lord are **great**." (Ps.111) The greatest of these, and wherein is established "**all his works he had made**", is Jesus' **resurrection** from the dead. Being God's **greatest deed**, it must be identical and synonymous with God's greatest **attribute**. Of these all remains but God's love. God's work of love "finished", and "fully come", comes the appropriation, "Therefore, be ever mindful of the Sabbath Day!" Like the Lord's Supper, the Sabbath and its whole service is a monumental memorial of the redemption from the bondage of Egypt of the lives and souls of the first-born of Israel as figure and type of the Elect or Church. Both Institutions are a type and prophetic symbol of the everlasting salvation of God's lost and sinful children by the sacrifice and victory on the cross of our Passover Lamb the Lamb of God manifested in God's love in Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

Like the consecrated bread of the Supper the consecrated time of the Sabbath is no material object that can be extended beyond its natural limits. The sacredness of the Sabbath Day cannot be carried over into other days. If

a person is not present at the Sabbath's communion in the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, he does not commune. And so if a person does not "remember the Sabbath" and through spiritual labour, does not rest on the Sabbath Day, he does not "honour" the Sabbath of God's Command nor does he "keep it holy", no matter how sincerely he may "regard every day alike" a Sabbath.

In the Lord's Supper "blessing" is prayed over each element. On the Sabbath prayer is of the essence of worship. In the Lord's Supper the bread is broken and eaten. On the Sabbath the Word is broken and served and appropriated. The elements of its service cannot be separated from the observance of the Sacraments. Likewise the elements of worship cannot be separated from the Sabbath as the Day of Worship. The elements of worship of the Day of Worship-Rest are practical but not material like those of the Lord's Supper, but spiritual and are appropriated spiritually. "A keeping of the Sabbath" is a transaction in faith, and for a Christian a transaction in the faith of Jesus the Christ – whereby he is absolutely separated from the Jews who do not believe the Christ. The **Sabbath**, just like the Lord's Supper separates between believers and unbelievers, **separates Christians from Jews**.

In the act of worship on the Sabbath Day the sacred character of the time does not consist in itself but in its use. In the Sabbath's **use** the whole communion of believers culminates and concludes. As soon as the Day of worship ends the holiness of Christian communion ends the keeping holy of the day. Every day is not a Sabbath however holy the lives or the worship of the Congregation or the believer as an individual. Not the believer or his life nor the Church or its worship makes the Day, God's "Holy". The Sabbath by virtue of God's sanctifying, blessing, finishing and resting, is called God's "Holy". The elements of the Lord's Supper cannot by virtue of the priest's application of it be changed into something greater and better than itself, namely into the Body and Blood of Jesus. Just so the First Day of the week cannot by virtue of the Church's application of it be changed into something greater and better than itself, namely into the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.

The observational monuments of the Lord's Day and the Sabbath Day are omnipresent and imperishable. Because their dependence is their strength and verity, both keep the memory of Jesus Christ alive. Their very existence and their constant repetition are realised by the living Body of Christ on earth, the Church. Their testimony of Him cannot fade unless the Church forsakes its office. As long as the **Word of Christ is proclaimed** will the Sabbath stand at the Master's call. And as long as the Sabbath stands at the Master's call the Word of Christ will be proclaimed.

If we have communion with Christ the Head and Heart of Christian Faith and life, we must have communion one with another. This is the Sabbath's call – its institutional value. On every Sabbath communing in the Faith of Christ the Church visibly proclaims that Faith and Fellowship over which Christ resides and reigns. Jesus' assurance before his impending death, "I will not eat of this (bread and wine) until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God" is its guarantee that the Kingdom would come and has come **as He was raised from the dead!** "Lo **I am with you** always and to the end of the world...**All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.** Jesus is King of the Kingdom of God through resurrection from the dead! "Therefore, Go ye and teach all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you!"

The Confessions define as the **Church**: There where the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are administered faithfully and truthfully. The Church is not only **Where**, but also **When** the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are administered faithfully and truthfully. The **place** is where **in the Name** of Jesus Christ two or three gather together. The **time** must bear the **Name** as well, the Name of Jesus Christ the **Lord, and therefore be the Lord's Day**.

7.6.

Sabbath Ethics

7.6.1.

Reformed

Said Luther (sarcastically), "Indeed, if Carlstad were to write further about the Sabbath, if Sunday would have to give way, and the Sabbath – that is to say, Saturday – must be kept holy, then he would truly make us Jews in all things, and we should become circumcised. It is true, and cannot be denied, that he who deems it necessary to keep one law of Moses – and keeps it as the law of Moses – must deem all necessary, and keep them all".

Against the Celestial Prophets

The Reformers protested that the Roman Church had **no Scriptural basis** for Sunday as Day of Christian Worship. The Reformers, as did the Catholics, claimed that Jesus was raised from the dead on the First Day of the week and **so retained the Catholics' one, only Scriptural** reason for having Sunday for Day of Worship, namely, **Jesus' Resurrection**.

Only, had Sunday been the day on which Jesus rose from the dead! Sabbath–protagonists, most unfortunately, have ever since remonstrated that Jesus' resurrection from the dead is an irrelevant matter for the sanctification of the Christian Day of Worship. They object that to

claim the event, the logic and the principle of Jesus' **resurrection** as reason and motivation why the **day** of Resurrection should be the Day of Christian Worship, is wrong in principle and cannot validly be maintained. In this they have always been **mistaken** though. The event, the logic and the principle of Jesus' resurrection as the basis for separating the Day of Resurrection for Christian Worship, do not differ from or contradict the **creation** motive but in fact **underlies** it in God's Eternal Purpose. (The resurrection motive does not so much **depend** on the creation motive for Sabbath-keeping as it **supports** it. God saved the world by raising Jesus from the dead!) No created man, no redeemed man and no believing man has ever entered into Sabbath-rest but through faith in **God's-in-Christ-finishing** of his works and **God's-in-Christ-entering** into His rest.

Sabbath-apologists are **quiet** on the subject of the day of the **consummation of God's works in Jesus' resurrection**. Bacchiocchi, for example, repeatedly refers to the "*Biblical symbolic significance of the Sabbath*", yet the **best** explanation **he** offers of this significance is the supposition that the Sabbath is a "*creational institution*" and of "*humanitarian value*". That isn't much better than to appreciate the Sabbath for "Quiet Saturday" – not after what Jesus had done by rising from the dead "in the Sabbath"! Sabbath-apologists keep quiet about Jesus' resurrection and what the Sabbath has to do with it while even Christ's Second Coming is totally dependent on it! The new creation of the earth and everlasting life, depend upon Jesus' resurrection from the dead! All future, even that of God himself, (if one may imagine it) depends on Jesus' resurrection from the dead! Yet Sabbath apologists would not tolerate Jesus' resurrection to have **anything** to do with God's Day of finishing and rest? Unfortunately, Resurrection Sabbath has become the **Quiet Saturday**.

The redemption which Christ **would** come for, and in fact, **had** come for to accomplish and which He indeed **did** accomplish, is more than temporal material or temporal spiritual redemption. It is **eternal redemption and salvation – eternal life**, which Jesus **wrought when resurrected** from the dead. And the **event** was of epoch-making consequence for the **Day** of event – the **Sabbath!** Jesus' resurrection **completes, "finishes", God's works – "once, for ever"**. Why could it not be understood that only here Genesis 2:1-3 really got fulfilled? Jesus' resurrection **founded** God's works – "**once, for ever**". Jesus' resurrection does not only **result** from God's works of creation and salvation but is its basis and reason for being. God created with the view of the Word become Emanuel, God with us. And the birth of the Child was not the final incarnation and Emanuel, but the Man Jesus Son of God and man **risen from the dead!** On the Rock God's works

are established, here, this Day, in Jesus in his resurrection from the dead! And the Sabbath in Scripture is associated with this **fundamental as well as finished** work of God and his Christ. Raising Jesus from the dead is God's founding therefore, not of the material creation only, but also of the spiritual realm of creation. And redemption aims at its origin, it reaches that ultimate goal for which God at first created the world. Sabbath apologists cannot see a place for the Sabbath in the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ because they cannot find a place for the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ in God's original creation. But if Jesus should be found in the Genesis, then He certainly should be found there the One from the dead Raised. And if the Sabbath in the Genesis portrays God's Rest then that Rest of his must be the Rest of God in Jesus Christ and in Him raised from the dead!

Jesus exalted at the right hand of the throne is **God's finishing** of the Sabbath-Day. Through Christ's resurrection "in the **Sabbath**" He enters the holy Halls of Divine Glory. The Seventh Day is made **Coronation-Day**, Festival of "the Sabbath Rest unto the Lord thy God". Christ's declaratory claim that He is "Lord of the Sabbath" anticipates his crowning rest of resurrection from the dead and Enthronement in heaven. It establish the Seventh Day Sabbath God's Day of remembrance – "My Holy Day".

Reconciliation achieved, the Anointed rose from the dead at midday of the Yom Yahweh. "For He spake somehow of the **Seventh** Day on this wise, And **God** did rest the Seventh Day from all his works", Hb.4: 5. God did not leave the Sabbath out of his design but brought it in on the Day He "brought in" the Son and the People. Let Israel rejoice and the Lord "**reign for ever and ever**". Let the Song of Moses be sung, the "song of deliverance" – the Song of the Christ and his Passover, the Song for the Sabbath Day.

Sabbath-apologetics that deny the **real** Sabbath rest in that it denies its ultimate realisation **in Christ's resurrection** is an empty water pot that must crack for want of the moister of life. **Accepted Sabbath-apologetics** in denying the Sabbath the miracle and glory of Jesus' resurrection, allows – in effect **begs, the Sabbath's bankruptcy**. It denies the Sabbath its inheritance, its wealth and glory, only for it to be usurped by the Sun's Day.

Accepted Sabbath-apologetics' **basic motivation** is one-sided: **Law**. It rejects the **cornerstone** and **fundamental** reason and argument for the Sabbath namely **Jesus' Resurrection** "in **Sabbath's** time" that **vindicates** God's original **creation**. No fitting superstructure can be erected upon such a day merely because God's house is not built on sand.

Is the Seventh Day a Scriptural baseless invention, or is it genuinely the Sabbath of God's speaking his Word and Promise, of his completion of all his work and of his rest? It is Scripture-truth that Jesus' Resurrection "hallows" the **Day** of his Resurrection. Jesus' Resurrection "hallows" the **Day** of his Resurrection as Day of **Worship** and **Rest**. If the Resurrection cannot, nothing – not even creation, could sanctify the Seventh Day as the Day of God's Rest. Because by Jesus' resurrection from the dead God once for all spoke. The principle that Jesus' Resurrection "hallows" the **Day** of his Resurrection **should only be applied to the Day it truthfully belongs to and not to an impostor**.

"In consequence of denying the universality of the atonement the Continental Reformers could not admit the divine claim of a Day on which "Christ risen" was proclaimed as the fountain of risen life for all." Hessey, *Sunday*, p. 166

In the whole course of his voluminous treatise Hessey with this remark experiences his best moment of insight into the relation of Covenant and Day of Covenant. **Christ on the day of his resurrection** was indeed proclaimed in the courts of heaven to have provided "*risen life for all*". In providing "*risen life for all*" Jesus **completes all God's works**.

Christ **on that Day** was proclaimed the fountain of life for those all and **for those of his only** – for the **elect only**, and not "*for all*" **without distinction**. If ever there was a thing particular to the Covenant of God's Grace it is this: With the rising of Christ from the dead, the damned are **separated** from the redeemed irrevocably. Those not of the covenant **not risen with Christ** are lost forever. The Scriptures calls the Sabbath the "**sign**" of **particular** grace that means that God is the God of his **People**. Had the relation within the Covenant of Grace implied divine claim of a **Day** on which the "Risen Christ" was proclaimed the fountain of risen life for all **his own**, then as little as **any unredeemed** could get involved in Covenant relationship could **another day** get involved in Covenant relationship. The Sabbath is for the **elect only** – for the **redeemed** of Jesus in his resurrection only. The Sabbath is for the elect **Day only** – for the **Rest-Day** of Jesus in his resurrection only.

The *Continental Reformers* should have admitted *the divine claim of a Day on which "Christ risen" was proclaimed as the fountain of risen life*. But they failed to do so because they did not bestow on the **Prophetic Day** its due honour, but on a day decided upon for the sake of **Church "order"**. Meanwhile Christ's resurrection was confirmation of **God's Order** of an eternal Covenant of Grace. Christ's resurrection **sealed** that Covenant and the **Day** thereby became the memorial and monument of God's Covenant fulfilled in Jesus.

Luther did not grasp this consequence. Or he unwittingly felt something in that direction, and expressed it in that saying of his, "*If anywhere the day is made holy for the mere day's sake, – if anywhere any one sets up its observance on a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to ride on it, to dance on it, to feast on it, to do anything that shall remove this encroachment on Christian liberty*". Luther's logic is nothing wrong with: Were the Sabbath not sign of Covenant–relation and of Covenant–relationship, it belongs not in Christianity whatsoever. But being the sign of Covenant–relation and Covenant–relationship, the Sabbath can never be an encroachment on Christian liberty and must in essence be as eternal as the Covenant itself. Had the Sabbath been an encroachment on Christian liberty – that liberty of a free salvation by grace only, then it becomes the **duty** of the Christian to get rid of it. But now the Sabbath is **based on, points to and conveys that sure liberty** the redeemed **elect** have in **Covenant** relationship with **Christ**.

The obedience of Christian freedom may never be confused with the bondage of legalism. Outside the covenant Christians would be **bound among the dead** and **not** be raised to life and freedom. Luther knew that, but he did not grasp **the niche the Sabbath fills within the Covenant relationship of Lord and People**.

Encroachment on Christian liberty would be **this**: "*Seeing those who preceded us (majores nostre, which is all but the Apostles and Scriptures) chose Sunday (Sonntag – Dies Dominica) for the Lord's day (Sunday) for themselves, this harmless and admitted custom must not be readily changed. Our objectives in retaining it are, the securing of unanimity and consent of arrangement, and the avoidance of the general confusion which would result from individual and unnecessary innovation*". (Augsburg Confession)

Luther and Melancthon decide for the "**simple people**". They decide for to prevent the simple people from accepting the **Sabbath** more than anything else, whether so stated in this Confession or not, **and whether or not it is "Jewish"**. We "*all*", "*simple*", "*intelligent*", can see that. They decide in favour of **Roman Catholic "custom"** if ever this custom belonged anywhere. They as representative of **despotic civil power** and not of **Scriptural Authority** or freedom, decide for the people. They decide for the simple from **their lofty position** of the "**intelligent and instructed**" who "*do not need*" to "*celebrate festivals*" such as the Sabbath. Thus this custom is imposed upon the **simple who accept the Scriptures only as finally authoritative**. This custom is imposed least of all "*harmless*" and "*admitted*", but as "*encroachment*" and impeachment on covenant–freedom and better conscience. Luther and the other Reformers like Calvin with the

argument of “order” with all respect to their work otherwise, dismally failed on the issue of the Christian Day of Worship. They succeeded only to replace one legalism, “Sabbatharianism”, with another, the tyranny of “episcopalism”.

7.6.2.

Roman Catholic

“At the death of Christ ... at the time when the other Hebrew rites and ceremonies were to be abrogated ... the sabbath as seventh day was abrogated”, Canons of the Council of Trent, 21

7.6.2.1.1.

The Sabbath “Institution”

The Trent Canon makes a **sweeping** yet inconsistent statement: “... *the other Hebrew rites and ceremonies ... the sabbath ...*”. It makes no distinction. All institution is “*rite and ceremony*”. All “*rites and ceremonies*” are ‘*Hebrew*’. All “*rites and ceremonies*” are therefore “*abrogated*” – the Sabbath included. But then, “*the sabbath*” is abrogated, very selectively, **only** “*as seventh day*”.

The Sabbath is, by definition of the Word of God, (1) “the **Seventh Day** (2) the **Sabbath** of (3) the **Lord** thy God ... (4) **for** in it (5) **God** (6) **rested**”. Old Testament “Sabbath” in its **totality** of Seventh-Day-ness **and** Rest is “Sabbath”. And the “Sabbath” in its **totality** of Seventh-Day-ness **and** Rest is “**God’s**”. It is **not** the Sabbath of man or of the Hebrew People. The Sabbath isn’t simply a day of **rest** and that, **man’s or the Jews’ rest**. **Any** day could be **that**. The Sabbath, that is, the Seventh Day of the week, **by declaration of its Creator-Lord**, is “**holy**”, that is, it is **separated for intended and specific purpose**. And that requires that the Sabbath should be **this particular day the Seventh, the Day of its Creator-Lord’s declaration**. It requires that the Sabbath will be the Day of God’s Worship–Rest for man as the People of God. **No other** day could be **that**.

God’s finished and rested “on” (Genesis) and “in”, (Hebrews) **concretely**, “**the Seventh Day**”, the “**Sabbath (Day)**”, of creation–**week** according to the **Scriptures**. There’s no other reason or cause for the “week” or for a “Seventh Day of the week” or “Sabbath” than **that God concretely and historically, finished and rested on this Seventh of his created days**. To “abrogate” the Seventh–Day–ness of the Sabbath is as much a **violation of God’s work** as would be to attempt to destroy God’s **earth** in order to disturb the chronology or order of revealed time.

“I lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh **from the Lord** which made heaven and earth!” Ps.121:1 To deny the **creation-time-order** of the **Sabbath** or of Sabbath–**keeping** is to deny

its **direction and force as for worship** – its practicality – and through that its spirituality. To deny the Sabbath’s practicality is to so spiritualise it that nothing of its substantiality remains and its **institution** is substituted with **imagination**. The **concrete Sabbath-Rest-Day** is sacrificed for the so-called “heavenly Sabbath” which is nothing better than an illusion. The Bible doesn’t know such a sabbath.

God is active “in the Day” of **Jesus’ Resurrection, “the Sabbath”**. Mt.28:1-4 God acts in “**perfecting** (finishing)”, “**resting**” in Christ the Word. It means that if one “*abrogates*” the Seventh Day Sabbath one has not only done away with all **Sabbath** Days, but also with all **Rest**. One has to do away not only with the *incarnatio* of God’s Word but also with his *intemporatio* if one were to do away with the **temporal–** and **Day–**ness or concrete-ness of the Sabbath.

God’s Rest should be understood not merely as a noun of object: God enjoyed a **rest** after He had ceased to work. It should be understood for the concrete **Day** of God’s Rest”. But God’s Rest should be understood as verb of predicate, God, actively, **rested**, according to the **plan of finishing all in Christ**. God’s rest of the Sabbath Day was, his **intended and willed work**, for and of the **Seventh Day**, and for and of the **rest** and the obtaining of the rest of **accomplishment, fulfilment, victory, contentment and peace**.

Order was **God’s willed and planned product** of each six days of creation and of the whole week of creation. **Order** was the willed and planned product of the **Seventh Day**. **Order** was God’s creation–work of the Rest–Day. His Sabbath–discipline was the act to in finishing to sanctify, to bless and to rest. And to devote the **Day** unto the **purpose: God’s Covenant of Peace and Rest in Jesus Christ**. **It all** was God’s one **act** of rest of the **Seventh Day**. Now to discard God’s Institution of order and for the sake of order and to arbitrarily replace it with the First Day ostensibly for the sake of order, sums up disorder.

If Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead cannot be seen in God’s rest–act of the **Seventh** creation–day, **then what** was the **Rest** of the **Seventh Day** “He spoke of concerning the Seventh Day”? From **before** time even **in the beginning**, **God** is present, wherein if **Jesus Christ** could not be present, **God** could not.

Time and order are as much God’s creation as are **matter and space**. “In the space of time the Seventh Day of creation God **rested**”, says Genesis 2:1-3. The earth’s **movement and its relation** to its co-created cosmos – in other words, **time** – was as much the work of God’s will than to create matter was the work of God’s will. God who “**thus spoke concerning**

the space of time the Seventh Day of creation”, willed and brought into existence what he willed – **His Sabbath-Day**.

The Sabbath from its nature, importance and duration must be understood as an “*institution*”. The reason? “The Sabbath of the Lord thy God”, “**was made for man**” an “*institution*” for the worship and to the honour of God. This is true already of the first creation Sabbath. But as to its origin and purpose, to its nature, importance and duration, the Sabbath is no “*rite*” and no “*ceremony*” because in the first place God “created” the Sabbath for to be His Day of his own act of Rest – “My Sabbaths” God calls the Seventh Day Sabbath. God does not keep “*rites and ceremonies*”. The Sabbath Day **springs from** God’s Rest like the river of Ezekiel’s vision flows from His throne. (“He leadeth me besides still waters” – “waters where rest is”, OAT.)

The Sabbath is **not** Day **for** God’s Rest – He tires not and needs nothing. The Sabbath is Day **of** God’s Rest – that is, Day of God’s finishing, blessing and hallowing **because of** God’s Rest. The Sabbath **stems from** God’s Rest. It is the Day **from** God’s Rest. But the Sabbath **is** Day **for** God’s Rest, seeing it **provides** for God’s glory in providing opportunity and space for his **People to worship** Him. This **opportunity and space** can never be taken for granted. The Sabbath Day is of God’s willing and of his doing. It is of God’s **granting**. He **allows** man to share in the Sabbath’s blessings through worship of Himself. **For the Church the Sabbath exists not except in being returned unto its Giver and Author**. Even its return to God is the work of **God**. (“By grace ye were saved.”) “**Rest**” is of the essence of the Sabbath Day for man – rest in **God’s** work of rest. The Sabbath’s is **provided for in that work of God in Christ Jesus**, and ultimately, in Him **resurrected** from the dead.

7.6.2.1.2.

By Nature, “Rest”

Not a single “rite” instituted by God throughout Old Testament dispensation had ever been rendered **meaningless**. All had been **fulfilled** in Jesus and rendered **meaningful**. If Christ had not fulfilled and does not fulfil circumcision, for example, it **never** would have had meaning or value. It would have been, even during the Old Testament dispensation, what Paul calls it, a mutilating of the body. God’s word had been **made true in Christ** and **therefore** circumcision is meaningful – it witnesses of **God’s fidelity**. **How could any observe it still? Each** Old Testament rite had been fulfilled in **Christ**. **If not fulfilled in Christ**, of **divine** institution could be no possibility. Because of **divine** institution, “*rites and ceremonies*” of the Old

Testament are not “*Hebrew*”, but are divinely ordained. The Old Testament with its “*rites and ceremonies*” is **God’s** Word, not man’s.

Christ’s fulfilment in the case of **each** ceremony or rite in any case meant its **perpetual Christ-symbolism**. Rites and institutions had **never stopped witnessing to the Christ**. The **symbolism** of each ceremony or rite today still applies and speaks whether **observed or not**. **Faith finds Jesus** in those rites and ceremonies that had been **ended and completed** in Him, **as it finds Jesus** in those that had **been begun** by Him. **God still speaks through the symbolism of rites and ceremonies past or present because its symbolism or its observance speaks of Christ**.

If any **one** aspect of this **unitary totality** of **Seventh-Day-Sabbath** should be “*rite and ceremony*”, it should be **that** aspect that would possess **the capacity to be** something ceremonial and ritual. Sunday-propagandists usually identify the rituality of the Sabbath with the **Seventh-Day-ness** of the Sabbath. But if the Seventh Day *per se* is ritual and ceremonial, then any and all days are *per se* ritual and ceremonial. As little as man can stop the earth to turn and as little as days can be “abolished”, as little can **a day in itself be “rite and ceremony”** – and therefore be abolished. The “part” that **by nature befits “rite and ceremony”** – if one may thus divide the Sabbath Day, is the **aspect of principle**, the aspect of being a “sabbath” or a “rest” that must **ethically** be “*instituted*”. Without “*institution*” of the “*ceremonial*” and “*ritual*”, ethical “**rest**”, **no** day can be one of “rest”! If the First Day had been the “Day of Rest” then the First Day would have been the Day of “*rite and ceremony*”. And therefore, if anything must be “lifted” were the Sabbath Day abolished because it is “*rite and ceremony*”, **it must be that** which for being the ritual and ceremonial had **by institution** been **introduced to the make up** of the Day. Namely the “**rest**” of the Sabbath Day.

No attempt to prove the “*abrogation*” of the Sabbath considers the “**Rest**”-aspect of the Sabbath as “*rite and ceremony*”. They all identify the **Seventh-Day**-aspect of the Sabbath with “*rite and ceremony*”. Wild surmising stem from this counterpoising. Some do away with any Sabbath (Luther wished he could). Others spiritualise the Sabbath completely (Augustine). Like Calvin some only find the order of a certain day still useful. Then there are the extremists who blindly adopt the Jewish and Pharisaic principles of “Sabbath” and apply them to the First Day (Pietists). But **most ignorantly carry on the legacy** of the age of compromise (Justin. See Par. 7.3.1.2.3.), and traditionally observe the Sunday for no good or clear reason but which they suddenly discover by the score when confronted with the truth of God’s Sabbath Day (Protestants). Catholics mostly and

some high Church “ecclesiastics” believe a Sabbath solely by authority of the Church. But **all** when they do away with “*rite and ceremony*” do away with the **Seventh Day**. They do away with the Seventh Day which **God** somehow in the Scriptures **spoke of** when He, **when it comes to man**, “*instituted*” and invested upon it the “*rite and ceremony*” of “*rest*” – **not** as if **annulled** but as if elevated and chosen **for high and sure purpose**.

If anything of or about the Sabbath had been “*abrogated by the death of Christ*” it had to have been the “**Sabbath–Rest**” for being “*institution*”, “*rite and ceremony*”, and not the **Seventh Day** for being but the chronological Seventh Day of creation and week. If anything of or about the Sabbath had been “*abrogated by the death of Christ*” it had to have been the “**Sabbath–Rest**” because Jesus came to fill the **Rest** and to be the **Rest**. It is simple logic and naturally consequent that the “**Sabbath**”–aspect of the Seventh–Day–Sabbath constitutes its institutional and ceremonial and ritual character – **not** the **Day**–aspect of being the **Seventh Day**. To replace the **Seventh** with the **First**–Day as a “**Sabbath**” would be just as ritualistic and ceremonious as to stick with the Seventh Day Sabbath and as ceremonious as the Seventh Day Sabbath is **supposed** to be.

Meanwhile all these abrogation theorists reason that the “moral” or “spiritual” element of the Fourth Commandment – its “rest–aspect – is its eternal and “divine” element. If at the death of Christ the Seventh Day Sabbath for being “*rite and ceremony*” had been abrogated, “**Sabbath**” had been abrogated **in principle** and, in principle, **not the Day**. The Seventh Day would have remained **just another day**, void of the meaning it before had. Which exactly is the case in the world that has adopted the First Day for its Day of Rest – and which proves the point that the thing that was “*abrogated*” of the Seventh Day, was its “Sabbath–ness”, its “**Rest**”–aspect. **No day** for that matter and in that case, could be “Sabbath”, **again – except if purely by the will of man**. **No day** could be Sabbath again because precisely “Sabbath” allegedly had been “*abrogated*” or “*annulled*”.

The weakness of the abrogation theory lies in the assumption that because something is “*rite and ceremony*” there is nothing **enduringly spiritual** or “**Christian**”, about things “*rite and ceremony*”. If Jesus’ death meant the end of “*rite and ceremony*” irrespectively it also and especially would mean the end of **Christian “rite and ceremony”**. Christian “*rite and ceremony*” would never have originated, and thus **Sunday**–keeping would never have originated had Jesus’ death meant the end of “*rite and ceremony*”. The Church would not have had **sacraments** that are not only virtually but formally as much “*rite and ceremony*” and “*institution*” as the Seventh Day Sabbath ever could be. The Church would not have had Sunday

that is not only **virtually** but also **formally** as much “*rite and ceremony*” and “*institution*” as the Seventh Day Sabbath is. After all it is the idea of “**Sabbath**” and the **keeping** of a “**Sabbath**” that for the “liberated” mind smacks of legalism, “*rite and ceremony*” and “*institution*”. **Not** so much **which** day of the week, whether Seventh Day or First. This as a case to prove the point had been the subject of fierce contention during the age of pietism when “**Sabbath–keeping**” of the **First Day** was the order of the day.

Everyone also knows the ditty “one day in seven” or “all days like a Sabbath”. The tune is struck on the key of **blissful rest**. *I.e.*, the ritualistic and ceremonious reside in the cultic **devotion** of a “sabbath” that **by nature** is “*rite and ceremony*” on the chosen **day that by nature** is everything but “*rite and ceremony*”.

In the Old Testament “*rites and ceremonies*” of **sacrifices** and **offerings** were **added** to the Sabbath **not** for being the **Seventh Day** but for being the **Institution of Rest** that **before** had existed **without such “rites and ceremonies”** of sacrifices and offerings. These ritual and ceremonial institutions of offerings and oblations were added to the Sabbath not to Moses’ liking, but because of the increase of sin and the consequent greater need for forgiveness. In all it pointed to God’s eventual offering for forgiveness of wrongs and sins through Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. Thus even these additional rites and ceremonies belonging to the Old Testament Sabbath cast a **clearer** shadow of the body under which it one day would **fully be concentrated**.

7.6.2.1.3.

For its Capacity

Nothing naturally in a day capacitates rituality and ceremoniousness. “*Institution*”, “*rite and ceremony*” is what God attributed the Day as Sabbath or what man does in celebrating the Day as Sabbath or in celebrating Sunday as Day of Sabbath. Christ through the **rites and ceremonies** of Holy Communion “**instituted**” the Lord’s Supper. Just as **no supper of itself** has ritual, ceremonial or institutional value or properties so **no day** has it. “*Rite and ceremony*” is something **devoted** to the day. In the case of the Seventh Day, God acted first in his creation of the Sabbath Day in that He **rested** the Seventh Day. Although **God’s** act of rest wasn’t rite or ceremony because it was the **origin** and **creation** of the Seventh Day Sabbath, that rest, **when extended to include man** in the enjoyment of God’s rest, constitutes the institutional element of ritual and ceremonial “rest”. Man’s “rest” is considered his “*institutional*” or “*ritual*” and “*ceremonial*” “**keeping**” of God’s Sabbath–Rest.

The **Seventh Day** is **divinely ordained** a **spiritual** institution of **worship**, and therefore, a “*rite and ceremony*. **Nothing intrinsic** makes of The **Seventh Day**, “**Sabbath Day**”. In itself the Seventh Day possesses no material, “*sensible*” qualities to distinguish it from other “ordinary” days. In itself the Seventh Day is just as **ordinary** as the other days. **Without the creation story of the Bible Book** there would have been **no week** and no **Seventh Day** because in this Book only is God’s acting of creation **revealed**. But we could retract this statement without loss of the Seventh–Day–Sabbath because God revealed the same things **better and finally** through and in the life of Jesus Christ on earth. Jesus **eventually** also **confirmed** what He in his life as “Son of man” had taught, through and in his **resurrection** from the dead. Being Day of **God’s** own and revealed **Rest–act**, the Sabbath Day is “**spiritually discerned**” or “**sanctified**”. Besides being distinguished in time–spatial relation “the Seventh Day”, **God’s** own **Rest–act** was the Seventh Day’s (“added” or devoted) “**blessing**” (in distinction from the other days of the week) on the grounds of which God “**hallowed**” it and no other day of the week. Being the Day of Reaching Goal, the “Last Day”, or Day of “Finishing” and “Rest” – **which are the works of God** – makes of the (ordinary) Seventh Day, “**Sabbath**”. Being thus made and declared “Sabbath”, **also for man** (and where more so than in the resurrection of Christ from the dead?), the Seventh Day becomes **institutionalised**. God bestows this institutional ceremonial and ritual **purpose**, on no other day. Not from itself but from the act and decision of God directed at the Seventh Day, **directed at man**, does the **Sabbath** receive and derive its nature, importance and duration of ritual and ceremonial **institution of spiritual worship**.

To consider any aspect of the Sabbath’s **total and unitary constitution** as something temporary or deductible or dispensable or “abrogated” makes nonsense of the Sabbath in every respect. The Sabbath is of a **nature** divinely approved that it **cannot be abrogated but necessarily is confirmed** by the death of Christ.

7.6.2.1.4.

For its Unity of Nature

Has the Sabbath ceased to be the **Seventh Day** but survived to be the **First Day**? The unadulterated “Sabbath” “is still in force for the People of God” – *i.e.*, for believers or Christians. It is a spiritual Day for a spiritual People. The People are spiritual Israel. They are living and dying people of the world yet people who have everlasting life in the object of their faith, Jesus Christ. Just as spiritual yet earthly and material as they themselves are, is their Day of Worship–Rest. It is so earthly it is the day of Jesus’

resurrection from the dead. This earthly “day” is “made for man” Day of Rest and Worship – “Sabbath”, with Jesus its Lord and Patron. It “remains in force” **in its only revealed nature**, that of its **dual nature**, **Seventh Day and Day of Rest**. Being this Day it immutably consists of indestructible founding and establishment in Christ its Lord. The **temporal**, the “**Seventh**”, is **just as “spiritual”** as the “(spiritual) **Rest**”, and both are equally “divine” in that they are created, established and confirmed in Jesus Christ and in his resurrection from the dead! The **eternal**, the “**Rest**”, is **just as temporal** as the “**Seventh Day**” – **both constitutional elements of the Sabbath**, “Rest” and “Day”, are meant to be of this Day the **Seventh**. Both aspects – Seventh–Day–ness and Rest, are **revealed graces** “valid for God’s people”. “God did speak concerning the Seventh Day” and **therein** is contained everything spiritual and eternal about the Sabbath of the Lord thy God’s speaking.

Ironically objections against the Sabbath for being “*rite and ceremony*” usually argue the Sabbath **clean away**. The Sabbath is made an **ethereal** “Seventh **Age**” of “Sabbath Rest”. On the one hand the objections make the Sabbath so temporal, earthly and human it is a “*rite and ceremony*” – a “seventh day” merely; on the other hand the Sabbath is so spiritual and eternal it has no temporary or “sensible” quality – it is a “rest” / “sabbath” merely. But the **Bible Sabbath** is the one that **is Seventh Day, and, Rest, at once**, and temporal, **and, spiritual, at once**. The **Bible Sabbath** is earthly **and** spiritual; it is **God’s rest “the Sabbath”** while it is this “**the Seventh Day**” **God’s “Holy Day”**, “made for man”.

The Bible and God’s revelation in Christ **knows** no other “Sabbath–Rest” and **permits** no other. Being **God’s** Day of Worship–Rest “made (meant / created) for **man**” = **as for Himself and unto Himself**, the Sabbath could never be “*abrogated*”. Being divinely created the Sabbath would **for the first time come to its right in Jesus Christ!**

7.6.2.1.5.

“Hebrew Rite and Ceremony”

This Trent argument supposes a **reason** for the abrogation of “*rites and ceremonies*” being their **nature**. The **nature** of the “*rites and ceremonies*” is that they were “**Hebrew**”. And **because** the “*rites and ceremonies*” were “**Hebrew**” they “*were to be abrogated*”. The argument goes that they were of Hebrew **origin**. The **Jews**, or the one Jew, **Moses**, instituted them (in the case of the Sabbath allegedly, long after creation). The qualification, “**Hebrew rites and ceremonies**” amounts to concluding that **Old Testament “rites and ceremonies”** are of an **origin purely human** that cannot be attributed to God or to the Word or authority of God. It

supposes that **all** was the doing **merely of the man Moses the Hebrew or Jew**. But whatever is of **divine** nature or of **divine** origin is indestructible being **not** man's creation. **This is admitted through the very argument of "Hebrew" "rites and ceremonies" being "abrogated". Had they not been of "Hebrew" origin but of divine origin it would have been impossible to abrogate or to abolish them.**

Because the Trent theologians did not like a keeping of the Sabbath, they disparagingly described it as "*rite and ceremony*" and the Sabbath, "*institutional*". And because there is nothing wrong, and nothing **not** "spiritual" about being "*rite and ceremony*" and "*institutional*", they further declaim a keeping of the Sabbath for being a "*Hebrew*" "*institution*" of "*rite and ceremony*". By doing this the Trent theologians bury sound thinking in medieval tradition that reduces the Sabbath to a one-dimensional legalistic relic from Judahism. But the ritual, ceremonial and institutional understood as the Sabbath's manifestation in its practical keeping by believing Christians, is nothing but **spiritual, practical, Christianity!** It confirms, and in no way contradicts the Sabbath's validity with respect to believers' keeping of it as **in keeping with** God's rest of "eternal salvation".

7.6.2.1.6.

Pagan Rite

This Trent argument because it **makes it merely human**, places the Old Testament "*rites and ceremonies*" on a par with **heathen, pagan and idolatrous "rites and ceremonies"**. The only difference between the Old Testament "*rites and ceremonies*" and the other is that the Old Testament "*rites and ceremonies*" were of "*Hebrew*" humanness.

Of **civilised "rites and ceremonies"** or the advanced culture of "natural law", one should better speak not, for nothing in the "Hebrew" sacrificial system makes it more sophisticated, more intelligent, more graceful – more "civilised" or "human", than any heathen system. Trent's argument makes of all Old Testament "*rites and ceremonies*" – **because they are no more than human ("Hebrew") – no more than savage and senseless waste of life.** It makes of the "*institutions*" of God's Word the imaginations of man and a killing of the divine flame of life in all forms of life – a killing that fills troughs of blood **for no purpose but to honour idols.** This kind of abominable "*rite and ceremony*" are meant in the Council of Jerusalem's resolution that Christians should "abstain from the spiritual contamination of idolatry, from idolatrous fornication and from idolatrous killing by strangling and blood", Acts 15:20. The "*Hebrew*" "*rites and ceremonies*" are just as repulsive to civilised man as any heathen. The goodness and acceptability of "*rites and ceremonies*" for the believer are not

intrinsic or aesthetic, but depend on its **Originator** or "*Promulgator of Law*", and the **purpose He had in mind with it.** In the case of the "*Hebrew*" "*rites and ceremonies*" their origin and end are **divine**; in the case of any other its origin and end are **human and therefore idolatrous.** The **only difference** between the "*Hebrew*" or Old Testament and the heathen "*rites and ceremonies*" is **divine "institution"**. The "*Hebrew*" or Old Testament "*rites and ceremonies*" are "the Word of God" – "Scripture". **Eventually the whole matter rests on one's standpoint on the authority of the Bible. "Abrogation" cannot depend on whether the Sabbath might be "Hebrew" or a "rite" or a "ceremony".**

Since Christ has been God's sacrificial "*rite and ceremony*" for the remission of sin, to go on with even the Old Testament ("*Hebrew*") "*rites and ceremonies*" is brutish and idolatrous **and could be continued only by reason of unbelief and rejection of Christ!** That the apostles would deem the persistent observation of Old Testament "*rites and ceremonies*" because of unbelief in Jesus Christ to be of the **same kind and nature** as the idolatrous practices it denounces cannot be doubted. For a Christian to observe Old Testament "*rites and ceremonies*" while confessing faith in Christ would be clear denial of Christ and **virtually idolatry.** The Council of Jerusalem nevertheless on the very threat of unbelief in Christ manifested through **idolatrous practices**, resolves **from a fundamental standpoint** that "**Moses is read**" – God's Word is heard – in the **Christian Church "every Sabbath"**, "everywhere". The Sabbath for nothing in the world could be imagined as of the same nature and kind as the practices which the Council **denounced** and which worked in hand the maintaining of **heathen "rite and ceremony"** in the Church.

The New Afrikaans Translation puts it this way: "*But we must write to them (the heathen who turned themselves to God) not to eat flesh that was offered to idols, because it is unclean; that they must avoid immorality, that they must not eat any strangled animal, and also not blood. These prescriptions of Moses in fact are since of old kept before the People in every city. It is lectured every Sabbath Day in the Synagogues.*" The translators view the "*prescriptions*" as the Council's original decisions and as the Council's confirmation of Moses on these points. The translators are able to live with the idea that **these** assumed Mosaic prescriptions **were still valid** for the Apostolic Church. But the same scholars cannot accept that the **Sabbath** "is still valid for (the Apostolic Church) the People of God".

The "*institution*" of the Sabbath exactly, is seen by this Council as a bulwark against the incidence of "*rite and ceremony*", but "*rite and ceremony*" of **heathen** origin and devotion. The Sabbath is throughout the

New Testament excluded from the category of heathen “*rite and ceremony*” as it is from “*Hebrew rite and ceremony*”. In fact, this is what the **whole Sabbath-issue** in the New Testament was about. The New Testament tries to bring to the senses of the vain as well as to the senses of true worshippers that the Sabbath isn’t “*Hebrew rite and ceremony*”. While “made for **man**” it was made **to the worship** of God and **to the worship** of the “**Lord of the Sabbath**”, Jesus Christ. The Sabbath now under the New Testament is not for Israel of Old Testament days but for God’s People and the worship of Jesus’ Christ! This matter demanded a **whole new approach** to the Sabbath Day and virtually its re-enactment and re-instatement as “Day of the Lord”. Especially the **Gospels** busy themselves with the re-evaluation of the Sabbath **for God’s People**. Which meant, the Sabbath “was made” and “is still in force” for the **Christian** people and its worship. Eventually, in the latest Gospel, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, this process has **reached finality** and is reflected in the adoption by John of the Sabbath’s colloquial appellation by then, “Lord’s Day.

7.6.2.1.7.

Universal “*Rite and Ceremony*”

“*Rites and ceremonies*” can be abrogated, not because they are “*rites and ceremonies*”, but because they are of **human origin** – because they are “*Hebrew*”. If not human or Hebrew by “*institution*”, they have to be of **divine** institution and eternal and eternally valid according to God’s **revealed intentions** with them. The Old Testament being **God’s** word, **God’s** revelation and **God’s** Covenant with his Church of all dispensations, contains or teaches no “*Hebrew*” ritual or ceremony and no ritual and ceremony **not of divine “institution”**. **Every** rite and institution of the Old Testament was instituted on **the authority of God only** and was time and again intended for **all believers**. If one confesses with the Reformers, *Sola Scriptura*, God’s authority only in the institution of these things must be admitted.

Of **all** the Old Testament institutions and laws **only one** (not counting the extraordinary latter rains Promise of Joel) had been **meant for the Hebrews** to the exclusion of any other people, namely **circumcision**. And this “**Jewish**” institution was the very “*rite*” through which **non-Jews** were **incorporated** into the Body of the Believing.

Of all “*rites and ceremonies*” **circumcision** might be regarded the **most peculiarly “Hebrew” “rite and ceremony”** and it may therefore be considered as **representative** of all “*Hebrew*” “*rites and ceremonies*”. Even that does **not** make of circumcision a **merely human or specific Hebrew** rite or ceremony. **Abraham** the “father of them that **believe**” instituted

circumcision on **God’s** instructions **before there were Jews**. **Paul makes of this fact the crux of his doctrine of righteousness by faith**. However “**fleshly**” circumcision had been, it was of **divine initiative**, of **divine authority** and of **divine and spiritual purpose**. Specifically from the children of Abraham “**after the flesh**” the **Messiah-Saviour** would be born. “**God with us**” is **circumcision’s ultimate fulfilment**. Therefore “**God speaks**”, even when “**Moses**” (who is himself of Abraham’s seed) “**institutes**” the “*rite*” of circumcision. The **Christ-fulfilment** of this absolutely **fleshly and Jewish** institution had in view the most **spiritual purpose** and **everlasting consequence** for all of humankind – the very **salvation through the one Name** given under the sun among all men, **Jesus the Christ**.

7.6.2.1.8.

Fulfilled “*Rite and Ceremony*”

Circumcision had never been **abrogated**, but was **fulfilled in its eternal and spiritual New Testament meaning in Jesus**. In **His** birth and death and in the circumcision of the **heart** of those who believe in Him the **Old Testament** condition of the “**Mosaic**” “*rite and ceremony*” of circumcision **gets fulfilled New Testamentically**. Jesus being the purpose, aim and message of the rite of circumcision’s ultimate meaning, it can only be completed in Him.

Paul does not argue for the abrogation of circumcision or of the Sabbath while it is viewed a “**Mosaic**” “*rite and ceremony*”. He argues that if any man does **not indeed receive his circumcision in Jesus – or does not keep the Sabbath because of the Faith of Jesus** – he is accursed, has no part in Him and is “**cut off from Christ**”. (Precisely for this reason, the Jews today may keep the Sabbath but has no part in Jesus for their unbelief.) Circumcision is of the nature that it once **for all time** is fulfilled **in Christ**. Circumcision **today** – two thousand years after Christ – still holds **in the One to Whom this blood-rite had pointed**. It speaks for itself that now that Christ had come in the flesh and had died in the offering of his blood no man **believing in Him** could observe the rite as a **blood-rite** any longer. If any man would nevertheless observe circumcision in the cutting of his flesh it can only mean that he **believes** not the circumcision of the Old Testament which expected the Christ. Another messiah must come because the One foreshadowed **according to the prophetic meaning of the Old Testament** blood-rite is **rejected**. The Jews, were they **today** to accept Jesus the Christ and receive circumcision of the **heart** they would stop the “*rite and ceremony*” of circumcision of the body, **today!** Paul says exactly **that** when he says that a person who has himself circumcised is “**severed of Christ**”.

For being **included in Christ** every believer has spiritually undergone circumcision in **Jesus' shedding of his blood** for him. Circumcision has ceased to be a rite and ceremony of blood, but circumcision of the heart has not ceased. See Par. 8.2.3.

Now the **Sabbath** of the heart is a literal and concrete keeping of the Seventh Day appointed by God unto that spiritual purpose, and unto no fleshly purpose like Circumcision. Both Sabbath and Circumcision are ceremony and rite and both have Jesus in view. **But they differ** in institution, in nature and in history. Circumcision was instituted a **blood-rite** with its own ceremonies. The Sabbath had **never** been instituted a **blood-rite** and its ceremonies were **physical but of spiritual nature**. (We are not talking of the added blood-rites of long after the Sabbath's institution.) The Day the Seventh had been instituted the **concrete yet spiritual** medium of and for **spiritual rest** whether physical or spiritual – the rest that Christ fulfilled physically and spiritually, and still fulfils. The Sabbath, **therefore**, is as valid as ever before.

7.6.2.1.9.

Temporal "Rite and Ceremony"

The only thing that renders Old Testament "rites and ceremonies" temporary is God's intentions with its institution. It depends on **God's intention** with and nature and purpose of each institution, rite and ceremony whether **Christ's fulfilment** of it meant its **last** observance or its **lasting** observance. The Sabbath speaks for itself, being God's institution of the Seventh Day and of no rite or ceremony – being a **divinely** instituted **day** – that those who **believe in Jesus** not only would, but, should, observe it **perpetually**.

Through its own keeping holy the First Day of the week the Church in **principle acknowledges** a Day of Worship and Rest of divine **origin and end** – and of lasting obligation. The only problem is the Church does so arbitrarily. It replaces the divinely ordained **Seventh** Day with a one **humanly** ordained and in so doing makes of the day of worship a **fickle "rite and ceremony"**. The Church after doing so no longer has to do with only trampling under foot God's **Sabbath**, but it from the moment of doing so faces flagrant disregard of God's whole **Word**.

The Church's **keeping** the Day of Worship isn't the reason why it still stands fast or had come to a fall for God's people. The Sabbath **still holds good** for God's people because **God's Rest Day** it is, and therefore the believer's obligation. This entails the **essential** difference between the Sabbath and **all "rites and ceremonies"**. The Sabbath still holds good for the people of God for the very reason of it having **received its content, purpose**

and meaning in Christ – through His Lordship the Sabbath is newly created God's Rest Day. In Jesus' resurrection from the dead "in the end of the Sabbath" the Sabbath's beginning and future is settled once for all. As in the Old Testament "the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God" so in the New Testament "the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath" – from the moment "in the Sabbath" of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The emphasis has shifted from "the Seventh Day is ..." to "the Son of man is ...". The relation has intensified from "Sabbath of the Lord ..." to "Lord of the Sabbath ...". But this Day it is and no other.

7.6.3.

Seventh Day Adventist

7.6.3.1.1.

Sabbath's Shadow-nature Denied

"We dissent from the proposition that the Lord Jesus Christ transferred the observation from the last day of the week to the first in order to point beyond the original 'creation rest' to the greater 'redemption rest'."
Questions on Doctrine, p.156-157, (SDA)

Seventh Day Sabbath-keepers here argue against the glory of the **Sabbath** being transferred to the **First** Day of the week. They have every right to. It had never happened but in Sunday-arguments that the glory of the **Sabbath** had been transferred to the **First** Day of the week.

It is **quite a different** thing though that the Lord Jesus Christ "transferred" the **point of gravity** of the Last Day of the week from the '**creation rest**' to the greater '**redemption rest**'. Hebrews 4-5 is one example of Scripture that proves the point. Mark 2:23-28 is another and most likely the strongest indicator of the Sabbath's change from an **Old** Testament Day of Rest into essentially the **New** Testament Day of Rest and Worship, or "**Christ-Day**". The reason? Because the Sabbath is the **Lord's** Day and Day of His **resurrection** from the dead. This **shift in primary significance, necessitates** that the original "creation rest had "to point beyond the original 'creation rest' to the greater 'redemption rest'". That **cannot** be denied nor **may** it be denied lest **Christ's** glory is denied. **Before** Christ the shadow-pointer "Sabbath" had **only** pointed **forward** to Christ and **back** to creation. **After** Christ it points and moves in **four directions**, from creation to Christ and from Christ to creation; from Christ to his second coming and from this time of anticipation of his coming back to Christ incarnate and resurrected. Yes, we are **not** talking of the **First** Day of the week but of the **Seventh** Day Sabbath. We are talking about the **Seventh** Day of the week "according to the Scriptures"! "God concerning the **Seventh** Day thus spoke" as He **never** spoke concerning the First Day of the

week or any other day. Theology should discover this **complete Sabbath of which Jesus is the Centre and direction, the Power Source and Mover.**

The quoted denial from *Questions on Doctrine* is regrettable because it amounts to a denial of the Sabbath's christological and christocentric quality. Within the "*implicit recognition of the Sabbath's continuance*", "*found*" in the "*teachings*" and "*declarations of Jesus*", *loco citato* naturally also the Sabbath's "**pointing beyond**" would be recognised. "Continuance" and "pointing beyond" are inseparable and complementing aspects of the Sabbath Day.

It is possible to think along these lines when thinking of the **Seventh** day Sabbath that finds this **essential continuity** not only in **Jesus'** teachings and declarations, but wherever spoken of in the **Old Testament**. Ostentatiously **no** word or idea of **essential continuity** can be discovered when thinking of the **First Day**. The First Day of the week is **devoid of "spiritual" content**. No "spiritual content" like that written about the Seventh Day **exists in Scripture** about the First Day. The First Day simply **has no** such "spiritual content". Its only "spiritual content" is contained in **obedience** to the **creation order** of days. The First Day's only "*implicit recognition*" is appointment to **Old Testament Institution** – that of **work**, and not of rest. The First Day must **look to** the Sabbath, and like the other working days **from** the Sabbath might find inspiration. The First Day does not "**point beyond**" like the Sabbath – not retrospectively neither prospectively – to Christ. It has **no symbolic value** of things **past**, more than any other of the first six creation days, or of things **future**, more than any other of the first six creation days. As little as the First Day was the Day of Jesus' resurrection **in fact**, as little was or is the First Day the Day of Jesus' resurrection **in shadow**.

No day receives its importance from itself or even **directly** from the work that God performed on it. Each creation–order day receives its importance from God's **declaration**. God pronounced the **same** declaration over **all first six** days, "**good**", and over all first six days **together**, "**very good**". **Only** of the Sabbath did He pronounce **by word as well as deed**, "**Holy, blessed, fulfilled and finished ... rest**". Completing all **creation** and His whole **Council**, God, through **condescending** to and **communing** with creation, and through giving Himself to creation and **man**, **gives himself also particularly to the time and limit and day of the Seventh Day and claims this day the Seventh Day unto Himself**. In claiming the Day unto Himself God also claims man and creation unto Himself. God's Word **returns, full**. God through His Eternal **Word** invests the Seventh Day with **Promise and Oath** to be the **Lord's** Day in the "fullness of time". The

Sabbath reaches and "points beyond", by virtue of its **divinely ordained properties to wait upon the Word. This glory the Sabbath shares with no other day. Its is a holy magnificence. "It is ... My Holy ... the Sabbath of the Lord your God."**

7.6.3.1.2.

"A Shadow of Things to Come"

Paul's figure of speech of the "shadow of things to come" is most fitting even though he does not apply it to the Sabbath. The shadow–symbolism of the Sabbath is **not** admitted with **Colossians 2:17** in mind. See Part Four, Colossians 2:16.

Luke in 23:54 applies the phrase *epifohskoh* – "**shining forward towards the Sabbath**", also with a **prophetic meaning of victory "to appear"** in light and life **in Jesus' resurrection** from the dead, soon "**in the Sabbath**", Mt.28:1. Luke uses the term "**to appear**" – *epifohskoh*, as a **proleptic doxology** and not only as an indicator of the time of day.

The **Hill of Golgotha** has no honour. But **what Christian would not** honour the Hill for the Lord crucified on it? No one will worship the hill that was but the bearer of the cross. No one would worship the **shadow** of the cross if they don't worship even the **hill** of the cross. No one will worship the **cross** except he is an idolater and Christian in name only. And so no one will idolatrously worship the **Sabbath** for the honour it receives from being the shadow of Christ who was to come as the Reality and had come and is to come again. **But as Christ is proclaimed** through the story the Hill of Golgotha tells, so is Christ worshipped as the Eschatos of which the Sabbath is the shadow. No one will deny The Eschatos, **The Resurrected, is proclaimed** by the story the **Sabbath** tells. And that is what it means, the Sabbath is a shadow ... "**of things to come**". (This is still not what Col.2:16 implies.)

As the day of God's time progresses **the shadow leads to the moment of the day in its fullness, noon, and the turn of the Yom Yahweh**. At that moment the shadow is **filled in the centre with the reality, the body** that casts the shadow. **All shadow is light in Jesus**. In the midday of God's Day, the **light** reaches from the centre into every direction, creating connection between the past and all other time, **representing its fullness**. This moment belongs to the reality of **Christ's dying on the cross and his reaching forth therein from the past, and his taking hold of the future of light and life in resurrection from the dead**. In that **twofold moment** the whole of the past and the whole of the future are contained "**in the body of His flesh**". The Sabbath – the one **Day like no other** in all of Scripture that **can** be seen as a shadow of Christ – lies at **this end** as well as

at **this beginning** – right **beneath the feet** of the One Who casts the shadow. The Sabbath is shadow of Christ, **still**. As a shadow of things that **did** come and as “a shadow of things **to come**”, **the Sabbath stretches forth, as from Jesus’ resurrection to creation, so to the Great Day of the Lord and Last Day of Judgement**. Today, like in Old Testament times, the Sabbath is “a shadow of things **to come**” because “**the body is of Christ**” who is “at the right hand of the power of God **hence He shall return to judge** the living and the dead”. (Don’t you **judge** one another” said Paul in Colossians 2:16.) Jesus ascended to the right hand of **that** power of God where He now reigns, being “**the Risen One**” ^{Mk.16:9 et al.} “**raised from the dead ... according to the working of the exceeding greatness of his mighty power us-ward**”.

The coming of the Lord of hosts is a coming of **judgement**. The Sabbath’s prophetic significance **derives from its object – the coming in all time, in dying as in rising, as in judgement, of the Man of God**. He “speaks”, “**today**”, “If you hear His voice, do not harden your heart”, but “enter into His rest!” “For this reason / purpose there remains keeping of the Sabbath for the people of God”.

“The shadow (is) of things to come, but the body is of Christ (who had come and is coming again)”. The “Body” cannot be separated from its shadow. Although the Body does not depend upon its shadow **it never denies or repels** its shadow. Being the shadow of Christ’s body **gives meaning** to the Sabbath. Had it **not** been this shadow the Sabbath would have lacked special meaning. Being the shadow of **Christ’s body** gives meaning to the **Sabbath**. The **First Day** – **not** being this shadow – could never have the meaning the Sabbath **does** have because of being shadow of the Body which is Christ’s.

Paul uses the word “shadow” simply for the concept of “symbolism”. And symbolism stands for **meaning**. The Sabbath is shadow of the **Body on the Cross**. But it also is shadow of the Body risen from the **grave**. In the light of the **Living and Risen One on the Throne**, the Sabbath is shadow of the One “**to come**”. The Sabbath is “a shadow of things to come” – of the body that **would** come, did come and **will** come again – **the Body that is of Christ the coming**. This shadow is cast **across the earth**, across **man’s total history** and across the total **past and future of the Man from God**. God **accomplished** reconciliation as from before the foundations of the world He **willed** and **determined** reconciliation. The shadow **persists** as long as the Body “waits till his enemies be made his footstool”. Seeing the Sabbath as a shadow of Christ **complements its past significance with a new and abiding excellence**. The Sabbath as a shadow of the Body that is **Christ’s**, reveals its **Covenant anchorage “through the veil” within the**

most holy of the sanctuary of Grace. The Sabbath in the Christian dispensation is “the Lord’s Day in the Covenant of Grace”.

“**The Body is of Christ**”, Jesus the Lamb of God’s **Passover**. As the shadow shortens **towards fulfilment of prophecy** the Body is etched off against the **light of victory in resurrection from the dead**. From the “*dawn of the Yom Yahweh*” at crucifixion hour the shadow arrives beyond the grave **of the Crucified Buried**, and in the “*midday of the Yom Yahweh*”, “**turns**”! ^(Schilder) The shadow **then “of things”** now, presently expected and yet “**to come**”, ^(Paul) **reaches from and forth to Christ the Resurrected Coming**. Could anything be the symbolic significance of the Sabbath, could anything be its “shadow”-quality, that symbolic significance used to be and again is the **coming of the Christ**. The Church now lives in and of the **expectancy** of the coming Jesus as it throughout history had lived in and of that expectancy. **That expectancy is the Church’s worship – hence the Sabbath’s nature of being Day of Worship of its expected Lord**.

The Sabbath had **always** been a shadow. It had always pointed **forward** as it had always pointed **back**. The Sabbath had indeed pointed back as well as forward **since creation** and again **since the Resurrection** of Christ. **Now** it looks **forward in trust** on the basis of fulfilment **already accomplished** in Jesus – as in creation. “The body of Christ its Head ... increasing with the increase of God”. ^(Col.2:17-19) **It had not been like this before**. The Sabbath’s foundation is **surer now** – the Cornerstone **had** been laid. Jerusalem is being built and prepared, as a bride for the Groom. The Tabernacle of God is with men the elect saved ... Come Lord Jesus Lord of the Sabbath, fulfil thy rest. **Jesus’ coming – that He would come, that He did come, and that He again will come – is the “Song for the Sabbath Day”. For no less good reason does the motive of redemption – indeed the motive of the Day of Resurrection from the dead – replenish the creation Sabbath’s origin**.

Had the shadow received fulfilment in the **First Day**, Sunday, **it** and **not** the Sabbath, would have been “shadow of Christ”. The **First Day**, and **not** the Seventh Day, would have received the significance for being “shadow of Christ”. But being “shadow” is of the **Sabbath’s nature for solid cause, namely, that “the body is of Christ”**. **Having received fulfilment in Christ the Seventh Day and not the First Day shadows God’s rest**. The Sabbath **long before** – through creation and divine institution – was graced with this much **capacity**, and therefore, **would be vindicated through Christ’s vindication of God’s Rest and Day of Rest through resurrection from the dead**.

7.6.3.2.

The Sabbath Denied the Honour of Jesus' Resurrection

I once attended a conference where I listened to a renowned professor lecturing on the Sabbath. The impression I got was that the Sabbath is made our saviour. No, not our merit saves us, according to his reasoning, but this Seventh Day of the week God had given man as the “*divine rest for human restlessness*”. Now I am sure the professor never intended to create this impression. But that was the message as I understood it. I could have listened wrong. I could have caught words, phrases, emphasis where I am prone to hear them while he did not intend it that way. So I read his books. And unfortunately I to a great extent found the same problem in his writings on the subject of the Sabbath. But I found a vacuum, an edifice of which the foundation has been jack hammered away. The Sabbath was made man’s **saviour**, and then a saviour only to the extent of **physical and temporary** wellbeing. While the Sabbath is being made man’s redeemer its saving ability isn’t ultimately and eternally. That of course is just common sense, because the Sabbath is a created thing, a thing made for specific purposes and it cannot serve any purpose that God had not meant for it. The moment the Sabbath assumes the role of **saviour** it no longer serves because it no longer fulfils God’s will with and for it. Then the Sabbath is **not only made a yoke of bondage but an idol**. The Sabbath’s purpose of being made for man should not mean that it takes over from man’s only Saviour, Jesus. The Sabbath should **serve** its Lord and his People, and not vice versa. The Sabbath should only serve man in so far as it serves the Lord of both man and Sabbath. **This will elevate the Sabbath to its highest level in God’s design – that of facilitating corporate worship of Jesus Christ.** The many times the Sabbath is described and indeed qualified as being a “**sign** that you are my people and I your God” are an indication of the close connection **that is realised** between **people and worship** on and through the Sabbath. A people – “man” – without the Sabbath the “separated” Day for worship simply cannot be God’s people. It is practically impossible. God **wills and creates** his People the Church with this inborn, genetic (programmed) capacity. Without the worship (“rest”) the Church would be still born, it would not survive its first gasp of air. Even Pentecost happened to be on the Sabbath. The Sabbath **will** be the sign of the People’s relationship with its Lord, **or** the People’s relationship with its Lord **will not exist. The Sabbath is the sign of the Church’s total dependence on its Lord.** (The Sabbath is the one little DNA specification of the chromosome that tells the Body: “Breath!” Without the Lord’s Day the Body would not be the Church of the Son of man.) **Therefore Jesus’ declares Himself**

“Lord indeed of the Sabbath”.

The Sabbath cannot save man from death and hell. Only Jesus can. And Jesus can, only because He conquered death and hell **through resurrection** from the dead. Christ **put the Sabbath there for the Day of his resurrection** and thus the Sabbath obtained another dimension – the dimension through which **it witnesses to the finishing in Christ of all God’s works and of his entering into his own rest.** This foundation of the Seventh Day Sabbath as **Covenant sign** I find missing in the professor’s reasoning. I find missing the **real “divine rest for human restlessness” – God’s own rest in Jesus in resurrection from the dead and man submitting to and accepting this magnificent liberation as it is in Christ only.** ... To which man’s “Sabbath-keeping” may attest.

7.6.3.3.

“Principle” of “Sabbathkeeping”

Basic concepts must be clarified for intelligent discussion. While he treats “*Sabbathkeeping*” or “*the principle and practice of Sabbathkeeping*” identically, Bacchiocchi in the quote makes no distinction between “*Sabbathkeeping*” and “**the Sabbath**”. To distinguish between the two concepts is of the essence of the matter though. The fact that distinction is not made, betrays the lack of appreciation of the fundamental meaning of the Sabbath. “*The principle*” of Sabbath keeping will be something different from “*the principle*” of “the Sabbath”.

7.6.3.4.

Sabbath as Covenant Sign

The fundamental meaning of “the Sabbath”, is that of **Covenant-sign**. “**The Sabbath**”, “**principally**”, is of **God’s** doing. “The Sabbath” is God’s Rest-Day! God acts **according to His eternal counsel**. Condescending and exalted in Jesus Christ, He establishes his rest on the Seventh Day for a sign that He is **to his people their Sovereign** and they unto him are a separated people. **The Sabbath is a sign of God covenanting in Christ to be man’s God.**

7.6.3.5.

Sabbath Demanded

Throughout the Old and New Testament “the Sabbath” has come as perpetual **command** and **demand** by Creator and Redeemer –**Lord** – of the Church. The Sabbath has **direction**: Appointed Lord’s Day this time and occasion **approaches** man all the days of his life as gift of mercy and summons to faith. “The principle” of “the Sabbath” is that it stands under the title and affirmation of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, **claiming** unconditional and total surrender, obedience and allegiance.

7.6.3.6.

“The Sabbath” Is Not “Sabbath-Keeping”

Biblically speaking, “*Sabbath keeping*” is what the Church does with the time and occasion that constitute the **Seventh Day**. (Speaking from the standpoint of **tradition**, “*Sabbath keeping*” is what the Church does with the time and occasion that constitute the **First Day** of the week.) “**The Sabbath**” should not be identified with “Sabbath-keeping”, which is of **man’s** doing and of man’s **choosing**. Divine rest, divine blessing and divine distinction / election – were **originally** attributed to the **Seventh Day** by **God** Himself. In so doing God “**made**” the **Seventh Day** as a distinguished (“sanctified”) reality of identifiable time-space entity – the **Seventh Day**. While the Sabbath can and may be divorced from all ritual and ceremonial **additions**, it cannot and may not be divided into **something temporary** (the Seventh) and **something permanent** (Day). **God** would not have been the Creator of **something like that**. The Seventh Day is **God’s** and is **divinely** blessed and sanctified in in-dividable Seventh-Day-ness and Sabbath-ness – that is, it is divinely **chosen and distinguished** and in precisely being chosen and distinguished as the **Seventh Day** does God “make” of the Seventh Day the **Sabbath Day**. The Sabbath isn’t **man’s**, isn’t of human institution or dependent upon man’s performance and therefore isn’t “*rite*” or “*ceremony*”, or a righteousness of man’s works.

“*Sabbath keeping*” is not God’s Sabbath and essentially is no Covenant-sign. “*Sabbath keeping*” has **direction: Responding** to God’s **approach in giving “Rest”**, man **keeps** the Sabbath. It is the **Church’s doing**. It is **man, acting**. “*The practice*” of “*Sabbath keeping*” “**principally**”, is **man’s answer**, his best attempt at obedience to satisfy the demands of God’s Law. There is nothing wrong with this, but **when mistaken for the Sabbath of the Lord thy God** nothing is right with “*Sabbath keeping*” any more. “*Sabbath keeping*” **must** be mistaken for the Sabbath as such within a theology of **legalism and merit**. Where salvation is of **free grace** and not of **free will** though, Sabbath **keeping** will always be relative to the **Covenant**.

“*Sabbath keeping*” will not be a matter of how legally correct and how meritoriously well the Church observes the Day, but how **worshipful** and how **restful** – “restful” in the sense of **the Church resting from its own works of righteousness, deeply drawing from the Source of living waters**. “*Sabbath keeping*” **is no individual attempt at finding peace and rest. It is worship – corporate and Christian worship**. “*Sabbath keeping*” **means for the Church to take up Jesus’ yoke**.

In Jewish tradition the Torah or **Law is equated** with God’s yoke. Jesus certainly was of different mind. He never rebuked the cities for desecrating the Sabbath but for slighting God’s Rest, that is, for rejecting **Him**. Exactly in seeing the **Law** God’s rest, the Jews were blind to **Jesus** God’s rest. They understood no more than the **letter** of the Law. They could not perceive the **Word** of the Law.

In Jeremiah 5:5 and 2:20 to take up God’s **yoke** is to accept “**correction**”. It means **not to break** the “**bonds**”, but to **accept** the “bonds”. It means to carry one’s **yoke of obedience**. When Christ offers his rest He also offers his yoke. When Jesus claims to be Lord of the Sabbath, He claims himself to be Lord of the “man” and of the Church. **Jesus** claims faith and demands to be obeyed. Jesus offers Himself God’s rest and thereby renders the Law meaning, “**Come unto Me and I will give you rest**”. He who has received grace, forgiveness, help, redemption and salvation comes under the **obligation of freedom**. “**Go and sin no more!**” The sinner has been bought **at the price of grace** the property of the Lord Purchaser. “I will set you free” ... “find rest for your soul” (Jr.6:16). Who can sing, “Great peace have those who love thy law” (Ps.119:165), but he who had been given the peace of Christ, whose sins had been forgiven, whose Lord is Jesus? Or who could pray, “Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law” (verse 18), but he whose eyes had been opened to see and his withered hand healed to do thy law? “I have longed for **thy salvation** O Lord, **now thy law** is my delight” (verse 174). “The covenant of peace” (Nmb.25:12) is the covenant of Christ – God’s promise affirmed by oath – an **oath of deed**, the **Resurrection of Jesus from the dead**. “For the Law made nothing perfect but **a bringing in of a better hope by which we draw nigh unto God**”. Christianity has a better covenant. The “**bringing in**” “perfects” and was “**perfected**”, **even through Jesus’ resurrection from the dead**. He was “raised the third day according to the Scriptures”, according to the **Law**. The Scriptures or the Law perfected is perfected in Christ in resurrection from the dead. The fulfilling of the Law and the Scriptures happens in Jesus in his **resurrection** from the dead! **This is the Christian’s bond and yoke wherein he is bound in covenant with God**.

Jesus’ Lordship of the Sabbath Day – Mark 2:28 – cannot be divorced from his **oneness with the Father** – John 5:17. When the Jews accuse Jesus of Sabbath breaking, they accuse him of the blasphemy of making himself one with God. (Significantly the accusations didn’t occur in reverse order.) What Jesus did on the Sabbath before the eyes of the Jews was the **outflow of his unity of Being** with the Father. Jesus’ oneness with his Father was

shown through the fact that He **on the Sabbath did his Father's works** not only through the fact that He did his Father's works, but especially **in that He did them on the Sabbath**. The union between Jesus' **acts** and "the Rest(**day**)" – "Sabbath", correlates with the union between **Jesus** – God's "Act" or "Word" – and **Covenant Rest**: "Take my (light) yoke upon you (instead of your own heavy yoke) and **I** (as God) will give you (**my**) rest". Man's **keeping** of the Day is not God's **Sabbath** because it comes short of God's Rest and of God's "blessing" – because it lacks Jesus as content and aim. **It always will**. (The Sermon to the Hebrews clearly distinguishes between the "Rest" – *anapausis*, and "a keeping of the Rest" – *sabbatismos*.)

Jesus guarantees that his Yoke isn't heavy. **His yoke is rest**. Jesus **earned** complete rest "for man" through tireless **labour**. Jesus' labour was without rest being the rest itself. "Take my yoke upon you and I will give you rest" means, "Accept **the work that I did for you**". Jesus **offers** his yoke his rest; He **orders** his rest his yoke.

7.6.3.7.

"Sabbath-Keeping" and the Day

The Sabbath Day, while having been made a burdensome regulation of law upon law – a misconception of God's "yoke" – could very well **in reaction "at that time" in Galilee** have occasioned opportunity and circumstance for Jesus to offer **His** yoke of rest on the Sabbath. Jesus not only set human **captives** free but **released the Sabbath itself** "from the bonds of Satan". Jesus brought the Sabbath back into **coherency with the "covenant of peace"** which is "Emmanuel, God with us". Jesus **recovered** the Sabbath Day to its state and status of creation. Through **tradition** though, the Church has again bound the Sabbath with the bonds of Satan. It has made of the Lord's Day **man's** creation – a righteousness of **works**.

7.6.3.8.

The "Creational" Sabbath

The Sabbath can but be Christian. God cannot be God but **actively**. He in no way is God passively. God does not exist as a human **concept** but **in being He makes Himself known** – in and through his **revelation** – in and through **Christ**. God is the One God and Lord of **mercy**. God **acting in grace** and Covenant relationship, **puts the Sabbath** in Covenant–relation. He puts the Sabbath there for his eternal purpose in Jesus Christ. God "makes" the Sabbath **for this reason**, to be **merciful** to man, to be "**for man**", **in Christ!** The Sabbath, as a "**creational institution**" should have this meaning only. It **cannot** have any meaning besides this. To think of the Sabbath as **the same thing as its observance** – as man's "**creational rest**" – is to deprive the Sabbath of its **essential "principle"**.

7.6.3.9.

"Principle and Practice"

"What does the New Testament teach regarding the principle and practice of Sabbathkeeping? Does the New Testament view Sabbathkeeping as being clarified or nullified by the teaching and redemptive ministry of Christ? Does it suggest a transference of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week? Many Christian thinkers have addressed these questions, especially in the centuries following the Reformation." ^{Samuele Bacchiocchi, "The Sabbath in the New Testament", p.12}

What would be destroyed could the Sabbath be destroyed? That would indicate the **principle** of the **Sabbath**, and not of Sabbath-keeping. Sabbath-keeping could be changed. The Sabbath cannot be changed. **If the Sabbath be destroyed then, would man's** cessation from labour **be destroyed?** Man's charitable works? Jesus' attendance at meals on the Sabbath? Jesus' deeds of healing on the Sabbath? Spiritual aloofness of and devotional absenteeism from Temple and Synagogue? No. **God's completion, His blessing, His sanctifying and His rest, and His communion with man in all of this in the Word Christ Jesus. That would be destroyed could the Sabbath be destroyed.**

How could God have completed, blessed and sanctified the Seventh Day, how could He have "rested the Seventh Day" (Hb.4:4) – but through his works completed in his **Word**, Jesus the **Christ**? And how, but in his **resurrection** from the dead? How, but through the realisation of the "symbol" and the verisimilitude of the "significance" of His own "finishing" and "rest"? For what **reason** could "a Sabbath–rest still remain valid for God's people" after Christ had come, had died and had risen from the dead again **if not for the fact of his coming, for the fact of his dying and for the fact of his resurrection?** "The Word of the Oath ... maketh the Son High Priest consecrated for evermore" (Hb.7:28). The "Word of Oath", being God's, is word of **accomplishment**. **Word of Oath** from the mouth of God went out from Him not to return to Him empty. Spoken on the Seventh Day, heard on the Seventh Day, returned to Him no later than spoken.

7.6.3.10.

"The Sabbath Clarified"

No difficulty need remain with the concept of the Sabbath being "**clarified**" in the New Testament. This is what each and every incidence of discussion in the New Testament on the matter of the Sabbath and each deed of Jesus on the Sabbath **were about** – to "**clarify**" or to **reveal the Sabbath for what it really is in God's design**. Jesus **lives the revelation of God** and He puts the Sabbath **at God's disposal for the purpose of the Father's**

revelation in Himself. “The Sabbath was made for man”. “For man” ... for no other reason than God who wills to reveal Himself to man in Jesus.

The Sabbath was made once at creation, *egeneto*, Aorist. But Jesus is **weekly reinstating it, creating it anew, making it answer its purpose.** By making the Sabbath available He **instates it, for the Father to be seen in Him.** Jesus instates the Sabbath “for man”, that is, **for covenant relationship** between Creator and creature – as “in the beginning”.

7.6.3.11.

Day of Worship

The **Church** – the composer and compiler of the Gospels – **with the inclusion** of the passages about Jesus and the Sabbath, **aimed at “worship”.** Had the Church with these anecdotes purposed the destruction of the Sabbath by either its “nullification” or its “transference”, it would have made it as apparent and transparent **as simply saying so would have made it.** But as impossible an uncomplicated declaration of the annulment of the Sabbath would have been, as impossible would it be that Jesus could busy Himself with abrogation of the Sabbath **through doing the Father’s work,** manifesting Him to man on the Sabbath. Jesus’ practice and teaching about the Sabbath could never have been directed against the Sabbath and with the view of its “nullification” or its “transference” to the First Day. Jesus’ practice and teaching in effect amounted to precisely the opposite, that is, to the introduction and confirmation of the “Sabbath”, that is the Seventh Day of the week and the Lord’s Day *per se*. The emergence of the nomenclature “The Lord’s Day” in the latest document of the New Testament resulted from the Church’s consciousness of the Sabbath during the Apostolic era **naturally** as being the Day of the Lord Jesus.

The **idea** of the “Lord’s Day” **had come along the whole history** of the first century Church, **but of only the first century Church.** In its **earlier writings** (the documents of the New Testament other than John’s Revelation) the concept of the Lord’s Day is found expressed in more than one way. “The Sabbath” of course was the most common way of speaking of “the Lord’s Day”. The appellation “the Lord’s Day” also must have been used **orally** in tradition. It is inadmissible to go to **later** times for the etymology and semantics of this nomenclature. To do so effectively amounts to violation of the Fourth Commandment because it results in man’s own sanctification of another day and the desecration of the correct day set apart by Jesus in his revelation of the Father.

The supposition of nullification in whatever form or manner is sheer nonsense. How any “*Christian thinker*” can think that the Sabbath’s transference to the First Day does not mean the Sabbath’s nullification, is

unimaginable considering **the Sabbath’s Covenant essentiality.**

“*Nullification*”, “*transference*” ... it is **an impossible idea, keeping in mind the very basis of the Sabbath – God’s completion and rest in Christ in his resurrection!** “The essential continuity” of **God’s covenant fidelity** implies the continuity of **the Sabbath Day that is exclusively associated** with God’s covenant promises and actions and their fulfilment.

Not doubting the sincerity of the “*many Christian thinkers who have addressed these questions*”, how could they get to the point where it became possible for them to decide **directly contrary** to this “*principle of the Sabbath*” and its “*practice*” in the New Testament? Because they **presumably** decide directly according to the “*principle*”! It became possible for these “*many Christian thinkers who have addressed these questions*” precisely at the point where they **assumed the very basis of the Sabbath – God’s completion and rest, to be the event – the act of God through the resurrection of Jesus – “on the First Day of the week”!** If only these Christian thinkers could themselves have understood their own premise more clearly and Bacchiocchi could have perceived it more clearly, **he** would have understood that the “*Biblical symbolic significance*” **belongs with the Day of Resurrection while it belongs to the Sabbath.** And if these thinkers could only have realised that the basis belongs to the **Seventh Day** and **with the Seventh Day, they** would have agreed to the perpetuity of the **Sabbath** and to its “*enrichment*” in the New Testament.

7.6.3.12.

Perspective – “According to the Scriptures”

The Sabbath of the Seventh Day according to the Scriptures is the Lord’s Day. It is the Sabbath of the **New Covenant** – of God’s Eternal Covenant of Grace – **for the very reason** claimed for the **First Day** of the week. That reason is the **Resurrection** of Jesus from the dead. But the Seventh Day is the Christian Sabbath because it is the Day of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead “the third day ... **according to the Scriptures**”. It is **difficult** enough to **simply allege** that the Resurrection applies to the **First Day.** But it is **impossible to substantiate from Scripture** – unless Scripture is **translated to accommodate preconceived ideas!** Scripture passages on the Sabbath, the First Day, the resurrection and the crucifixion, even on the appearances and Pentecost must be **manipulated in order to suit the First Day.** The facts of history are **not** for Sunday what they **seem** to be, what they are **claimed** to be and what they are “**translated**” to be. Manipulation through translation **obscures indispensable truths** necessary for a **correct** knowledge about Jesus’ resurrection. But more importantly **theological correlation of the facts and truths of the Covenant of Grace**

is impossible with the view to Sunday observance whereas theological correlation of all facts and truths obviously and copiously subsist the **Seventh Day Sabbath in the context of the Covenant of Grace**. In a word, Christ did **not** rise from the dead on Sunday but **“in the Sabbath”**, **“according to the Scriptures the third day** (of his death)” – **note the quotation marks**. Let it be made emphatically clear that there is **abundance of Scriptural confirmation in this regard. Jesus’ resurrection in relation to the Day of his resurrection** is not in the Scriptures merely treated as a **“bare fact”** (a statement with which most Sabbath-keepers refer to the Resurrection in relation to the Day of Christian Worship). Jesus’ resurrection in relation to the Day of his resurrection is treated as a **principle of phenomenal theological amplitude and implication in the New Testament**. In fact Jesus’ resurrection is the **theme and total message** of the New Testament – it is the **“New Testament”**. And the **Day** of its occurrence receives **more** attention and **greater** importance than it had ever enjoyed in the **Old Testament**. In fact Jesus’ resurrection is the **theme and total message** of the **Seventh Day** – it is the **“Sabbath”**. Jesus’ resurrection in relation to the Day of his resurrection as a **principle** of theological amplitude and implication can be traced **from Genesis to Revelation and is especially obvious in the Gospels**. Nothing, but absolutely nothing of the kind can be said on behalf of the First Day. From the standpoint of Christian Faith Sunday observance has but one problem, one thorn in the flesh – **the Scriptures**. If of the Scriptures could be got rid of, the Church could **autonomously** decide for Sunday as the Day of Rest. But while one believes as a **Protestant** for whom the **Scriptures** are supposed to be authoritative only the Seventh Day Sabbath can be the Christian Day of rest.

The Balance Sheet that reveals a **total Sunday-deficit** in Scriptures and a **massive credit of Scriptural wealth against the Sabbath-entry** has for nineteen centuries been hidden from the eyes of the Auditor General. The truth of Sunday’s bankruptcy and the Sabbath’s Surplus Credit Account has been kept secret and smothered under a blanket of prejudice, scorn, contempt, preterition and slight. It didn’t suit society and wasn’t to the taste of tradition. “Shut up the words, and seal the Book, even to the time of the end: Many shall run to and fro, and **knowledge shall be increased** ... for the words are closed up and sealed till **the time of the end**. Many (words) shall be purified and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand (the words); but the wise shall understand (the words)”. Knowledge of God’s Word has never been at lower ebb among both learned and laymen than when it comes to putting together Jesus’ **resurrection and the Sabbath**.

The Bible has been the **best selling** book for centuries but has also been the **least read and even less understood**. If read, the Bible is **read as bought off the racks from bookshops**. No conscientious translation regarding the Resurrection and the Sabbath can be obtained anywhere on earth and nobody ever reads what is available to read with the **question** of the relation between Jesus’ resurrection and the day of his resurrection **in mind**. Ignorance as of the Dark Ages still rules when it comes to knowledge of the Scriptures on this point. Of the real meaning of Sabbath– and Resurrection–passages – as of Scriptures of the First Day – no one has a clue as to its true meaning so disguised and wrested they are translated. But despite this universal **ignorance and indifference** the Word is **discovered independently constantly** and things too wonderful to believe unless discovered for one self are opened to the mind. “They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: **For all shall know Me**, from the least to the greatest”, ^{Hb.8:11} God determines the times and the spirit of the time. “For the earth shall be **filled with the knowledge** of the glory of the Lord (Jesus in resurrection) as waters cover the sea” (Jesus’ atoning death for sin). ^{Hab.2:14} “And the Son (of Zadok, “young man”, “mighty man” ^(1Chr.12:28)) ... that kept the charge of my sanctuary (Jesus King and Priest at the right hand of God) ... shall come near to me to minister unto me says the Lord God ... and **in that day** that He goeth into the sanctuary unto the inner court to minister in the sanctuary (day of Resurrection) He shall offer his sin offering (to make intercession for believers)... ... and (He the Son) shall teach my people the **difference between the holy and the profane** (as between the Sabbath and profane days)... And in controversy (confession of faith) they shall stand in judgement (and fail not) – they shall judge (decide) according to my judgements: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my **assemblies** (the New Testament Church), and they shall hallow my **Sabbaths**”. ^{Ez.44:15 to 27} “The word of God is a **discerner**” ... Hebrews 4 speaking of the Sabbath!

7.6.3.13.

The Biblical Significance Attached to the Seventh Day

“Efforts to define Sunday as the continuation and enrichment of the Sabbath is undoubtedly praiseworthy. Regretfully, however, they fail to show, first, how the Biblical symbolic significance attached to the seventh day can be transferred to the first day without destroying the symbol itself. Second, how Christ’s Resurrection caused the change in the day of worship in the first place.” ^{Samuele Bacchiocchi, “The Sabbath in the New Testament, p.22 par. 2}

7.6.3.14.

Ignoble Efforts

Bacchiocchi's cordial remark, "Efforts to define Sunday as the continuation and enrichment of the Sabbath is undoubtedly praiseworthy" is undoubtedly lamentable. Provocation for "efforts to define Sunday as the continuation and enrichment of the Sabbath" cannot be found in Scripture and definitely not in the event of Jesus' Resurrection. The "continuation and enrichment" of the **Sabbath, yes**, that can be seen in Scripture **and especially in the event of Jesus' resurrection**. During its course through revelation the Sabbath received **impetus** at certain points in history that as it were **propelled** it forward to the time of consummation. **Creation** was the first of these capacitating thrusts, the **exodus** the second major. Other moments of Sabbath-impetus came and went cf. the Jehoiada priest of Yahweh coupe (2Kings 11 and 2Chr.22). **Then in the noon of the great and terrible day of Yahweh the Sabbath Day is borne on Eagle's wings: "According to the Scriptures the third day", "in the Sabbath in the afternoon of light toward the First Day of the week", Jesus rose from the dead!**

Christians summarily ascribe **these primary facts** to Sunday. For a Sabbath keeper to find the Sabbath's adversaries' "attempt" and "effort to give a Biblical sanction and a binding solemnity to Sunday observance",^{p.22} last par. "praiseworthy" and "noble", is, **therefore, quite incomprehensible**. But when "attempt" and "effort" is made *to give a Biblical, praiseworthy and noble sanction and binding solemnity to observance of the Seventh Day Sabbath on the one sure basis of Christ's resurrection*, then Prof. Bacchiocchi not only would not even consider it, but will viscerally oppose it! (That to me, the present writer, is the aim and work of the order of Jesuits.)

7.6.3.15.

Symbolic Significance

Bacchiocchi's remark contains a typical complication of Sabbath-apologetics on the question as to "the Biblical symbolic significance attached to the seventh day", Bacchiocchi gives no indication of what he considers "the symbol itself" to be. Nevertheless his argument implies that, **if**, "the Biblical symbolic significance attached to the seventh day (could) be transferred to the first day without destroying the symbol itself", then the First Day **has to be** the "continuation and enrichment of the Sabbath". That implies **tremendous** "Biblical symbolic significance" that must be "attached to the seventh day".

The question is, **What is** "the Biblical symbolic significance attached to the seventh day"? **What if** it could be discovered that **Christ's Resurrection is** that "Biblical symbolic significance attached to the seventh day"? "**Since** (given as) the law ... (the Sabbath is **now**) **consecrated for evermore**" (Hb.7:28). **It is the Lord's Day**. Can any other "Biblical symbolic significance (be) attached to the seventh day"? **None at all because this includes it all**. Had the Resurrection occurred on the First and not on the Seventh Day, would not "Christ's Resurrection (have) caused the change in the day of worship"? **It would!** But it also would **not**, for two reasons. First, Christ was **not resurrected** on the First Day but "**in the Sabbath**", and, Second, Christ rose "**according to the Scriptures** the third day" "after that He offered himself to God ... that ... they who are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance".^{Hb.9:14-15} The **expectancy** of the Scriptures does **not** belong to the **First Day**. Sunday-apologetics had to leave the **treasure of expectancy** lie unexplored, **because, in the expectancy of the Scriptures** lies "the Biblical symbolic significance attached to the seventh day"! The "**promise of eternal inheritance**" guarantees it. "**Having obtained eternal redemption He entered in once into the holy place**". "For He that is **entered into His rest**, He also hath ceased from His own works, as God, from His", Hb.4:10. "**Therefore** remains keeping of the Sabbath for God's people"^{verse 9} i.e., for **Christians**. "**By so much** was Jesus made a surety of a better Testament".^{Hb.7:22} "By so much", that is, by so much as **resurrection from the dead and entering upon His rest**. Jesus would do and finish the Father's works of all creation through his rising from the dead and entering his rest as God did from his. Jesus would accomplish this in **prophetic fulfilment of God's eternal purpose in creating**. This is "the symbolic significance attached to the seventh day" ... the "Biblical significance". **This is what makes of the Seventh Day the Sabbath Day. God's "rest" – is the blessing of the Day, is, its sanctification and is, its rest**. This it is of the **Seventh Day** and of no other. **Not** because the Day is the **Seventh** is it God's Sabbath. Not because man should keep it holy is the Seventh Day God's Sabbath. But **because it is the Day of His Rest** is the Seventh Day God's Sabbath. **The realism of the Seventh Day's "Biblical symbolic significance" consists of God's rest in his revelation**. To imagine that Christ could ever have risen from the dead on another day than the Seventh Day must in advance be dismissed. By the same consequence, **had the First Day been the day of Jesus' resurrection**, then no other day than the First day **must** be "the continuation and enrichment of the Sabbath". The First Day, and not the Seventh Day, **must then have had contained the "Biblical symbolic significance" of**

God's Sabbath–rest. The First Day **must** have been in the position to boast the completion of God's creation and all the works He had made, and not the Sabbath. The First Day **must** have been the Day of God's revelation. John **would** have said, "I was in the Spirit on the First Day" ... **Sunday, had not Jesus been raised from the dead "in the Sabbath"**. The scholars who argue for the Sabbath's continuation in the First Day would have had an answer to the question, "*Why should the Sabbath be terminated by Christ?*" Their answer would have been, "On account of the redemption–rest He has already brought, and on account of the final rest that (had) to come ... Because of Christ's resurrection on the First Day". The symbolism attached to the Seventh Day **would** have been transferred to the First Day and its significance for the **Seventh Day, destroyed ... were it true that Christ rose from the dead on the First Day!** But God did **not** destroy his own work through Jesus, but **confirmed** it, every iota and every tittle. **God dug under the foundations and cast it the surer.**

The only possible way the Seventh Day could retain its Biblical symbolic significance, is to have retained "*the symbol itself*" – according to Bacchiocchi's own thinking, Bacchiocchi, strangely though, hasn't got the **Resurrection as the symbol**, and he does not want it. He refutes it. He refutes it because he, just like these other scholars, believes that Christ rose from the dead on the First Day. He refutes the Resurrection as the "*Biblical symbolic significance of the seventh day*" even though the Resurrection is what he **needs to be able** to build any case in favour of the Seventh Day Sabbath. Had Bacchiocchi as well as these scholars been right about the Resurrection on the First day, "*the Biblical symbolic significance attached to the seventh day*", must "*be transferred to the first day without destroying the symbol itself*". It "must", because "*Christ's Resurrection*" being "*the symbol itself*" would have "*caused the change in the day of worship in the first place*."

By rejecting the "*Biblical symbolic significance attached to the seventh day*" – **Christ's resurrection**, Bacchiocchi is also forced to reject the Resurrection as the symbolic significance attached to the **First Day**. He makes of it "merely a bald fact". Had Bacchiocchi grasped the Biblical symbolic significance attached to **Jesus' resurrection** and what significance it has for the **day of Resurrection**, he would have understood the Sunday proponents' intentions and would not have praised it so amicably. On the contrary, he would have been obliged to accept Sunday as the Christian Day of Rest.

The Sabbath through Christ's ministry had undergone major change. "*Christ's Resurrection*" being "*the symbol itself*" **did cause** "*the change in the day of worship in the first place*." It changed it from the **Old Testament Sabbath** as a ("bare" or "bald") "*creational institution*" into the **New Testament Sabbath** as a **Resurrection institution**. The **Day** wasn't changed, but its **content** was. The change wholly is of **intensity**, of **content**, and of **quality**. **The cistern was the same but the better wine was kept for last.** It took a **miracle**. The **Seventh Day** could not be changed if, as the Sabbath, it had not been the **actual day of the required miracle**. **Another day** – the **First Day** – in this respect therefore must be irrelevant.

7.6.3.16.

"Was Made"

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). ... "*Our Lord's choice of words is significant. The verb "made" – ginomai, alludes to the original "making" of the Sabbath and the word "man" – anthropos, suggests its human function. Thus to establish the human and universal value of the Sabbath, Christ reverts to its very origin, right after the creation of man ... Christ traces ... the Sabbath to (its) creation origin in order to clarify (its) fundamental value and function for mankind.*" Bacchiocchi, "The Sabbath in the New Testament" p. 42–43

"*Christ traces ... the Sabbath to (its) creation origin*" not merely in relation to its "*original "making"*" and even less "*in order to clarify (its) fundamental value and function for mankind.*" Making the Sabbath's "*fundamental value*" a "*universal value for mankind*" **precisely is the Pharisees' mistake!** Christ (in Mk.2:27) clarifies the Sabbath's **fundamental relation to Himself**. Jesus' words that "the Sabbath was made for man" do not primarily intend allusion to **creation**, but to the **immediate – to his own "making" or "bringing about" of change – Mark's use of the Aorist, egeneto!** This **Master** of the disciples should be acknowledged as the **Lord** – "**indeed also of the Sabbath**" *kai tou sabbatou*. Whereas **previously** the Sabbath was called "the Sabbath of the Lord your God", or, in direct speech, "My holy (day)", it is **changed** and had received a new, richer and deeper content. It "had become" – *egeneto* – "the Lord, Son of man's Day". **Primarily in the Son of man** had the Sabbath become the Day of Rest. **Now it could be said for the first time**, "The Sabbath had become (a day) **to the benefit** of man and no longer is a day that man should live for" – Mark 2:27! – as were the day a Master in its own right. The Sabbath has to do not with temporary prosperity but with man's eternal salvation in the Lord of the Sabbath. **The Son of man "made"** – *egeneto*, **the difference**. The difference has **brought about** a difference of **emphasis**: At

what point is “God’s rest” = his “Sabbath” – **fulfilled**? At the point of **the Day** concerned? “**No**”, says Jesus, Or at the point where the day “**had become**” the **Lord’s**, the **Son of man’s**? “**Indeed**”, says Jesus. **Only within a relation with its Lord** can the Sabbath’s “*function for mankind*” be of “*value*” – it is a function under the Lordship of the Son of man.

The “*creational*” motivation for the Sabbath falls short of the Sabbath’s aim and purpose to “become” the “Lord’s Day” and falls prey to the very principle that steered the Pharisees off the right track. Without the Christological basis of Jesus’ resurrection the castle evaporates in thin air of “*value and function for mankind*”. Underneath the Sabbath, “*fundamentally*”, then lies an **abstract** “*creation origin*”. And above is “*establish(ed)*”, **merely** “*the human*”. As a result the rest is **ethereal** “*universal*” and “*beneficial*”, the Sabbath’s aim and purpose is **nothing but** “*its human function*”. The Sabbath then had lost its Christological and Messianic founding, foundation and content – its **divine** origin, its **divine** principle and its **divine** purpose! Such a **universalistic and bargained concept of the Lord’s Day** could never answer to the prerequisites of “**the Lord’s Day**”. See above on the eclectic nature of the Sabbath, Par. 7.3.2.1.6/7/9/10.

7.6.3.17.

Conquer the Sword by the Blade

Discussing the “*Abrogation of the Sabbath*”-viewpoint, Prof. Samuele Bacchiocchi ^{The Sabbath in the New Testament”, Biblical Perspectives, Michigan, p. 18} refers to Willy Rordorf’s thesis ^{p.19} that the Sabbath was a “*social institution*”, “*annulled by Christ*”. Says Prof. Bacchiocchi, “(Rordorf) *basis his position especially on the provocative nature of Christ’s Sabbath healing ministry, by which he claims, “the sabbath commandment was not merely pushed into the background ... it was simply annulled.” This position leads Rordorf to divorce Sunday completely from the Fourth Commandment, viewing the day as an exclusive Christian creation, introduced to celebrate Christ’s resurrection through the Lord’s Supper celebration.*”

Denying that “*the provocative nature of Christ’s Sabbath healing ministry*” “*annull(s)*” the Sabbath, or “*push(es) ... the sabbath commandment ... into the background*”, Prof. Bacchiocchi should admit that **while** “*Christ’s Sabbath healing ministry*” **confirms** the Sabbath, it **establishes it** as that “*exclusive Christian creation, introduced to celebrate Christ’s resurrection*”. “*Christ’s Sabbath healing ministry*”, “*introduced*” the Sabbath with the view to **eventually** and **at the point of completion** of all healing ministry “*celebrate his resurrection*” – “**in the Sabbath**”. The **resurrection** “*pushed the Sabbath*” (as such) into the **foreground**. Not for a moment was the Sabbath by Jesus’ resurrection “*pushed into the*

background”. (Not for a moment was the **First Day** “*pushed into the background*” **or** foreground – the First Day **never features**.) The **Church** came, and **it**, associated “*Christ’s Sabbath healing ministry*” with the Christian celebration of the **Sabbath** (not of Sunday) **with the view** “*to celebrate Christ’s resurrection*”. (The **Church** even associated “*the Lord’s Supper celebration*” with the **Sabbath** – not with Sunday. ^{As had been shown in Par. 7.2.2, Part One of Part Three.}) The Church had done so within the compass of the **first century** and the period of the composition of the New Testament Documents. The Church’s decisions as regards the **Sabbath** and **its** relation with Jesus’ **resurrection** – i.e., its relation with **Jesus’ being Lord** – are seen in and can be understood clearly from the **Gospels and Mark 2:28 especially**. The Church brought Jesus, his Lordship, his ministry and his resurrection as his ministry, together with the Lord’s Day **Sabbath**. It did so not arbitrarily but **because of intrinsic nature** and christological essence. The Sabbath was **prophetically and symbolically endowed** – **exclusively thus endowed** by its Lord and Creator – not only because of “*Christ’s Sabbath healing ministry*” but eventually and basically because of Jesus’ **resurrection**. “*Christ’s Sabbath healing ministry*” was **wholly founded** on and did **wholly receive** from the **Resurrection its power and integrity**. So the first century **Church** “*introduced*” “*celebrat(ion of) Christ’s resurrection*” to the **Sabbath for being the Sabbath** – The Sabbath of which the Son of man is Lord, i.e., for being “the Lord’s Day”. “The Lord’s Day” of **tradition** of the second century and after (including Rordorf’s) has **nothing** in common or has **nothing** to do with “the Lord’s Day” as found in John and in the Synoptists. ^{See Part Four, Par. 8, Rv. 1:10, “The Lord’s Day in the Second Century”.}

Whereas Bacchiocchi exposes the fallacy of Rordorf’s single assumption he finishes not off. He accepts the handed over sword but at the blade and instead of to administer the final blow cuts his own hand.

7.6.3.18.

If Things Could be Different

Dr. Bacchiocchi does not extensively treat on Rordorf’s assumptions. (But we shall look closely at his.) The only objection he advances against Rordorf is that Sunday is “*divorced completely ... from the Fourth Commandment*”. (Sunday had never been connected with the Fourth Commandment and cannot be divorced from it. Bacchiocchi’s objection must be dismissed as irrelevant.) To assume that “*the provocative nature of Christ’s Sabbath healing ministry*” “*simply annulled*” the Sabbath is naïve. It provoked just the opposite, namely, **complex confirmation** of the Sabbath. That complexity involves – is in fact based – on the one confirming factor of all, Jesus’ resurrection “in the Sabbath”. This living truth is written but once

in the New Testament yet implied, proved and improved on amply. One way it is spoken of in New Testament Scripture is the mentioning at all, as such, of the Sabbath in the context of and in connection with Jesus' healing ministry and resurrection. The Gospels could have **omitted** mention of the Sabbath had the Sabbath no meaning in the context or in the relation. Had the Church no longer kept the Sabbath **for its worth in Christian worship** it would not have been an issue for the Church but a forgotten matter. The Gospels could have treated on the saving ministry of Christ without mentioning or without even alluding to the Sabbath Day. But instead they **deliberately and elaborately weave the Sabbath into their histories of Christ's works of the Father**. The close nexus that exists between Christ's redemptive works and the Sabbath Day, is mirrored in the **special attention** the Sabbath receives in the Gospels in this regard – a bond that **Christ intended and that He extended through all his works, bringing all together in his resurrection from the dead**.

It remains a mystery why God would institute the Sabbath and then throughout **Christ's** ministry and the era of the origin of the **Church** allow it to be researched, tried and explored even to the “dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow” ... only to “simply annul” it. Old Testament institutions and ceremonies through fulfilment in Christ made short shrift of are without exception never investigated in depth in the New Testament like the Sabbath is. They no longer were of consequence. Because the Sabbath still was of consequence it is investigated. And the degree to which the Sabbath – as nothing else – is taken seriously reflects its evaluation and value within the Christian Faith and for the Christian Faith. The Sabbath matters a lot for the Church because it is its Day of Worship and “rest” – “rest” as that of Christ's Body. The fact of the unparalleled attention the Sabbath receives in the Gospels presupposes its lasting relevancy for the Christian community. Had that relevancy been one of getting rid of a tenacious vexation, the Evangelists would have taken a completely different approach. They would flatly have denounced the Sabbath. **They could not have denounced it better than to have kept quiet about it**. But now “God speaks” so clearly about it. Or they also could have stated how God had “simply annulled the Sabbath” – because only God could have done so. Here comes a theologian and the host of others and expect a Christian to see in Jesus' confirming and affirming works of the Sabbath Day its abrogation. Those theologians expect that Christian to experience God's Promise and indeed its fulfilment to be nullified and to reverse a strange Day of a strange god.

7.6.3.19.

Provoked and Provoking Acts

“(Rordorf) *basis his position especially on the provocative nature of Christ's Sabbath healing ministry*”. The nature of Christ's Sabbath healing ministry undeniably was “**provocative**” in the sense of the one act of God leading to the next in **fulfilment** of the Sabbath's prophetic meaning.

7.6.3.20.1.

The Source of Power

God's works of mercy (his Covenant fulfilment) in Jesus Christ do not only like a shadow point in the direction of his resurrection – they actually **draw from it** meaning and power. Christ's Sabbath deeds of redemption are like the **saints** who when He died, **in anticipation and by virtue of his resurrection** were raised from the dead. To **presuppose Christ's resurrection** wherever his Sabbath works are considered in the Gospels is most logical and consequent. Jesus' **resurrection** is the inevitable **prerequisite** of specifically his **Sabbath** ministry. **In these Christ-actions of the Sabbath Day, in these, his death-conquering, life attaining actions, the Sabbath of the Seventh Day receives from its Lord its divinely intended stature. Christ's resurrection, being the ultimate of these Sabbath actions ultimately establishes the Seventh Day as “the Sabbath-Rest-Day of the Lord your God”. Yes, it establishes the Sabbath as the “Lord's Day”.**

7.6.3.20.2.

Provoking the Jews' Anger

The word “provocative” can have another connotation, a bad one. It may mean that through the provocative nature of Jesus' Sabbath healing ministry, He teased or dared God. Such meaning of the word “provocative” implies that Jesus in the face of God transgressed the Sabbath Commandment – which notion, quite “*simply*”, “*annuls*” all **truth. God** wasn't provoked by Christ's deeds of the Sabbaths – the **fanatics** were. The Sabbath-transgressed-and-abrogated-idea makes of the **Jews** who took exception and not of Christ, the final judge of the nature and significance of his and his Father's works. The Jews took offence because **Jesus' Sabbath-deeds showed his Oneness with God**. Christ **could** not have dishonoured God, neither could He have annulled the **Sabbath** with his deeds of the Sabbath Day because they were the **Father's** works!

Conspicuous of Jesus' **Sabbath**-ministry is the people's **hostile** response. Jesus' Sabbath healing ministry as well as Sabbath preaching ministry were of such a nature **as to provoke the glory of God, to confirm his Lordship** of the Sabbath and of his people and to **lure the people** into

noticing Jesus' **oneness with his Father** – to see his divinity. The people received Jesus' teaching and healing on **other** days **peacefully**. Jesus on other days than the Sabbath did the **same kind of works** of mercy. But these works, **being done on the Sabbath Day, provoked the Jews' anger**. The Sabbaths' miracles received a different reception and a **different dimension for being done on the Sabbath. Only God had the right** to do these works **on the Sabbath**. The **time of doing being the Sabbath** made this difference. **The sphere of the divine is trespassed and the prerogatives of God infringed**. Jesus sovereignly and pre-emptively elected not these **works** for the Sabbath, but the **Sabbath** for these works. Jesus could have abstained from doing them on the Sabbath but instead He distinguishes the Sabbath as the Day of these works and for these works. He **will** the provocative nature of the **combination** of these **works** and the **Sabbath**. Not only to provoke acute awareness on the part of his opponents does Jesus exercise his divinity on the Sabbath, but to have **his Father's will obeyed**. No other Day than the Sabbath would suit the purpose. And Jesus again in **choosing the Sabbath** for his **resurrection** from the dead (the pinnacle of all his miracles) **will** to reveal, to prove, and to exercise his **divinity**. **Jesus wills his Father's work be done in deciding for the Sabbath day as day for his rising from the dead.**

7.6.3.21.

Sabbath Typology

SNT p. 62 “*Christ's announcement of His Messiahship* (Luke 4:16–21) *is followed in Luke by two Sabbath healing episodes. The first ... resulted in the spiritual healing of a demon–possessed man. The second ... brought about ... physical restoration ... The result ... was rejoicing for the whole family and service ... The theme of liberation, joy, service which are present in an embryonic form in these first healing acts are more explicitly associated with the meaning of the Sabbath in the subsequent ministry of Christ*”⁶³ *Acts of healing ... are not merely acts of love and compassion but true “sabbatical acts” which reveal how the Messianic redemption typified and promised by the Sabbath was being fulfilled through Christ's saving ministry.*”⁶⁴ *... Undoubtedly, for ... all the people blessed by Christ's Sabbath ministry, the day became the memorial of the healing of their bodies and souls, of the exodus from the bonds of Satan into the freedom of the Savior.*”⁶⁵ *... The Messianic age was expected to be ‘wholly Sabbath and rest in the life everlasting.’ In the light of the ... Messianic understanding of the Sabbath rest, it appears that Christ, by offering His rest immediately after His Messianic disclosure (in Luke 4) intended to substantiate His Messianic*

claim by offering what the Messiah was expected to bring, namely, the peace and rest typified by the Sabbath.”

And thus we could go on to quote Prof. Bacchiocchi, the chief exponent currently on the subject of the Sabbath's good meaning.^{E.g., From Sabbath to Sunday, “The Sabbath's Typology and its Messianic Fulfilment”} (The good meaning of “Sabbath-keeping” – not of God's Sabbath Rest.) The **first** thing noticeable of Bacchiocchi arguments is the factor of **expectancy and fulfilment**. “*The theme of liberation ... present in an embryonic form in these first healing acts*”; “*sabbatical acts ... which reveal ... the Messianic redemption typified and promised by the Sabbath*”; “*The Messianic age was expected*”. But the most obvious characteristic is that Bacchiocchi **limits the expected and promised Messianic fulfilment to “Sabbath healing ministries”** and “*liberation from hardship of work and from the social inequalities*”. Bacchiocchi confines the expected advantage in each case to “*physical restoration*”. E.g., “*What the Messiah was expected to bring*”, “*the fuller redemption the Messiah would one day bring his people*”, “*the peace and rest typified by the Sabbath*” **never surpasses the like of “a suffering woman ... released from the shackles of physical infirmity”**.⁶³ “*Spiritual*” benefit of the Sabbath healing ministries is no more than **psychological**: It “*resulted in spiritual healing*”; “*the healing of their bodies and souls*”; “*peace and rest*”. **Messianic expectancy and fulfilment**, for Bacchiocchi – as for the “*Sabbath healing ministry perception of the Sabbath*” at large – **stops short of eternal salvation and eternal life** because it **stops short of the ultimate** Messianic promise and fulfilment, namely, **Jesus' resurrection from the dead!** “*The embryonic form*” of “*the theme of liberation, joy, service*” never matures into victorious song of joy over the **power that rules** physical and spiritual sickness ... over **death!** “*The theme of liberation, joy, service ... present in an embryonic form in (the) first healing acts*” and that gets “*more explicitly associated with the meaning of the Sabbath in the subsequent ministry of Christ*” never reaches the anticipated climax in Jesus' **last “ministry”**, his exaltation to the right hand of the power of God in **resurrection** from the dead! The **one “true sabbatical act”** that actually “*through Christ fulfils ... the Messianic redemption typified and promised by the Sabbath*” is **denied the Sabbath!** Christ's **resurrection** “in the Sabbath”, **never realises**, and therefore cannot be contemplated, “remembered” in remembrance of God's Sabbath–rest. (Instead **others** suppose resurrection “on the **First Day**” to complete “*the Messianic redemption*”.) “*The exodus from the bonds of Satan into the freedom of the Savior*” never actually crosses its Red Sea to be “brought in” into freedom and rest of the Promised Land – the Kingdom of heaven, on the Sabbath.

“The cloud was Christ”, but His praises aren’t sung for bringing the People out, through, **and in!** “*The Messianic age was expected to be ‘wholly Sabbath and rest in the life everlasting’*”, yet, Jesus’ through resurrection from the dead obtains not “*wholly Sabbath*”–rest. Jesus *intended to substantiate His Messianic claim by offering what the Messiah was expected to bring*”, yet through resurrection from the dead does not substantiate His Messianic claim of the Sabbath and offers not what the Messiah was expected to bring as Lord of the Sabbath and of no other day in that special sense!

Although Bacchiocchi evaluates Jesus’ “*Sabbath healing ministries*” soteriologically, he does not understand Jesus’ **resurrection** to be God’s sublime and ultimate “*redemption–rest*”–act – God’s sublime and ultimate “*Sabbath healing ministry*”. Bacchiocchi, as often writers likely minded, sees Jesus’ resurrection as “*nothing more*” than a “*bald fact*” **without meaning for the day of its occurrence. But if Jesus’ resurrection can’t have meaning for the day on which He rose from the dead, how can Jesus’ lesser works have meaning for the day on which He did them?** That is the question to answer for those who do not believe the resurrection occurred on the Sabbath. The question to answer for those who believe Jesus was resurrected on Sunday, is this, How could Christ’s **Sabbath** healing ministries have drawn from their fountain–source His **resurrection**, had the **Sabbath** not been the day of Resurrection? Would another day steal the occasion? Should all those Sabbath–healing ministries not have been First Day healing ministries?

“*The Sabbath came into being (egeneto) after the creation of man, not to make him a slave of rules and regulations but to ensure his physical and spiritual well-being*”.^{p. 43 par. 4} Like Sunday–apologetics, Sabbath–apologetics have no **boldness** to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by the new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, through his flesh”. That is to say, **through resurrection from the dead!** For Bacchiocchi “*spiritual wellbeing*” **stops ever short of Christ’s final act** to the effect of **eternal “spiritual wellbeing”**. But the Scriptures declare, “**This Man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God**”.^{Hb.10:19–20, 12} Jesus’ Sabbath–ministry implies a **finished** work of **final** salvation and **eternal “spiritual wellbeing”** – not merely of **temporary “wellbeing”**, be it “*spiritual*”. (It also is plainly untrue that “*the Sabbath came into being ... to ensure (man’s) physical and spiritual well-being*” – an observation not worth commenting on.)

It is inconsistent to argue that the redemptive character of Christ’s “*Sabbath ministry*” meant the **establishment, confirmation and enrichment** of the **Sabbath** of the Christian faith while refusing the **same** importance for the **same** reasons for the Day of Jesus’ **resurrection**. Prophetic expectation from the Old Testament as well as from the life of Jesus **appointed the Sabbath** not only for Jesus’ works of redemption **before his death**, but with the view to His **supreme** salvation act of **resurrection from the dead!** In other words, **all** Jesus’ earthly ministry and particularly all his **Sabbath** ministry and **death, points to and appoints** the Day of his **resurrection**. It so to speak “nominates” the Sabbath for this elect work of God! **All** Jesus’ **prior** ministry and particularly his **Sabbath** ministry and **death derive** its significance and energy **from His resurrection**. Which Day would feature in Jesus’ **resurrection**? So Jesus’ resurrection as it **should, happened** on the **Sabbath**. As it **should**: because God blessed the Sabbath for that past, sanctified it for that future, and rested the Seventh Day in that present ... in Christ Jesus ... in resurrection from the dead!

Because Bacchiocchi does not argue for this **ultimate** of Jesus’ Sabbath ministry, he also does not argue for the ultimate of **fulfilment**. Not surprising then to find in Bacchiocchi’s considerations of the relation between Ministry and Day of ministry the relation between **Ultimate Ministry and Ultimate Day** of ministry **lacking**. (As in the wider spectrum of traditional Sabbatarianism.) Estimation or even just the mention of **eternal salvation for man** from death and from among the dead, and of **Jesus’ resurrection** from death and from among the dead, does not exist in Bacchiocchi’s considerations. He for example refers to Christ as the “*Fulfiller of the law*”. “*He realized it’s promises*”.^{p.37} He pays attention to “*the major events of Christ’s life*”, and to “*not only ... the life, but also the teachings of Christ*” for the “*direct fulfilment of Messianic prophecies*”.^{p.35} ^{SNT} But he does so **without mentioning Jesus’ resurrection and without even alluding to it! Not even** Matthew’s words, “*to fulfil*”, while they “*could also refer to the prophetic realisation ... in the life and ministry of Christ*” awaken in Bacchiocchi’s mind the idea of Christ as **Resurrected** being the “*prophetic realization of the law and the prophets*”.^{p.35} (The more surprising of this **vacuum** of Jesus’ **resurrection** in Bacchiocchi’s arguments is that it manifests itself in **response** to Sunday proponents’ **reliance on the Resurrection** as the basis for Sunday observance.) The **non-completion** in this kind of thought as the result of not taking into account Jesus’ **Resurrection**–“*Sabbath ministry*”, disappoints greatly. All Jesus’ “*Sabbath healing ministry*” is expropriated of essence and basis

thereby. (Sunday scores the winning round, the round of **final prophetic fulfilment** ... had Jesus been raised from the dead the First

Day of the week.)

No reason exists to shy away like Bacchiocchi does from Christ's **death and resurrection**—“*Sabbath ministry*”. The fundamental purpose of Jesus' incarnation and **full** Messianic ministry **was to fulfil** the Covenant of Grace. Jesus **came to die** for the sins of his elect – **not only** to fulfil this Covenant through miracles on the **Sabbath**. Without Jesus' atoning **death**, we would have been dead in our trespasses still even had we been raised from the grave like Lazarus or healed like any of those Jesus healed on the Sabbath. Without the **sacrifice** of the Lamb of God means we are without the resurrection unto life. God put **together**; no man can put asunder. Christ's death and resurrection are of equal **value and importance**. They are of one **nature** and of one **content**: God's saving revelation. The two are the **One Work** of redemption of God. But as Revelation was revealed in **Resurrection**, Redemption is recompensed in **Life**. The **two – death and resurrection** – are the **Rest** of God **He for us had made his Sabbath–rest**. The Covenant of Mercy reaches from Crucifixion to Resurrection like **Noah's rainbow – it is God's Covenant of Grace** in which we may rest and rest our trust and hope **because He “in it rested”** and in it put **his** trust and hope – the hope and surety of **Christ**.

The **Scriptures** though, **do** distinguish and even **compare** between Crucifixion and Resurrection. If Christ be not offered ...? This question isn't asked because it is contained in the cardinal question, “If Christ be not **raised** ...?” “It is Christ that **died, yea rather** (= “even more” – *mallon de*) that is **risen** again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us”. ^{Ro.8:34} He makes intercession for us by virtue of his death **as well as** life – even his life on earth **and** in heaven. Christ had “**passed over**”. He had arrived and had “**entered**” – entered God's **rest, the Crucified Resurrected**. “That ye may know the **exceeding** greatness of his power which He wrought in Christ according to the working of his mighty power when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at the right hand in heavenly realms **far above all** principality and power and might and dominion”. ^{Eph.1:19} So Paul, wanting “to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified”, preached ... “Christ and the resurrection”! ^{Acts 17:18} “Christ was **declared Son of God with power** ... by the resurrection from the dead”. ^{Ro.1:4} “He being **made perfect** (being resurrected) became Author of eternal salvation and became called of God an High Priest”. ^{Hb.4:3, 5:9} Christ “became” – this day. “Today have I begotten thee”. God's “It is finished”, is

finished in the death of death in the death of Christ Resurrected! Where this incomparable is compared in Scripture, we expect God's **Sabbath, there!**

God's Sabbath was in His mind “when His works were **finished from the creation** of the world”. But **for no moment** was the Sabbath in God's mind without the **death and resurrection** of Christ **prominent**. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts”. ^{Is.55:8} **Christ's resurrection, eventually, is the only basis of God's sanctification of the Seventh Day Sabbath**. To remember that God is Creator is to remember that in six days He created but the Seventh **finished**. God's Covenant of Grace – His Eternal **Purpose** – “**ended** all God's works He had made” – works **purposed** as well as **ended** ... **in the Son**, the Son of man, Lord of the Sabbath–rest of God. (“Lord of the Sabbath” entails more than just Lordship of the **day**, the specific Sabbath of the Day the Seventh of God's creation. It means and entails “**Lord** of God's Sabbath–**rest**”). **Jesus** is Lord, Ruler, the Decider and Doer of God's **sovereign act, his act to rest**. (“**Sovereign** act” because He is “Lord”.) **Jesus** is the Sabbath's “*creation origin*” and even the Sabbath's creation–**rest!** The “*creation–Sabbath*” tells of **Jesus**. He is the “Amen, the Faithful, the True Witness, The Beginning of the creation of God”, Rv.3:14.

7.6.4.

“**Natural Law**”

7.6.4.1.

“**Moral Law**”

Says James Augustus Hesse, (*Sunday*, Lecture 4),

“*In England especially, the controversies subsequent to the Reformation bring the Sabbath very prominently forward, and raise questions concerning it which were never mooted in primitive times. It seems therefor, desirable, and, indeed, necessary, before we enter upon those questions, to settle these: What was the Sabbath? On what ground was it observed, until the time when, as we suppose, it ceased to be obligatory? ... Why did it cease (if indeed it did cease), to be in force when our Lord rose from the dead?*”

The first question to be determined may be stated thus: Was the observance of the Sabbath a matter of Natural or Moral law, or did it arise solely from external command? If not the former, why not? If the latter, to whom was the external command, which originated the observance, given? (This surely is one of those questions “which could never have been mooted in primitive times”.)

It was scarcely, I think, a matter of Natural or Moral Law, in the sense of being an obligation discoverable without express revelation. Nothing that man finds within him could possibly direct him to the seventh day, in preference to any other day, as a day of rest and worship of God. The utmost that can be said in this respect is what I am going to state. In so far as the commandment to observe the Sabbath implies positions discoverable by the light of reason, (namely, that our Creator demands our gratitude and worship, and that these are best exhibited and most surely paid by periodic appropriation of time to Him), there is a Natural or Moral element on which the commandment is founded. Of course, when an external command has been given, obedience to it may and does become moral in a secondary sense – we may see the reasonableness of it, and our duty to conform our conduct to its requirements, considering the relations in which we stand to the promulgator. But this is not the question at present. In the strict acceptation of the term, the duty of observing the Sabbath is not natural or moral. Perhaps, if we were to ascend to the very earliest conceivable point in the history of the human heart, we should find the moral element of which we are speaking reducible yet further, to general gratitude to the Creator. It was developed as “day unto day uttered speech, and night unto night showed knowledge” (Ps. 19:2). Indeed it would be absurd to suppose that all the laws called Natural or Moral manifested themselves in man’s heart at once. They would, at least the greater part of them would, have been unmeaning to him, antecedently to experience, and could only have dawned upon him as society expanded. There was nothing to provoke their violation. The ideas could not at first have suggested themselves of honouring parents, or abstaining from adultery, covetousness, theft, or false testimony, or even depriving of life, (for death had not entered into the world). On the same principle, I submit, Adam could not have understood a positive command to rest on the seventh day, before the cycle of days had begun, or labour had become laborious enough to necessitate repose. Instincts implanted by the Creator expanded as circumstances called them forth, into the recognition of what we call moral commandments; but no instinct whatever could, without express revelation, expand into the recognition of the seventh day, as God’s day. It is necessary to insist upon this, because, from the point which some persons make of establishing the morality in toto of the Fourth Commandment, and their indisposition to be contended with the acknowledgement of a moral element in it, one would suppose them to hold that the Decalogue was imprinted in a formal shape, as the foundation of all morality, on the hearts of our first parents. Virtually, whatever is moral in the Decalogue was there. Formally, very little was

there. (Of course, I do not mean to say that no positive precept could be understood by Adam. He had one given to him which he could understand – to abstain from the fruit of a tree obvious to his senses – and he broke it, transgressing thereby one of the few moral obligations of which he was as yet conscious, the obligation to obey his Maker. All I am contending for is, that whatever determination we come to, as to the origin of the observance of the Sabbath day, such observance was not a matter of natural or moral law, at any rate as to its circumstances. Those circumstances I hold to be, first the particular day, and the manner in which it was to be observed).

My position might be further illustrated by the words of Hooker. “Even nature”, (he says), “has taught the heathens First, that festival solemnities are a part of the exercise of religion; secondly, that praise, liberality and rest are as natural elements whereof solemnities consist.” Nature did not even teach these things in the earliest springtime of mankind, but they are founded on the natural or moral instincts to which we have already adverted, and therefore are natural or moral in a sense in which the direction of these instincts to the seventh day, or even to one day in seven, can never be. That this is not natural is evident from a consideration strongly put by Archbishop Bramhall, that the old-world fathers from Adam to Moses are not represented as keeping the Sabbath-day, which we may suppose they would have done, had the obligation been discoverable from within. “We find”, (says he), “oblations and priests, and sacrifices, and groves or oratories, and prayers, and thanksgivings, and vows, and whatsoever natural religion doth dictate about the service of God; but we find not one instance of the execution of this supposed law of the seventh-day Sabbath.” I may add, that had the law of its observance been natural or moral, the heathen of Canaan, who are reproached, and with singular minuteness, for many transgressions of the law of nature, and were therefor cast out before the children of Israel, would surely have been reproached for transgression of this. Now they are nowhere so reproached. Had it again been one of the laws of nature, there would not, I humbly conceive, have been assigned for reasons for its observance, in one passage, a fact which could not have been known except by revelation, “God’s working six days and resting the seventh;” in another, a fact which occurred long after man was created, and in which not humanity in general but one nation only was interested. “God brought thee forth out of Egypt, therefor God commanded thee to keep the seventh day.” (Dt.5:15).

But, though the Sabbath was not a natural or moral institution, was it not appointed so early in the world’s history, that, positive though it be, it may be almost deemed a part of man’s nature, and so, binding upon

mankind for ever? Do we not read in Genesis 2:3, that “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work which God had created and made”? We do read this. But what does it amount to? It is merely an account of what God did, not a setting forth to man of what man should do. Besides, when was it enjoined upon man? One would suppose, from the place in which it is mentioned, immediately after he was created, in Paradise, and under circumstances which, as has been observed already, would have rendered its terms unmeaning to him. And the other argument about the old-world fathers and the heathen would apply here. Had the Sabbath been a positive institution at any time anterior to the legislation of Moses, the former would have been noticed as keeping it, the latter censured for neglecting it.

But still, the blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day is mentioned so long before it was actually imposed upon man. This is, at any rate, a stubborn fact. How is it to be accounted for? We may remember, that though we know perfectly well the cosmogony as it is set forth in Genesis, nay the very words uttered by the Creator during and after the completion of His work, and the counsel and confederation of the glorious Three in One in accomplishing it, there is not sufficient evidence for believing that its great and wondrous tale was disclosed to mankind before Moses wrote it. Genesis was a revelation to Moses, not to Adam. We may urge, with Archbishop Bramhall, “that the sanctifying of the seventh day there, is no more than the “sanctifying” of Jeremy “from his mother’s womb” that is the designing or destinating of him to be a prophet; or than the “separating” of St. Paul “from his mother’s womb”. So, the sanctification of the seventh day may signify the decree or determination of God to sanctify it in due time; but as Jeremy’s actual sanctification, and St. Paul’s actual separation, followed long after they were born, so the actual sanctification of the sabbath might follow long after the ground of God’s decree for the sanctification of that day, and the destination of it to that use.” Or we may reply fully with Archdeacon Paley. He is arguing that the Sabbath was given to the Jews peculiarly and at a certain time. If the Sabbath had been instituted at the time of the creation, as the words in Genesis may seem at first sight to import; and if it had been observed all along from that time to the departure of the Jews out of Egypt, a period of about two thousand five hundred years; it appears unaccountable that no mention of it, no occasion of even the obscure allusion to it should occur, either in the general history of the world before the call of Abraham, which contains, we admit, only a few memoirs of its early ages, and those extremely abridged; or, which is more to be wondered at, in that of the life of the first three Jewish patriarchs,

which in many parts of the account, is sufficiently circumstantial and domestic. Nor is there, in the passage (Exodus 16) any intimation that the Sabbath, when appointed to be observed, was only the revival of an ancient institution, which had been neglected, forgotten, or suspended; nor is any such neglect imputed either to the inhabitants of the Old World, or to any part of the family of Noah: nor, lastly, is any permission recorded to dispense with the institution during the captivity of the Jews in Egypt, or on any other public emergency.” And he proceeds, “The passage in the second chapter of Genesis, which creates the whole controversy on the subject, is not inconsistent with this opinion: for, as the seventh day was erected into a Sabbath, on account of God’s resting upon that day from the work of creation, it was natural enough in the historian, when he had related the history of the creation, and of God’s ceasing from it on the seventh day, to add, “And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that on it he had rested from all his work which God had created and made”, although the blessing and sanctification, i.e., the religious distinction and appropriation of that day, were not actually made till many ages afterwards. The words do not assert, that God then “blessed and sanctified” the seventh day, but that he blessed and sanctified it for that reason; and if any ask, why the Sabbath, or the sanctification of the seventh day, was then mentioned, if it was not then appointed, the answer is at hand: the order of connexion and not of time introduced the mention of the Sabbath in the history of the subject which it was ordained to commemorate.”

“The first question to be determined may be stated thus: Was the observance of the Sabbath a matter of **Natural or Moral** law, or did it arise solely from **external command**? If not the former, why not? If the latter, to whom was the external command, which originated the observance, given?”

Hessey presupposes “**moral**” law as the **opposite** of “**external command**”. “**Moral**” law is “**natural**”. It is “**developed as day unto day uttered speech, and night unto night showed knowledge**”. “**Moral**” law is something, says he, “**that man finds within him**” and that “**(naturally) directs him**” to “**worship of God**”. “**Obligation discoverable from within**” (Hooker) makes up “**Natural / Moral law**”. “**If we were to ascend to the very earliest conceivable point in the history of the human heart, we should find the moral element**”. It “**implies positions discoverable by the light of reason**”. Man should be able to “**understand**” “**precepts**” and it should be “**obvious to his senses**” to be “**moral**”. “**We may see the reasonableness of it, and our duty to conform our conduct to its requirements, considering the relations in which we stand to the promulgator**”. “**Moral obligations**” are

“**conscious**”, “Moral or Natural Law”, “*would, at least the greater part of them would, have been unmeaning to (man), antecedently to **experience**, and could only have dawned upon him as **society** expanded*”. “**Instincts implanted by the Creator expanded as circumstances called them forth, into the recognition of what we call moral commandments**”. “**Nature teaches**” (Hooker), “**Natural religion doth dictate about the service of God**”, says Bramhall, “*oblations and priests, and sacrifices, and groves or oratories, and prayers, and thanksgivings, and vows, and whatsoever*”.

Of this plainly nothing is based on instinct, or on reason, or on understanding or the heart or feeling as a natural attribute created within man “in the image of God” but surviving his fall into sin. Not even “*prayers*”, “*thanksgivings*”, or “*vows*”, found “*in the old-world fathers from Adam to Moses*” can be attributed to “*the image*” of Himself in which God created man. All this “*natural religion*” must be ascribed solely to **man’s sinful, fallen nature**, “*developed*” through “*experience*” in “*society*” of a lost mankind. This is “**Law, added**” (Paul) “**because of sin**”, and by which “**sin increases**” and **not** “the righteousness which is of God”. One of the basic mistakes of this “*Moral Law*”-reasoning is that it ignores the fall of man into sin and into a state of sin where his “*natural*” attributes and capabilities are **corrupted completely**, even unto the **state of death**. Man is left without **desire towards God** in himself, his heart has become the most deceiving of all things, his reason weakened and impaired, his inner man corrupted and called the “body of death”. This is man’s state and shameful pride from the moment he disobeyed in his heart and even before he actually ate of the forbidden tree. **Man has walked under the law and under the curse of the law ever since**. And he has walked under the full and total weight of sin’s consequence – even death. The Law has **punished** man with death. Death came down upon him **completely**, not gradually and little by little as he within society “*discovered*”, one sin after the other, as one law after the other was “*understood*”, “*as circumstances called them forth, into the recognition of what we call moral commandments*”. Man’s sin from its **first moment** was his **complete and inherent sinfulness**, not his disobedience to the **one** (and only) “*positive precept understood by* (him)” merely. Law, sin and man’s **total depravity** were a **matter of principle** that involved the **total man** as a **spiritual and responsible** creature before the “*Promulgator*” of Law. Law, sin and depravity were **not** a matter of **insight that evolved into improved** reason-able-ness and **improved** social response-ability. Which means that **not society, but God**, is “only Lawgiver” and sole “*Promulgator*” of Law. Man, in his “**experimental**” circumstance **improved no bit** as according to “*natural religion*”, but only

got further depraved of all good while through the whole process he only further lost sight of God’s original “moral” standards. As man lost his original status of being created in the image of God, he also lost his **capacity for understanding** God’s “moral” requirements of which “**everything virtual was there**” **originally**. He improved not in this regard or in any “*formal*” way of which “*very little was there*” **through experience**, but through experience **developed a need for law upon law** in order to direct him to his **basic** sinfulness before a Holy God. “Natural religion” of any form or manifestation, is the most unambiguous “*religion*” of man’s **incapacity**. It has nothing to do with an evolved ability for true worship of God through Jesus Christ. **It belongs with the pagan, the heathen, “religions”**. **It sorts under the idolatry of the world**. Read Barth’s Paragraph 17, CD Vol. 1, 2, *Religion as Unbelief*.

In answering Hesse and the others’ arguments of “*Natural or Moral Law*” on the validity of the Sabbath in Patriarchal – **and** in Christian – times, it is necessary to answer the **evolutionary** ideology of “*Natural Religion*” and its claims of “General Revelation” and “point of contact”. According to these dogmas the Sabbath as well as its observance are obscured and denied not only **after** creation, but also **at** creation.

It was within the **total circumstance**, within the **completed works** of God, that God separated the Seventh Day, blessed it and sanctified it, **then**, and **there**, for this creature, man, as for Himself. “**The Sabbath was made for man**”, said Jesus, supposing **God’s Sabbath**. Jesus meant the Sabbath was made **with man’s creation “in the beginning” and being God’s work and propriety in creating it**. It happened in God’s own real time – the **only** real time. God created the Sabbath when He created the cosmos and never at any other time as a **feat of his doing** and of His own will. He created as his own Rest, the Sabbath he “made for **man**”. That was at creation and not in Moses’ day, or else claiming to be Lord of the Sabbath makes of God a liar. If God not **on the Seventh Day of creation** and **through** this time – instrument of the Seventh Day communed with his creature, man, He never did and never would afterwards.

Man’s fall into sin did not annul God’s purpose, his will, his desire, or his design. Man’s fall never excused him from the obligation to be the faithful creature of this faithful God. **Man’s fall never excused him from the rest of God’s presence** and celebrating and refreshing in the enjoyment of God’s works and mercies. Man can never be pardoned his turning his back to God’s “Sabbath-Rest”. The Sabbath, therefore, was **not the innovation of the writer(s) of “The Law of Moses”**. The “*circumstance*” and “*society*” through which was prompted the knowledge and

understanding of God's Sabbath rest was that of the **garden of Eden – "Enjoyment"**, not that of Moses or Jewish scribes aeons "*afterward*". They recorded not their own imaginations but the truth and **reality of the history "in the day when God made the heavens and the earth"** revealed to them by God's Holy Spirit. God "made" the Sabbath **then, through** his resting, blessing and sanctification of the Seventh Day. The institution of the Sabbath was the divine act of the Seventh Day of **creation**. In fact, the institution of the Sabbath was God's solo act. Man only by **invitation** shared (and shares) in God's rest of that first day in man's life.

Man broke communion with his Creator through following his own fallen, sinful desire and inclination toward evil and damnation. Man loved the world, the fruit of the tree, more than he loved God, and he consequently parted company with **Life and Rest**. God never gave man the freedom to separate from Him. Man's sin was to claim a freedom that wasn't his. God expressly warned man not to do it.

Man from the hand of his Creator is supposed actively involved in God's rest on the Seventh Day. (Just as in Jesus' resurrection from the dead "in the Sabbath" **man** is particularly involved **being represented in Him**.) Although man is not **mentioned** present and participating with God in God's rest in the Genesis story, his presence and involvement in God's rest on this day at this time in history is indisputable. Genesis 2 verses 1 to 3 are, whether accidentally or not, fittingly grouped through chapter-division with the **second story** of creation, and not with the first story of the first six days of creation. **The Sabbath's institution cannot be divorced from the history of man's fall into sin. In this relation only can the Sabbath be appreciated as the covenant-sign it is, the Covenant being God's Eternal Covenant of Grace.** The **first allusion** in the Scriptures to God's eternal purpose in Jesus Christ is not the "Seed-Promise" in this story. It is not the symbolism of the (substitutionary) slaughter of animal-life or the clothing of man as a covering of sin found in this story. The **creation-completion through God's rest on the Seventh Day** contains the prophetic truth of salvation from the effect of sin and death. The Sabbath cannot be begun with Moses or even less with scribes hundreds of years after Moses. The Sabbath began when God had begun to **reveal his love in creating**.

Man – through following his "*instincts*", "*moral judgement*" and the dictates of "*society*" – man's "*society*" being the serpent and not his Creator – **had sinned even before he ate** of the tree. He **separated** himself from his Creator and from Eve, from the company his Creator and from the occasion the Sabbath afforded him of holy communion with his Maker and Eve. Man had sinned already by his own choice of **isolation** and choice of **company** –

which is Sabbath-breaking. Man had sinned already in that he **questioned God's faithfulness – which is Sabbath-breaking** because "the Sabbath was made for man" by God who thereby meant to show his faithfulness to man. Man had sinned already in that he **envied God – which is Sabbath-breaking** because the Sabbath is supposed for man's trust, rest, peace and satisfaction in God. Sin and death had ruled even before man transgressed the "*positive precept understood by Adam*" not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. "*The single ... positive precept understood by Adam*" through "*experience ... as circumstances called forth*" its "*recognition*", **was God's Sabbath Day and man's keeping and sharing in its blessing!** (See *KD 3/4, Par.53, G.p.58, "The Sabbath-Commandment explains all other Commandments and any other form of the one Commandment. Therefore does it belong at the fore-front"*.)

Man trespassed **formally**, regardless of the **scope of law present in any dimension** of life in **paradise**. "Law" in fact proved to be the "Law of death", so formal it was. "The day you have eaten of the tree you shall die". To sin is dead man's deed. To obey is living man's deed. Taking of the **fruit** was only a **symptom** of sin **reigning**. In fact, formally there can be no sin in taking a fruit and eating it. "Morality" of "Natural Law", falls far short as indicator of God's will or Law. Man transgressed God's **one, revealed Will**. He transgressed God's **one, divine Law**, and God's **One, Eternal Word**. **Adam disobeyed Christ**, and **then**, as sign to seal his sin, ate of the tree he should not have eaten of. The nature of sin and its consequence imply a **sure responsibility** irrespective of degree of "*experience*" or "*circumstances which would have rendered its terms unmeaning to* (man)". *Its terms* were **deadly meaningful** to man. Adam's eating did not make him a sinner **by degree**, but **proved** him a sinner, **a dead man**. His act wasn't that of *progress* but of regress, the act of **fallen** man. Man, Adam, sinned "without the Law" **written**, that is, long before Moses and long before the scribes could make laws. But Adam sinned then, and trespassed the **Sabbath's "Laws"**, **then**. "Sin's strength is the Law". The **Law only confirms** that "where sin is committed, death holds sway already". "The reward of sin is death". It is the Law that demands death for sin – **ultimately it is God**. When God told Adam, "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die", He pronounced to man his responsibility, **in full, and the consequence of sin, in full, and the power of sin, the Law (that is, its irrefutability), in full**. God obliged Himself to inform man on his own creature-responsibilities. God neglected nothing. He left nothing to **man to be learned** through trial and error, or, as natural religion defines it, through "*progress*". That would have **excused** man of responsibility and of sin. **God**

was **Himself a law unto Adam and Eve**. God did not leave His own responsibility to Adam's instincts and experience. Man was a rational and more importantly a "spiritual", *i.e.*, **responsible** and **worshipping** creature from his first breath. ("Responsibility" is the only 'scientific' difference between man and animal. Man from being created by God was responsible to God.)

God's Sabbath was made known to the human race in Adam in **the very first day** of his life – through **direct communication of God**, through Himself and by Himself. In a certain sense man's very (first) sin was desecration of the Sabbath. If God had not rested and had not blessed and hallowed the Seventh Day **in relation to his creation**, in relation to "**all his works** which he had made", then and there **communicating with Adam and Eve**, He could **not** have sanctified, blessed and hallowed the Sabbath at all. If God had not rested and had not blessed and hallowed the Seventh Day **in relation to man** as the **only** creature created **in his own image** and the **only** creature **given rule over creation**, He could **not** have rested on the Sabbath. God would have been unable to communicate with his works. God's sanctification of the Sabbath implies **man's involvement** in the Covenant Transaction of Creation. Adam knew this Covenant and the covenanted **Day – God's Day of Sabbath-Rest**. The Sabbath implied man's involvement in a way **true to the nature of the Covenant** – the Covenant of **Grace**.

God covenanted with man, not the other way round. Man is made **answerable** because of God Covenanting with him. God is made answerable through this Covenant with man **only to Himself**. **The Covenant of Grace is God's act of free will**. The Sabbath is sign of God's **faithfulness**. Now this is God's **Eternal** Covenant and no merely **temporary** thing. It is the **Covenant within the Counsel of the Tri-Une God**, "**made known**" in **being shared with man, then, at creation, on the Sabbath**. The Covenant of **Grace** is made known to Adam, **when God creates** him and his world and completes his works **in this act** of this very first **day of communion** between man and Maker. The Covenant of Grace is a **Sabbath-Covenant**, **the "Covenant of Peace" – the Covenant of God's Rest "made for man"**. God covenanted not with man "*Two thousand five hundred years afterward*". It did not happen any millions or hundreds of years afterward, but no sooner nor later than **immediately in relation to the real time of God's Covenant Establishment with his creature, man**. It was the earthly **Day of God's Rest of all his works** that God had created "**in that he made a finishing to it**", "**the Seventh Day**". The **Covenant of Grace**, very really, was "**God's work that He wrought**", "**on the Seventh Day**". To Moses,

long after, was revealed **the truth and reality of the history** of the creation of the world and of man and God's Covenanted relationship with man – the relationship of Grace in Jesus Christ. Moses recorded this truth, long afterwards, "God of the Seventh Day speaking" through Moses. And no sooner nor later after perhaps another many thousands of years some Jewish scribes penned down what must have been revealed to Moses by God Himself of **what actually happened "on the Seventh Day"** that was the Seventh Day of all creation and of all created time. **Not**, as natural theology alleges, "*although the blessing and sanctification, i.e., the religious distinction and appropriation of that day, were not actually made till many ages afterwards*". **Verily because the blessing and sanctification, i.e., the religious distinction and appropriation of that day were actually made on and in that first Seventh Day of God's works**. God Himself doing what no man could, made, finished and rested from his own works **to distinguish and appropriate that day religiously**. And afterward again, God Himself doing what no man could, made, finished, blessed and sanctified the Seventh Day, naming it "Day of Rest – **Sabbath**". "**Sabbath**" is the **Covenant**-name for the **Seventh Day** of creation-week. "**Lord's Day**" is **that very name** and **that very day** under the dispensation of the **Reality** of God's Covenant of Grace, **Jesus Christ the Lord**, "**resurrected from the dead**"!

The Sabbath, **always**, comes as **judgement-day**. God approaches man in his Eternal Covenant of Grace, and the Sabbath, weekly, confronts man as God's compelling invitation to his Covenanted presence and communion. **God confronts man in Jesus as the Lord of the Sabbath, putting forth to man His claim on him**. The same judgement occurs "Today!" as in the Patriarchal times and as in the Apostolic and Messianic times – "Today!" in this **the end-time**. God changes not, nor his "holy day". God's will, his original will and purpose with this day, **will** be vindicated. It **had** been vindicated in fact through divine confirmation in the finishing of all God's works. This Day **had** been vindicated, in fact, through Resurrection from the dead of Jesus the Anointed. **He, sealed** God's Covenant of Grace with man. On the Seventh Day of **God's finishing** and of **man's beginnings** Jesus "*entered upon his Rest from his own works*".

James Augustus Hesse summarises his position on the validity and, nature of validity, of "the Lord's Day", **Sunday**, as follows, "*The tendency of what has been said hitherto is this :- To show, that as the Lord's Day (Sunday) is of Divine institution because of Apostolic practice and of Scriptural indication, it is not necessary to resort to a Judahic origin of it in order to make it binding upon the conscience. I have contended that the Ancient Church considered it to be a day of obligation, quite independently*

of any connexion with the Sabbath, on purely Christian grounds; – that it was not until after the fifth century that this view was materially impaired; and that it was not until towards the end of the sixteenth century that a sabbatarian origin was formally proposed instead.” Lecture VIII, p. 226, *Sunday*

We contend that as the Lord’s Sabbath Day is of Divine institution because of **Apostolic** practice and of **Scriptural** indication both Old and New Testament, it is not necessary to resort to a Judahic origin of it in order to make it binding upon the conscience. We contend that the Ancient Church considered the Sabbath to be a day of obligation in unbroken and fulfilling continuity and connection with the Old Testament, on purely Christian grounds. That it was not until after the Apostles’ lifetime that this view was materially impaired; and that it was not until towards the end of the second century that Justin formally proposed Sunday observance instead.

Hessey tries to state his view positively. Nevertheless it in essence is negative.

1, It is not purely “*Scriptural*” – it requires no direct indication or command of the New Testament. “*(The Sabbath’s) observance was nowhere positively enjoined by (Christ).*” Hessey quoting Dr. Bound who refers to Cecil

2, It is not purely “*Ecclesiastical*” – the post-apostolic Church falsely rely on “*Apostolic practice and Scriptural indication*”.

3, It definitely is not “*Old Testament*” – it rests not on the Fourth Commandment in any way and is anti-Law in every respect.

Hessey anxiously tries to find some explanation to the seeming anomaly that if the Fourth Commandment is **morally valid** it must be obeyed **literally**. This negative approach towards the Fourth Commandment is about the most positive aspect of Hessey’s understanding of the “Sabbath”-problem. Of course the Sabbath as a “Judahic” institution is to **Christian** ethics, “morally” **unacceptable**. But what is the “*Jewish Sabbath*”? May the “*Jewish Sabbath*” be called the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment? In this lies Hessey’s predicament, and of course the predicament of the entire “Natural Law”-idea of the nineteenth century about the Sabbath.

Hessey at great length quotes from Pietistic Sabbath views and measures to illustrate how un-Christian the Lord’s Day (Sunday) is **when based on “law”** – as he understands “law”. “The Lord’s Day” (Sunday) unavoidably becomes a “Sabbath” as Jewish as “*the Jews’ Sabbath*”. And Hessey is right about that. There is though a great divide between the Lord’s Day when based on **legalism** (pietism) and the Lord’s Day when based on

“**Law**” – “law” understood as **divine** ordinance, whether of Old or of New Testament origin and kind.

Three forms or kinds of “Sabbath” which Hessey painstakingly **disapproves** of must be distinguished from **Sunday**,

1, The “**Judahistic**” or “Pharisaic” Sabbath; 2, The “**Judahic**” or “**Old Testament Sabbath**”; 3, The “**Moral**” Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment also understood as the “Creation” or “Redemption (of the Exodus) Sabbath”.

Of these three, **all three** have one thing in common – they all fall on the weekly **Seventh** Day.

Of these three, **two** have something in common – they were of “**Divine**” origin given by the “One Lawgiver” through “*inspired*” or “*godly*” men. ^(James)

Of these three, **one** is of peculiar nature and objective – it is of **human** origin, invented by many geniuses trying to improve on God’s Sabbath.

Of these three, **one** is of peculiar nature and objective – it pertains the **Old Testament only** and applies to that People only with whom God had entered into Covenant relationship, the **Jews**. To **this** Sabbath (yes, to the Sabbath of the Seventh Day) were “**divinely**”, **added, more** “law” than it was “law” in itself. In the “fullness of time” the Christ would come – as God had covenanted with the descendants to the flesh of Adam and Abraham. “Law” of offerings, rites and ceremonies with the view of the fulfilment of **this Promise** gave the Sabbath a **sacrificial** aspect and ceremonial character that as it came also went with these laws, offerings, rites and ceremonies. This “Sabbath” ended with Jesus’ **death** as did all sacrificial institutions. (That can be claimed only of course because of Jesus **resurrection, from**, the dead into which He as Sacrifice gave Himself. Had He not been raised from the dead Christ’s would just be another sacrifice – a sacrifice that cannot take hold of Life because it would have been held in the clasp of death forever.)

Of these three “Sabbaths”, **only one** is of peculiar nature and objective, form and kind. **It contains no ceremonial, no “added”, divine, or human, “law” or “works” whatever**. Intrinsically this Sabbath (through the Work of God) means and commands the **end for and of all man’s works**. In **contradistinction** this Sabbath intrinsically means and implies the end of all **God’s** works in the sense of its **accomplishment**, its **very doing** wherein **God acts alone his mightiest work in resting**. For man it demands the end of **self-righteousness**. For God it implies “the righteousness which is of God” through and in his works in Jesus Christ. For man this Sabbath means, “Thou shalt not work”, but, “rest”. For God this

Sabbath marked his rest, which also was his works, **finished in Jesus**. With respect to the peculiar nature and objective, form and kind of **this “Sabbath”, the Seventh Day** – but without the “later” and “added”, “Divine” “law” of the **Old Testament!** – it is of **eternal, “Divine”, origin and future**. Man forever must stop working out his own salvation. God forever worked out man’s salvation.

These three types of “Sabbaths” can be distinguished in terms of “works” or “law”. And in terms of this distinction the “**Judahistic**” (Judahistic isn’t ‘judaist’) **Sabbath of self-righteousness and human or “natural” law** is excluded from **God’s** – and therefore, from the “divine” – “Sabbaths”. In terms of this distinction, the “**Judaic**” or “ceremonial” Seventh Day Sabbath is separated from the **sole universal and permanent “Sabbath”, the Seventh Day Sabbath of Christian legacy and of the Lordship of the Son of man**. In terms of this distinction **this Seventh-Day-Sabbath, curtailing all human frantic failure, rests on all God’s consoling completion**. It is the Sabbath of the Sole Lawgiver. In the New Testament this Sabbath Day is the Christ- and Christian-continuation of the Old Testament Creator-Sabbath. It is the Old Testament Sabbath, not only continued, but fulfilled, perfected, exalted and honoured **being the Lord Jesus’ Sabbath Day** through life, through death, through resurrection and through exaltation (Pentecost).

First “**the Seventh Day**”, “was made”, that is, **created** for the Day of God’s Rest. Then at Sinai this Seventh Day was **institutionalised** in Law and made the “**Sabbath**” for a “keeping” by “God’s people”. Then still later in history the **temporary, the sacrificial** by-laws pertaining to the Sabbath were “added”. Because of its sacrificial nature these “rites and ceremonies” were “abrogated” by the Sacrifice of sacrifice, the Lamb of God. **No partial** differentiation may be seen in this, part of the “Sabbath” consisting of a “**moral**” “rest”, the other part of “**ceremonial**” character namely its **Seventh-Day-ness**. A **difference of works** exists between the Sabbath of the “moral” **Fourth Commandment**, and the “ceremonial Sabbath” of the same **Seventh Day**. God’s Sabbath was made the Sabbath also of divers “ceremonial” sacrifices and offerings with the view to the offering by sacrifice of Christ – which view it in any case had intrinsically held since creation. Not divers Sabbaths lie **within** the Fourth Commandment – one “moral” and another a “ceremonial”. A difference came about **outside** the Fourth Commandment: **more of God’s laws were appended** to the **original** law of God’s Sabbath.

The difference also is not one of **morality**, the one “moral” and the other not moral but “ceremonial”. **Both** forms of Sabbath-law are moral. The

ceremonial Sabbaths are also moral exactly for the significance and symbolism of the ceremonies that in their time **contributed to the prophetic meaning** of the Fourth Commandment Sabbath. The Old Testament ceremonies of the Sabbath Day were not of the nature of some philosophic concept of “natural law”. They were **moral** – as moral as any aspect of the Old-Testament Sabbath and Sabbaths. They were moral because the “ceremonies” **witnessed of Christ**.

The Sabbath “God somehow spoke of”, the Seventh Day of creation-origin, **forbids works of any kind but that of God** who in finishing, in blessing and in sanctifying the Seventh Day, rests from all his works in that man may rest and may also enter into God’s completed rest. As Calvin said, That we may rest in order for God to work in us.

The “**moral**” Sabbath and its morality itself are distinguished on the basis of **works**. The “**moral**” Sabbath distinguishes itself as the definite **Day** for God’s act of rest. God’s **acts** from the nature of his divinity are **absolute**. When God’s act is God’s rest, God’s rest is **his absolute act**. God acts **divinely**, that is, in and of full capacity and possibility. “**God rested**”, means, **God is God in acting his rest**. “**I am** who I am”. **God’s rest leaves no idleness**. **Ephesians 1:19** describes God’s **rest**. God’s rest is the exercise and accomplishment of the culmination of his absolute **power**. **God the Mighty** is **God who rests**. Not God almighty as if the mightiest of several mighty, but **God the only one** who disposes of power. The **least** of his power is **all** powerful. God who **rests** is God who **raises** Christ Jesus from the dead because **that, is God working absolutely**. Genesis 2:1-3 says just that because “God somehow spoke of the Seventh Day that in it He entered upon his rest”!

The Lord God well pleased in man, has made this day “**for man**”. Why? Because He, “the Son of man, **is Lord** of the Sabbath”. “Lord of the Sabbath” means God **acting absolutely**, God acting **divinely**, that is, God acting in and of full capacity and possibility. It implies far greater achievement than **creation** out of **nothing**. It implies creation from the **dead**. It implies far greater work than accomplishment of a good and smooth-going task. It implies **victory over adversary ... the resurrection** of Jesus Christ **from the dead** by which feat He is “**Lord**” and without which feat not even Christ may claim to be Lord! And being “**Lord of the Sabbath**” implies the Sabbath the **Day** of Christ’s **victory and triumph** and without which victory and triumph not even the

Sabbath may be invested with the significance of being the Day of God’s Rest!

Because distinguished by works – the creative and finishing and saving works of God – the Sabbath cannot be distinguished of itself or from in itself. It cannot be distinguished as “moral” because it is “naturally” moral or because of its “human value”. Likewise it cannot be distinguished as “ceremonial” because of its time-element, “the Seventh Day”. It is the Seventh Day Sabbath created and elected by the deed of God that cannot be separated from its “moral” quality, features or attributes. God makes of the Seventh Day “My”, “Sabbath” or “Rest Day”. God’s Rest Day is the Seventh Day that cannot be separated from its endowment with “ceremonial” elements, features or attributes, because these are also God’s laws which also foretell God’s rest of the Seventh Day in Jesus Christ. Jesus being the end of these sacrificial ceremonies belonging to the Seventh Day Sabbath put a stop unto it because he offered up Himself in blood offering once for all. Jesus also – or rather, Jesus in the first place being the end-goal of the Seventh Day Sabbath, He forever establishes it his Day of Rest because He rises up from the dead “Sabbath’s Time” once for all. Saying Jesus rose from the dead “In the Sabbath”, is saying New Testamentically what Old Testamentically is said with the words, “God rested the Seventh Day”, or, “God the Seventh Day finished”.

The ceremonial Seventh Day Sabbath “came after” when “law was added” and “sin increased” thereby. ^(Paul) Therefore the ceremonial Seventh Day Sabbath was temporal. It ended when Christ became the end of the law, when He nailed all ceremonial law as well as “moral” law to the cross. He nailed it to the cross as He let Himself be nailed to the cross, being himself the Law – being himself the ceremonial Law as being himself the moral Law ... being himself the sole “Giver of Law”. ^(James)

The Scriptures know but one Sabbath Day. Anybody believing the Bible will know which Day it is, what sort of Day it is, whose Day it is, and for what the Day is meant. Consequently no one will have doubts about “How’s” about keeping the Sabbath. “For nobody will teach anybody any more, because they all will know the Lord”. They all will know the Lord that once said, “the Son of man is Lord of indeed the Sabbath”. That claim teaches us everything. It teaches us everything about morals too. It guarantees us our freedom, the freedom of salvation, the freedom of being slaves of Christ in a way the Sabbath is the servant of the Word.

7.6.5.

Humanistic Sabbath

“... The Lord Jesus' cardinally important pronouncement: 'The Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord ('Kyrios') even of the Sabbath'. Maybe, to the surprise of many,

perhaps most of us: the first section of the Lord Jesus' pronouncement probably did not sound strange to some of his Jewish audience, particularly the Pharisees! As Christians we are all too inclined to think that all Pharisees and all rabbis in the time of Jesus thought and lived casuistically about everything, including observance of the Sabbath, that is to say, law upon law and command upon command. But just listen to Rabbi Schemeon bar ben Menasja: 'Look, it says in Exodus 31:74, Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy FOR you (= for your own good), that is to say: the Sabbath is given to you and you are not given to the Sabbath.' Given that this comes from approximately 180 AD, it can indeed be representative of a certain rabbinic section in Jesus' time.”

Prof. Coetzee observed keenly. This verse is often if not always interpreted in the “representative”, “humanitarian” manner. The quoted rabbi's view is “representative” of an old “school of thought”. Since the rabbi, its chief exponent at the end of the second millennium could well be Prof. Samuele Bacchiocchi. In my opinion the “humanitarian” view fails to catch the drift of Mk.2:27. Its adherents miss “the HEART”. They miss the heart because they mistake divinity for benevolence.

What sort of benevolence, incidentally, “approximately 180 AD” claims, “Look, it says in Exodus 31:74, Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy FOR you (= for your own good), that is to say: the Sabbath is given to you and you are not given to the Sabbath”, yet “about 95 AD” prays to God, “May there be no hope for the defectors and may You speedily eradicate the hostile government in our time and may the Nazarenes the heretics (= Christians who, ironically, kept the Sabbath till deep into the Christian era) perish in an instant and be erased from the book of life”? Quoted from Prof. Coetzee's lecture.

Had God made the Sabbath merely “holy FOR you” (= exclusively “for your own good”), human nature expressed in humanitarian benevolence would turn that good into evil. The Sabbath is called “the holy of the Lord”, and that means the Sabbath is holy, separated, FOR Him, and not, “FOR you” – Israel, or, for that matter, “FOR you” any “man”. The Sabbath isn't “given to you”, oh man, it isn't your property to use or misuse. That is as serious a mistake to make as to subject man to the Sabbath as were the Sabbath a master of man.

For the Jews the Sabbath had become a national prerogative for no other reason than the humanitarian or social benefits it would bring them. If they kept the Sabbath, they would flourish and prosper. They wouldn't know poverty or sickness. Keeping the Sabbath had become a salvation of works and of merit. But their Sabbath-ethics had become the “social

gospel” of their time. It proved to be just as harsh a master as the social gospel of communism. Human life was least respected. Christ “simply annulled” this sort of socialistic and political Sabbath.

While the Sabbath finds fulfilment in **humanitarian idealism** it is corrupted into yet another **humanistic** institution devoid of theological and christological meaning. The New Testament Sabbath’s soteriological significance consists entirely of its christological nature. **If not serving Jesus its Lord and the Unity of the Church the Sabbath cannot serve man and if not serving man as Christ’s Church, it serves man in no respect.** In other words, had the Sabbath not been the Christian Day of Worship it would have been not only useless in every respect, but worse: it would have been a righteousness of works – its keeping would effect man’s eternal damnation.

The Sabbath reaches **beyond man** and his interests. Jesus showed how the Sabbath **serves the interest of the Kingdom of heaven** and of the **Sovereign** of the Kingdom. (This must be seen even in Scriptures like 1Cor.1:2 and 13.) In Ezekiel 20 and 22 where Israel is several times blamed for profaning the Sabbath, **no humanitarian or social negligence is given as reason** for the rebuke. The transgression of the Sabbath Law consisted in the **Name and honour of God** being profaned. **Idolatry** was the People’s sin when they broke the Sabbath! The Sabbath is given “to be a sign between **me and them**, that they might know that **I am the Lord** that sanctify them”. And God sanctified or chose **Israel** for no other purpose than that He separated the **Sabbath** unto Himself. God chose Israel as well as the Sabbath **for His own interest** (Acts 13:47). The Sabbath was not instituted to the service of man **other than in worship of this God** who created and redeemed man unto Himself. The Sabbath might often incur man’s social and secular **detriment**. “I gave them my statutes which if a man do he shall **even live** in them” even if **at the peril** of his life, livelihood and the goodwill of his neighbour. If faith looks at the Sabbath for **hands-out of human pity** it is badly mistaken. **The Sabbath is about its Lord and his People.** Never did Christ do well on the Sabbath for the single purpose of **helping humankind**. He did his duty of **mission**. His **Father’s** work had to be done and accomplished – **specifically on the Sabbath because Jesus’ works are his Father’s rest**. Jesus’ works meant the Day of the **Lord** had come. In Christ’s Sabbath’s works the **Father had to be seen and acknowledged**. The **ultimate** realisation of the purpose of the Sabbath occurred in **Christ’s ultimate Sabbath-work – his resurrection from the dead**. He is the **Risen – NOW IS** He Lord of the Sabbath. **Therefore He reigns** – according to Mk.2:27–28, “**Lord of the Sabbath**”. **Therefore the**

Sabbath holds good for the redeemed. The Sabbath receives substance: is made into something real – through this greatest deed of God in his entire unity of Being. And one aspect or facet of its form and content is that now **as this Seventh Day to God’s order of time**, the Sabbath shall be **God’s Day of Rest and therefore man’s Day of Worship**.

Jesus opened the Sabbath to its **original** purpose – “the Sabbath was made”. The Sabbath being “made for man”, God encompasses **all** creation “for man”. Jesus made the Sabbath **God’s rest** – “**the Son of man is Lord** of the Sabbath”. The Creator **meets** his creature **in Jesus** who **rose from the dead on the Sabbath. Being “lifted up”** – in both crucifixion and resurrection ^(See Schilder *Christ Crucified*.) he draws “**all men**” – “**unto him**”!

7.6.6.

“Rest” Corresponds with “Works”

What Christ on the Sabbath **said**, he on the Sabbath **did** by doing the Father’s **work**, freeing the captured, healing the sick, **quenching man’s spiritual thirst** on the Sabbath day. God invites man to his Own Rest – Jesus Christ. Christ “preached” – **God’s rest**. “Christ preached”, is God’s rest. Jesus practised God’s rest in **deed**. Jesus “proclaimed” his rest not only through preaching and healing **but through the proclamation carried within the Sabbath Day**. Jesus, preaching and healing while simultaneously and significantly choosing, electing and magnifying the **Sabbath, thereby proclaims God’s Kingdom. Today the Christian Church in the very same way – to worship on the Day of Rest – proclaims the Kingdom of Christ.** The Church not only **adds** to its confession the **deed** of faith but in and through the act of worshipping on this **particular** day, **confesses. I.e.**, the Church **lives its confession** of its Lord, the “Lord indeed of the Sabbath also”. **What** is that but the **obedience of faith? How** is that possible but in that the Sabbath’s **Lord had given it exclusive, that is, “holy” content?**

Jesus offers his rest and quenches the soul’s thirst. This He does not only by becoming man, not only throughout his ministry **in life**, but most intensely **in dying and rising** again from the dead – rising “**in the Sabbath**”! Thus God in Christ “somehow of the Seventh Day speaking” uttered the words of deeds **of life** and through the ultimate deed **unto life** – through **Jesus’ own and single deed of Covenant obedience and faith**. “And (God) somehow of the Seventh Day spoke in this strain, and God did rest the Seventh Day from all his works ... and again, If they but entered my rest!” “**My rest**” is it because of the **Covenant-establishing and Lordly obtaining “works” of God in Christ! Again, because of that, “My Holy (Day)”!** “Therefore God blessed the Seventh Day and sanctified it **in that** (= “because”) he ended and rested on the Seventh day from all his work

which God created and made". The **Sabbath** is of **God's** doing as much as of whatever He **created**. **More** so, "because" God "**made**" the Sabbath **for being** the Sabbath, i.e., **for being** his holy Day of Rest ... nowhere else but **within** the **Covenant of Grace**; never else but in **Christ**. As from before the foundation of the earth God had the names of his elect written in the Book of Life (that is, "in Jesus"), so God from before the foundation of the world had "made the Sabbath" for what it **already was in his will**: "**the Lord's Day**". (Not merely for being that Day engraved in stone). The Sabbath of the Seventh Day of the week is of the **Lord Christ's** doing as much as anything about the **redemption** he had covenanted to accomplish. Let no man put asunder what God had put **together**. Jesus unselfishly gave Himself ... on the Sabbath and through service the Sabbath renders **his** service. **He toiled his hardest together with the Father specifically on the Sabbath Day** as on no other day for the salvation of man. It meant his Rest in fullness. Jesus not only **willed to do** but **He willed to do on the Sabbath** his works of the Father. Jesus was Himself "**made**" the Son of man. He earned it through toil. He **earned** his Lordship – He "**made**" or "**won**" it – a Lordship also of the Sabbath, the Son of man serving, serving, serving "man" even unto death to rise "according to the Scriptures the third day" – the resurrection of the Son of man from the death of man! "The Sabbath was made for man". It "was made", "according to the Scriptures", "the third day", **through victory of resurrection**. As much as **Jesus'** solidarity with his elect manifests itself in his **death** is **man's** vested solidarity with Jesus manifested in his **resurrection** from the dead ... and from this truth **derives** the Sabbath Day of resurrection, indeed "the Lord's Day".

How could man dare to axe the root from the trunk of the tree under which the Lord met Abraham? That tree sheltered and protected. It served toward rest and communion. Let man rather not doubt as did Abraham God's Covenant fidelity. Jesus' **reign** over the Sabbath – his **Lordship** over the Sabbath – **meant its magnifying** and never its marginalising, belittling or annulment. Jesus claimed and **today still claims** to be Lord of the Sabbath. **Jesus being Lord of the Sabbath means an invitation, a commandment, to keep the Sabbath unto Him**. The New Testament Church received the Law of God in a way the Old Covenant People could not have dreamt of but could see in faith only. "Abraham saw My day and rejoiced". God **met** Abraham and "rested Himself"⁴ and **conversed** with him under the tree and there with him, "made Covenant" and Promise. And Abraham served the LORD in worship "And the LORD went his way when He finished **communing** with Abraham", Genesis 18! If in this a Sabbath's Rest to "the way of the LORD" wherein God "knew" Abraham¹⁹ and he

"found favour in (His) sight",³ cannot be recognised, who would ever recognise God's Sabbath Day? If in this Jesus Christ "the Way of the LORD" in Whom God "knows" His own¹⁹ and they in Him "find favour in His sight",³ cannot be recognised, who would ever be able to in this recognise God's Promise "according to the time of Life"?

7.6.7.1.

Lecture, 19 January 2001

Introduction

Prayer, God of love, we open our thoughts on your Word in fear and awe of your greatness, the only greatness there is in heavens and on earth. Let us constantly realise our own nothingness while we try to be wise and understanding. We ask your mercy and your forgiveness of our sins – our sins even in daring to speak on the things of God, for Jesus' sake, Amen

To **introduce myself** I wish to present this extract from the *Preface* to Oscar Cullmann's *The Christology of the New Testament*,

To readers as well as to critics, "I should like to say beforehand that I am willing to learn from their discussions precisely at the points where they differ with me. But I hope that they will not dispose of my interpretations with apodictic assertions and verdicts without exegetical grounds. Above all I hope that they will not place me in this or that category which they reject a priori, much less accuse me of not subscribing to this or that contemporary or earlier school. If my (interpretation or) book is judged in terms of theological 'direction', none of the familiar 'schools of thought' will be satisfied with me. This (presentation, as my) book is an exegetical work. I have expressed my conception of the exegetical method in various places. Dispensing with all profound methodological observations – and thus proving myself quite 'out of date', I emphasize here only that I know no other 'method' than the proven philological-historical one. I know of no other 'attitude' toward the text than obedient willingness to listen to it even when what I hear is sometimes completely foreign and contradictory to my own favourite ideas, whatever they may be – the willingness at least to take the trouble to understand and present it, regardless of my own philosophical and theological 'opinions'; and above all the willingness to guard against designating a biblical statement a dispensable form' because it is unacceptable to me on the basis of my opinions." (Emphasis CGE)

Oscar Cullmann's guidelines to the understanding and interpreting of the Bible incidentally almost exactly resemble the way my conclusions as expressed in my book and as I shall try to explain in this presentation, developed and were established.

Orientation to Our Theme

For an orientation to the Convention's theme, *The Meaning of the Sabbath for South Africa Today*, just this: *The Meaning of the Sabbath for South Africa Today* cannot be rightly appreciated but against the background of historic Calvinism in South Africa and its deep and devout regard for Sunday-sacredness. How has Sabbath-theology addressed the Calvinistic stance on the Sabbath vis a vis its "Lord's Day"? Consistently with "law upon law"! But "... *the world* (which in South Africa is Calvinism) *should no longer say that Seventh-day believers talk the law, the law, but do not teach or believe Christ.*" (Refer E.G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 92.)

Calvinism in South Africa today basis its observance of Sunday solidly on Jesus' resurrection – which solidly is Scripture- and Christian-truth. The questionable thing is whether it is allowed to allot the Scripture- and Christian- foundation of Jesus' Resurrection to Sunday, while denying and demolishing it from under the Sabbath.

Calvinism in South Africa today is still the honest and fundamental bulwark of Protestantism in a world that has turned its back on Evangelical, Reformation-truth and the Reformation principle of *Sola Scriptura*! Is it surprising then to find the questioning of traditional Romish vestiges to come from South Africa and specifically from Calvinism in South Africa? To better appreciate *The Sabbath in South Africa Today*, the Calvinistic thinking on the Sabbath in South Africa must therefore be considered duly.

The Meaning of the Sabbath for South Africa Today cannot be anything else, anything more, or anything better than what it is for the Church and always has been for the Church. And *the Meaning of the Sabbath for the Church* cannot be anything else, anything more or anything better than what it is "according to the Scriptures".

The Sabbath, Christian Faith: Context and Content

Our Scripture reading is from the Sabbath's Sermon to the Hebrews the eleventh chapter, verse 23 to 29. I shall fill in the Preacher's innuendoes. "*By faith Moses' parents, when he was born, for three months hid him, because they properly saw The Child and feared no potency's law that would prevent His coming. By faith Moses, when he came of age, refused to be called the Pharaoh's daughter's son. He rather chose to suffer affliction as a son of God's people of all time than for a short while to enjoy the pleasures of sin. He placed the reproach of CHRIST first considering it greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he budgeted the dividends of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, despising the King's revenge: for he*

endured as seeing HIM WHO IS, the Invisible. Through faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the Blood-of-the-Passover lest He-that-Destroys-the-Firstborn should harm God's people. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by a Prepared Path – by which the Egyptians, when they tried to use it, were drowned."

Moses' Was Faith as Eschatology

How might we ensure we talk about the Sabbath as Christian Faith?

"*Christentum das nicht ganz und gar und restlos Eschatologie ist, hat mit Christus ganz und gar und restlos nichts zu tun.*" "*Christianity that not totally and unreservedly is eschatology totally and unreservedly has nothing to do with Christ.*" Karl Barth (Translation CGE.)

Now no matter how great a theologian Barth is and no matter how sweeping his statement, this magnificent claim holds good with Scripture, or falls with Scripture. I am sure no one here present would disagree that Barth with this word of his is in full agreement with the essentials of the Scriptures. We may say with certainty that Genesis 2, Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5, 2 Kings 11 *et al.* are, eschatology. If of Christian significance, these "Sabbath"-Scriptures have all "to do with Christ" or they have "nothing to do with Christ".

The Preacher to the Hebrews says what Barth says, only authoritatively. "*By faith, Moses ...*"! In fact, "*By faith Moses*", "*unreservedly*", "*regarded Christ*"! Whether "*Moses*", through creation, Law, Passover, *etc.*, *i.e.*, whether, "*Moses*", as the Scriptures, he "*by faith ... sees Him Who Is*", "Christ"! The Preacher sums up "*Moses*" in all Scriptures as eschatology!

You may view *eschatology* as one factor or dimension of a square. In order to calculate the surface of the plane or plan of "context", we should find the second factor. And the Preacher again provides it in one word, "*By faith Moses ... esteemed the reproach of Christ (suffering for Christ).*" "Here is the suffering and endurance of the saints: here are they who keep on and persevere (through suffering) in the commandments of God and Faith of Jesus", says another authoritative eschatologist, the Patmos prophet! Rv.14:12

Linguistically and contextually "the endurance of suffering of the saints" (*heh hupomoneh tohn hagiohn*) must be seen against the unfaithful's "holding fast their mark of the beast's name" (*tis lambanei to charagma tou onomatou autou*), verse 11. The saints' endurance must also be seen against their own "keeping (fast) the commands of God (*tehrountes tehs tas entolas tou theou*) and the faith of Jesus" (*kai tehn pistin Iehsou*). Perseverance

pervades the whole of the context, but in “*the perseverance of the saints*” though, is presumed and implied their **suffering** (2Co.1:6) at the hand of those who “hold fast the mark of the **beast**”. And in “*the saints’ perseverance in suffering*” is presumed and implied the **perseverance in suffering for Jesus** and “*for the Faith of Jesus*”! Thus, whereas there is this “mark” or “sign” of allegiance on the part of the ungodly, there also is this “mark” or “sign” of allegiance on the part of the faithful or saints involved. It is their “mark” “*kept fast*”, “*persevered*” in and **suffered** for, which is “*the suffering of the Faith of Jesus Christ*”!

“Inasmuch as ye are partakers of **Christ’s sufferings** ... if ye be **reproached** for the **Name of Christ, yet as a Christian** ... let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God on this behalf” (1Pt.4:13, 14, 16). “**Whether we be afflicted** ... **enduring** of the same **sufferings**...” (2Cor.1:6). Therefore, “Rejoice in ... **suffering** ... and fill up that which is behind of the **afflictions of Christ**”! (Col.1:24)

Suffering is the *endeicis* – the intrinsic essential of “*Christianity*”, of “*Faith*” and of “*Church*”. But **five** “signs” of “guarantee” will you find in Scriptures deemed worthy to be *endeicis* and **no more, Christ Jesus The Endeicis** (2Th.3:5), the *endeicis* of the **love** of Christ (1Cor.13:7), the *endeicis* of the **hope** on Christ, (1Th.1:3) the *endeicis* of the **faith** in Christ (2Th.2:4) ... and the *endeicis* of the **suffering** for Christ! (2Tm.3:10) These are the “kernel”, the **only** “signs” and “guarantee” of Christian Faith that are intrinsic and essential. All “signs” besides are but the “fruit of seed” – *sehmeia*, **of these!** These five things of which the suffering for Christ is not the least, “mark” the “*the Faith of Jesus*”! In fact, says Paul, “*these three, faith, hope and charity, abide*”! *Menei pistis, elpis, agapeh*. “To abide” is a verbal equivalent of the substantive, “suffering” or “longsuffering”, on which the great Protestant Doctrine of the “perseverance of the saints” rests. “*Faith, hope and charity, abide*” or “continues” under and through the purging of “**suffering**” or it is **not** the “*faith hope and charity*” of “*Christian Faith*” (or “*Christianity*”)!

Suffering like eschatology then accompanies and characterises every Christian Truth, virtue and Doctrine. Like eschatology, suffering constitutes that most splendid glory that belonging to the Sabbath illumines its path today as ever before.

Two criteria apply for the Sabbath to be “*Christian Faith*”. It has to be “*Eschatology*”, and it has to “*value highly the reproach of Christ*”. (2Th.1:4)

The Sabbath, believed, confessed, kept, and taught, **according to the Scriptures, shall go contrary** to “*contextualised*”, compromised,

theological vogue. It **shall mean because of the Sabbath to suffer for Christ** and for “*the Faith and Testimony of Jesus*” – which is “*The Third Angel’s Message*” (Rv.14:12).

The Seventh Day Sabbath provides occasion for **unsettling opposition and persecution**. The “**eschatological**” “**suffering**” of the Sabbath is to “*take up one’s cross*” and to “*forsake family*” and nation and tradition and creed for the Gospel of Jesus, “*seeing Him Who is, the Invisible*”! **The Sabbath indicates Christians as Contra-Contextualisers – Reformers and Protestants against situationalisation**, “*strangers and sojourners*” “*who have come to Jerusalem above*”! The Sabbath implies that unrestful Abrahamic “*dwelling*” or “rest”, “*in tabernacles*” “*not made with hands*” (Hb.9:11). It has no *Heimat* here below. “*For he looked for a city that has foundations the builder and maker of which is God!*” The Sabbath **is not**, but **points to** the **Christian** “*Identitätsheimat*”. (It does not point to Ernst Bloch’s communistic Utopia.) **Jesus Christ is that Rest of God Where and in Whom** the “Christian and believer” finds his rest “**and therefore** (*ara*) **a keeping of the Sabbath**”. For the Christian “*remaineth a keeping of the Sabbath*”, “*is valid a sabbatismo*” – as sign of the *katapausis* he **in Jesus Christ** “*entered into*”. Sabbath-keepers are **eschatologists!** Their “*Faith*” and “*Future*”, has **everything** “**totally and unreservedly to do with Christ**”. “*They declare* (through their keeping of the Sabbath or rather their Sabbath-keeping declares of them) *plainly that they seek an heavenly country*”. They “*declare plainly*” by their believing of the Sabbath through suffering for Christ’s sake that they are “*strangers and pilgrims on earth*” (Hb.11:14, 16, 13).

The Sabbath has no importance but for the **sufferers** for the *Faith of Jesus* – the **Church!** It has never had any advantage for the “*contextual*” ochlocracy (tyranny of the mob), for the *hegemonia* (“sovereignty” or “rule”) of the proletariat. For few has the Sabbath been the Day of joy and enjoyment **of the Lord** ... and for even the **fewest** the Day of burden, solicitude and tribulation **for** the Lord! For but the **fewest** – being “the Body that is **Christ’s**” – has the Sabbath been “*The Third Angel’s Message*” : “**in as much as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings**”!

And for how many has the Sabbath meant a **rejoicing** in the **suffering** for Christ? The Sabbath of “*humanitarian value*” might flatter halls smugly “*packed to capacity*” of contented arrived ones, the Sabbath of a Sabbatharian establishment. But it **won’t be** the *Christian* Day of Worship-Rest – **for lacking** the *endeicis* of the **suffering** of “*Christian*” “*Faith*”.

The Sabbath “*on the table*”, basically, is the Sabbath of the *Christian Vision and Future*. Isaiah 66:23, “*And it shall come to pass that for all*

time, proverbially, ‘from one new moon to another’, all flesh from Sabbath to Sabbath shall come to worship before Me, saith Yahweh”! The Sabbath eschatologically belongs to the **Kingdom of God** – that dominion and domain of the **saints in Jesus Christ** – as wide as Christianity and the Church itself – as wide, **but, as restricted**, as “*Christian Faith*” and “*the perseverance of the saints*” in “*the Faith of Jesus*”!

I have endeavoured to find definition of the Sabbath in terms of **The Scriptures**. Is my spectre or “**plan**” of the Sabbath and the Church wishful thinking and preposterous? It depends on the **Basis** the structure is projected on – *eschatology: by faith to see Christ, and to esteem the reproach of Christ!* Without these factors the drawing of the Sabbath and its surveying will be incorrect. But these factors however accurate give no **content**. We have the drawing. We say ‘See, this is my house’. But we still have no **structure**; we still have nowhere to abide or rest! **Third Dimension and Content**

We found the **plane** of two factors, *Eschatology – Suffering squared = “context”* – the *Christian Sabbath* seen **one-dimensionally**.

The most important principle of all Bible’s Sabbath Truth must now be taken up, at which point the banner must be raised today to spearhead **proclamation of Christ** through and in and with the doctrine, the teaching, **and**, the practice and suffering of the Christian Sabbath. If the **Sabbath’s** banner must be raised – let **Christ** be raised, or sound the retreat and burn the banner! If by the **Sabbath** and its Truth, **Christ** be not **lifted up**, then hide in shame or join the ranks of Sunday-worshippers!

That indispensable principle, that third dimension whereby is obtained **substance and content** of “*Christian Faith*” or “*Christianity*”, is this:

“*Christlicher Glaube der nicht Auferstehungsglaube ist, kann weder christlich noch Glaube genannt werden.*” “*Christian Faith that is not Resurrection Faith, cannot be called Christian, or, Faith!*” (Emphasis CGE)

It sounds so nice and easy, but are we really prepared to apply this condition to our **Sabbath-persuasion**?

“**And I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto Me!**”

Christ’s statement includes both Crucifixion and Resurrection, the one without the other being unimaginable. “I want to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him **crucified**” “**Him** (the Crucified), hath God **exalted** with his right hand Prince and Saviour (Acts 5:31), the Prince of Life Whom God **raised** from the dead, whereof we are witnesses!” (3:15) One can speak of “*Christ crucified*” but as **Christ resurrected!** One can speak of the *Suffering Servant of the LORD* but as **Triumphant Son of God**. Christian Witness, “*Christian Faith*”, “*sees the One Who Is*” “*at the right*

hand of the power of God in heavenly realms”. It sees “**The One Resurrected** Who on the First Day of the week appeared to Mary first”.

“*By faith Moses ... esteeming the reproach of Christ* (the glory of God – Jn.13) *greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, had respect unto the recompense of the reward ... Through faith he kept the Passover as seeing Him Who Is, the Invisible.*”

The Preacher speaks of *Yahweh*, of “*Him Who Is*”, “*the Invisible*”, as **risen!** And he speaks of **Him** as being the essence and the content and the fulfilment and the perfection of “*recompense of the reward*”, as being, and for being, “**Christ**”, as being, and for being, **Christ resurrected** from the dead! The Preacher to the Hebrews is an eschatologist and he is a resurrectionist. He sees this **Bedrock** and this **Future**; he sees Christ **reproached**, and, **rewarded!** “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable his judgements and his ways past finding out!”

“*In der Erinnerung an seine Auferstehung gründet die inklusive Hoffnung auf die universale Zukunft Christi. ... In ihm gründet die Zukunft der Gerechtigkeit für die Sünder und die Zukunft des Lebens für die dem Toten Unterworfenen.*” “*In the memory of His resurrection is seated the inclusive Hope of the universal Future of Christ. ... In Him is founded the Future of Righteousness for sinners and the future of Life for those subjected to death.*”

If the **Sabbath** – its being and truth, its past and future, its essence and doctrine, its keeping and rest, its Content and Form – its Reality and Day – **after we men have handled it, no longer** is *Eschatology*, **no longer** is *Suffering for Christ*, and **no longer** is *Resurrection Faith*, it ceased to be *Christian*. It ceased to be *Faith*. **It ceased to be the Bible-Sabbath!**

Do We Keep the Sabbath Or Do We Observe Saturday?

Have you ever thought it possible there might be **just one thing** Christianity could agree on absolutely – that there might be just one thing Christians have **absolutely contextualised**? **Then what about Sunday-sacredness and Sunday-observance?** Immediately I hear us all protest. We are Sabbath-keepers! We don’t “contextualise” – we don’t compromise, not on the Sabbath!

With all respect to Sabbath-keepers, when we think “contextually”, what is say twenty million Sabbath-keepers to say a billion Sunday-keepers? With all respect to my brethren of **mutual faith**, I still ask, Have you ever thought it possible there might be **just one thing** Christianity could agree on absolutely – that there might be just one thing Christians have **absolutely**

contextualised? Then what about Sunday-sacredness and Sunday-observance?

Let me answer: Christianity has **absolutely contextualised** with regard to Sunday-observance in **more than one way! We always think in terms of Sunday only. But what about the Sabbath?** Don't you think it **strange** that whereas Christianity has come to **full agreement** on Sunday-sacredness, that whereas the **whole** Christian Church **makes of Sunday the Christian Day of Worship**, it did **nothing** to the **Sabbath Day?**

The **Church**, when it made of **Sunday**, its "**sacred**", "**celebrated**" Day of **Worship-Rest**, made of the Sabbath, "**Still Saturday**" – "**Still Day of Doom**". (As you all know, Saturn's Day is the Day of Doom – its meaning received from the introduction of the "Planetary Week".) **Christianity** – the **Church!** – in order to drive away superstitious doom, made of Saturday, the Sabbath Day, the day of **religious** profanity! Christianity still observes the Sabbath. It observes it, "**Still**" – Saturday of gloom, and, **noisy** – Saturday of mirth! But the Christian Church "**observes**" Saturday, and in either way, "**observes**" it **religiously!**

The **whole Christian Church** – with inclusion of the **Sabbath-keepers** – wittingly or unwittingly, believes the Roman Catholic **pious** and **sacred** observance of "**Still Saturday**". **All** the Church **shares** **Still Saturday!** **Everywhere** on **every** Seventh Day of the week "Christianity" undivided, "**observes**", "**celebrates**", and "**devotes**" "**Still**

Saturday", **sacredly** – for its pleasures as for its doom!

Again I hear vehement objection! **No, no! Sabbath-keeping** believers observe the Seventh Day **for the purpose of Worship and Rest** – not as or for being a Day of Doom or frolicking!

Admitted! But don't **we, Sabbath-keeping** believers – like the rest of Christianity – believe the **resurrection** of the Sabbath's Lord occurred on another Day **than He is the Lord of? We all, the Church, otherwise and Sabbath-keeping, believe the Lord SUN's Day befell the honour of being the Day the Lord of the Sabbath, rose from the dead on!**

Every **Sunday** – every **First** Day of the week well-meaning Christians keep **holy**, they keep holy **Life's Victory** over **death's "stillness"**. They do **because they believe Jesus' resurrection**, "**On the First Day of the week!**" Every **Sabbath** Day – every **Seventh** Day Sabbath well-meaning Christians keep **holy**, they keep holy **death's "stillness"**. They do **because they don't believe Jesus' resurrection "in Sabbath's time!"** They do, because **they** also, believe Jesus' resurrection, "**On the First Day of the week!**"

We Sabbath-keeping believers not only implicitly **admit** with the argument of **practice** Death's Quiet Saturday. We actually **confess** our **faith**

of it with **argument**, "**Jesus rested the Sabbath in his grave!**"; "**Jesus the Sabbath in the grave reposed!**" "**Jesus' resurrection from the dead is a bald fact – an event meaningless in itself for the Day as such of His resurrection**". Is it still so easy and nice to speak of "**Christian Faith**" as "**Resurrection Faith**"? We like to make of the Sabbath "**Christianity**" or "**Christian Faith**" but **not "Resurrection Faith"**!

According to **us, Sabbath-keeping** believers, Jesus' **DEATH**, in itself, **does** mean something for the Day as such of His' "**repose in the grave**". Jesus' **DEATH**, say **we**, means so much for the Day, **He BY DEATH obeyed the Commandment to REST the Sabbath and so in DEATH in resting** confirmed the Day's sanctification or setting apart.

But, Jesus' **RESURRECTION**, in itself, say **we, Sabbath-keeping** believers, means **nothing** for the Day as such of His Victory over death and grave! **THE DEATH OF DEATH IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST** means so little for the Day of its truth, Jesus by **resurrection from the dead, obeyed no Commandment of God** – not even His Commandment **OF LIFE UNTO DIVINE REST FROM THE DEAD! He by Life's Victory over Death obeyed NOT the Commandment to REST the Sabbath and so in Resurrection confirmed NOT the Day's sanctification. And so Jesus confirmed no more than the Day's ordinariness!**

For Jesus to have "**rested the Sabbath**", to have "**reposed in the grave**", according to **our**, Sabbath-keepers' thinking, requires **three things**. First, the **penalty for sin, death**, must be made the **Prize for Victory** over sin, death and the devil. The **penalty for sin** must be made **God's Rest!** And the ultimate Prize for **Sin's victory over life, righteousness and man, Death**, must be made Jesus' "**Rest**", His "**repose in the grave**"! Then, the **Real Prize** for Jesus' Victory over sin, death and the devil, **His resurrection from the dead**, must be **reduced**, to **nothing**, and "**in itself**", must be but the "**bald**" and "**meaningless**" "**fact**" of what happened when Jesus was raised from the dead.

If Jesus' **resurrection "merely"** is "**a bald fact – in itself meaningless**" "**for the Day of the week it happened on**", then the **truth of creation "completion"** must also be "**merely a bald fact**" "**in itself meaningless for the Day of the week it happened on**". **Then**, that "in six days the LORD made heavens and earth, the sea and all that in them is **but**, on the **Seventh** Day, **perfected** all His works He had made", must be "**meaningless in itself for the Day**" of the week it happened on. Then meaningless **must it be for the Day God commanded** that His Rest should be commemorated on.

If Jesus' **resurrection** is meaningless for the Day of the week it happened on, then **also** the "**salvation of the LORD**". Then **also** "that the Lord thy God **brought thee out** (of the land of Egypt) through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm"! Then also is it **meaningless** for the **Day** He commanded the "**bald fact**" of His **salvation** to be celebrated on! Then **in vain** "commanded (He) thee to keep the **Sabbath Day**"!

What is God's **Rest** if not **improvement** of the six days of creation's "**very good**" work – if not its "**perfection**"? What is it if not that "*Jesus gave them rest*" – if not the "*entering into His own Rest as God from His*"? – Hb.4:8, 10 What can all this – eschatological – "ending" = "**finishing**" mean if not "*the exceeding greatness of His power when He raised Christ from the dead? God "thus spoke" "in the Son*"! God thus "*revived Himself*" in the Son in Whom His "*soul delights*".

The raising of Jesus Christ from the dead means **everything for the Day on which God "finished", and, saved!** It cannot be improved on. It is of all God's works, the exceeding great in power – His work of the Seventh Day – His Rest!

Of all history and of all future God's Finishing is the Beginning! If God at creation "finished", "sanctified", "blessed", "rested", and "saved" and the Day from it derived importance **then**, would not the day from it derive importance **now, if God in Christ in resurrection from the dead**, "finish", "sanctify", "bless", "rest", and "save"? True to divine principle it would! Would yet the last act not mean anything for the Day where the first act so much meant for the Day, God called it "My Holy"? By divine principle the Day of the week received its due and by divine principle shall again receive its due.

God's mightiest and supreme **Act**, his One **Word** of Command of Life in Jesus Christ **in raising Him from the dead**, spells God's "**Rest**" and Jesus' "**entering into His own Rest**"! It spells the "**Rest**" concerning which God, when He "of the Seventh Day, spoke", **in this Act**, "**in the Son**", "**spoke**", "**the Word**". When "of the Seventh day speaking", God, "**through the Son**", "in these last days" (**the Day of Jesus Christ!**) "**spoke**", **God in Christ, of Christ spoke, in Him being raised from the dead!** (Hb.4:4, 1:2) "*Christianity that not totally and unreservedly is eschatology, totally and unreservedly has nothing to do with Christ!*"

From this **Resurrection-sanctification** of the Sabbath Day, the Sabbath of the Seventh **Creation** Day obtained **its** sanctification. From this **completion of perfection** "in the Sabbath Day" of Jesus' **resurrection** from the dead, the Sabbath of the Seventh **Creation** Day obtained **its** "finishing" which is God's **own "finishing"** and "**entering** into His **own Rest**". "*That*

ye may know **What Is** the exceeding greatness of his Power **Which He wrought when He Raised Him from the dead and set Him at His Own Right Hand in heavenly realm!**" "*It Is*" **Jesus!** It is **Jesus'** own "finishing" and "entering into **His** own Rest – **as** God ...", **being God** "reigning for ever and ever" **as** and **being resurrected** from the dead!

"**Being made perfect** He **became** ... the Author of eternal salvation". Then **arrives** the Christian Day of Worship and Rest, the Christian Sabbath Day!

God's **finishing** of the Seventh Day is His finishing in Jesus Christ Who **through resurrection** from the dead "is the **Amen (Rest) of the creation of God**" (Rv.3:14).

God's **sanctification** of the Seventh Day is His "**preparing the new and living Way into the Holiest of all**" (Hb.9:8; 10:20)!

God's **rest** of the Seventh Day is His "**obtaining eternal redemption** ... (having) sat down on the right hand of God" (Hb.10:12).

God's **blessing** of the Seventh Day is "**through Jesus Christ to Whom be glory for ever and ever**" **because of resurrection from the dead!** (Hb.13:21. Cf. Ex.15:18).

"The Rock was Christ". He is "the Stone the builders rejected **become the Cornerstone**" – **through resurrection from the dead** – the Cornerstone upon which **rests** the whole Building of his Church and Kingdom for whom "**therefore there remains valid a keeping of the Sabbath!**" (Hb.4:9) **The Cornerstone** has "become glorious in our eyes" – **through resurrection from the dead – and therefore** "it is the **Day** the Lord has made – let us be glad and rejoice in it!" (Ps. 138)

We're talking **eschatology all the way!** We are talking **true Christianity** all the way! We're talking the **Seventh Day Sabbath!** "*So much Scripture*" yet so little if **nothing** to do with the First Day of the week! "*So much Scripture*" and **all** to do with the day and the spirit of the day of **God's** doing and of **God's** making, "the **Seventh Day concerning which** He – so eschatologically – **spoke**".

Now, "**according to the Scriptures**", and, "**to the Law and to the Prophets**", that certain **place in the history** of God's Plan of Salvation was **predestined, reserved, preserved and prepared** for the **Sabbath the Seventh Day** "*concerning which He thus spoke*", "*thus*": **by resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead** – Matthew 28:1 to 4 and Hb.4:4!

God's acts are eschatologically one, but the **last** – God's act in Christ **in raising Him from the dead** – has **pre-eminence**, and **from it**, God's creation-act **derives** content and glory. (**2Cor.3:9**) Not only are the acts of God eschatologically one, the **days** are eschatologically one as well.

As the **last act (and, Day) is first in power and glory**, the first act (**and, Day**) can but **reflect** the power and glory of the last – **the last which is first by God’s dispensation and doing through Jesus Christ – in resurrection** from the dead!

Now, If “God concerning the **Seventh Day** spoke” when He spoke of **creation**-blessing and sanctification, completion and Rest, then we know **that “Seventh Day” must** have received from **Resurrection Day** – God’ **acts** being eschatologically one. And being eschatologically one, we know, the **Days** by God’s single eschatological act, dispensation and purpose “perfected” **in Jesus Christ in resurrection** from the dead, **must** be **that, “Seventh, Day”!** It must be! “God spoke, and it was”! Jeremiah 4:28, “**I have spoken, I have purposed!**” **Therefore**, “The Lord’s Day” is so called for **eschatological** reason above all! “The Lord’s Day” is so called for its “**witness**” – its “suffering-value”. And it is called “The Lord’s Day” because of its Lord’s *egesis*!

*“What makes of this day this singular Day, **the Lord’s Day**, was that what happened on it and to it: **the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!** It is the **resurrection** of this One deceased, **his going out** of the grave wherein He – after He ... had been crucified and had died, had been laid.”* (Emphasis mine.) * See **Footnote**.

The **resurrection** of Jesus Christ from the dead then is what makes of the **Day** of His resurrection, the **Lord’s Day!** The principle behind Barth’s ominous statement on the Lord’s Day, is the general premise, the basis and the content of **each and the whole** of **Christian** Doctrine. And so it is for Jürgen Moltmann.

*“Das Christentum steht und fällt mit der Wirklichkeit der Auferweckung Jesu von den Toten durch Gott. (The Christian Faith stands or falls with the resurrection of Jesus from the dead by God.) **Es gibt im Neuen Testament keinen Glauben, der nicht a priori bei der Auferstehung Jesu einsetzt.** (There is no such thing in the New Testament as Faith that a priori does not start at the resurrection of Jesus.) ... **Das Bekenntnis zur Person Jesu als des Herrn und das Bekenntnis zum Werk Gottes der ihn von den Toten auferweckt hat, gehören untrennbar zusammen.** (The confession of the Person of Jesus as the Lord and the confession of the work of God Who raised Him from the dead inseparably belong together.) ... **Christlicher Glaube der nicht Auferstehungsglaube ist, kann darum weder christlich noch Glaube genannt werden.** (Christian Faith that is not Resurrection Faith therefor cannot be called Christian or Faith.) ... **Aus der Wahrnehmung des auferstandenen Christus entsteht die Wahrnehmung der eigenen Sendung in der Mission an die Völker.** (In the percipience of the*

*risen Christ begins the percipience of the Mission to the nations.) **In der Erinnerung an seine Auferstehung gründet die inklusive Hoffnung auf die universale Zukunft Christi.** (In the remembrance of His resurrection is founded the inclusive Hope of the universal Future of Christ and Church.) **Die Kernsätze der urchristlichen Missionsverkündigung lauten darum:** (The crux of the primitive missionary proclamation therefor is,) **1. “den gekreuzigten Jesus hatt Gott von den Toten auferweckt”.** (This crucified Jesus God raised from the dead.) ... **2. “des sind wir Zeugen”.** (Of Him are we witnesses.) ... **3. In ihm gründet die Zukunft der Gerechtigkeit für die Sünder und die Zukunft des Lebens für die dem Toten Unterworfenen.** (In Him reside the Future of Righteousness for sinners and the Future of Life for those subjected to death.)” (Theologie der Hoffnung, s. 150/151)*

Is Our Sabbath the Christian Sabbath?

If Sunday the **First Day** of the week had been **the day in the Act** of God’s exceeding great power in raising Christ from the dead, then only **could** Sunday have become the Lord’s Day **by Jesus’ resurrection**.

But not even this is the first condition. The first condition is the eschatological. **If** Sunday the **First Day** of the week had been **the day prepared in the dispensations** of God for this His glorious eschatological purpose in Jesus Christ, then, and then only, Sunday **could** have become the Lord’s Day by Jesus’ resurrection. **But we see:** God, in His dispensations, and for this His glorious purpose, and mightiest Act in Jesus Christ in raising Him from the dead, **choosing, creating and preparing, “the Seventh Day”.** “God somehow of the Seventh Day **thus spoke**”! (Hb. 4:4)

Precisely therefore, **take away Christ’s Resurrection** and of Christianity and of its true, Scriptural, divinely created, ordained and prepared Day of Worship-Rest, of its real “Lord’s Day”, the **Seventh Day Sabbath**, remains **nothing** . . . nothing but **idolatry!** I mean not the First Day of the week called Sunday called the Lord’s Day because that, *a priori*, is idolatry! “*Resurrection-Sunday*” – the antipode of “*Still Saturday*” – is Rome’s abomination and no substitute for the Lord God’s Holy Sabbath Day! I mean of the **Seventh Day Sabbath’s Christian worship** remains nothing but idolatry **if the resurrection of Christ is denied it, if Christ’s resurrection isn’t its all.**

If Christ’s **resurrection** be denied the **Sabbath** and **its** observance, then all that remains of it is **man’s keeping** of it. Now what remains if **God’s Act** of this day is removed and only **our** act of this day remains? The Reformers said it a thousand times: a righteousness of works . . . **idolatry!** **All that remains is the Sabbath’s denial and the confession of Still**

Saturday! For **without** Jesus and without Him the **Resurrected** Crucified, a keeping of the Sabbath and the Sabbath itself are “*not Christian*”, “*not Faith*”, not Christian Doctrine, not Christian practice, not Christian virtue, but self-worship ... idolatry!

May we keep on talking about “Sabbath-keeping”, and, “I **believe** the Sabbath”, while **Jesus’ resurrection** is denied the Seventh Day Sabbath? While the Sabbath demands nothing of us of that Faith for which a man loses his life in order to gain it? Yes, Christ’s resurrection from the dead is the cross the Sabbath demands the follower of Christ in order to participate in the sufferings of his Master should take upon his shoulder. Allow me to remind you of Moltmann’s diction **with which we heartily in agreement started**, “*Es gibt im Neuen Testament keinen Glauben, der nicht a priori bei der Auferstehung Jesu einsetzt. ... Christlicher Glaube der nicht Auferstehungsglaube ist, kann weder christlich noch Glaube genannt werden.*” “Therefore there remains valid for God’s People a keeping of the Sabbath – and the world shall hate and persecute them for it! They shall “*esteem the Reproach of Christ*” for believing and obeying the pure **Doctrine** of Christ. “*Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter into God’s rest*” by “*Christian Faith*” – by **Resurrection Faith** – they shall “*enter in*” being “*made partakers of Christ*” in his **suffering**. We shall suffer for the Resurrection of Christ or not at all. This is the eschatology of the Sabbath of the “*Christian Faith*”.

The lines of demarcation are clearly drawn. **Sunday** is the Christian Day of Worship-Rest because Jesus on the **First** Day of the week **rose** from the dead and **Saturday** is NOT the Christian Day of Worship-Rest because Jesus did **NOT** “in the

Sabbath” rise from the dead.

Or,

Jesus “*in the Sabbath*” **rose from the dead** and the **Sabbath**, “*therefore*”, and “*according to the Scriptures*”, **became** God’s Covenanted and Promised Day of creation- and redemption-Rest – God’s Covenanted and Promised Day of creation- and redemption-Rest – “*fulfilled*”!

To summarise, “*God*” in **Jesus Christ** in **resurrection** from the dead, “*in these last days*”, “*spoke*” ... His Living Word! He in Jesus Christ **in resurrection** from the dead, “*spoke ... of the Seventh Day*”. God “*thus*” “*speaking*”, **in Jesus Christ, in resurrection from the dead**, “*spoke*” “*on*” and “*in*” and “*by*” “*Sabbath’s time*”, and “*thus*” “*speaking*”, “*entered into His Rest*”, Mt.28:1, Hb.4:10. God “*thus speaking*” “*entered into His Rest*”

(so) “*that ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward when He raised Christ from the dead*”. Eph.1:19-20

The **negative conclusion**, however, is that if Jesus’ **resurrection** from the dead – the very fibre and life of **Christian Faith** – is **denied** the **Sabbath**, then, to “observe” it, is to observe “*Still Saturday*” – the “**Day of Saturn**”, **cosmic god** of doom. Then, to observe the Sabbath is to “*observe*” the “*days*” of the “*weak and beggarly cosmic principalities*” that Paul in Galatians 4:10 unequivocally, **condemns** as he unequivocally condemns its observers!

Let us join Paul, as closing prayer, in his **Song for the Sabbath**,

“If then ye be **risen with Christ** . . .

“If then ye be where **Christ sitteth** on the right hand of God . . .

where “in Him **dwelleth** all the **fulness** of the Godhead bodily . . .

then “ye **in Him** are **complete** . . .

and Christ “**is Head of all principality and power**” . . .

And “through the operation of God who **raised** Him from the dead,

has He **quicken you also** . . . **together with Him**,

has He **forgiven you all trespasses** . . .

has He **spoiled principalities and powers** . . .

has He triumphed over them in it” . . .

in Jesus’ resurrection from the dead! Amen.

Footnote. In these words, Karl Barth states the true meaning of things concerning the Sabbath Day in the Kingdom of God. Barth has a few more words that I did not quote because those few words destroy the truth of everything he says. Those few words are, “... *his going out of the grave wherein He after He had been crucified had died, two days before, had been laid.*” “*Was jenen Tag zu jenem – jenem einzigartigen Tag machte, war das, was an ihm geschah: die Auferstehung Jesu Christi von den Toten, die Auferweckung dieses einen Gestorbenen, seine Herausführung aus dem Grabe, in das er zwei Tage zuvor, nachdem er gekreuzigt und gestorben, gelegt war.*” By these three words, “*zwei Tage zuvor*”, Karl Barth, with the whole Sunday-keeping Church, **makes of the Lord’s Day, the Sunday**. These words make of the day of Jesus’ crucifixion and death also the day of His entombment. And the day of Jesus’ entombment no doubt being the Friday, Barth places the resurrection two days after ... on the Sunday of course! But I mention this only incidentally for it is not the subject of my discussion today. **The Great Enigma**

But who can protest in allegiance to **The Scriptures**, when every **Scripture** touching “*Sabbath*” and “*First Day*”, is **corrupted**? As a result of

new Versions and Translations, who, when reading them will not believe Sunday for “the Day the Lord has made”? Who will not read his (new) Bible and leave the Sabbath behind seeing it was “After the Sabbath (and) on the First Day” when God in the ultimate of his power finished all his works He had made when He raised Christ Jesus from the dead? Who will read his Bible and not keep still the Saturday awaiting glory “on the third day” after Friday? Who will read his Bible and not with the first Christians “on the First Day of the week congregate their fear of the Jews notwithstanding”? Who will read his Bible and not with Peter and the disciples on the First Day of the week experience Pentecost? Who will read his Bible and not with Paul and the disciples “on the First Day of the week have Holy Communion”? Who will read his Bible and not loath being “prescribed to keep the Sabbath”? Who will read his Bible and would not be ashamed to “observe the beggarly Sabbath”? Who would read his Bible and would not enjoy being “judged strong” for “not regarding” the Sabbath? In each case, who reads not Translations for the Word of God? Who, ever, sees what the Bible really says as “**it is written**”? Only ... well yes, only who?! That is the Sabbath in South Africa today, scorned and taunted by the prophets who, **holding forth and high the Bible**, shout, “Thus saith the Lord, in English, in Afrikaans, in Setswana ...!”

The Sabbath in our age is **the Sabbath of Translations** such as the Revised Authorised Version. They have effectively “*contextualised*” the Sabbath to “*our situation*” and “*the world we live in today*”, having properly taken into account “*the rich Christian tradition*” of apostasy! The Sabbath is **combated and eradicated at its roots – there where the believer reads about it in the Scriptures he bought at the Bookshop!**

Report Back on Seminar

Dear Dr John Webster,

First of all thank you for a stimulating and thought-provoking Seminar. Also again my appreciation for your hospitality and patience with a rather rude me. I admire the standard and clarity of your theological thought. As for the direction and trend of your work I was taken off my feet it’s so daring and fresh. Your vision is most noble – a *theology* that actually is *proclamation* of Jesus Christ. And your elated yet humble enthusiasm is highly contagious.

I think it was a good thing you could not attend my lecture of Sabbath evening or that I did not speak after your lecture of Sunday morning. It could seem I simply copied and repeated your lecture. You illustrate **linearly** what I illustrate by way of **cubic**: Eschatology / creation, suffering / incarnation,

and resurrection / consummation. Your scheme **better** illustrates the **progression in time** of the revelation of the “*Coming God*”. It follows *Heilsgeschichte*, and God is God only in acting through *Heilsgeschichte*, as Cullmann says, or God is God only, in Paul’s words, “to-us-ward” (Tyndale). You by now realise where we differ, in that I do not see things in a **straight line** as you sketch, but rather like some “theological Big Bang”, exploding as well as imploding. I in effect believe a **reverse-eschatology**. I do not see creation as the beginning or origin or source, or the consummation, the last *Parousia*, as the end or fulfilment or aim or ultimate. **All these**, for me is the **Incarnation** of God in Christ, and then **that** Incarnation of **Resurrection** from the dead, **His** of eternal life. If I might “define” God I would say **He is the One Who is not but in-Christ-to-us-ward**. (Thus never Lessing’s, “*God who is, is just that*” or something like it as someone noted or words to the effect.)

Identically then **your** scheme (put on the white board of Sunday’s morning of 21 January 2001), is **my** scheme **with two differences**. **1**, Where your arrows point **forward** constantly, all mine would point to the **centre**. **2**, Where you only have Jesus’ **birth and suffering** for the “*Incarnation*”, I would have it (like “*Creation*”) as **pointer** to the **centre**, the **Second Incarnation** of the “*New creation*”, Christ **resurrected from the dead!** Christ’s **birth** as the Son of Mary already **has in view** his **suffering and exaltation** as the Son of God! By final analysis Jesus in **resurrection** from the dead, **is** “*the coming God*”, **is** “the likeness of man” – **for all eternity**. And **our** resurrection can but be the reflection of **His** – and therefore real and “in the flesh” as the Church confesses. So with (our) creation. Where you view creation and history, eschatology and even *Heilsgeschichte* as progressing **towards eschatology-as-consummation**, I view the first *Parousia* as the **approaching**, and the apocalyptic *Parousia*, as the **Return** of the “*coming God*” “**to-us-ward**” in **Jesus Christ in Resurrection** from the dead. The arrow points **back or inwards!** What in theology is known as “*the Consummation*”, can but obtain its significance and greatness from “*the Incarnation*” – Jesus’ *Return* or *Advent* is the **return** of **Him**, Who, “in (**that**) Sabbath’s-Day” of “the fullness of time”, **already, is** that “*Coming*”, **Resurrected, Incarnated, and, Returning, “God”**. **This**, is “*the Coming God*”, “the Son of Man” and “Lord of the Sabbath”. These **three** dynamics of creation, incarnation and eschatology **drive** towards this moment in revelation-history, this moment in *Heilsgeschichte* – **Jesus’ everlasting Incarnation through resurrection from the dead!** Jesus’ resurrection like a black hole **pulls in** the forces of progression, time and direction. And this **central** moment and event make of the **day** the Seventh of the week, “the

Sabbath of the LORD thy God”, the **Day** “concerning which God **spake**”. **Here** is the Sabbath of the LORD your God’s **glory**. **This** is what it means that the Sabbath **indeed is** the Sabbath of the LORD your God! Say you, in the very last note of your paper, “**THE SABBATH IN ITS 3RD DIMENSION IS THE GREAT SACRAMENT IN WHICH WE EXPERIENCE A FORETASTE OF CHRIST’S RESURRECTION**”. Notice what I have for the “third dimension”: **Jesus’ resurrection** of course! Therefore do not make the Sabbath that Augustinian and Dark Ages spiritualised “**hereafter**” that causes the Sabbath to evaporate into thin air. Bring it in where God “**concretised**” **it in the heart and fullness of time in Jesus Christ in Resurrection from the dead** – “*therefore there remains valid for the People of God a keeping of the Sabbath*”. Hebrews speaks of the **present** validity of the Sabbath on strength of **Jesus’** rest He gave his people on **strength** of the fact that He already had “**entered** into His **own**”, accomplished, victorious, “**rest** – as God from His”.

I disapprove of the translation you read from that says “*the Scriptures speaking of the Seventh Day ...*”. The contextual subject that “spoke”, is not **man** or Scriptures, but “**God**”, Who “swore” they would not enter into his Rest for their disobedience, “**God**”, Who, “in these last days, speaks to us in the Son”.

Your first *Parousia* (“*Creation*”) is **possible**, only because of the **ultimate** *Parousia* of Jesus the Nazarene **resurrected from the dead**. Your final *Parousia* (“*the Advent*”) is **possible**, only **after** or because of the **really** final *Parousia* of Jesus the Nazarene Who was **raised from the dead**. And your second *Parousia* (“*the Incarnation*”) is **possible**, only **with a view to** the *Parousia* of Jesus the Nazarene through **resurrection from the dead**.

You place the *Advent-Parousia* at and as the **end** and only as resultant of **creation**-history rather than as resultant of the **Central Consummation** and *Heilsgeschichte*. But the **future is with us already in Christ** and **expecting the future is to expect the present Christ’s return**. Pastor Steenberg emphasised the two aspects of the “last things”, but also entertains your linear and *chronos-logical* approach.

My criticism of your eschatology though, more seriously concerns the **specific re the Sabbath**. You **fail to arrive** at the end **when you should** arrive at the end and every thing from its urgency and compelling force **begs you to do so**. When you have to “contextualise” the Sabbath to the dictum of your theology, you **retreat!** Instead of to speak of “**Resurrection-Sabbath**”, you swerve past it like a rugby player dodges his opponent, and then speak of a completely strange concept I have for the first time in my life heard of this weekend, “**Crucifixion-Sabbath**”! I find the same underlying fear to take

that **leap of faith** to reach the full consequences with Barth, with Moltmann and with Bacchiocchi – as with Jewish eschatology. Jewish eschatology will always be unable to **arrive**, because it does not believe the **End** Who is the Alpha **and**, the **Omega**. Jewish “*theology of the Sabbath*” **necessarily** must be deficient. Unfortunately Christianity seems to also fear to tread where angels would have rejoiced to go had it concerned them while Christ for none other “*than us hath consecrated the new and living way through the veil, that is to say, his flesh*”. **Hebrews 10:20 speaks of Christ’s Resurrection from the dead**. (Hebrews never mentions the Resurrection but presupposes it in about every sentence.)

I asked you where our theologians place their doctrine of the Sabbath within their theological framework? Moltmann undoubtedly places it under the Doctrine of **Creation**. And therefore he mainly treats of the Sabbath as **ethics** – to which you referred extensively. (Therefore also was his Sabbath-theology so quickly abused by the *theology of revolution*.) Bacchiocchi in fact handles the Sabbath under no **sub**-category. He treats on it directly under Ethics as **autonomous** theological discipline. Therefore his is the worst form of Sabbath-theology. Barth gets nearest to the proper prologomatic position the Sabbath should occupy. As you know he writes on the Sabbath mainly under “*The Doctrine of Creation*” – “*Volume Three*”, **but he also** writes on it in “*Volume Four*” under “*The Doctrine of Reconciliation*” – and **there**, under “*Jesus Christ, The Servant of God*”, **and then finally**, under the sub-heading, “*The Exaltation of the Son of Man*”! Extra the ordinary and excellent in perception! Even in *Volume Three* Barth treats on the Sabbath completely christologically! It is the **inevitable** result of Barth’s Christ-centered approach to *Theology*! Barth is completely **unconvincing** in his apology for Sunday. What profound insight **nevertheless!** Now that is why I during discussions **confidently** asserted that the Sabbath should be considered under *Christology* and *Soteriology*. From there my cubic or spherical, imploding, illustration of the Sabbath’s meaning as eschatology x suffering x resurrection. (See in my lecture how I tried to indicate how the Sabbath of **Creation** and even its chronological position as **Seventh** Day of the week should be **derived** from its **eventuality in Christ**, and not *vice versa*!) Most important, Dr. Webster, is that within such a view of things the **literalness** of the Sabbath in being the **Seventh Day**, emerges and becomes inevitable and indispensable. Christ proves the Seventh Day Sabbath “for the sake of man” here on earth, to put it bluntly.

I say our theologians – and you also – stop short of following consequences through. Remember Moltmann’s explanation for the dilemma he concerning the Sunday caused for himself? Also keep in mind your

Footnote 17 on "Barth's argument on the "last page" for shifting from Sabbath-talk to Sunday-talk ...". Honest and faithful adherence to Scripture and "salvific" events, that is, honest and faithful adherence to Heilsgeschichte, is a Sabbath Rest **and** a Sabbath Day of eschatological fulfilment and consummation. In Old Testament terms that Heilsgeschichte is described as God's "resting", "sanctifying", "blessing" and "reviving", that is, His "ending". Eventually that Heilsgeschichte is **all of God's doing in raising Jesus Christ from the dead!**

For the second time, I don't like the Version you quoted Genesis 2 from, as would God, "having finished" his works, **only** have blessed and sanctified as were these acts of his **different and other** than his "finishing". It but echoes the LXX that places God's work of "ending" on the Sixth Day! Christ "finished", that is, "ended", the "works" of his Father "the third day" **in rising from the dead**, "as did God his", and **not before** (Friday) **or after** (Sunday)!

"The day of 'new creation' [the Seventh Day Sabbath] presupposes the (Christ-centred and Christological) 'day of rest' of the ... messianic feast of Christ's salvation history". Only in it and through it could it "know the feast of creation". In the cataclysmic "crisis of the modern world it is necessary and timely for Christianity too to call to mind the sabbath" of the "the new creation" – being the Sabbath of the **Resurrection** of its Creator and Saviour from the dead! The Sabbath of creation and the Sabbath of eschatology cannot be different days. It **has to be** this single day of the ending of it all – the day of Jesus' resurrection, the Seventh Day of the week.

The basic mistake of dividing God's "ending" and his "blessing" also underlies your dividing and separating God's **one** act in the dying **and** rising of Jesus Christ. Christ is the one and completed Word of God, Christ crucified, Christ dead and Christ resurrected from the dead. And the death of Jesus would have been but the death of all sinners did He not rise or were He not raised from the dead. The death of Jesus in itself would have had no meaning for the Sabbath Rest of God just as it would have had no meaning for us, lost sinners! God acting in Christ *to-us-ward* in Jesus in raising Him from the dead, is God acting in Christ *to-ward-the-Seventh-Day-Sabbath* in Jesus in raising Him from the dead.

"For a small moment have I forsaken you", Monique read from the Isaiah 54:7. (If the death of Christ **without his resurrection** meant the Sabbath's meaning for us as Day of Worship-Rest, then Friday should also be a Sabbath-Rest.) Forsakenness is **not** God's blessing, however sublime its "moment" or its "stillness". Forsakenness is God's everlasting **curse on sin!** The Sabbath of Jesus' death knew that curse and shared it. But God in Christ

cut that moment of forsakenness that should have lasted forever, **short!** The Sabbath would **still** have been **cursed** for having known and shared that forsakenness by God **were it not for Christ's resurrection**. And **Sunday** would have been the Day of God's blessing and Lordship **if** He on **Sunday** ended that forsakenness with **raising Jesus from the dead**. (Remember, also Sunday, if Jesus rose on it, would have been "Crucifixion"-Sunday seeing at least half of that day according to tradition would have been spent in death's "moment of forsakenness". And if any blessing is contained in the "forsakenness", then also Sunday should share in that blessing. It is the same thing said about Friday above.) "Life would again break forth" Monique told us, in the day of "forsakenness"! But, who could guess? Not on the Sabbath Day! "Life would again break forth" – through Jesus' resurrection from the dead . . . **only the next day!** Now as little as the Old Testament foresees or expects Jesus' resurrection would happen on the **First** Day, as little does the New Testament foresee, expect or witness that it would or that it actually did happen on the First Day! Rather does both Old and New Testament **point to, and, witness of, the contrary,** and point to the **Seventh** Day **to be and for being** the day of Jesus' resurrection from the dead – from the larger – prophetic –perspective as well as from the specific – chronologic perspective.

I cannot see how you can invent the name, "Crucifixion Sabbath". It is a misnomer. **Christ wasn't crucified on the Sabbath**. The Event makes the day, not the Day the event. And He did not die on the Sabbath; He was not even buried on the Sabbath. Those moments of **significance** happened **before** the Sabbath. What **remained** on the Sabbath **not only** was the **nothing** of God-forsakenness. **The very suspense promises the day of relief: "Only a moment!"**

How Christ suffered **in** death we mortals can imagine as little as we can understand how He could rise **from** the dead again. The Scriptures describes Christ's **suffering** not as that of his **being** dead, but as that of his **dying** – of his **entering into** death. The Scriptures also describes Christ's **victory and glorification** not as that of his **being** dead, but as that of his **dying** (John 13, 17) but ultimately as that of his **resurrection**. **Death per se** in the case of Christ remains that thing that has **no** glory, **no** virtue, **no** good effect (only in Christ it has the virtue that it is vicarious). God and Christ "**entered into** (their) **rest**" as no dead God, but as the **Triumphant**. Both the meaningless death and the meaningful Resurrection belong to the Sabbath because the event makes the Day, not the day the Event (exactly what you do by trying to glorify the Sabbath through naming it "Crucifixion Sabbath"). Both the meaningless death and the meaningful Resurrection

belong to the Sabbath **but while** death is the **conquered** and **overcome** and **banished enmity**. If we would "honour My Sabbath-Rest", as the Scriptures and God say, we would honour it **as and for being** the day of God's **exaltation** of course! Already in the command, "**Honour!**" is implied God's **exaltation** in Jesus Christ and this **Day's** connection with it! And we battle to grasp the implications thereof for no reason than our ingrained tradition to **honour** the Sunday for this reason instead. Even as Sabbath-believers do we land in the pitfall. We devoutly **allow Sunday** the most splendid "**Honour!**" that belongs to God's **Sabbath** Day only.

That is how I see the Sabbath in the context of the doctrine of creation, namely as *Heilsgeschichte* or *soteriology*, and so in the context of eschatology, of theology, and ultimately, of *christology*. The old Seventh Day Adventism perhaps tried to grasp this when they so emphasised the Sabbath **and obedience** with regard to **salvation**. They meant well, but did not succeed so well.

Proclaim a message that will honour and exalt **Christ** while you have a doctrine of the Sabbath that will honour and exalt **Him** in **servicing** Him. So the Gospel will take care of the Sabbath and the survival and growth of your Church. I propose an alternative, Dr Webster, for your grand scheme of theology that will increase the grandeur of Christ even more. It must be a scheme according to the order of the intensity of essence, rather than according to the order of sequence. It will brake the time-barrier for eternal Life to explode forth from and over eternal death for the sake and cause of one thing, the exaltation of the Lord and Saviour of us, sinners.

7.6.8.
Apology
to Pope John Paul the Second
as well as to the Seventh Day Adventists
who miss the woods for the tree

(The Pope's words or ideas are printed italic. Mine are printed regular and underlined, or are bracketed.)

THE LORD'S DAY

The Lord's Day — as the Lord's Sabbath Day was called from Apostolic times (Mk.2:27, Hb.4:4, Rv.1:10) — has always been accorded special attention in the history of the Church because of its close connection with the very core of the Christian mystery. In fact, in the weekly reckoning of time, "Sabbath's Time" (Mt.28:1) recalls the day of Christ's Resurrection. It is Passover which returns week by week, celebrating Christ's victory over sin and death, the fulfilment in him of the first creation and the dawn of "the new creation" (cf. 2 Cor 5:17). It is the day which recalls in grateful adoration the world's creation and God's own Sabbath Rest. Since then it looked forward in active hope to "the fullness of time", when Christ would come in glory through resurrection from the dead (Eph. 1:19) and all things were made new by virtue of it. So the Sabbath also looks forward to "the last day", when Christ will come again in glory (cf. Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:13-17) and all things will be made new (cf. Rev 21:5) eternally by virtue of His first coming through resurrection from the dead in Sabbath's Time.

Rightly, then, the Psalmist's cry is secondarily applied to the Sabbath Day: "This is the day which the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps 118:24). This invitation to joy, which the Apostolic liturgy (in many Sabbath-episodes in Acts) makes its own, reflects the astonishment which came over the women who, having been "answered" on Jesus' resurrection "in Sabbath's Time" by the angel, after sunrise on the First Day of the week "departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy and did run to bring his disciples word"!

((To say, "*this invitation to joy reflects the astonishment which came over the women who ... found the tomb empty when they went there "very early on the first day after the Sabbath"*" , while referring to "Mark 16:2" and suggesting Jesus' resurrection **THEN or shortly before**, is to corrupt the Scriptures which in Mark 16 says, "they were afrighted ... and they went quickly, and fled from the sepulchre for they trembled and were amazed;

neither said they anything to anyone, for they were afraid!" Mk.16:5,8,9. To say, "early on the first day after the Sabbath" with reference to "Mark 16:2", further corrupts the Word because the words of verse one are placed after that of verse two, thus to confuse two events both that neither are Jesus' resurrection nor happened at the time of Jesus' resurrection.))

The joy of having been "answered" on Jesus' resurrection "in Sabbath's Time" by the angel is an invitation to the joy which Sabbath's Time supposes. Not in any way is it to relive the experience of the two disciples of Emmaus, who "disagreed between themselves ... their eyes holden that they should not recognise Him ... and sad", whose "trust that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel" was disappointed, whom Jesus called "fools, and slow of heart to believe. Not in any way does this joy mean to relive the short-lived "burning in the heart" of the Emmaus disciples, out of whose sight Jesus vanished the moment "their eyes were opened". The joy of Sabbath's Time is an invitation to joy, and not in any way an invitation to relive the experience of the disciples whom on the evening of that same day Jesus "upbraided" for "doubt arising in their hearts", they being so "terrified and afrighted". The joy of Sabbath's Time echoes not the "joy" which the disciples experienced "on the evening of that same day", when "they were glad to see Jesus (again)" (cf. Jn 20:19-23). The joy of Sabbath's time echoes the gift of Jesus' peace and of his Spirit according to Pentecostal promise when the disciples, as Apostles, proclaimed Him as before the eyes crucified and resurrected, "LORD"!

((To say that "in the breaking of the bread (Christ) revealed himself (cf. Lk 24:32,35)" as if the Eucharist and the transubstantiation are meant, is to corrupt the Word. To say that "the breaking of the bread" mentioned in Lk 24:32,35 means the Lord's Supper, also is to corrupt the Word.))

The Resurrection of Jesus is the fundamental event upon which Christian faith rests (cf. 1 Cor 15:14). It is an astonishing reality, fully grasped in the light of faith, yet historically attested to by those who were privileged to see the Risen Lord – as it indeed of old was witnessed to and in actual historic event was witnessed by the Sabbath Day. It is a wondrous event which is not only absolutely unique in human history, but which lies at the very heart of the mystery of time. In fact, "all time belongs to [Christ] and all the ages". But to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead belongs "Sabbath's Time" – "God concerning the Seventh Day thus spoke, He the Seventh Day did rest". Therefore, in commemorating the day of Christ's Resurrection not once a year, but since Jesus' resurrection, Sabbath Days only, the Church seeks to indicate to every generation the true fulcrum

of history, to which the mystery of the world's origin and its final destiny leads.

((The Passover's **yearly** celebration pointed to Jesus Christ **in the future in time**; its **weekly** celebration points to Jesus Christ **in the fullness of time**. In Yahweh's Passover, Jesus Christ crucified, resurrected and exalted at the right hand of God **for ever** confronts the Church of Christ in the weekly Sabbath Day. Yahweh's Passover no longer is restricted to sacrifices; is no longer contained in sacrifice. It belongs to and is contained in the once for all Sacrifice of the Lamb of God, our Passover Lamb. Its once for all validity is attributed **solely to the fact of Jesus vanquishing death in Sabbath's time**. **"Therefore in fact** (in the Greek, *ara*, it is the strongest possible "therefore"!)) remains for God's People a keeping of the Sabbath Day" (Hb.4:4). **Yahweh's Passover is the Lord's Day!** Let this truth be sounded and let this truth resound through the world and through all future! The Scriptures identifies Yahweh's Passover with the Seventh Day Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment. **Jesus Christ identifies it with "the third day I finish" – the Great Day of Yahweh's Passover – the Yom Yahweh.**))

Those who have received the grace of faith in the Risen Lord cannot fail to grasp the significance of this day of the week. For Christians, the Sabbath Day in Christ in resurrection from the dead is "the fundamental feast day", established not only to mark the succession of time but to reveal time's deeper and eternal meaning – its relation to Redemption – Yahweh's Passover.

The Apostles thus recognising the fundamental importance of the Sabbath Day, took its origin from the actual day of Christ's Resurrection — a day thus appropriately designated 'the Lord's Day'. The coming of the Third Millennium, which calls believers to reflect upon the course of history in the light of Christ, also invites them to rediscover with new intensity the meaning of the Sabbath Day: its "mystery", its celebration, its significance for Christian and human life.

Given the array of new situations and the questions which they prompt, it seems more necessary than ever to recover the deep doctrinal foundations underlying the Lord's Sabbath Day, so that the abiding value of it in the Christian life will be clear to all the faithful. Christian believers should come together, in order to commemorate the suffering, Resurrection and glory of the Lord Jesus, by hearing God's Word and sharing in the sacraments, and to give thanks to God who has given them new birth to a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (cf. 1 Pt 1:3).

The duty to keep the Lord's Sabbath Day holy, especially by sharing in the proclamation of Jesus Christ in a spirit of Christian joy and fraternity, is easily understood if we consider the many different aspects of this day. The Lord's Day of Rest, the Sabbath Day, is a day which is at the very heart of the Christian life. Open wide the doors to Christ! Rediscover the Lord's Day: Do not be afraid to give your time to Christ! Yes, let us open our time to Christ, that he may cast light upon it and give it direction. He is the One who knows the secret of time and the secret of eternity, and he gives us "his day" – the day He is Lord of – as an ever new gift of his love. The rediscovery of this day is a grace which we must implore, not only so that we may live the demands of faith to the full, but also so that we may respond concretely to the deepest human yearnings. Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly the life of the Christian Faith.

The Lord's Day – Celebration of the Creator's Work

"Through him all things were made" (Jn 1:3) The Lord's Day is above all a Passover celebration – a redemption celebration, wholly illumined by the glory of the Risen Christ. For the Christian it is the festival of the "new creation". Yet, when understood in depth, this aspect is inseparable from what the first pages of Scripture tell us of the plan of God in the creation of the world. It is true that the Word was made flesh in "the fullness of time" (Gal 4:4); but it is also true that, in virtue of the mystery of his identity as the eternal Son of the Father, he is the origin and end of the universe. As John writes in the Prologue of his Gospel: "Through him all things were made, and without him was made nothing that was made" (1:3). Paul too stresses this in writing to the Colossians: "In him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible All things were created through him and for him" (1:16). This active presence of the Son in the creative work of God is revealed fully in the Paschal Mystery, in which Christ, rising as "the first fruits of those who had fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:20), established the new creation and began the process which he himself brought to completion when he rose in glory and "deliver(ed) the kingdom to God the Father ..., so that God may be everything to everyone" (1 Cor 15:24,28). (This is not only a future accomplishment of Christ; it through resurrection from the dead is his already and in the Covenant of Grace was His since eternity. The Kingdom of God is present; it is the era of Christ and the Christian Faith. God's Sabbath Rest is present; it is the Sabbath of the Kingdom proclaimed by Christ.)

At the dawn of creation, therefore, the plan of God implied Christ's "cosmic mission" – of which the Sabbath Day is a sign of anticipation. This Christocentric perspective, embracing the whole arc of time, filled God's well-pleased gaze when, ceasing from all his work, he "blessed the seventh day and made it holy" (Gn 2:3). According to the Priestly writer of the first biblical creation story, then was born the "Sabbath", so characteristic of God's Eternal Covenant of Grace. The theme of "God's rest" (cf. Gn 2:2) and the rest which he offered to the people of the Exodus when they entered the Promised Land (cf. Ex 33:14; Dt 3:20; 12:9; Jos 21:44; Ps 95:11) is re-read in the New Testament in the light of the definitive "Sabbath rest" (Heb 4:9) into which Christ himself has entered by his Resurrection. The People of God are called to enter into this same rest by persevering in Christ's example of filial obedience (cf. Heb 4:3-16). In order to grasp fully the meaning of the Lord's Sabbath Rest, therefore, we must re-read the great story of creation and deepen our understanding of the theology of the "Sabbath". ((Oh, Pope Paul 2, mine are the underlined words only; these are your thoughts and words. How can you to the detriment of God's holy Sabbath Day so glorify

Sunday with it?))

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gn 1:1) The Genesis story conveys well the awe which man feels before the immensity of creation and the resulting sense of adoration of the One who brought all things into being from nothing. It is a story of intense religious significance, a hymn to the Creator of the universe, pointing to him as the only Lord in the face of recurring temptations to divinise the world itself. At the same time, it is a hymn to the goodness of creation, all fashioned by the mighty and merciful hand of God.

"God saw that it was good" (Gn 1:10,12, etc.). Punctuating the story as it does, this refrain sheds a positive light upon every element of the universe and reveals the secret for a proper understanding of it and for its eventual regeneration: the world is good insofar as it remains tied to its origin and, after being disfigured by sin, it is again made good when, with the help of grace, it returns to the One who made it. It is clear that this process directly concerns not inanimate objects and animals but human beings. Immediately after the creation stories, the Bible highlights the dramatic contrast between the grandeur of man, created in the image and likeness of God, and the fall of man, which unleashes on the world the darkness of sin and death (cf. Gn 3).

Coming as it does from the hand of God, the cosmos bears the imprint of his goodness. It is a beautiful world, rightly moving us to admiration and

delight, but also calling for cultivation and development. At the "completion" of God's work of creation, the world is ready for God's act of Rest. "On the seventh day God completed his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done" (Gn 2:2). With this anthropomorphic image of God's "work", the Bible not only gives us a glimpse of the mysterious relationship between the Creator and the created world, but also casts light upon the task of human beings in relation to the cosmos. The first chapters of Genesis constitute in a sense the first "Gospel". God as the Creator of all things refer the totality of things to Himself so that with everything subject to Him, the divine Name would be glorified in all the earth. It refers to nothing less than the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; and the Seventh Day within the scope of this foreshadowing implies Jesus' Resurrection from the dead on it, and on no other day of the week.

"Shabbat": the Creator's joyful rest

If the first page of the Book of Genesis presents God's "work" as a metaphor for man, the same is true of God's "rest": "On the seventh day God finished his work which he had done" (Gn 2:2). Here too we find an anthropomorphism charged with a wealth of meaning.

It would be banal to interpret God's "rest" as a kind of divine "inactivity". By its nature, the creative act which founds the world is unceasing and God is always at work, as Jesus himself declares in speaking of the Sabbath precept: "My Father is working still, and I am working" (Jn 5:17). The divine rest of the seventh day does not allude to an inactive God, but emphasises the fullness of what has been accomplished. It speaks, as it were, of God's lingering before the "very good" work (Gn 1:31) which his hand has wrought, in order to cast upon it a gaze full of joyous delight. This is a "contemplative" gaze which does not look to new accomplishments but enjoys the beauty of what has already been achieved. It is a gaze which God casts upon all things, but in a special way upon man, the crown of creation. It is a gaze which already discloses something of the nuptial shape of the relationship which God wants to establish with the creature made in his own image, by calling that creature to enter a pact of love. This is what God "accomplished" (not "gradually will accomplish"), through the saving covenant made with Israel and fulfilled in Christ. It is (not "will be") the Word Incarnate, through the eschatological gift of the Holy Spirit and the configuration of the Church as his Body and Bride, who will extend to all humanity the offer of mercy and the call of the Father's love.

In the Creator's plan, there is both a distinction and a close link between the order of creation and the order of salvation. This is emphasised

in the Old Testament, when it links the "shabbat" commandment not only with God's mysterious "rest" after the days of creation (cf. Ex 20:8-11), but also with the salvation which he offers to Israel in the liberation from the slavery of Egypt (cf. Dt 5:12-15). The God who rests on the seventh day, rejoicing in his creation, is the same God who reveals his glory in liberating his children from Pharaoh's oppression. Adopting an image dear to the Prophets, one could say that in both cases God reveals himself as the bridegroom before the bride (cf. Hos 2:16-24; Jer 2:2; Is 54:4-8).

As certain elements of the same Jewish tradition suggest, to reach the heart of the "shabbat", of God's "rest", we need to recognise in both the Old and the New Testament the nuptial intensity which marks the relationship between God and his people. Hosea, for instance, puts it thus in this marvellous passage: "I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me for ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord" (2:18-20).

"God blessed the seventh day and made it holy" (Gn 2:3)

The Sabbath precept, which in the first Covenant prepares for the Lord's Day of the new and eternal Covenant, is therefore rooted in the depths of God's plan. This is why, unlike many other precepts, it is set not within the context of strictly cultic stipulations but within the Decalogue, the "ten words" which represent the very pillars of the moral life inscribed on the human heart. In setting this commandment within the context of the basic structure of ethics, Israel and then the Church declare that they consider it not just a matter of community religious discipline but a defining and indelible expression of our relationship with God, announced and expounded by biblical revelation. This is the perspective within which Christians need to rediscover this precept today. Although the precept may merge naturally with the human need for rest, it is faith alone which gives access to its deeper meaning and ensures that it will not become banal and trivialised.

In the first place, therefore, the Lord's Sabbath Day is the day of rest because it is the day "blessed" by God and "made holy" by him, set apart from the other days to be, among all of them, "the Lord's Day".

In order to grasp fully what the first of the biblical creation accounts means by keeping the Sabbath "holy", we need to consider the whole story, which shows clearly how every reality, without exception, must be referred

back to God. Time and space belong to him. He is not the God of one day alone, but the God of all the days of humanity.

Therefore, if God "sanctifies" the seventh day with a special blessing and makes it "his day" par excellence, this must be understood within the deep dynamic of the dialogue of the Covenant, indeed the dialogue of "marriage". This is the dialogue of love which knows no interruption, yet is never monotonous. In fact, it employs the different registers of love, from the ordinary and indirect to those more intense, which the words of Scripture do not hesitate to describe in imagery drawn from the experience of married love.

All human life, and therefore all human time, must become praise of the Creator and thanksgiving to him. But man's relationship with God also demands times of explicit prayer, in which the relationship becomes an intense dialogue, involving every dimension of the person. "The Lord's Day" is the day of this relationship when men and women raise their song to God and become the voice of all creation.

This is precisely why it is also the day of rest. Speaking vividly as it does of "renewal" and "detachment", the interruption of the often oppressive rhythm of work expresses the dependence of man and the cosmos upon God. Everything belongs to God! The Lord's Day returns again and again as the Seventh Day to declare this principle within the weekly reckoning of time. The "Sabbath" has therefore been interpreted evocatively as a determining element in the kind of "sacred architecture" of time which marks biblical revelation. (13) It recalls that the universe and history belong to God – and therefore to Christ; and without a constant awareness of that truth, man cannot serve in the world as co-worker of the Creator.

To "keep holy" by "remembering"

The commandment of the Decalogue by which God decrees the Sabbath observance is formulated in the Book of Exodus in a distinctive way: "Remember the Sabbath day in order to keep it holy" (20:8). And the inspired text goes on to give the reason for this, recalling as it does the work of God: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (v. 11). Before decreeing that something be done, the commandment urges that something be remembered. It is a call to awaken remembrance of the grand and fundamental work of God which is creation, a remembrance which must inspire the entire religious life of man and then fill the day on which man is called to rest. Rest therefore acquires a sacred value: the faithful are called to rest not only as God rested, but to

rest in the Lord, bringing the entire creation to him, in praise and thanksgiving, intimate as a child and friendly as a spouse.

The connection between Sabbath rest and the theme of "remembering" God's wonders is found also in the Book of Deuteronomy (5:12-15), where the precept is grounded less in the work of creation than in the work of liberation accomplished by God in the Exodus: "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with mighty hand and outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day" (Dt 5:15).

This formulation complements the one we have already seen; and taken together, the two reveal the meaning of "the Lord's Day" within a single theological vision which fuses creation and salvation. Therefore, the main point of the precept is not just any kind of interruption of work, but the celebration of the marvels which God has wrought.

Insofar as this "remembrance" is alive, full of thanksgiving and of the praise of God, human rest on the Lord's Day takes on its full meaning. It is then that man enters the depths of God's "rest" and can experience a tremor of the Creator's joy when, after the creation, he saw that all he had made "was very good" (Gn 1:31) God then saw it reconciled and redeemed in Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead!

From Old Covenant Sabbath to New Covenant Sabbath

Because the Fourth Commandment depends upon the remembrance of God's saving works and because Christians saw the definitive time inaugurated by Christ as a new beginning, they made the Sabbath Day (NOT "the first day after the Sabbath") a festive day, for the day on which the Lord rose from the dead was "Sabbath's Time" (Mt.28:1). The Paschal Mystery of Christ is the full revelation of the mystery of the world's origin, the climax of the history of salvation and the anticipation of the eschatological fulfilment of the world. What God accomplished in Creation and wrought for his People in the Exodus has found its fullest expression in Christ's Death and Resurrection, though its definitive fulfilment will not come until the Parousia, when Christ returns in glory. In him, the "spiritual" meaning of the Sabbath is fully realized, as Gregory the Great declares: "For us, the true Sabbath is the person of our Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ". This is why the joy with which God, on humanity's first Sabbath, contemplates all that was created from nothing, is now expressed in the joy with which Christ, "in the Sabbath Day" of the fullness of Passover time, rising from the dead, brought the gift of peace and the gift of the Spirit (cf. Jn 20:19-23). It was in the Paschal Mystery that humanity, and with it the whole creation, "groaning in birth-pangs until now" (Rom 8:22), came to

know its new "exodus" into the freedom of God's children who can cry out with Christ, "Abba, Father!" (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). In the light of this mystery, the meaning of the Old Testament precept concerning the Lord's Day is recovered, perfected and fully revealed in the glory which shines on the face of the Risen Christ (cf. 2 Cor 4:6). We move from the "Sabbath" to the "Lord's Day" (**NOT** to "the first day after the Sabbath"), from the Seventh Day of creation week to Sabbath of the New Creation

(**NOT** to "Sunday"): the dies Domini becomes the dies Christi!

The Day of the Risen Lord and of the Gift of the Holy Spirit
The weekly Passover

"We celebrate Sunday because of the venerable Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we do so not only at Easter but also at each turning of the week": so wrote Pope Innocent I at the beginning of the fifth century, testifying to an already well established practice which had evolved from at least a century after the Lord's Resurrection and NOT, "from the early years after the Lord's Resurrection". Saint Basil speaks of "holy Sunday, honoured by the Lord's Resurrection, the first fruits of all the other days"; and Saint Augustine calls Sunday "a sacrament of Easter" – thus "divinising" this pagan day of worship.

The intimate bond between Sunday and the Resurrection of the Lord is strongly emphasised by all the Churches of East and West – which nevertheless doesn't make right a single aspect of its wrongs. In the tradition of the Eastern Churches in particular, every Sunday is the anastàsimos hemèra, the day of Resurrection, (18) and this is why it stands at the heart of all worship – while it should have been God's holy Day of Sabbath Rest in Jesus Christ!

In the light – or rather in the darkness of this constant and universal tradition, it is clear that despite the Seventh Day is rooted in the very work of creation and even more in the mystery of the biblical "rest" of God, and despite it is the Resurrection of Christ that we must look to in order to understand fully the Lord's Day of Sabbath Rest, it is Sunday that leads the faithful each week to ponder and live the event of Yahweh's Passover, true source of the world's salvation.

According to the common witness of the Gospels, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead **DID NOT** take place on "the first day after the Sabbath" (Mk 16:2,9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1). **NOT ONE** of the texts the Pope calls to witness to his claim, Mk 16:2,9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1, mentions, or even indirectly supposes the resurrection's time of occurrence! Of these four texts, only Mk.16:9 refers to the resurrection – and that as supposed of indefinite past cause or mode of Jesus' appearance to Mary.

On the same day, "the first day after the Sabbath", the Risen Lord **appeared** to the two disciples of Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-35) and to the eleven. They were NOT Apostles gathered together, but disciples still, and "thronged into" the place "they were", "because of fear" (cf. Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19). NOT a week later, but "eight days after" — as the Gospel of John recounts (cf. 20:26) — the disciples "were in" still, and NOT gathered together once again, when Jesus appeared to them and made himself known to Thomas by showing him the signs of his Passion. The day of Pentecost — NOT the first day of the eighth week after the Jewish Passover, but the Fiftieth Day after the Passover's Sabbath Feast Day on which Jesus was buried (cf. Acts 2:1), when the promise made by Jesus to the Apostles after the Resurrection was fulfilled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4-5) — also fell NOT on a Sunday, but on the Sabbath. This was the day of the first proclamation and the first baptisms: Peter announced to the assembled crowd that Christ was risen and "those who received his word were baptised" (Acts 2:41). This was the epiphany of the Church, revealed as the people into which are gathered in unity, beyond all their differences, the scattered children of God.

It was for this reason that, from Apostolic times, **NOT** "the first day after the Sabbath", **NOT** the first day of the week, but the Sabbath Day itself in fact, began to shape the rhythm of life for Christ's disciples. (cf. 1 Cor 16:2 ... Yes, even this text implies it.) "The first day after the Sabbath" was also the day upon which the faithful of Troas were **STILL** gathered **AFTER** they, on the Sabbath, gathered "for the breaking of bread", when Paul bade them farewell. ((Paul did not "miraculously restore the young Eutychus to life (cf. Acts 20:7-12)", but "found he was alive".))

The Book of Revelation gives evidence of the practice of calling the Day of the week the Lord called Himself Lord of and which the Church worshipped the Lord Jesus Christ on, "the Lord's Day" (1:10). This, would now be a characteristic distinguishing Christians from the world around them – not the Day of their worship so much as the Lord of their worship. As early as the beginning of the second century, it was noted by Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia, in his report on the Christian practice "of gathering together on a set day before sunrise and singing among themselves a hymn to **Christ** as to a god".(19) And when Christians spoke of the "Lord's Day", they did so giving to this term the full sense of the Passover proclamation: "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil 2:11; cf. Acts 2:36; 1 Cor 12:3). Thus Christ was given the same title which the Septuagint used to translate what in the revelation of the Old Testament was the unutterable

name of God: YHWH. And thus was given to the Sabbath the day of Yahweh's Passover, the Name of Christ, "The Lord's Day".

*In those early Christian times, the weekly rhythm of days was generally not part of life in the regions where the Gospel spread, and the festive days of the Greek and Roman calendars did not coincide with the Christian Sunday. For Christians, therefore, it was very difficult to observe the Lord's Day on a set day each week. This explains why the faithful had to gather before sunrise. Yet fidelity to the weekly rhythm became the norm, since it was based upon the New Testament and was tied to Old Testament revelation. But the Sabbath for this very reason was eagerly aborted by the Apologists and the Fathers of the Church in their writings and preaching where, in speaking of the Paschal Mystery, they use the Scriptural texts Luke 24:27, 44-47 **AS IF** the Risen Christ himself would have explained to the disciples the First Day of the week acquired a doctrinal and symbolic value capable of expressing the entire Christian mystery in all its newness.*

Growing Christian distinction of the Sabbath

It was the newness of Christ's evaluation of the Sabbath which the catechesis of the first centuries stressed as it sought to show its prominence relative to the Jewish Sabbath. It was on the Sabbath that the Jewish people had to gather in the synagogue and to rest in the way prescribed by the Law. The Apostles, and in particular Saint Paul, continued initially to attend the synagogue so that there they might proclaim Jesus Christ, commenting upon "the words of the prophets which are read every Sabbath" (Acts 13:27).

***NO** communities initially observed the Sabbath while also celebrating Sunday. Soon, however, the two days began to be distinguished ever more clearly, in reaction chiefly to the insistence of those Christians whose weakness of faith made them inclined to compromise with the pagan world.*

The day of the new creation

A comparison of the Christian observance and appreciation of the Sabbath with the Old Testament vision of the Sabbath prompted theological insights of great interest. In particular, there emerged the unique connection between the Resurrection and Creation. Christian thought spontaneously linked the Resurrection, which took place "in Sabbath's time", with the Seventh Day of the cosmic week (cf. Gn 2:1-3) which shapes the creation story in the Book of Genesis: the day of the finishing of God's works. This link invited an understanding of the Resurrection as the beginning of a new creation, the first fruits of which is the glorious Christ, "the first born of all creation" (Col 1:15) and "the first born from the dead" (Col 1:18).

In effect, the Sabbath Day is the day above all other days which summons Christians to remember the salvation which was given to them and

which has made them new in Christ. "You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col 2:12; cf. Rom 6:4-6).

The Sabbath day: image of eternity

The Sabbath's position as the seventh day of the week suggests for the Lord's Day a complementary symbolism. Set within the sevenfold succession of days in a unique and transcendent position it evokes thoughts not only of the beginning of time but also its end in "the age to come". The Sabbath symbolises that truly singular day which arrived in Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead – the day of the Kingdom of heaven without end which will know neither evening nor morning, the imperishable age which will never grow old – the age of Christ's rule and Lordship. The Sabbath is the ceaseless foretelling of life without end which renews the hope of Christians and encourages them on their way. Looking towards the last day, Christ fulfils completely the eschatological symbolism of the Sabbath. In celebrating Sabbath Day, the Christian is led towards the goal of eternal life.

The day of Christ-Light

Christ is the light of the world (cf. Jn 9:5; also 1:4-5, 9), and, in the weekly reckoning of time, the day commemorating his Resurrection is the enduring reflection of the epiphany of his glory. The theme of the Sabbath as the day illuminated by the triumph of the Risen Christ is given special emphasis in the Gospels and the Sermon to the Hebrew believers. From generation to generation as she gathers on this day, the Church makes her own the wonderment of Zechariah as he looked upon Christ, seeing in him the dawn which gives "light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Lk 1:78-79), and she echoes the joy of Simeon when he takes in his arms the divine Child who has come as the "light to enlighten the Gentiles" (Lk 2:32). The fulfilling of these expectations all in actual fact took place on the Sabbath Day, according to the Acts of the Apostles.

The day of the gift of the Spirit

When he appeared to the disciples on the evening of the First Day, Jesus sighed over them and said: "That you might receive the Holy Spirit!" But the outpouring of the Spirit was the great gift of the Risen Lord to his disciples on Pentecost Sabbath Day. It was again the Sabbath Day when, fifty days after the Resurrection, the Spirit descended in power, as "a mighty wind" and "fire" (Acts 2:2-3), upon the Apostles gathered with Mary. Pentecost is not only the founding event of the Church, but is also the mystery which for ever gives life to the Church. Such an event has its own powerful liturgical moment because of its intimate bond with the Paschal

Mystery. The "weekly Passover" thus becomes, in a sense, the "weekly Pentecost", when Christians relive the Apostles' joyful encounter with the Risen Lord and receive the life-giving breath of his Spirit.

The day of faith

Given these different dimensions which set it apart, the Sabbath appears as the supreme day of faith. It is the day when, by the power of the Holy Spirit, who is the Church's living "memory" (cf. Jn 14:26), the first resurrection of the Lord becomes an event renewed in the "today" of each of Christ's disciples. Gathered in his presence in the Sabbath assembly, believers sense themselves called like the Apostle Thomas: "Put your finger here, and see my hands. Put out your hand, and place it in my side. Doubt no longer, but believe" (Jn 20:27). Yes, the Sabbath is the day of faith. This is stressed by the fact that the Sabbath liturgy includes the Confession of Faith. Recited or sung, the Creed declares the baptismal character of the Day of Worship, making it the day on which in a special way the baptised renew their adherence to Christ and his Gospel in a rekindled awareness of their baptismal promises. Listening to the word and receiving the Body of the Lord, the baptised contemplate the Risen Jesus presented in the proclamation and the sacraments, and confess with the Apostle Thomas: "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20:28).

An indispensable day!

It is clear then why, even in our own difficult times, the identity of this day, the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, the Lord's Day, must be protected and above all must be lived in all its depth. After his creation God wanted from man a life to His Own glory; but man fell in sinning. After its apostolic age "a keeping of the Sabbath Day was still valid for the People of God; but the Church turned instead to an observation of the First Day. An Eastern writer of the beginning of the third century recounts that as early as then Christianity in every region was keeping Sunday holy on a regular basis. What began as a subservient practice later became a juridically sanctioned norm. Sunday in fact has structured the history of the Church through two thousand years: how could we think that it will not continue to shape her future? The pressures of today can make it even harder to fulfil the Sabbath obligation. In particular, the Church feels herself called to a new catechetical and pastoral commitment, in order to ensure that none of her children are deprived of the celebration of the Sunday. It was in this spirit that the Second Vatican Council, making a pronouncement on the possibility of reforming the Church calendar to match different civil calendars, declared that the Church "is prepared to accept only those arrangements which preserve a week of seven days with a Sunday". Given its many

meanings and aspects, and its link to the very foundations of the faith, the celebration of Sunday remains, on the threshold of the Third Millennium, a foreign element in our Christian identity. ((Both to the disgrace of Christ and the Scriptures; but certainly to the entrenchment of papal authority even in Protestant Churches.))

The presence of the Risen Lord

"I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20). This promise of Christ never ceases to resound in the Church as the fertile secret of her life and the wellspring of her hope. As the day of Resurrection, the Sabbath of the Lord is not only the remembrance of a past event: it is a celebration of the living presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of his own people.

For this presence to be properly proclaimed and lived, it is not enough that the disciples of Christ pray individually and commemorate the death and Resurrection of Christ inwardly, in the secrecy of their hearts. Those who have received the grace of Christ are not saved as individuals alone, but as members of the Mystical Body, having become part of the People of God.(38) It is important therefore that they come together to express fully the very identity of the Church, the *ekklesia*, the assembly called together by the Risen Lord who offered his life "to reunite the scattered children of God" (Jn 11:52). They have become "one" in Christ (cf. Gal 3:28) through the gift of the Spirit. This unity becomes visible when Christians gather together: it is then that they come to know vividly and to testify to the world that they are the people redeemed, drawn "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9). The assembly of Christ's disciples embodies from age to age the image of the first Christian community which Luke gives as an example in the Acts of the Apostles, when he recounts that the first baptised believers "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (2:42).

The Lord's Supper

((It is not my purpose to answer on the Eucharist that takes up a large part of the Pope's Letter.))

The Lord's Supper is a particularly intense expression of the reality of the Church's life. It feeds and forms the Church: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor 10:17). Because of this vital link with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the mystery of the Church is savoured, proclaimed, and lived supremely in it.

This ecclesial dimension intrinsic to the Lord's Supper is realised in its every celebration. But it is expressed most especially on the day when the

whole community comes together to commemorate the Lord's Resurrection. The Lord's Sabbath Day celebration and the Lord's Supper are at the heart of the Church's life. At the Table Christians relive with particular intensity their Lord's promise at the Last Supper. Such was the experience of the Apostles "on the Fiftieth Day" – of Passover-Sabbath – “fully come”. They were gathered together and this promise of the Lord realised. The Risen Lord was present with them through the gift of the promise of the Holy Spirit as they were gathered together. In a sense, the People of God of all times were present in that small nucleus of disciples, the first loaves of the Passover Church.

((See above disclaimed that the disciples' experience “on the evening of the First Day” meant that “Through their testimony of that event, every generation of believers hears the greeting of Christ, rich with the messianic gift of peace, won by his blood and offered with his Spirit: "Peace be with you!"”. Also is it disclaimed that “Christ's return among them was "a week later" (Jn 20:26)”. That evening's experience CANNOT be seen as a radical prefiguring of the Christian community's practice of coming together every seven days, on Sunday, in order to profess faith in his Resurrection and to receive the blessing which he had promised: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (Jn 20:29).” No close connection is suggested in the Gospel of Luke in the story of the two disciples of Emmaus, between the appearance of the Risen Lord and the Lord's Supper. They recognised him when he “took the bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them” (24:30). He then “vanished”! The gestures of Jesus in this account were NOT his gestures at the Last Supper, and the "breaking of bread", is NO “clear allusion to the Eucharist” or to the Lord's Supper. See Part 3 / 3 of The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace.))

A pilgrim people

As the Church journeys through time, the reference to Christ's Resurrection and the weekly recurrence of this solemn memorial help to remind us of the pilgrim and eschatological character of the People of God. Sabbath after Sabbath the Church moves towards the final “Lord's Day”. The expectation of Christ's coming is inscribed in the very mystery of the Church and is evidenced in every celebration of the Lord's Supper. But, with its specific remembrance of the glory of the Risen Christ, the Lord's Holy Sabbath Day recalls with greater intensity the future glory of his “return”. This makes Sabbath the day on which the Church, showing forth more clearly her identity as “Bride”, anticipates in some sense the eschatological reality of the heavenly Jerusalem. Gathering her children into the

Eucharistic assembly and teaching them to wait for the “divine Bridegroom”, she receives a foretaste of the joy of the new heavens and new earth, when the holy city, the new Jerusalem, will come down from God, “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev 21:2).

The day of hope

The Sabbath is not only the day of faith, but is also the day of Christian hope. To share in “the Lord's Supper” is to anticipate the eschatological feast of the “marriage of the Lamb” (Rev 19:9). Celebrating this memorial of Christ, risen and ascended into heaven, the Christian community waits “in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ”. Renewed and nourished by this intense weekly rhythm, Christian hope becomes the leaven and the light of human hope.

With the offering of the Sabbath's Worship, the Church crowns the witness which her children strive to offer every day of the week by proclaiming the Gospel and practising charity in the world of work and in all the many tasks of life; thus she shows forth more plainly her identity “as a sacrament, or sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the entire human race”.

The table of the Word

The Risen Lord is encountered in the Sabbath assembly in the proclamation of the Word. The Word offers the same understanding of the history of salvation and especially of the Paschal Mystery which the Risen Jesus himself gave to his disciples: it is Christ who speaks, present as he is in his word “when Sacred Scripture is read in the Church”.

In his first Apology addressed to the Emperor Antoninus and the Senate, Saint Justin proudly described the Christian practice of the Sunday assembly, which gathered in one place Christians from both the city and the countryside. When, during the persecution of Diocletian, Christian assemblies on the Sabbath Day were banned with the greatest severity, many compromised and rather to accept death, complied to the imperial decree, and attended Eucharist on Sundays.

This explains Justin's apology on behalf of Christian's who observed Sunday! The Sabbath Day Lord's Supper, because of its Christian witness, cost Christians their lives! How could they neglect this encounter, this banquet which Christ prepares for us in his love? May our sharing in it be most worthy and joyful! It is Christ, crucified and glorified, who comes among his disciples, to lead them all together into the newness of his Resurrection. This is the climax, here below, of the covenant of love between God and his people: the sign and source of Christian joy, a stage on the way to the eternal feast.

The fulfilment of the Sabbath

This aspect of the Christian Sabbath shows in a special way how it is the fulfilment of the Old Testament Sabbath. On the Lord's Day, which — as we have already said — the Old Testament links to the work of creation (cf. Gn 2:1-3; Ex 20:8-11) and the Exodus (cf. Dt 5:12-15), the Christian is called to proclaim the new creation and the new covenant brought about in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Far from being abolished, the celebration of creation becomes more profound within a Christocentric perspective, being seen in the light of God's plan "to unite all things in [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph 1:10). The remembrance of the liberation of the Exodus also assumes its full meaning as it becomes a remembrance of the universal redemption accomplished by Christ in his Death and Resurrection. More than a "replacement" for the Sabbath, therefore, Lord's Day is its fulfilment, and in a certain sense its extension and full expression in the ordered unfolding of the history of salvation, which reaches its culmination in Christ.

In this perspective, the biblical theology of the "Sabbath" can be recovered in full, without compromising its Christian character. It is a theology which leads us ever anew and in unending awe to the mystery of the beginning, when the eternal Word of God, by a free decision of love, created the world from nothing. The work of creation was sealed by the blessing and consecration of the day on which God ceased "from all the work which he had done in creation" (Gn 2:3). This day of God's rest confers meaning upon time, which in the sequence of weeks assumes not only a chronological regularity but also, in a manner of speaking, a theological resonance. The constant return of the "shabbat" ensures that there is no risk of time being closed in upon itself, since, in welcoming God and his kairoi — the moments of his grace and his saving acts — time remains open to eternity.

As the seventh day blessed and consecrated by God, the "shabbat" concludes the whole work of creation, and is therefore immediately linked to the work of the sixth day when God made man "in his image and likeness" (cf. Gn 1:26). This very close connection between the "day of God" and the "day of man" did not escape the Fathers in their meditation on the biblical creation story. Saint Ambrose says in this regard: "Thanks, then, to the Lord our God who accomplished a work in which he might find rest. He made the heavens, but I do not read that he found rest there; he made the stars, the moon, the sun, and neither do I read that he found rest in them. I read instead that he made man and that then he rested, finding in man one to whom he could offer the forgiveness of sins". Thus there will be for ever a direct link between the "day of God" and the "day of man". When the divine

commandment declares: "Remember the Sabbath day in order to keep it holy" (Ex 20:8), the rest decreed in order to honour the day dedicated to God is not at all a burden imposed upon man, but rather an aid to help him to recognise his life-giving and liberating dependence upon the Creator, and at the same time his calling to co-operate in the Creator's work and to receive his grace. In honouring God's "rest", man fully discovers himself, and thus the Lord's Day bears the profound imprint of God's blessing (cf. Gn 2:3), by virtue of which, we might say, it is endowed in a way similar to the animals and to man himself, with a kind of "fruitfulness" (cf. Gn 1:22, 28). This "fruitfulness" is apparent above all in filling and, in a certain sense, "multiplying" time itself, deepening in men and women the joy of living and the desire to foster and communicate life.

It is the duty of Christians therefore to remember that, although the practices of the Jewish Sabbath are gone, surpassed as they are by the "fulfilment" which the New Testament Sabbath, the Lord's Day, brings, the underlying reasons for keeping it holy — inscribed solemnly in the Ten Commandments — remain valid, though they need to be reinterpreted in the light of the theology and spirituality of the Sabbath's fulfilment in Christ. The Sabbath is closely linked with the liberation which God accomplished for his people. Christ came to accomplish a new "exodus", to restore freedom to the oppressed. He performed many healings on the Sabbath (cf. Mt 12:9-14 and parallels), certainly not to violate the Lord's Day, but to reveal its full meaning: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mk 2:27). ((Remember, these are the Pope's words!)) Opposing the excessively legalistic interpretation of some of his contemporaries, and developing the true meaning of the biblical Sabbath, Jesus, as "Lord of the Sabbath" (Mk 2:28), restores to the Sabbath observance its liberating character, carefully safeguarding the rights of God and the rights of man.

The question now is HOW could Christians confuse Sunday for the day of ultimate liberation, the day of Jesus' resurrection from the dead? HOW could Christians, called as they are to proclaim the liberation won by the blood of Christ, feel that they have the authority to transfer the meaning of the Sabbath to Sunday? The Passover of Christ has in fact liberated man from a slavery more radical than any weighing upon an oppressed people — the slavery of sin, which alienates man from God, and alienates man from himself and from others, constantly sowing within history the seeds of evil and violence. **Then the day meant to intimate that Passover, the Sabbath Day, is surrendered so as to adopt the day that belonged to the oppressor!**

The day of rest

Nowhere in history is there a single instance to be found that Christians had to suffer for the sake of keeping Sunday. The Pope skilfully creates the impression that Christian martyrdom gives Sunday that quality of the Christian Faith: the suffering of Christ, which it so obviously lacked through all the centuries. Says he,

For several centuries, Christians observed Sunday simply as a day of worship, without being able to give it the specific meaning of Sabbath rest. Only in the fourth century did the civil law of the Roman Empire recognise the weekly recurrence, determining that on "the day of the sun" the judges, the people of the cities and the various trade corporations would not work. Christians rejoiced to see thus removed the obstacles which until then had sometimes made observance of the Lord's Day (the Sabbath Day) heroic. They could now devote themselves to prayer in common with the unbelievers without hindrance. ((Constantine's edicts prove exactly this.))

It would therefore be wrong to see in this legislation of the rhythm of the week a mere historical circumstance with no special significance for the Church and which she could simply set aside. Even after the fall of the Empire, the Councils did not cease to insist upon the arrangements regarding Sunday rest. In countries where Christians are in the minority and where the festive days of the calendar do not coincide with Sunday, it is still Sunday which remains the Lord's Day, the day on which the faithful come together for the Eucharistic assembly. ((Notice the Roman character of these assemblies.)) The link between the Lord's Day and the day of rest in civil society has a meaning and importance which go beyond the distinctly Christian point of view.

The following is obviously self-contradictory and reflects the Roman humanistic approach to the Gospel : *The alternation between work and rest, built into human nature, is willed by God himself, as appears in the creation story in the Book of Genesis (cf. 2:2-3; Ex 20:8-11): rest is something "sacred", because it is man's way of withdrawing from the sometimes excessively demanding cycle of earthly tasks in order to renew his awareness that everything is the work of God. There is a risk that the prodigious power over creation which God gives to man can lead him to forget that God is the Creator upon whom everything depends. It is all the more urgent to recognise this dependence in our own time, when science and technology have so incredibly increased the power which man exercises through his work.*

"Sunday"???

**Sunday: the Primordial Feast, Revealing the Meaning of Time
Christ the Alpha and Omega of time**

"In Christianity time has a fundamental importance. Within the dimension of time the world was created; within it the history of salvation unfolds, finding its culmination in the 'fullness of time' of the Incarnation, and its goal in the glorious return of the Son of God at the end of time. In Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, time becomes a dimension of God, who is himself eternal".

In the light of the New Testament, the years of Christ's earthly life truly constitute the centre of time; this centre reaches its apex in the Resurrection. It is true that Jesus is God made man from the very moment of his conception ... but only in the Resurrection is his humanity wholly transfigured and glorified, thus revealing the fullness of his divine identity and glory. In his speech in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia (cf. Acts 13:33), on the Sabbath Day, Paul applies the words of Psalm 2 to the Resurrection of Christ: "You are my Son, this day I have begotten you" (v. 7). It is precisely for this reason that ... the Church acclaim the Risen Christ as "the Beginning and End, the Alpha and Omega". ... These words clearly attest that "Christ is the Lord of time; he is its beginning and its end; every year, every day and every moment are embraced by his Incarnation and Resurrection, and thus become part of the "fullness of time".

Since the Sabbath Day is the weekly Passover, recalling and making present the day upon which Christ rose from the dead, it is also the day which reveals the meaning of time. It has nothing in common with the cosmic cycles according to which natural religion and human culture tend to impose a structure on time, succumbing perhaps to the myth of eternal return. The Christian Sabbath is wholly other! Springing from the Resurrection, it cuts through human time, the months, the years, the centuries, like a directional arrow which points them towards their target: Christ's Second Coming. The Sabbath Day foreshadows the last day, the day of the Parousia, which in a way is already anticipated by Christ's glory in the event of the Resurrection.

In fact, everything that will happen until the end of the world will be no more than an extension and unfolding of what happened on the day when the battered body of the Crucified Lord was raised by the power of the Spirit and became in turn the wellspring of the Spirit for all humanity. Christians know that there is no need to wait for another time of salvation, since, however long the world may last, they are already living in the last times. Not only the Church, but the cosmos itself and history are ceaselessly ruled

and governed by the glorified Christ. It is this life-force which propels creation, "groaning in birth-pangs until now" (Rom 8:22), towards the goal of its full redemption. Mankind can have only a faint intuition of this process, but Christians have the key and the certainty. Keeping The Lord's Sabbath Day holy is the important witness which they are called to bear, so that every stage of human history will be upheld by hope.

Sunday in the Liturgical Year

With its weekly recurrence, the Lord's Day of Sabbath Rest and Worship is rooted in the most ancient tradition of the Church and is vitally important for the Christian. But there was another rhythm which soon established itself: the "observation" of the "cosmic rule" of "times and seasons and years" that Paul first combated in his Letter to the Galatian Churches. Human psychology in fact desires the celebration of anniversaries, associating the return of dates and seasons with the remembrance of past events. When these events are decisive in the life of a people, their celebration generally spells the end of the simple Gospel Sabbath Feast.

Now, by God's design, the great saving events upon which the Church's life is founded were closely linked to the annual Jewish feasts of Passover and Pentecost, and were prophetically foreshadowed in them. Since the second century, the annual celebration of Easter by Christians — having been added to the weekly Easter celebration — allowed civil authority a more tolerable attitude towards Christians.

Whereas the Galatian Churches added to their pagan festivities the Biblical rite of circumcision, the Church of this age added to its pagan festivities (See Part 4, Par. 8.3.) the mystery of Christ crucified and risen. Preceded by a preparatory fast, celebrated in the course of a long vigil, extended into the fifty days leading to Pentecost, the feast of Easter — "solemnity of solemnities" — became the day par excellence for the initiation of catechumens. Through baptism they die to sin and rise to a new life because Jesus "was put to death for our sins and raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25; cf. 6:3-11). Intimately connected to the Paschal Mystery, the Solemnity of Pentecost takes on special importance, celebrating as it does the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles gathered with Mary and inaugurating the mission to all peoples. ((What a hold of every clean and unclean and hateful bird!)) Likewise, "in celebrating this annual cycle of the mysteries of Christ, the holy Church venerates with special love the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, united forever with the saving work of her Son". (122) In a similar way, by inserting into the annual cycle the commemoration of the martyrs and other saints on the occasion of

their anniversaries, "the Church proclaims the Easter mystery of the saints who suffered with Christ and with him are now glorified". When celebrated in the true spirit of the liturgy, the commemoration of the saints does not ((**Not?**)) obscure the centrality of Christ, but on the contrary extols it ... ((**Really?**))

The intrinsic relationship between the glory of the saints and that of Christ is built into the very arrangement of the Liturgical Year, and is expressed most eloquently in the fundamental and sovereign character of Sunday as the Lord's Day. Following the seasons of the Liturgical Year in the Sunday observance which structures it from beginning to end, the ecclesial and spiritual commitment of Christians comes to be profoundly anchored — **NOT** in Christ, ... but in "cosmic principalities and powers".

Sunday emerges therefore as the natural model for understanding and celebrating these feast-days of the Roman Church Year, which are of such value for the Christian life that the Church has chosen to emphasise their importance by making it obligatory for the faithful to attend Mass and to observe a time of rest, even though these feast-days may fall on variable days of the week firmly established in tradition, and ... supported by civil legislation. These traditions — and, by analogy, some recent cultural initiatives in civil society — often **embody values which are not difficult to integrate with the demands of faith.** It rests with the discernment of Pastors to **preserve the genuine values found in the culture of a particular social context and especially in popular piety, so that liturgical celebration — above all on Sundays and holy days — does not suffer but rather may actually benefit.** ((Which is precisely the method and strategy of Christian leadership of the second century and of Bible Translation of the twentieth century.))

CONCLUSION

The spiritual and pastoral riches of Sunday, as it has been handed on to us by tradition, are truly great. When its significance and implications are understood in their entirety, Sunday in a way becomes a synthesis of the Christian and pagan values. It is clear therefore why the observance of the lord Sun's Day is so close to the Church's heart, and why in the Church's discipline it remains a real obligation. Yet more than as a precept, the observance should be seen as ... rising from the depths of rebellion against Bible truth and authority. It is crucially important for this Anti-Christ that all the faithful should be convinced that they cannot live their faith or share fully in the life of the Christian community unless they take part regularly in the Sunday Eucharistic assembly.

We see a "diaspora" Christianity though, which is put to the test because the scattered disciples of Christ can no longer easily maintain contact with one another, and lack the support of the structures and traditions proper to Christian culture. In a situation of such difficulty, the opportunity to come together on the Sabbath Day with fellow believers, exchanging gifts of brotherhood, is rare indeed. Sustaining Christian life as it does, the Sabbath Day has the additional value of being a testimony and a proclamation. As a day of prayer, communion and joy, the Sabbath Day should resound throughout society, emanating vital energies and reasons for hope. The Sabbath Day should be the proclamation of that time in which he, who is the Risen Lord of history, makes his home. The Sabbath Day should be not the grave of our illusions but the cradle of an ever new future, an opportunity given to us to turn the fleeting moments of this life into seeds of eternity. The Sabbath Day should be an invitation to look ahead; it is the day on which the Christian community should cry out to Christ, "Maranatha: Come, O Lord!" (1 Cor 16:22). With this cry of hope and expectation, the Church is the companion and support of human hope. From Sabbath to Sabbath, enlightened by Christ, she goes forward towards the ... heavenly Jerusalem, which "has no need of the sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light and its lamp is the Lamb" (Rev 21:23). As she strains towards her goal, the Church is sustained and enlivened by the Spirit. It is he who awakens memory and makes present for every generation of believers the event of the Resurrection. He is the inward gift uniting us to the Risen Lord and to our brothers and sisters in the intimacy of a single (but torn and mutilated) body, reviving our faith, filling our hearts with charity and renewing our hope. The Spirit is unfailingly present, appearing unpredictably and lavishly with the wealth of his gifts in every Lord Christ's Sabbath Day's gathering for the weekly celebration of His Passover Redemption. The Church listens to the Spirit in a special way and reaches out with him to Christ in the ardent desire that he return in glory: "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'" (Rev 22:17). Precisely in consideration of the role of the Spirit, I have wished that this exhortation aimed at rediscovering the meaning of the Lord's Day of Worship Rest should be dedicated to Him in the Holy Spirit.

I entrust this pleading Letter to the intercession of Jesus Christ, that it may be received and put to the test by the Christian community. Without in any way detracting from the centrality of Christ and his Spirit, the Father Whose Promise both His Son and His Spirit are, is always present in the Sabbath Day of the LORD thy God. It is the mystery of Christ itself which demands this: indeed, how could HE who is Creator of the world and His

People fail to be uniquely present on the Day of His exceeding exercise of His Power in the Holy Spirit when He raised Christ from the dead and placed Him at His right hand in heavenly realms far above every name – even that of His earthly mother Mary?

As they listen to the word proclaimed in the Sabbath assembly, the faithful look to Christ alone, learning from HIM to keep it and ponder it in their hearts (cf. Lk 2:19). Through the Holy Spirit, they learn to stand at the foot of the Cross, offering to the Father the sacrifice of Christ and joining to it the offering of their own lives. With Jesus Christ their Lord, they experience the joy of His Resurrection, making their own the words which extol the inexhaustible gift of divine mercy in the inexorable flow of time: "His mercy is from age to age upon those who fear him" (Lk 1:50). From Sabbath to Sabbath, the pilgrim people follow in the footsteps of the Man of Galilee and HIS intercession gives special power and fervour to the prayer which rises from the Church to the Most Holy Trinity. The Sabbath of the LORD thy God is the Day belonging and devoted to the Tri-UNE God of Christian Faith and Mission. Speaking of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, the Father proclaims, "Today have I begotten Thee", "and behold, in the midst of the throne stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth".

Dear Protestant brothers suffering for the Faith of Jesus, I urge you to work tirelessly with the faithful to ensure that the value of God's Holy Day is understood and lived ever more deeply. May the men and women come to know the Risen Christ. And constantly renewed by the Sabbathly commemoration of His redemption, may Christ's disciples be ever more credible in proclaiming the Gospel of salvation and ever more effective in building the Kingdom of Christ.

Appendix p. 1.

“*The Jesus Seminar*”

The New Quest for “*the historic Jesus*” –

Die mens sonder Bybel-ore luister na wat die Bybel sê juis soos die boodskap daarvan vandag, twee millennia later, verstaan wil word – en nie met eerste-eeuse ore nie. Hy glo wat hý wil, en wat hom nie geval nie, glo hy nie. Hy piek en tjoez die god wat die belowendste klink op die vraag, “*Wat is die karakter van jou god?*” soos hy vir die politikus met die mooiste beloftes van ’n lekker lewe kies. In plaas daarvan om in die skande, aanstoot én lyding van die kruis van Christus te roem skeep die Christendom van vandag mos die selfvolterende behae daarin om homself die skuld vir alle ellende op aarde te gee. Dan gee hy sommer die Verlosser en God van die Christendom die skuld want sy koninkryk is outokraties en daarom ’n ryk van “*sistemiese onreg*”. Wat die *oorkop-mens eintlik om hom wil sien is dat God besig is om ’n regverdige bedeling in hierdie wêreld te skeep* – dan sal hy in hom glo. Maar hy kan nie glo in ’n opstanding wat nie *betrekking* het op ’n *regverdige bedeling* waarin elke mens alles kry wat hy verdien om nie te kry nie – sodat van ’n daadwerklike en fisiese opwekking van hierdie één God-Mens, niks oorbly as sosiale gelykmaking nie. Want die opstanding maak van Jesus van Nasaret ’n Gans Ander wat – volgens die *nuwe hervorming*’ geen mededoë met die mens in sy ellende kan hê nie en te veel soos ’n Gesagsfiguur daar uitsien! Die moderne mens sal nie voor sy *troon neerkniel* of hom *smeek* nie – nee-a! Hoe verwaand is hierdie kamtige te na gekomde mens, of liever, hierdie *bestryder van sistemiese onreg*’ dan nou? Niks nuuts nie; maar net die *teologie van rewolusie* in heiliger gewaad! Eintlik, Micky Mouse in leerstoel-gewaad.

Hierdie ding dat Jesus nie regtig liggaamlik uit die regtige dood uit, regtig opgestaan het nie, is amper so oud soos die Christelike Geloof self. Dink geleerdes soos Prof. Hansie Wolmarans jou werklik die ‘gewone’ Christendom van sê maar die ‘ou’ Hervorming het nooit geweet van die amulette en ander buite-Bybelse inligtingsbronne en wat hulle beteken het en wat hulle betrekking tot die christelike geloof sou inhou nie? Dan moet hy bra onkundig wees! Weliswaar het die argeologie talle meer sulke voorwerpe opgediep, maar die volle verhaal was twee duisend jaar gelede al, volledig afleibaar uit wat toe beskikbaar was. Die eerste ‘geleerde’ wat daarvoor geval het, was inderdaad Justinus die Martelaar! Hy pas die mitologiese opstandingskultus van die oorwinning van die lig oor die duisternis toe op die Christelike geloof van Jesus se (letterlike) opstanding uit die dode. Inderdaad vervang hy selfs die letterlike Bybelse Dag van Jesus se opstanding met die simboliese dag van die heidense kultus – “Sonsdag”.

Net soos wat die Christendom die Kruis-simbool van die heidendom oorgeneem het. Ja ag nee wat, die korrupsie van die Christelike geloof het nog maar altyd uit eie geleedere begin.

Vir die *nuwe hervorming*’ is ’n “waarlik opgestane Heiland” té uniek in sy verhoging en té algemeen in sy vernedering. Vele valse Christusse maak nie een egte nie. Maar laat my toe om net een onderskeidingsteken tussen die ware en die valse te meld, en dit is hulle getuies. Het die vele valse verlossers getuies onder die mense? Ek weet nie van een nie! En as hulle sou gehad het, is ek daar seker van nie een van hulle sou ongelowige getuies gewees het nie. Maar wie is die getuies van die opgestane *‘historiese’* Jesus? Christene? Gelowiges? Geheel en al nie! Dit kon daarom nie Christene se geloof gewees het wat Jesus – by wyse van spreke – ‘uit die dood opgewek het’ nie. (Die Christelike Geloof dus, was nie die skepper van homself nie.) Dat die getuies van die opgestane Jesus, later, gelowiges of Christene geword het, maak nie van hulle – in die eerste plek – gelowige getuies of “Christen”-getuies nie! Hulle het as die ‘wêreld’ van Jesus se opstanding uit die dood getuig – as ongelowige wêreld. Ja, hulle het Hom ná sy opstanding selfs bely as hulle ‘Here en God’ – maar vir presies dieselfde redes en met presies dieselfde konnotasies as wat hulle hom vóór sy dood as hulle ‘Here en God’ bely het. So eg was hulle bevestiging daarvan dat hierdie Mens Jesus van Nasaret gesterf het, vir drie dae dood was, en weer uit die dode opgestaan het. Nou kon hulle voortgaan – net soos voor die onderbreking – met hulle planne vir die herstel van die koningskap en troon van Dawid. Die getuies se aardse verwagtinge, metodes en eise met betrekking tot die opgestane Jesus bewys dat hulle werklik te doen gehad het met die werklike Jesus van vóór sy werklike dood. Hulle getuig dus onpartydig, onbevooroordeeld, en belangeloos sover dit Jesus die Nasarener as die Opgestane Here aangaan. Jesus is daarom die Opgestane Here en Verlosser **sonder die toedoen van menslike geloof**. Al sou niemand ooit geglo het dat Hy uit die dode en uit die dood opgestaan het nie, dan het Hy nogtans uit die dode en uit die dood uit opgestaan. Die bewys is daar dat juis hierdie almal wat nie gegló het nie, nogtans dít geglo het.

Maar die grootste bewys van Jesus se opstanding uit die dood is die **getuienis daarvan self**. Die egtheid daarvan had die krag om van ongelowiges gelowiges te maak – gelowiges in die Waarheid en die Lewe. Nie vice versa nie! Nie soos die *Jesus navorsing* dit omkeer nie – die egtheid van gelowiges had die krag om van ’n onwerklike die werklikheid te maak!

Dan getuig die Heilige Gees van die feit en waarheid van Jesus se liggaamlike opstanding – die Kerk bewys dit. Toe ongelowiges begin om te

glo toe was dit omdat Jesus se opstanding die waarheid was – want Hy het self die krag gehad, was inderdaad die Krag Self! Daar’s net een Christelike Geloof en dit is die Opstandingsgeloof. Die Christelike geloof in die opstanding en in nuwe lewe op die nuwe aarde en onsterflikheid berus alles op die *‘literalistiese’* werklikheid self van Jesus van Nasaret se opstanding uit die dood en onder die dode uit. Dít is *fundamenteel* – onvoorwaardelik voorwaardelik. Die Christelike Geloof gaan nie bog aan nie. En word nie vals beskuldig vir die geloof van *bomplanters* nie. So min as wat Crossan van die werklikheid van die Christelike geloofsbasis dink, soveel dink hy van die geloofsvolk self.

Daar volg natuurlik die wedersydse verloënings onder die *“nuwe hervorming”*, want, sê prof. Wolmerans, *“’n Nuwe voorstelling van God is dat al sy kinders soos ’n liggaam van sy Gees deurdrink is ... Ons is God se bewussyn en werk saam om sy wil te verwesenlik.”* As ons darem God se bewussyn moet wees die dag wat sou sy bewussyn dan wees!

En laastens: Waarom moet die Christelike prototipe by Billy Graham gaan kry word? Mensig! Is daar nie ’n Calvyn nie? Of ’n Karl Barth? Maar Billy Graham? Behoede ons! Dan liever Pous Johannes Paulus die tweede.

The Uniqueness of Jesus the Christ

Still we haven’t finished with the issue of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Actually there is no other topic so hotly discussed currently as it, not only among theologians but also among ordinary Christians. (I doubt whether other “religions”, ironically, are so interested in dialogue with Christians!)

We have not scratched the surface in our previous discussions yet.

Another book on the subject as representative as that of Paul F. Knitter, *No Other Name?*, I must still discover. What makes this book of interest especially to **BSA**’s readers, is the fact that the Catholic Church is behind its publication. (Refer **BSA** December 2000 on the Catholic Church and the translation and printing of the Bible.) *No Other Name?* is published by Orbis Books Maryknoll for the American Society of Missiology. The Publishers remark, *“The Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll) recruits and trains people for overseas missionary service. Through Orbis Books Maryknoll aims to foster the international dialogue that is essential to mission. The books published, however, reflect the opinions of their authors and are not meant to represent the official position of the society.”* (Not officially of course!)

But let us first quickly glance at the back page of Knitter’s book.

About the scholar, the back page tells us that *“Paul Knitter served as a Divine Word missionary before assuming a position at Xavier University,*

Cincinnati, where he is presently Professor of Theology. He received the Licentiate in Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and studied under Karl Rahner before earning a Doctorate in Theology from the Department of Protestant Theology at the University of Marburg, West Germany (the first Roman Catholic to do so). For the past fifteen years his main interest has been Christian dialogue with other religions, especially those of the East. ...”

Comments Leonard Swidler of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* on *No Other Name?*, *“Paul Knitter faces honestly the conundrum of what the committed Christian believer does theologically in face of the growing evidence, scholarly and from personal encounter, that there are other ways, religious ways, of leading a full, authentic human life, than the Christian way. Can a person be ‘saved’, that is, come to live a truly human life, by some other name than that of Jesus Christ? Knitter’s answer is one can be ‘saved’ by ‘some other name’, and then he proceeds to show how this affirmative can be equated theologically with a full Christian commitment. / This is first rate creative theology. It is theology done the only way it can be done today: in dialogue with other world religions and with one’s own Christian tradition”*

John B. Cobb, Jr., Ingraham Professor of Theology, School of Theology at Claremont, has this to say about Knitter and his book, *“Paul Knitter has surveyed and organized the Christian discussion about the relation of Christianity to other traditions with unusual thoroughness, fairness, and clarity. This presentation serves at the same time as an argument for his own view that the need is to adopt the hypothesis that all religious traditions are talking about the same reality – God, in Christian parlance. Even those, like myself, who are dissatisfied with this hypothesis and who resist the way in which it relativizes Jesus as one saviour figure among others will find this book an indispensable contribution to the ongoing theological debate. They will also find a passion for inclusive truth and a spirit of openness to learn from other traditions that are beyond criticism and that can pave the way for a new Christian consensus.”*

Christianity is passionately, radically and aggressively **exclusive** Christian Faith or it is not Christian nor Faith. One can only be *dissatisfied* utterly with this hypothesis which relativizes Jesus as one saviour figure among others. One’s passion for **exclusive** truth must unashamedly reveal a spirit of openness to teach other traditions that Christian consensus on Christ’s uniqueness and exclusiveness is *beyond criticism*.

Already we notice the **basic** point of departure for the possibility of *“inclusive”* and *“open”* *“Christian parlance”*. That point is the

understanding of what it is for man to be “saved”. “*Can a person be ‘saved’, that is, come to live a truly human life, leading a full authentic human life ... by some ... name*” other than Christ’s?

One could say it is possible. But **this** is not what it means to be saved according to the Christian Faith! In terms of Christian Faith, a “**saved person**” is one who with his mouth, that is, with clearly articulated **understanding**, and with his heart, that is, with his whole **spiritual** being, **believes** and **confesses** that Jesus is the Christ of God. It means that he is **justified** in the forgiveness of his sins through the atoning death of Jesus Christ and his resurrection from the dead. It means the same Jesus with his second and final advent will raise him from the dead into **eternal life**. Of no person who doesn’t believe in Jesus Christ only and exclusively **this** salvation is possible. From this understanding of the salvation, carried through the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, crystallised the Apostolic Articles of Faith. It is absolutely impossible to maintain these Articles of Faith if “*religious pluralism*” is accepted. Who but a person of strong Roman Catholic sentiment would be able to interpret for example the First Article so as to be able to divide the Godhead between Buddha and Allah and Mary while supposing Christ just one of the “*same realities*”? The Scriptures and the Christian Confession will come under consideration again and again as we peruse this book.

If “*leading a full, authentic human life*” means to be “*saved*” **any** “*name*” would be superfluous. To still cling to “*some name*” would simply be **show**. For such “*saving*” benefits one would retain the semblance of allegiance to any “*saviour-figure*” and for no reason but social (and academic) pressure. To be openly a humanist and nothing but a humanist **in the present day** will be difficult simply because it would be out of fashion. Religion – of any sort – has become an obvious, practical and profitable psychological and social comfort zone and status symbol. No one can lead “*a full, authentic human life*” in our day and world as the odd one out who cannot fit into popular political and religious trends. The ideological comfort zones of modern day living – in the traditionally Christian as much as in the traditionally non-Christian worlds – need no “*name*” but for social **conformity**. There is no community in this world that does not thrive on complacency based on conformity even were such complacency and conformity nurtured on hatred for competing religions. It may even be true of Christian society. It certainly is true of the religions of Agnosticism and Atheism. They only invent a metaphysical “*name*” or “*lord*” where “*other traditions*” have objectified its.

The concept to “*be ‘saved’*” in the sense of “*to come to live a truly human life*” can do and must do **without one** specific Name, that of Jesus Christ! Jesus calls no one to a comfort-zone, but to **suffering**. Christ’s Lordship is a tangible reality experienced in suffering! At the same time this experience of Christ’s Lordship is not to be mistaken for Christ the Lord in his own Person and Godhead – which two things in all “*other ways*” or “*traditions*” are invariably identified.

The Christian believer is called to “the suffering of Christ”. Not to asceticism or such idolatrous “severity against the flesh”, but to the suffering of a **lonely** and **isolating** faith in Him the Lord and God of one’s life. Jesus does not **share** with “*some name*” no matter which. He opposes and bans any other “*name*” for He is the only, the only true, the only living, the only saving “Name given under the heavens on earth among men”. (We talk Scriptures or we have nothing to say. We explain by quoting the Scriptures.) The “*saved*” too, believe and confess Jesus as Saviour and ban any other “*name*” or “*way*” or “*tradition*” or “*reality*”. God is a “jealous God”. And they who believe in Him are also jealous of His honour. “**I** am the way”, Jesus said – the **only** way or not at all. “The saved” are certainly not those “*leading a full, authentic human life*” in the realm of rule of “*some name*”. It is not even a case of synergism between the saved and the saviour. It is Christ alone. The “*saved*” are those “few” – the very special “many” whose God is this the **electing** God in Christ Jesus only.

Let it first be established what it means to be “*saved*” through and in and for Jesus the Christ before He is made of equal prize as other “*names*” and they are made “*God*”. Humanising salvation can only mean humanising the Name God’s elect are saved by. It can only mean man must be saved of Christianity and not of sin. It can only imply the deification of idols. And it can only result in where it from the outset required the nullifying of the Scriptures.

What exclusive Biblical Truth is not destroyed for the “*passion for inclusive truth*”? The question, *No Other Name?* immediately becomes a complex of questions. For example, from mission has come the “*need to adopt the hypothesis that all religious traditions are talking about the same reality – God*”. What is the nature of the **Scriptures** if the **Name** it is “*talking about*” isn’t exclusive? “*All religious traditions*” – their **writings** included and especially – must be “inspired” like Christianity claims the Bible is – which means there isn’t much in the Bible’s “Inspiration”! Then sure as expected, we find not one thinker along the lines of “*religious pluralism*” who takes the Bible seriously! We shall confirm this allegation as we take a closer look at them one by one.

Another example is the Christian concept of **sin**. For a false sense of guilt Christianity has decided itself is to be blamed for all the ills of the world – itself and not “sin”. Now guess how the “*other traditions*” interpret sin? Christianity uses sin to show how inferior the “*lesser revelations*” are. That will also be illustrated as we go along.

The “*evidence*”, according to Leonard Swidler, is “*growing, scholarly and from personal encounter, that there are other ways, religious ways ... than the Christian way.*” There is nothing tangible or true about this “*evidence ... that there are other ways ... than the Christian way*” – Swidler simply imagines it. And he **must** presume the “*other ways*” in the **plural**. If “*the Christian way*” cannot be the exceptional and exclusive, singular “*way*”, **on what grounds** should any “*other way*” **not** be included and accepted (as just as valid a “*way*”)? Would Knitter or Swidler still have held to their claim if they *honestly faced* the truth hidden in the *conundrum* of **all** the juggled religions? Where are they going to draw the line between **truth** and the **claim** of truth? No wonder Knitter’s “*main interest has been Christian dialogue with other world religions ... especially those of the East*” because his preference implies at least the part the **size** and perhaps the **age** of a religion play in its qualification to be a “*way*”. Would Knitter besides have been interested mainly in the religions of the East because other **Western** religions are manifestly anti-Christian? I refer here to Islam and Judaism, the two if not **only** “*other ways*” of the modern Western world.

In any case, **what is there** to be discussed (whether with East or West) but **what we are seeing** is effectively discussed, namely the **compromise** of the exclusivity and uniqueness of Jesus as the only Lord and Christ of God? That’s what “*the promotion of scholarly dialogue*” between religions is about! **Christianity talks incessantly** while the “*other ways*” look on amused and unperturbed. *What we have, in fact, is the mouse in monologue with the elephant.* (With apology to Henry Maurier, in Knitter, p. 142.) Has Christianity or the Christian Faith gained by the discussion? Has the Lordship of Jesus Christ gained or did it lose?

“Mission” is a self-endowed task and title. “Mission” is man’s own law – not that of Christ. All the energy put into “Mission” is like the plenty Israel offered Dagon. The shining sanctity “Mission” surrounds Christian virtue and duty with its pretence. Mission so to speak has replaced indulgence. Mission makes of Christianity a religion of works and merit like all the other idolatrous religions.

Mission is supposed to be the flow of spiritual goods from those who have to those who have not. Why then should Christianity attempt “mission” if the “*other traditions*” already possess everything Christianity could dream

of having to disperse among the peoples of the world? Is Christianity so poor it must receive alms from other religions?

“*International dialogue is essential to mission*” but definitely not to Proclamation – not to the Gospel. The issue, *No Other Name?*, involves not only the “Name”, but the totality of Christian Faith, Congregation, Doctrine, Object of worship, way of worship. If it is not **asserted**, *No Other Name!* (The intent of the Text is to assert.), but **asked**, *No Other Name?* Christ in His own Divine Person for the sake of Mission and “*religious pluralism*” is denied and betrayed. In Proclamation though, Christ in His own Divine Person is The Worshipped. A “*theocentric*”, “*newly experienced Reality*”, took over from Christ. It surprises not to find it revered within a “*tradition*” where idolatry in every form has been rife for ages – Roman Catholicism! Unfortunately Protestant theologians also promote a religion that could no longer “*adhere to Christ as the full and final expression of divine revelation*”.

“*For ... twenty years or so*”, says Knitter, “*I have felt no small problem in integrating what I have learned and experienced from other faiths with what I have learned from traditional Christian doctrine, especially concerning the uniqueness and finality of Christ and Christianity. ... This book, I hope, will help ... to find answers that will be faithful both to contemporary experience and to Christian tradition*”.

Note where Knitter’s “*experience*” and loyalty lay and where not. Does he try “*to find answers ... faithful*” the Scriptures? Or is the Scriptures hid behind “*Christian tradition*”? The normative for Knitter is “*contemporary experience*”. Note also the direction of his *experience* and *learning*. Was there a flow from Christianity to the “*other faiths*”? He doesn’t say so.

“*The structure of the book* (and the content surely) *reflects the path I have followed in confronting and trying to resolve the question of Christ / Christianity and other religions. Chapter one sets the problem: the new experience of religious pluralism in the world today, the vision many persons have of a new kind of unity and dialogue among religions, and the perplexing question Christians encounter when they feel themselves drawn toward such unity and dialogue ...*”.

With this Knitter says it all. There is first dissatisfaction with and confrontation of “*Christ and Christianity*”. Then, “*I tried to resolve the question*” but of course with no avail. I start wooing other religions or rather now openly follow my brave relationship with them. Then a new movement is started – a sort of “sect” – to accommodate the unhappy seekers after truth, in this case: *The New Experience of Religious Pluralism. Voila! Many*

persons find their peace and happiness in *such unity and dialogue!* Finally comes formal apology, “*in all (conservative Christian models) the problem appears to hinge on the traditional Christian claim for the superiority and normativity of Jesus Christ*”. The faction, Confession of Faith included, is complete. May we propose to rather call it *The Anti-Christ Christian Church?*

Knitter’s is typical subjective and emotional “religion”.

We would do better to leave Knitter’s Preface – which actually is more of a summary – and to follow on from the First Chapter. But that is for **BSA** April 2001.

No Other Name? - “Religious Pluralism”

Religious pluralism is a “*new Christian awareness of other religions*” – an *awareness* that forgets and in fact refutes its Christian “*superiority and finality*” and that claims nothing less than “*superiority and finality*” for “*other religions*”! Knitter “*argues*” that even the liberal conviction, “*to hold to a necessary completion of other religions in God’s historical revelation in Christ*”, “*must be open to revision*”. In other words, he would not allow Jesus Christ even a **comparative** position among “*religions*”, what to say a position of **exclusivity**.

One characteristic of “*Intra-religious Dialogue*” or “*Religious Pluralism*” – call it what you like – is its utter **disrespect for the Scriptures**, as we have pointed out more than once in previous issues of **BSA**. Knitter scarcely if ever uses Scripture, and when (rarely) quoted, conservative theologians originally did the quoting (e.g. pages 94, 96). Scripture is treated as were it of no consequence not because there is no Scripture with bearing on matters. It is not one or two texts that demand the uniqueness and exclusivity of Jesus Christ. It is the law and strain of all Scripture and especially of the Christian New Testament. The Scriptures are against the ideals of *religious pluralism*; the two are absolutely irreconcilable. The propagators of *religious pluralism* dislike and do not accept the authority of the Scriptures.

Another general observation about *religious pluralism* is its basic acceptance that Jesus Christ is not **divine** – God of God, as Christians have always confessed. Again one could have guessed that the propensity to share the honour of Christ with idols should be found in Roman Catholic Christianity – a Christianity that does not think it idolatry to worship Mary, images, or saints. To add another few “gods” just as well may include Allah and Buddha.

It is not surprising that the “traditional” Christian **Confessions** and especially Protestant Confessions receive no respect at all in *religious*

pluralism. The last thing one will find defended in *religious pluralism* are the doctrines of election and free grace for these imply the proclamation of Jesus Christ exclusively – to be found in Him or be lost.

For no other reason could Knitter base his “theology” “*in (auto)biography*”. He personalises or subjectivises theology. *Religious pluralism* is not really broadminded or open to truth but is restricted to personal opinion that would not submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ particularly or to Creed and Church generally. (*Religious pluralists*, like Knitter and “*Alan Race ... share many concerns and conclusions especially regarding the uniqueness of Jesus.*” *Religious pluralism* offers fertile soil for the proliferation of so many “*problems*” where the “*central Christian doctrines or convictions are at stake*” as there are “*intelligent questioning*” minds.

“*One Confronts Many*”, Knitter heads his first chapter. To the Christian mind that would immediately evoke the picture of the Christ “*confronting*” the many gods of idolatry, heathendom, paganism and Catholicism. But Knitter doesn’t so mean it. He thinks the opposite. He thinks the idea “*One Confronts Many*” to be a “*truly great question*”, and truly a great idea that Jesus Christ is just one **among** or only one **of** many.

Knitter from the outset disregards the Bible, the God of the Bible and the work of the God of the Bible. Knitter and thus fellow “*concerned, intelligent Christians*”, “*want to take up the question of one confronting many in the context of world religions – of the many world religions*” **instead!**

“*From the clouded origins of the human species, as the spark of consciousness broadened and gave rise to the burning concern for the meaning of life, there have always been many religions ...*”. Obviously Knitter thinks of the origin of the human “*species*” as **evolutionary** – **not** as **created** by God, nor created as a responsible creature from the first moment of life. Knitter thinks of man not as in need of a personal Creator or Saviour. All these “creators” and “saviours” are the creation of **man’s** “*burning concern for the meaning of life*” and the *broadening* of “*the spark of consciousness*”. In fact the only sure way the Christ-concept could have “*evolved*” as only one of many similar concepts would have been **IF** only the Creator God could be doubted and it could be said, **IF** man had not been created and is the product of evolutionary processes. Then only **his religions must be** the product of man’s own “*consciousness*”.

That Knitter approaches the problem of “*religious pluralism*” from the standpoint of the evolutionary origins of religion and religions is evident already in his idea of the “*completion of religions*”, referred to

above. For Knitter it is not even acceptable to believe that Christianity is that “completion of other religions”. It for us also is an unacceptable notion but for the very different reason that Christianity isn’t the product of human consciousness or experience. Christianity isn’t the end-result of human development or evolution. It is the sudden appearance in this world as the direct creation of God through his Holy Spirit by the Power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In other words, Christianity is miraculous because its origin is divine because its Lord is Divine and has nothing to with or in common with “other religions” **which are not divine**.

The whole concept of and Knitter’s treatise on “religious pluralism” is only possible from a “clouded” evolutionary standpoint of origins. The **clearcut truth** (call it naïve if you will) that God created and that He should be revealed exclusively in his Word Jesus Christ simply cannot fit into a scheme of spontaneous “origins” through a process of evolution.

“There have always been many religions, each with its own “ultimate” answers”, says Knitter. What he insinuates is that Christianity also has its “ultimate answers”, which for no reason could claim superiority or incomparability with the other religions’ “ultimate answers”. All religions’ “ultimate answers” are equal. *One confronting the other, the many are all the same*. Now it needs no great *intelligence* or *concern* to discern these implications of Knitter’s assumptions. But it demands faith in Jesus Christ not to mistake Him for *the many*, or *the many* for Him. And that faith no man has ever developed by himself no matter how well he has evolved.

“Today our inter-communicating planet has made us aware, more painfully than ever before, of religious pluralism and of the many different ultimate answers.” The “ultimate answers” given by “the many” that make up “religious pluralism”, one is supposed to believe should eventually all agree for are they not all **one** (and the same)? But here Knitter is “painfully aware” of the fact that they are all “different”. All being different, they cannot all be “ultimate”. The “ultimate” can only be one. As long as all the answers differ, the one possibility remains that at most just one “answer” could be the “ultimate”. The only other **logical** possibility is that not a single one is “ultimate”. Notwithstanding the *painful* fact that all religions with each its own “ultimate answers” are *different* supplies good reason not to take **any** seriously, not to trust any, except for its contradictory characteristics, that is, for its untrustworthiness.

Not even the only logical possibility that the “ultimate” can only be one, can indicate the Christian Faith. The Christian Faith falls outside any categories and outside categorising. The Christian Faith cannot be the

“ultimate” in relation to other “religions” because it cannot **be put in relation** to other “religions”.

The Christian Faith is **no religion** at all. It falls in a “category” of its own. It is **The Faith of Jesus**. It is the Christian’s fortress against *the quantity and quality of today’s knowledge*, causing him to *face* undaunted *the barrage of questions religious persons of the past never had to face*. The Faith of Jesus “secures”. “The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?” Christians may today as ever before “face” “the many other religions ... secure in their own isolated religious camps”, “holding fast unto” **The Faith of Jesus**. Christ does not only **have** the “ultimate answers” – He **is** The Ultimate Answer. He is the ultimate – “ultimate” not in comparison to other religions and other possibilities, but “ultimate” extra the ordinary and in relation to the impossible. The same cannot be said of Christianity as over against The Christian Faith though. It is not permissible to claim for Christianity what is claimed for Christ, there is this great difference between Christ and Christianity!

Knitter suggests some of the questions that spring from “the quantity and quality of today’s knowledge”: “Why are there so many different religions? If God is one, should there not be one religion? Are the religions all equally true, equally false? Do they all share in something common? How should they relate to each other? Are the many religions really one? ...”. These are all questions as old as religion. Not one of these questions belongs to “today’s knowledge”. Not one demands “quality of knowledge”. And, notably, not one question stems from a greater “quantity of knowledge” of religions. There might be the odd case of the academic whose interest in the subject of world religions overshadows general knowledge of religions. But even the best of today will have to have advanced beyond imagination to compare with the old philosophers and holy ones, “common” of world religions of yonder times. We fancy we’re clever and know a lot, but we shall never reach the heights the pioneers of world religions scaled with such grace and elegance. They were good. They had knowledge. They had insight and understanding – “intelligence”. But they lacked **The Faith of Jesus!**

Knitter talks about “intelligence”, “quantity” and “quality” of “knowledge” that “today” confront “anyone who takes religious faith seriously”. He talks of “knowledge” and “questions” “that religious persons of the past, secure in their own isolated religious camps, never had to face”. Now again it doesn’t ask for great *intelligence* to see that Knitter points to *religious persons of today, Christians*, who, *secure in their own isolated religious camp* of the Christian Faith, **cannot face** these *intelligent* questions

– **Christians**, who, in Knitter’s opinion, do **not take religious faith seriously** but **hypocritically** cling to that old time religion called the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Knitter continues his list of questions that “*today*” confront “*religious persons*”, “*How should my religion relate to the others? Can I learn from other religions? Can I learn more from them than I can from my own? Why do I belong to one religion rather than another?*” One might guess Knitter asks these question as a Christian. But there’s no contextual guarantee that he does. He makes – let’s assume – of the Christian “*religion*”, “*my religion*”. He doesn’t regard it as the Faith OF Jesus – **Jesus’** Faith. He can do what he likes with his own things, clearly. He could put “*my religion*” **on par** with any other “*religion*”. These questions each and all amount to this question, What is mine better than yours? *Can I learn from your religion? Can I learn more from you than I can from my own?* (There’s not much for you to learn from mine!) *Why do I belong to Christianity after all?* Between the lines one reads Knitter’s conclusion, ‘*It seems rather senseless to me to be a Christian!*’ One cannot escape the “*ultimate*” conclusion, that Knitter’s every word and thought in effect subverts **The Christian Faith**.

“*For anyone who takes religious faith seriously, these are painful questions*”, says Knitter. This statement reveals Knitter’s basic approach departs from the supposition of the equality of all mankind. There’s no real difference between peoples or thought-worlds. So how can there be real difference between their religions? Again Knitter supposes the evolutionary appearance of these **peoples’**-religions. There is nothing special, nothing other-wordly, “divine” or miraculous about any. *For any Christian who takes The Faith of Jesus seriously, these therefore, are painful questions.* No Christian will “*run away from such questions, not if their own faith is going to be honest*” and the commonplace thing it after all is.

Honest Christians will face these questions. They will, but in faith, and **after** they have faced these questions they will not “learn for ever but never come to the true knowledge of Christ”. They won’t get confused, begin to doubt, and loose perspective. They will keep on focusing on Jesus sharper, stronger and nearer, every step. *If their faith is going to be honest they will stop asking such questions* and start asking questions about the **surprise of grace**: How could God so have loved the world that He could send his only begotten Son Jesus Christ for its salvation?

Again one unfortunately finds suspicious and accusing innuendoes in Knitter’s argument. “*If their own faith is going to be honest (they will not)*

run away from such questions.” Knitter suggests “*they*” will always be *running away* as long as “*they*” do not assent to the generalisation of Christianity. “*They*” will always be *dishonest* as long as “*they*” object to making the uniqueness of Christ at best the equal of the common in other religions. The scenario likens children playing and one threatening to no longer play if everybody doesn’t play his way. If you don’t agree that Christianity is but *one of many* and its “*ultimate answers*” are only the beginning and that one must *learn from the other religions* before one *knows* anything, you’re a **coward** who cannot *face* these questions and **dishonest** because you *run away* from them. That is Knitter’s foregone conclusion. (I’m no longer playing!) “*This is especially true for Christians*”, says he, “*perhaps because they have always felt or been told that theirs was the only true religion ...*”. (I’m no longer playing if I cannot have it **my** way!) They were all the time spiteful! Knitter could have omitted the word “*perhaps*”. The reader can surely see that he doesn’t really mean that word. And the Christian would not mind if the accusation applies to him. Fortunate is the man who *has always felt or been told that Christianity is the only true religion*. The unfortunate thing “*today*” is that often this is not the case, and Christians are told and taught that Christianity is and always has been just one of many ‘true’ religions. There even are those who teach that “*other religions were destined ... eventually to become the “one” Christian religion*”. Pray God that that day will never come. It will mean the end, not its triumph; the end of Christianity, not of other religions.

No Other Name?- Who Wins?

“*Many factors have worked together to make the age-old fact of religious pluralism a newly experienced reality for many today. The most significant factor is also the most obvious: knowledge. Today we in the West know more about other religions than ever before. The science of religion has come a long way since it was founded and given scientific respectability by Max Muller with his publication of Comparative Mythology (1856) and, especially, his Introduction to the Science of Religion (1873). What was at first esoteric material for the delight of the ivory-towered philologist, lexicologist, phenomenologist, or comparative philosopher has become the popularly written and beautifully illustrated religious paperbacks that fill the shelves of American and European bookstores. Translations of Bhagavad Gita, the Tao-Te-Ching, the Dhammapada are to found alongside the Bible. Commentaries on the meaning and value of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism by Huston Smith, Alan Watts, Mircea Eliade are selling just as well – if not better – than the works of Christian theologians. More and more*

persons have more and more opportunities to learn about religions other than their own. And they are taking advantage of these opportunities."

No one could deny what Knitter here writes with the possible qualification that "knowledge about other religions" although more readily available and more appealing presented, can scarcely be viewed as more factual or of deeper insight than the knowledge of the past. "Religious pluralism" is an "age-old fact". But what is Knitter aiming at? Why does he tell us what we already know and understand? While it must be admitted that what Knitter here writes is reasonably true, it supplies no justification to accept his innuendoes. For although *commentaries on the meaning and value of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism are selling just as well – if not better – than the works of Christian theologians*, it doesn't show or prove they are of greater – or of even comparable – value and truth than the Christian Faith. Regrettably, however, we must admit it shows **the spirit of the age** that may estimate the value of these religions above that of the Christian Faith. It proves the lamentable state of Christian faith but not of **The Christian Faith**. The value of the Christian religion (if we can call it that) is not its adherents' achievements, but the accomplishment of its Founder.

"In the desire to know more about others, Western Christians are motivated by the growing awareness that "they who know one, know none". Widespread interest in other religions has evolved, it seems, beyond its enthusiastic, less critical early phase, in the 1950s and early 60s, when many looked to the East as a panacea for all their personal and religious frustrations. Today, for the most part, religious consumers are much more critical: they do not buy a new product without carefully checking the ingredients. Yet the desire to learn about other products persists."

"Western Christians are motivated by the growing awareness that "they who know one, know none""", Knitter presumes. His observation is totally subjective. Nothing but prejudice prevents *Western Christians* to be motivated by the uniqueness and incomparability of the Christian Faith. *Western Christians* might in fact be fewer by the millions but they in the face of the "growing awareness" of *other religions* could to the same degree be surer *that they, who know The One, know the Only*. The conviction is a matter of faith – the belief in the Revelation of God in Jesus Christ – a revelation that from its very nature cannot have occurred but in *The One*.

"Widespread interest in other religions has evolved, it seems, beyond its enthusiastic, less critical early phase, in the 1950s and early 60s, when many looked to the East as a panacea for all their personal and religious frustrations." One wonders what but "personal and religious frustrations" could have caused *Western Christians* to look at the other

*religions, "in the 1950s and early 60s", as well as today. Knitter's observation that "for the most part, religious consumers (of late) are much more critical", is highly over-optimistic. The contrary, unfortunately, is true, that for the most part, frustrated Christians are far too uncritical when it comes to others' religions and much too critical when it comes to their own Faith. For instance, this whole book of Knitter's contains only negative frustrations about Christianity and the Christian Faith, and little if anything in kind about other religions. It has become but too true that the West has become a "consumer"-society with "religion" just another "consumer"-commodity. But that says nothing about The Christian Faith. In fact, which society today is not a consumer-society? Where on earth is materialism not the god of the age? Were it not for The Christian Faith though, what would have become of the world? If Christ Jesus did not rule the age and the world despite, what would have become of it? The very thought of Jesus Christ would have perished from the earth! We would not have spoken of "two thousand years (after Christ)"! There would not have been such a thing as "Comparative Studies" of Religions with Christianity one of the "religions". But the living and actual truth of Jesus the Christ is evident despite the good state of the many religions and the poor state of the Christian Faith. Its seeming decline detracts not the least from the glorious Kingdom of Heaven – the Kingdom of Jesus Christ! In fact, by this very *status quo* and development of the world and its many forces of religions and materialism, God is working out the final "Revelation of Jesus Christ"! This is the Kingdom of heaven still ruling with an iron rod the nations of the heathen – much to their dislike perhaps, but no less true.*

One thing becomes clearer by the day of actual experience of the interrelationship between the Christian "Religion" and "the other religions", and that is that Jesus Christ cannot be proclaimed in any way that might bring peace and agreement between them. The more such a peace might be agitated for, the more it resists. For the rod of Christ shall brake to pieces like clay pots the vessels of iniquity and idolatry. Jesus Christ shall bring division and the sword. The peace He offers is not the peace of compromise and consolidation but the peace of commitment at "the price of discipleship". (Dietrich Bonhoeffer died for his faith, the Christian Faith during an age many "intelligent Christians" thought the Christian Faith could discourse and co-operate with the religion and god of Nazism.)

"More and more persons have more and more opportunities to learn about religions other than their own. And they are taking advantage of these opportunities", says Knitter. Does this fact cancel out the vanity of religion and religions? *More and more persons have more and more*

opportunities to learn about irreligious things and infidelity than ever before. *And they are taking advantage of these opportunities.* Does that make these things the acceptable and normative? For many if not for most, it does. For the majority Christians, popular and powerful can never be the yardstick of truth and genuineness. So the fact that *“more and more persons have more and more opportunities to learn about religions other than their own ... and ... are taking advantage of these opportunities”*, is reason for the Christian to hold more fast to the unique Faith of Jesus Christ that from its very start had to conquer and survive as many foes and contenders as there were ages and saviours and gods.

Paul tells the Christians of his times, “You have not contended yet to blood” while so many actually laid down their lives for the Faith of Jesus. When were they for their own liberation supposed to begin to pay attention to the opposing religions of their time? But in our age of comfort and indifference Christians if they *persist* in their faith in *“the uniqueness of Jesus”*, must be *less critical and enthusiastic beyond intelligence*. They must be ill informed, dull and slack to reckon their Faith is so unique and precious it is **worth suffering for!** And the only thing that could possibly give their Faith that exclusive value that will make it worth suffering for, is the **Object** of their worship, *The Only Name* of Jesus Christ!

Everything Knitter says, he basis on inevitable yet disguised presuppositions that cannot in the least be to the credit of the Christian Faith.

This is not something new.

Back page of Dr. Louw Alberts’, *Is Jesus Christ Unique?* (Christian Art Publishers, 2002): The question, *“Is Jesus Christ unique? Brings us back to the fundamental truths of the Bible, where Jesus emphatically declared, “I am the way and the truth and the life”. But can this declaration, made about two thousand years ago, hold its ground in the pluralistic society of the 21st century?”* The publishers answer, *“The author presents a positive witness through which the Christian, both as an individual and in the community of the church, can renew his faith, and reconfirm his enthusiasm for the truth that Jesus Christ is indeed the only true way to God and eternal life.”* (Emphasis CGE)

When I read Dr Louw Alberts’ witness, its simplicity struck me most. He is a learned and honoured scientist, yet for him Christ is the answer to life’s deepest and sublimest secrets. When I listen to theologians argue the ‘*New quest for the historic Christ*’, I am just as impressed by the humbleness of the ‘orthodox’, as surprised and appalled by the arrogance, presumptuousness and insulting approach and manners of the ‘*New Reformers*’ as they don’t hesitate to call themselves. And every time I thank

God for their bombasm, for the ordinary, simple believer won’t need more of them to be convinced of their hypocrisy.

The Witness of the World of the Risen

“We are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and (in their city) Jerusalem. We are witnesses of him whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly – not to all the people, but to the witnesses chosen before of God, in fact to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.” Acts 10.

If Jesus of Nazareth had been God incarnate, and had risen from the dead Christ Jesus of Nazareth, God incarnate, then the recognition of this Man raised from the dead was the recognition of the same Jesus of Nazareth of before his death and resurrection, by the same people, for the same reasons, for the same purpose, with the same motives and with the same hopes: earthly, temporary, finite, ideals and honours. After, He had been recognised and confessed and believed for what he to THEM before had been: “my Lord and my God”! my King and my Ruler Divine! (– for don’t we have David and Abraham our fathers, who are called gods?) These witnesses weren’t delusioned, hallucinating visionaries – their ideals no mental projection of a restored past future, but of sober, disallusioned, scattered, disappointed, unbelieving, solitaires who hoped to regather an Israel to the flesh from scratch. They saw and touched and worshipped and witnessed this Jesus risen from the dead as they did that mortal of before his death and resurrection. And they were as realistic witnesses and confirmatories of his bodily resurrected reality as they were of his bodily crucified, reality – “whom they slew by hanging him on the tree”. To them he was as finished as he now was back, and was back now as he had been finished with before. THEY nor their vision created HIM, but HE – raised from the dead real – created theirs: “Lord, will you again build up Israel, and when, (because we think it’s high time)?”

Says Paul: “No one can say Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit”. True! Also said Jesus: “Not everyone who calls me Lord ...!” Jesus also told these witnesses: “You must wait in Jerusalem!” Why? Because you shall not proclaim or witness of Me – not you of all people and specifically you of all people! Why? Because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, simply, and, only my Elect. And, because “He – the Consoler, the Holy Spirit – shall witness of me” – **not you!** I am not witnessed to nor proclaimed by you, pigmy politicians!

The true proclamation and the real witness of the disciples begin the moment they become Apostles – sent by God through the Spirit. And the Spirit is most easily of the Godhead recognised by this singular feature and characteristic of His – that “He shall witness of ME”, Jesus! “The ‘spirit’ that does not confess that Jesus had come in the flesh ...” (– from the dead had come in the flesh –) that ‘spirit’, “is anti-Christ”. So the false prophet can’t help but betray himself by speaking of himself or anything else, and on behalf of himself, pretending to be the Spirit of Christ – **only not of Christ!** And the Spirit of Christ can’t help but betray Himself by speaking NOT of Himself or of anything else, or on behalf of Himself, **being “the Spirit of Christ”!**

Thus we will know all three the Persons of the Godhead without intermediary: Both the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who witnesses of Christ and Christ who witnesses of the Father: “Who has seen Me, has seen the Father”, and no one can say Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit.

To know God is God to know you (in fact, me) through the Holy Spirit by and in Jesus Christ. John, Peter, James! I will not be witnessed to or confessed through or proclaimed by you – not as you **still** are. I will be witnessed, confessed, proclaimed, by the Holy Power from on high, the Promise of the Father which will bring into being my Body amongst you, so that He will witness of Me when witnessing amongst you. Only as the New Israel, the Israel of the heart and mind and soul and body – of you and you all, unreservedly and together, one and in peace – Elect, Bride, Church! **Till then**, go wait in your earthly hope and dream, Jerusalem, oh Israel – I am not your dream nor your hope nor your vision – “*I am who I am*”.

Is Christ the creation of those miserable? He indeed is the **witnessed and confessed** of those miserable! In capital letters He is the historic historic Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man risen from the dead bodily! He is the in the flesh Risen, who, without their knowing or witness or proclamation or faith or hope or vision, but precisely because of their knowledgeable witness and confession, earthly faith and realistic hope and Zionistic vision, was both Creator and Hope of all but their expectations, being the Founder of The Christian Faith of the Kingdom of heaven and earth, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

FOR FORTY DAYS AND TEN, GOD KEPT SILENCE, while the redeemed crossed the desert to mount Horeb. Forty and ten days to be the undeniable irrefutable witness and proof of the God and Man Who Died Who Rose Again From the Dead and Sat at the Right Hand of the Power of God – it is HIS NAME – His Name ALONE, the ONLY NAME, Yahweh Elohim!

In Sabbath’s stillness God raised Him from the dead and hell, and in Sabbath’s peace and rest made peace and confirmed eternal Covenant of Grace in, and unity with, Christ our Head, and sealed His Called Elect by Promised Gift of Power from on high. Therefore I believe the Sabbath of the LORD your God and my God, dear brothers in the faith of Christ Jesus.

Calvin On Trial!

Within the space of a few lines Professor Samuele Bacchiocchi "as Church historian" (*Endtime-Issues*) puts Calvin to the stand and finds him guilty of "the fires kindled by the atrocity of that execution" (of Servetus)", the "greenwood and sulphur to better re-enact the destructive smoke and fire of hell", "still burning and casting their lurid sparks into the religious intolerance of Calvin".

Judges Bacchiocchi, "Calvin stands out among the Reformers as the most embarrassing example of religious intolerance. The role that Calvin played in the trial, condemnation, and execution of Servetus – a brilliant scientist of the time who espoused a unitarian view of God – has tarnished Calvin’s image to this very day."

"Servetus was caught by the Geneva police one night while he was travelling through the city in a disguised way on his way to Italy to practice medicine. Because Servetus refused to renounce his unitarian view of God and to accept the trinitarian view, he was burned to death at Champel on the 27th of October, 1553 ... Calvin was primarily responsible for this execution, because he presided over the whole trial."

"It is hard for me to believe that a man like Calvin who wanted to make Geneva a haven for the religious oppressed, could be so intolerant toward a renowned scientist who discovered the pulmonary circulation of the blood, to have him executed in a most cruel way." (The culprit is made the hero!)

Bacchiocchi’s allegations are not only unfair – they are horribly incorrect and slanderous – and certainly unforgivable for the summa cum lauda and medalled "Church historian" and author of sixteen books.

"Calvin ... wanted to make Geneva a haven for the religious oppressed", says Bacchiocchi as though Calvin’s was mere Pharisaic boasting contradicted by "the cold heartlessness in which (he as a "church leader") suppressed dissenters". "Calvin stands out among the Reformers as the most embarrassing example of religious intolerance."

But Calvin remained the true friend of Melancton, and translated his *Loci Theologici* despite the fact that Melancton "on more than one

point, disagreed with Calvin's own thought. ... (Calvin) even ... wrote a eulogistic preface. ... With openness of spirit he combined patience."

"A very big part of (Calvin's) time and his warmest love was extended to the imprisoned and to the companions in the faith who were threatened with death" (Kolfhaus, *Die Seelsorge Johannes Calvins*, p. 88) "Calvin was a pastor and counselor for martyrs! This is one light in which he is too little known. However, perhaps this facet of his career reveals the genuine depth of his life and is the clearest illustration of his piety." (Benoit, *Calvin*, p. 61) "It is in his attitude toward captives and martyrs that the Reformer shows the full measure of his humanness." (R. Stauffer, *The Humanness of John Calvin*, p. 90)

So, Servetus wasn't the poor "dissenter", victim of Calvin's "cold heartlessness".

"American politicians, including President Bush, have been misled to believe that Islam is (a) tolerant and peaceful religion", writes Bacchiocchi. Now the Councils of the City-States of the time in which the Servetus case played off, including Calvin, were wiser, and were not misled like the "American politicians"! The Councils (Governments of State) clearly perceived the dangers of monotheistic enthusiasm. Servetus' **crime** was contravention of **State Law** and sowing the seed of enmity against the State and law and order. The **Church** (Not only Calvin) judged the fanaticism of Servetus a heresy, the heresy of denying the divinity of Christ and sowing the seed of enmity against the Faith, its People and its Lord. In countries Protestant and Roman Catholic this crime, **for this reason**, was punished by death.

The law by which Servetus was condemned had been made long before his own life time. It came onto the statute books some indeterminable but short time after the Islamic invasions of Western Europe. It was meant to prevent the very evil which civilisation today experiences – the scourge of Islamic "terrorism"!

Servetus wasn't simply another doubter. He was the "brilliant / renowned scientist" (Bacchiocchi), "and also a theologian of considerable ability" (Johnson) – the most active propagator of his enthusiasm **that carried within it the danger of subverting State and Church**. So Servetus was tried, found guilty, condemned to death, and imprisoned. (One Mohamed and his Muslims had been enough.) It happened in **Vienne, by court of law. Calvin had nothing to do with any of the proceedings.**

Servetus escaped prison in Vienne and headed for Italy – not "to practice medicine" as Bacchiocchi alleges, but to hide from the law – where he certainly planned to further his own cause by whatever means. On route

to Italy in Geneva Servetus went to church – not to worship, but to get by unnoticed. Unfortunately for him he was recognised. Two men reported his presence in the city to Calvin. The Councils were alerted. Servetus was arrested the same day.

Was Calvin to tell the informers, Be quiet, let the man go? Then Calvin would have been branded the great Judas of Protestantism instead of the great persecutor of "dissenters"!

Like democracy today, at the time the Christian religion, formed the basis for criminal law and civil government. Vienne already had Servetus executed symbolically. His effigy, a straw puppet, was burned. Because apprehended in Geneva, Servetus now was the responsibility of that leading Christian City-State. The ecclesiastical tribune of Vienne nevertheless requested that Servetus should be sent back, but Geneva's Councils felt obliged to try Servetus themselves. Servetus was to be removed from society ... by death.

"The trial, which therefor took place in Geneva, was a lengthy one. Sometimes, by order of the Council, the evidence for prosecution and defence was in writing ... Sometimes there was a face-to-face confrontation, with wordy battles. Servetus was very abusive. He did not expect to be sentenced to death, and felt very sure of himself. Seeing that the Libertines – loose living men – had once more gained power in Geneva, and were plotting Calvin's downfall, the Spaniard was counting on their help. However, the Little Council decided to ask advice of Bern, Zurich, Basle, and Schaffhausen, and when the replies came in, it was seen that each of the four Swiss cities denounced Servetus as a heretic and blasphemer, harmful to the Church. ... Michael Servetus was found guilty, and was sentenced to death by burning. Calvin implored the Council to substitute death by axe, as being swifter and more merciful, but his request was brushed aside, and the condemned man was burned at the stake, on the hill called Champel on October 27th, 1553.

If Servetus had been put to death at Rome or Vienna, most probably the sad event would have been forgotten within a comparatively short time. That a man should be put to death in the Protestant city of Geneva, came as a shock, and called forth a storm of criticism and controversy. Time itself has not removed the stain which this left on Calvin's reputation. But Calvin lived in an age when heresy was everywhere regarded as a crime to be punished by the State, and in the matter of Servetus, the Government of Geneva, and Calvin himself, acted according to the laws of that age. In the standard civil law-book, it stated clearly that for the crime of denying the

Trinity, the penalty was death." (E.M. Johnson, *The Man of Geneva*, BTT 1977 Chapter 11.)

Bacchiocchi the Church historian doesn't know these things? He says nothing of the fact that **six Governments** found Servetus guilty of a crime punishable by death? He mentions not **Calvin's plea** for a more humane method of execution but makes him the sole sadist of the occasion? Bacchiocchi the Church historian doesn't know the Council employed Calvin – that he was **responsible to the Council** in the trial of Servetus? That Calvin had to provide laws on every imaginable aspect of life, like building and sanitary regulations ... approved or rejected **by the Government** of the day? (Which incidentally, at the time was in the hands of the Libertines and not in the hands of Calvin or the Church.) Bacchiocchi doesn't know? I don't think so. I think Bacchiocchi the Professor knows very well but loves to be the cruel executioner of Calvin the Calvinist for his "roots" and "teachings" – the doctrines of free grace and God's sovereignty and predestination.

So far for Bacchiocchi "*as Church historian*".

Says Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Meditations*, A Collection by Otto Dudzus, from an Afrikaans translation of the German by Leo van der Westhuizen, Tafelberg Uitgewers, ISBN 0 624 01238 7, p. 65/66, *The Hazardous Undertaking of Responsible Act, "Responsible man acts ... in the gloaming of the relativity that extends the historic situation over good and bad; it happens in the midst of innumerable perspectives that surround every given. It should not by the act simply be distinguished between right and wrong, good and bad, but between justice and justice, between injustice and injustice. Justice struggles with justice, Aischulos said. Precisely therein responsibility is a free enterprise – no law justifies it, no valid self-justification, no ready-made finality. The good as responsibility happens without knowing about the good, in the surrendering of the inevitable yet free deed to God who sees the heart, weighs the deed and guides history. Herein opens to us the deep secret of history. This man who in the freedom of his very own responsibility acts, sees his act flowing into the dispensation of God. Free act eventually sees itself as act of God, free decision sees itself as divine guidance, option as divine necessity. In the free surrendering of the knowledge about the own good and justice, occurs the good of God. Only in this last perspective is it possible to speak of the good in the historic act."*

Who would not allow the truth of this *Meditation* in the case of Calvin versus Servetus?

Now for Bacchiocchi as Church theologian ...

He argues that "*monotheistic religions tend to be more intolerant*"; that the "*problem*" of "*intolerance*" is the reason of "*terrorism*" – the killing of the innocent and defenceless. "*Which means*", says Bacchiocchi, that the "*problem*" (of *terrorism*) *cannot be resolved without first striking at its roots by exposing the immorality, shamefulness, and senselessness of its teachings*".

Bacchiocchi blames Islam's "*intolerance*" on its "*monotheistic nature*" and "*monotheistic view of God*" – which, Bacchiocchi says, is also the "*nature*" of Christianity and its "*view of God*". According to Bacchiocchi the "*nature*" of its "*religion*" and "*view of God*" is the reason also for the "*intolerance*" of Christianity! By final analysis then, Christianity's "*monotheistic nature*" should bear the blame for Calvin's "*intolerance*". But Servetus' "*unitarian view of God*" made of him a martyr!

"*Monotheistic religions*" – i.e., all of them – *teach "that there is only one true God"*. "*Christians ... accept ... people of all religions ... Moslem, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, as children of the same God, equally important in His sight.*" For Bacchiocchi, only "*religions*" are different – the "*God*", is "*the same*". "*There is only one true God, which for Moslems is Allah*". Muslims have the "*right*" to so believe, says he.

Now Christianity is neither "*monotheistic*" nor "*unitarian*"; it is "*trinitarian*". Christianity doesn't believe in any "theism" or "deism"; it believes "in God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit". If the confession of Christianity is not of a Faith in Jesus Christ for being God, and in God for being Jesus Christ, it isn't Christian; it isn't Faith! Not the **concepts** or conceptualisations of these two "gods", God and Allah, are comparable – how much less their **beings**. Christianity for this reason is the natural enemy of Islam. Hate in fact – hate for the Christian Faith and the God of the Christian Faith – gendered Islam.

Jesus – nobody or nothing else, least of all Bacchiocchi's "*worldwide educational program ... exposing the immorality of religious intolerance and promoting the right of all people*" is the answer to the threat of Islam and its pietism. Many programs such as Bacchiocchi's have been going on for centuries – in fact for as long as Christianity has existed and invariably have resulted in "*accepting Moslem, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and people of all religions, as children of the same God, equally important in His sight.*"

'Programs' like this equate not the "*children*", but the many **gods**. How could the Christian ever "*practice*" a "*Fatherhood of God*" that is brought down to the level of "*the brotherhood of man*"? "*We*", Christians, have already denied and surrendered Christian Faith **and our duty** when "*we accept people of all religions as children of God*". Because the truth is

"*people of all religions*" **are not** the children of God, but of different **faiths**, of different gods and of different **destiny**. Therefore, o Christian, "Throw out the Lifeline" the Good News of Jesus Christ – there are many drowning and "few are chosen"!

Either Christian Faith is believed for its Judgement, its Offence and Stumbling Block and Odour unto Death or Odour unto Life or not at all! No "*worldwide educational program ... exposing the immorality of religious intolerance and promoting the right of all people*" could substitute the "power of God which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead" – the "Name far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named". Indeed, "there is **no other** Name given under men under the sun" through Whom man shall be saved, or, be lost!

I recently attended a Bible Study where the issue was raised whether a sincere and devoted Moslem could be saved without Jesus Christ – whether only believers in Jesus Christ will be saved. I am sorry to report the whole (and large) congregation sat there dumb! Then to kill the uneasy silence one "experienced" was asked to say something. He must at least ten times have explained how difficult it is to explain the difficulty; also that there is no clear cut Scripture to tell; that one man's devotion is as deserving as another's, etc. Nobody in that church dared to answer the challenge of their Faith.

There is no salvation in monotheism or with the Allah of Islam. Islam has no respect for life because it has no respect for Jesus Christ the **Source** of life – "**the only true God and Saviour**"!

The Honourable Prof. Bacchiocchi,

As introduction, allow me to quote three paragraphs from your latest *End-Time Issue*, No. 85, p. 12, paragraphs 3, 4 and 5,

"Most of the people the Muslims conquered were nominal Christians who surrendered their faith because they had lost the vision of the Christian message and mission. A major reason is that church leaders at this time were wasting their time fiercely quarreling about metaphysical questions such as the divine / human nature of Christ, rather than inspiring Christians to proclaim the Gospel to the pagan nations. The first seven ecumenical councils held between 325 and 787 AD were largely concerned with the definitions of the nature and relationship between the three Beings of the Godhead. Bitter battles were fought over metaphysical questions that should be accepted as mystery. By losing their evangelistic vision, many

Christians succumbed to Islam, instead of bringing to the Muslims a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

During its first century of Islam's expansion from 632 to 732, Mohammed's successors subdued Egypt, Palestine, Syria, part of Turkey (besieged Constantinople twice in 668 and 717), and all the countries of northern Africa. In 711 they crossed from Africa to Spain and crossed the Pyrenees into Southern France. They boasted that they would soon stable their horses in St. Peter's cathedral in Rome. But in 732 the Frankish ruler Charles Martel defeated them at the Battle of Tours and checked their progress in the West.

In the East the Muslim conquest continued unabated. In the ninth century they subdued Persia, Afghanistan, and a large part of India. In the thirteenth century they conquered the Turks and the Monguls, Bulgaria, Serbia and parts of Hungary were soon to follow. Finally in 1453 the city of Constantinople itself fell into the hands of the Muslim Turks, who turned the magnificent church of St. Sophia into a mosque where the Koran is read instead of the Gospel. From Constantinople the Muslims spread panic in Europe and threatened the German empire until they were finally defeated at the gates of Vienna in 1683."

What at first consideration might seem rather boring history, I, if I were to have written these lines, would have used a BIG exclamation mark instead of an ordinary full stop to end them with. And each year dated I would have written with greater visual emphasis. Why will soon be clear.

But first, **You have not touched the very basic and determinative facts of Muslim origin, history and belief.** O no, you have! In these very lines! Here they are: "*nominal Christians*" – like Mohammed! – "*surrendered their faith because they had lost the vision of the Christian message and mission.*" And the major reason for this?: The metaphysical question about the divine / human nature of Christ!

The battle between Christianity and Mohammedism raged on two fronts, and, simultaneously! The one was on the battlefields of sword against sword. The other was in the battle chambers of Church Councils where the Sword of the Word and the sword of human wisdom were engaged in drawn out and dreary combat. It might seem that the "*Church leaders*" themselves had not always realised it. But because it was so drawn out a debate it became academic and "*mystical*". The arguments became "*mystical*" – not the real MATTER. The **fundamentals** of Christian Faith were opposed by the **fundamentals** of the new 'Prophet of Allah'. The metaphysical question of "*the divine / human nature of Christ*" had to be correlated "*with the definitions of the nature and relationship between the*

three Beings of the Godhead". There is but a very thin line between Arianism and Mohammedism and virtually no distinction between "Unitarianism" and "Islam".

"That church leaders at this time were wasting their time fiercely quarreling about metaphysical questions" unfortunately is most true, but just as unfortunate, not totally true, for they were supposed to have busied themselves with pure doctrine and the Scriptures finally – *such as matter the divine / human nature of Christ.*

Islam had as first object exactly to root out the *inspiring Christian proclamation of the Gospel to the pagan nations.* Islam **originated as** the direct **rejection** of the Gospel of Christ – it didn't originate as a reaction against the (supposed) weakness and poverty of the Gospel of Christ. Although many Christians "*succumbed to Islam*" many more stood for the truth of Jesus Christ and even paid with their lives for it. Therefore your supposition that had Christians not *lost their evangelistic vision* and instead had *brought to the Muslims a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ*, it would have made all the world's difference, is, to say the least, naïve.

Surely retrospectively – on the front – the crusades might look more like sanctioned hooliganism; and – in the conference rooms – the Councils like "*bitter battles ... over metaphysical questions*". Nevertheless it had been in the Councils more than on the battlefields that Christianity in the end triumphed. That the most fundamental principle of Christianity, that "*the three Beings of the Godhead ... should be accepted as mystery*" – yet as Scriptural and as the condition of Christ's own divinity – today must be squarely ascribed to "*the first seven ecumenical councils held between 325 and 787 AD*". It was God's Church, the Body of Christ that sat in council then. They counselled because of the very existence of Islam and of its denial of the Christian Faith – the denial of both the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. These heresies were not in the 'church' as much as they were against the Church – **their great defender was Mohamed.**

Now we can go back to the further paragraph I quoted, and may re-consider it in the light of some of my previous writing to you, honourable Professor.

"In the thirteenth century they (Islam) conquered the Turks and the Monguls, Bulgaria, Serbia and parts of Hungary were soon to follow. Finally in 1453 the city of Constantinople itself fell into the hands of the Muslim Turks, who turned the magnificent church of St. Sophia into a mosque where the Koran is read instead of the Gospel. From Constantinople the Muslims spread panic in Europe and threatened the German empire

until they were finally defeated at the gates of Vienna in 1683." (Emphasis CGE.)

What time in history is this? The Reformation-period!

What place demographically is this? Christianity!

Now recall, kindly, what you wrote about Servetus and Calvin in your *End-Time Issue*? Let me repeat one paragraph of that writing of mine to you, "Servetus wasn't simply another doubter. He was the "*brilliant renowned scientist*" "*and also a theologian of considerable ability*" – the most active propagator of his enthusiasm **that carried within it the danger of subverting State and Church.** So Servetus was tried, found guilty, condemned to death, and imprisoned. (One Mohamed and his Muslims had been enough.) It happened in **Vienna**, by court of law. Calvin had nothing to do with any of the proceedings."

How would any sound-minded person question what your Christian President Bush has done since September 11, 2001? Then how could any sound minded person question what the State and Church had done during a time in history under much greater threat by Islam?

Professor honourable, I am a Calvinist. I am still waiting for your apology for what you have written against Calvin.

Bacchiocchi responded to this letter by asking me to take his address off my list.

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